CHRONICLES & MEMORIES

The Sceptre of Judah

שבט יהודה

Shevet Yehudah

Solomon ibn Verga

Complete English Translation

Compared and Illustrated Edition

Reading guide

The English text, commentary and sources are gathered in the first part. Documentary reproductions appear at the end of the volume. Historical illustrations accompany the reading.

Part One · English 3

Appendix · Facsimiles 563

Each account is followed by historical commentary and translation choices. The existing English translation and historical illustrations are preserved.

References to editions and manuscripts are retained. Contents-page references and internal links follow the pagination of this edition.

English edition

The Sceptre of Judah

The Sceptre of Judah brings together accounts of persecution, court debates, memories of exile and traditions concerning the history of Jewish communities. Its scope extends from antiquity to the Iberian crises of the late Middle Ages and the early sixteenth century.

This volume contains the sixty-four numbered accounts and five supplementary pieces of the Spanish edition of 1744. The translation has been revised against the Hebrew text and Meïr Wiener's German translation. Each account is followed immediately by historical commentary, then by translation choices and significant variants.

The chronicles, documents and ancient texts cited in the notes help trace the episodes, clarify their characters and dates, or identify differences from the account. The illustrations come from old manuscripts, prints and paintings; their provenance is recorded at the end of the volume.

Cover: The Capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. Workshop of Jean Fouquet, c. 1465–1475, BnF, Français 247, f. 213v. A medieval representation of conquest and exile, used on both covers.

October 2026

Reading Table

Each account is followed by historical commentary and translation choices. Page numbers are clickable.

Introduction and Method 7

The Compared Editions 11

The 1744 Title Page 12

The 1744 Dedication 13

Account	Text	History	Choices
Account I Antony, Cleopatra and the Wars of Rome	15	17	19
Account II Ben Sira and Faithfulness to the Law	20	22	23
Account III Persecution in Babylonia and a Change of Power	24	26	27
Account IV Compulsory Conversion and Recovered Freedom	28	30	31
Account V The Granada Massacre and Its Memory	32	34	35
Account VI The Shepherds and the Paths of Relief	36	41	43
Account VII King Alfonso and the Objections of Thomas	44	72	77
Account VIII An Accusation at Écija	85	92	94
Account IX Sisebut and Forced Conversion	97	100	102
Account X Joseph at the Castilian Court	104	110	112
Account XI Exile and Trials of Faithfulness	114	116	117
Account XII A Murder at Ocaña and a Jewish Envoy's Address	118	123	125
Account XIII A Sermon Turned to the Jews' Advantage	126	128	129
Account XIV Sancha and the Price of Protection	130	133	135
Account XV A Holiday Game Turns Into Massacre	136	138	139
Account XVI The Sleepless King and Israel's Guardian	140	142	143
Account XVII The Ambassador Who Challenges the Punishment	144	149	151
Account XVIII Coin Offences and Expulsion from England	152	154	155

Account	Text	History	Choices
Account XIX The Cross Hidden in the Dung Heap	156	158	159
Account XX The Converted Confessor and the Offended Queen	160	162	164
Account XXI Philip Expels the Jews from France	166	168	169
Account XXII An Expulsion Confined to Certain Towns	170	171	172
Account XXIII An Intercession Before the King	173	175	176
Account XXIV Philip's Death and the Exiles' Return	177	179	180
Account XXV Another Expulsion After the Return	181	182	183
Account XXVI Plague and Accusations of Poisoning	184	186	188
Account XXVII Massacres in Spain and the Converts' Flight	189	191	193
Account XXVIII Starvation and Banishment to Pera	194	196	197
Account XXIX Confessions Extracted Under Torture	198	202	204
Account XXX Maimonides and the Epistle to Yemen	205	207	209
Account XXXI David al-David and the Messianic Revolt	210	214	216
Account XXXII A Messianic Claimant in Persia	218	221	223
Piece 32a Two Stones and the Limits of Knowledge	224	233	236
Piece 32b Psalms, Parables and Rival Readings	238	243	245
Account XXXIII A Disaster at Fez Left Unnarrated	247	248	249
Account XXXIV An Ultimatum and a Town in Flames	250	252	253
Account XXXV The Torch and the Governor	254	255	257
Account XXXVI The Community Denied a Burial	258	259	260
Account XXXVII The Royal Physician's Perilous Prestige	261	262	264
Account XXXVIII The Moved Corpse and the Parchment	265	268	269
Account XXXIX Baptisms Under Threat in Rome	270	271	272
Account XL The Messianic Debates at Tortosa	273	287	290
Account XLI Accusations Examined Before the Pope	294	302	305
Account XLII The Dignity of the Head of Exile	308	311	314
Account XLIII The Poisoning Charge and the Lepers	316	317	319

Account	Text	History	Choices
Account XLIV The Queen, the Confessor and the Decree	320	322	323
Account XLV Barcelona and the Communities of Catalonia	324	325	326
Account XLVI A Queen Regent and a Pope	327	328	330
Account XLVII Castilian Communities in Turmoil	331	332	334
Account XLVIII Testimony to Violence in Iberia	335	336	338
Account XLIX Forbidden Trades and the Law Preserved	339	341	343
Account L Dispossession on the Roads of Exile	344	346	347
Account LI The Expulsion from Spain According to Abrabanel	348	351	353
Account LII A Bereaved Father's Fidelity	354	356	357
Account LIII Hunger and Violence Near Fez	358	360	361
Account LIV The King Returns the Children	362	364	365
Account LV The Bread Trap at Salé	366	368	369
Account LVI Bread and the Cross	370	371	372
Account LVII Rome's Jews Refuse the Refugees	373	375	376
Account LVIII Abandoned and Rescued at Sea	377	379	380
Account LIX Children Deported from Portugal	381	383	384
Account LX The Lisbon Massacre	385	387	389
Account LXI The Dead Child Names the Accusers	390	392	393
Account LXII The Warning of the Turtledoves	394	396	397
Account LXIII Proposed Causes of Persecution	398	401	403
Account LXIV The Temple's Splendour and Service	404	423	429
Piece 64A Miracles, Disputations and Communal Annals	438	448	453
Piece 64B Alfonso's Dream and the Questions to the Craftsmen	461	472	477
Piece 64C Education and Contradictions at Court	481	487	489

Sources and Bibliography 493

Illustration Credits 547

Introduction and Method

The work and the scope of this edition

The Hebrew title Shevet Yehudah (שבט יהודה) associates Judah with shevet (שבט), a word meaning “staff”, “rod”, “sceptre” or “tribe”, according to context. The Spanish dedication of 1744 itself develops its double meaning of authority and punishment. The English title The Sceptre of Judah is retained; the parallel French edition bears the traditional title La Verge de Juda.

The volume follows the sixty-four numbered accounts of the Spanish Amsterdam edition of 1744. It also includes the two dialogues inserted after Account 32 and the three pieces following Account 64. The labels 32a, 32b, 64a, 64b and 64c make them easy to locate while preserving the old numbering. The 1744 title page and dedication are also translated. “Complete” refers to this transmitted collection; additional passages in Hebrew and German are translated among the variants when absent from Spanish.

The chronicle brings together several forms of transmission: stories heard, books invoked, reported debates, descriptions and recollections. A source not yet identified remains a source to seek. The investigation does not assume that failure to identify it proves invention.

Which texts were compared?

A textual witness (a manuscript or early edition that preserves the text) may transmit a reading different from another. Several translations are not necessarily independent attestations: they may derive from the same printed edition. Comparison therefore considers what each version transmits and, where possible, its relationship to the others.

Three sets of texts have been compared in full, account by account: the Spanish edition of 1744, the transcription of the 1928 Warsaw Hebrew edition and Meïr Wiener’s 1856 German translation. Specific passages in Wiener’s 1855 Hebrew text and apparatus (its editorial notes and recorded variants) were checked against page images, particularly to resolve numbers, obscure words and omissions. The German translation informs the decisions; it is not merely listed in the bibliography.

Georg Gentius's Latin version of 1651 was also recovered. Its title, preliminaries and selected passages were examined, without a complete collation of its text. Older editions mentioned only in other works are not represented as having been reread in full. References distinguish direct reading, a published transcription and information reported by a researcher.

How readings were chosen

For each account, Spanish, Hebrew and German are placed side by side. Differences in meaning, grammatical subject, people, places, quantities and dates are examined alongside available external historical sources. The adopted wording is that best supported by the combined evidence. No language is given automatic priority.

The "Translation Choices" section explains decisions that materially affect understanding: the competing readings, the reason for the choice and an alternative translation when it remains defensible. A reading is not changed merely because a number appears more plausible. In Account 7, for example, one million one hundred thousand men is supported by Hebrew, German and the passage of Chronicles invoked in the dialogue.

A mistranslation or an alteration in transmission can be corrected when the evidence converges. If a historical confusion belongs to the account itself, however, the translation preserves it and the commentary compares it with the documents. Silently replacing every old assertion with a modern historian's account would prevent the reader from seeing the history actually transmitted.

Developments absent from Spanish are identified at the appropriate point in the translation choices. Long variants are translated so that readers can compare the two forms of the account. Where abridged syntax assigns an action to the wrong person or produces an unintelligible sentence, the words needed to restore its meaning may be supplied in the main text; the note explains the intervention.

Historical investigation

The commentary first seeks a document or earlier text corresponding to the episode: a royal act, ordinance, register, chronicle, letter, travel narrative or passage in an ancient work. Religious and philosophical texts are examined when an account cites or echoes them. References provide the author or institution, the work, the passage and access to the edition consulted.

The scope of each comparison is stated. A document can confirm an expulsion without confirming the dialogue that explains it; a chronicle can supply another date or death toll; a biblical text can clarify an expression without proving the event. When an earlier archivist gives a shelfmark and extract that this revision has not checked against the original register, that intermediary is identified.

Dates are understood within the system used by the source. A Hebrew year can overlap two civil years. Chronograms—expressions in which selected letters represent a year through their numerical values—are explained when their reading matters. Old titles, currencies and measures are not converted into modern equivalents without justification.

Biblical connections are located by book, chapter and verse. The commentary distinguishes an explicit quotation, the reuse of a particular story, a tradition from religious commentary and a simple analogy. External sources may add a date, a person or a sequel to the events; these additions remain in the commentary, with their degree of certainty, so that the account transmitted by Ibn Verga remains recognisable.

Language, original terms and reading

The revision aims at clear, continuous English: pronouns clarified, idioms translated by meaning, dialogue punctuated and technical terms explained. The French edition was revised in parallel from the same body of texts. The two editions explain the same important decisions while respecting each language's usage.

Useful Hebrew words are retained with an immediate explanation. Thus ḥelev (חלב), in the dietary context, denotes certain prohibited fats; it is not an animal. "Law", "tradition", book titles and names of groups can carry different meanings in different passages; these are clarified where the distinction matters.

The opinions and accusations voiced by characters remain attributed to their speakers. Historical commentary identifies what the sources establish. Where a person, quotation or event has not been securely identified, the uncertainty is retained and explained.

Organisation and illustrations

Every unit follows the same order: account, historical commentary, then translation choices. The commentary and the choices each begin on a new page. Account titles are separated from the text by a larger space. Page numbers in the reading table are clickable, as are bibliographic references. The bibliography gathers the sources used; passage-specific locations remain in the notes or bibliographic references.

Every account and supplementary piece receives at least one historical illustration. The reproductions accompany the places, people and traditions mentioned. Their dates are distinguished from those of the events depicted: a fifteenth-century miniature showing antiquity documents a medieval representation, not an ancient eyewitness view. Captions explain the nature of the connection; credits supply the available collections, shelfmarks or inventory numbers and reproduction rights.

The Compared Editions

The following abbreviations are used in references. Printed page numbers and transcription sections locate the passages.

Key	Version	Comparison made
E1744	Spanish, Amsterdam 1744	Complete
H1928	Hebrew, Warsaw 1928	Complete, transcription
G1856	German, Meïr Wiener 1856	Complete
H1855	Hebrew, Meïr Wiener 1855	Selected text and apparatus
L1651	Latin, Georg Gentius 1651	Selected consultation

The Spanish and German title-page facsimiles are reproduced in the appendix, on page 563. The Hebrew title page follows on page 564.

The Sceptre of Judah

Composed in the Hebrew language by Rabbi Solomon ibn Verga, and translated into Spanish by M. de L.

Newly corrected, with the permission of the gentlemen of the Mahamad (מעמד, governing council of the community).

Amsterdam. Published by Mosseh d'Abraham Pretto Henriques, at the printing house of Jan de Wolf.

In the year 5504, corresponding to 1744.

The 1744 Dedication

To the most worthy Jeuda de Jahacob de Prado, presiding parnas (פרנס, administrator of the community) of the council of the illustrious gentlemen of the Mahamad (מעמד, governing council of the community), in the holy congregation of Talmud Torah (תלמוד תורה, "Torah study", the community's name).

Our father Jacob, aided by the spirit of prophecy, foretold what would befall his sons in the centuries to come: the twelve tribes, representing the whole house of Israel. When he came to the pronouncements concerning Judah, after assuring him of the homage his brothers would always pay him on account of his great valour, he said: "The shevet (שבט, sceptre or rod) shall not depart from Judah until Shiloh comes." This word, shevet (שֵׁבֶט), in the sacred language has the meaning of a sceptre; it also admits the sense of a rod and of punishment. Perhaps the man who pronounced these last wishes intended both meanings: shevet, a sceptre, when one is virtuous; shevet, a rod, when one transgresses.

In this small volume we may see how our Hebrew nation has experienced various persecutions, expressed by shevet in its sense of a rod. Had this people, Jacob, the portion of His inheritance, not continually enjoyed divine protection, it would surely have drowned in the proud and surging waves that the sea of our adversaries ceaselessly raises. In their great hatred, they seek by every means to obscure the love and favour granted and guaranteed by its divine Spouse: "Many waters cannot quench the fire of love."

Turning to the other meaning of the oracle just cited, expressed by shevet, a sceptre, the prophecy assures us that authority will never be taken from Judah. We indeed experience this, for that tribe has always enjoyed, and still enjoys, this pre-eminence.

Most worthy sir, having resolved, with the requisite permission, to have this

small treatise, entitled The Sceptre of Judah, reprinted, it occurred to me to add a dedication. No one could be more fitting for that purpose than your most worthy person, since you represent another Judah, son of Jacob. Since the exile from Spain, your noble ancestors have exercised authority within our nation, and today we see that authority shine in your person. As presiding parnas, you wield the shevet, the sceptre and authority, with which you and the most worthy gentlemen of the Mahamad so wisely govern this illustrious commonwealth, ever seeking its welfare and advancement.

Nor does the other meaning of the oracle, expressed by shevet, a rod, fail to apply to your most worthy person, since you have it particularly at your disposal to raise against those who deserve it.

I trust in your kindness that you will accept this fitting offering. In receiving it, look not upon my lowly merits, but be guided by the customary kindness and benevolence that naturally reside in your most worthy person. May God preserve you for many years, with the prosperity and advancement wished for you by one who remains

Your most faithful servant, who kisses your hands,

Moseh Preto Henriques.

Amsterdam, 27 Tevet 5504.

Note in the Spanish printing: Song of Songs 8:7. The dedication is signed by the publisher of 1744; it is not part of Ibn Verga's composition.

Purim in Amsterdam's Portuguese Synagogue
Balthasar Bernaerts, after Louis Fabritius Dubourg, 1737. An image of Sephardi life in Amsterdam, seven years before the Spanish edition translated here. [provenance]

Account I

Antony, Cleopatra and the Wars of Rome

The first disaster to befall the Jews took place in the time of Antony, Emperor of Rome. Intending to march against Jerusalem, he took with him a king of the Greeks named Quicio. As Antony approached Jerusalem, he heard that Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt, had been widowed. The fame of her beauty had already spread throughout the earth, and Antony fell in love with her. He sent ambassadors to Egypt to ask for her hand and, with her consent, took her as his wife, but on condition that he divorce his first wife, who was in Rome. This he did. Since the wife he divorced was the sister of Octavian Caesar, the consuls of Rome, seeing this disgraceful act, resolved to take the crown from Antony and bestowed it upon Augustus.

After this event, some enemies of the Jews came forward and said that the Queen of Egypt lived at peace with them and loved them, and that they had advised Antony and the queen to make this marriage so that Antony would abandon his war against them. Hearing this, the Romans advised Augustus to go to Jerusalem and take vengeance first upon Antony and then upon the Jews. He did so, taking a great army drawn from all nations, for at that time the Romans ruled the world. Battles were fought between Antony and Augustus, and, when defeated, Antony fled. Augustus killed Cleopatra and the two sons she had had by her first husband. After this victory, he turned against the Jews, who resisted him with great valour and killed many of his men. Seeing this, he said to his advisers: "Let us stop fighting the Jews: they fight not like men, but like lions and tigers." They answered: "How could we return to Rome in such disgrace? Let us return resolutely to the struggle and take courage; if we die, we shall win everlasting renown."

Taking fresh courage, they brought down the walls of Jerusalem and took great spoils from it. Augustus then appointed a governor to rule the Jews in the name of Rome, and returned there in honour. At the end of that year, the Jews rebelled against Roman rule and killed the governor. On hearing this, Augustus, filled with anger, gathered twice as many men as he had previously taken, for he knew the strength and courage of the Jews. He prepared battering rams, which he had not done the first time, because he had then underestimated the Jews. He carried on the

war for a whole year and at last prevailed. He killed a multitude of Jews, so many that he raised his hands to heaven and said: "Lord of the world, let so much blood not be reckoned to me as a sin, since the Jews themselves have brought all this evil upon themselves!"

He then took all their princes captive and brought them to Rome. Even there God's hand was against them: a change of climate and diet, together with their sin, brought about the death of them all. They were buried in Rome. This is what is found written in the chronicles of the kings of Aragon.

Herod in Jerusalem

Herod in Jerusalem, a miniature from Fouquet's workshop, attributed to Jean Bourdichon, c. 1470–1475. BnF, NAF 21013, f. 1v. Its setting offers a fifteenth-century interpretation of the Roman antiquity evoked in this account. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

Persons and Roman chronology

Antony, Cleopatra VII and Octavian can be identified. Octavian and Augustus are the same man, so the passage does not describe power passing between two different rulers. Plutarch's Life of Antony traces the breach with Octavia, Octavian's sister, the civil war and the defeat at Actium in 31 BCE. It does not place these events within an expedition by Antony against Jerusalem. The title "Emperor" and the image of a crown removed by the consuls belong to the wording of the transmitted account. For Quicio, Wiener prints "Cassius"; that comparison is insufficient to identify the "king of the Greeks" described here. [S001 ; G1856]

The deaths of Cleopatra and the children

Plutarch, chapters 81–87, distinguishes the people brought together in this account: Antyllus was Antony's son by Fulvia; Caesarion was Cleopatra's son, attributed to Julius Caesar. Both were executed. Cleopatra brought about her own death, although Plutarch records different accounts of the means she used. Antony's other children were taken in by Octavia. The statement that Augustus killed Cleopatra and "two sons by her first husband" therefore does not agree with this ancient source. This corrects the historical reconstruction, not the wording retained in the translation. [S001]

Jerusalem and a precise textual parallel

Josephus distinguishes Pompey's capture of Jerusalem and its later capture by Herod and Sosius from the much later war conducted by Titus. The closest textual parallel occurs in Jewish War V.12.4: Titus sees the bodies piled below the walls, stretches out his hands to heaven and calls God to witness that he is not responsible. The gesture, prayer and their narrative purpose closely match the scene attributed here to Caesar. This offers a concrete line of transmission, possibly through an intervening chronicle. Ibn Verga refers to "the chronicles of the kings of Aragon" without an author or title; no exact passage in that intermediary has been identified among the documents consulted for this revision. [S002 ; S003 ; E1744]

Herod's place in relations with Rome

Herod's absence is crucial to understanding how the account is assembled. In Josephus, Cleopatra obtains from Antony territories and revenues previously subject to Herod, including those of Jericho. After Actium, Herod, Antony's former ally, appears before Octavian at Rhodes, where the victor confirms his kingship. After Cleopatra's death, he restores the territories she had received and grants him others. In this source, therefore, Judaea's political reorganisation takes place through the preservation and enlargement of an allied kingdom. It does not take the form of the two sieges by Augustus described here.

This comparison also clarifies the initial accusation: the account makes the Jews' supposed friendship with Cleopatra the cause of collective retaliation. Josephus instead describes conflicting territorial interests and personal alliances. Neither his account nor Plutarch's confirms that the Jews arranged the marriage to avert an invasion. These discrepancies belong together: the episode combines a Roman civil war, traditions about Jerusalem's capture, and a particular explanation of persecution. [S002 ; S001]

Translation Choices

Who is “Caesar”?

The Spanish title César refers first to Antony and later to Augustus. Their names have been supplied where the title alone made the subject uncertain. H1928 confirms that Antony is the man whose marriage is intended to avert war against the Jews. This clarification does not turn either occurrence into a reference to Julius Caesar. [E1744 ; H1928]

A name and a siege term

Quicio follows the Spanish. The Hebrew has קיסיאוש (approximately Qisyaosh), which Wiener renders as “Cassius”. This is an identification adopted in the German translation, not a demonstrated identity. “Battering rams” translates Spanish arietes; Hebrew סוללות (solelot, “siege banks or works”) and German Belagerungsmaschinen (“siege engines”) are less specific. The ambiguous final pronoun concerned the underestimation of the Jews, not of the rams. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Climate, food and sin

The final sentence has been recast to make the combination of causes clear: a change of climate and diet, together with sin. The former phrase “the sin that was added to these causes” was an awkward literal construction. The religious explanation belongs to the old narrator and remains part of his text. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 1–3 ; H1928, section 1 ; G1856, p. 1–3.

Account II

Ben Sira and Faithfulness to the Law

The second disaster occurred in the time of Ben Sira ("son of Sira") and was exceptionally severe. I do not know its cause, but I found it written that thirty thousand people abandoned the Law of Moses, while those who remained faithful to it were burned. This Ben Sira was Joshua ben Sirach, the grandson of Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest. The Christians called him Joseph Sirach, as Jerome writes. This learned man composed a book which they call Ecclesiasticus; they included it among the sacred books because of his wisdom and the esteem in which he was held.

Ben Sira in a Syriac Bible

Frontispiece to Ecclesiasticus, Syriac Bible, third quarter of the sixth century, BnF, Syriaque 341, fol. 218v. The image represents the sage discussed in Account II; it does not illustrate the persecution related there. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

The author who can be identified

Ben Sira is the author of Sirach, also called Ecclesiasticus in the Latin tradition. The Greek prologue was written by his grandson, who identifies the book as the work of his grandfather Jesus/Joshua and mentions his own arrival in Egypt under a king Euergetes. The USCCB edition's introduction places the completion of the Hebrew work at about 175 BCE. These sources identify the book and its setting, but do not provide the genealogy extending to Joshua son of Jehozadak transmitted by Ibn Verga. [S004 ; S005]

Checking the reference to Jerome

In the Latin preface consulted, Jerome writes Jesu filii Sirach ("Jesus, son of Sirach"), not Joseph Sirach. He also distinguishes the work he undertakes on books he regards as canonical from the work he declines to undertake on Ecclesiasticus. The chronicle thus compresses a more complex history of reception. The Joseph/Jesus discrepancy needs to be stated: Joseph occurs in the Spanish, in H1928 and in Wiener, so it is not merely a French typographical error that could be silently corrected. [S006 ; E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The persecution remains unidentified

The account names no ruler, city or year. Neither the prologue to Sirach nor Jerome's preface relates the episode of thirty thousand people abandoning their religion and the execution of those who remained faithful. The documents consulted therefore do not establish an exact date or location for this persecution, or verify its number. The compiler's own admission that he does not know its cause remains in the translation. [E1744 ; S004 ; S006]

The genealogy and a biblical persecution distinguished

Joshua son of Jehozadak is more than a high priest's name: Haggai 1:1 places him beside Zerubbabel under Darius, when work on the Temple was resumed. The chapter dates this intervention to the king's second year, 520 BCE. This setting precedes that of Ben Sira by several centuries. Ibn Verga's genealogy therefore cannot be read as an immediate succession of three historically established generations; the shared name Joshua/Jesus does not by itself connect the two men.

An ancient comparison for coercion to abandon the Law appears in 1 Maccabees 1:41–64: Antiochus's orders, the abandonment of ancestral practices, the destruction of books of the Law, and the killing of those who remain faithful. This passage helps place the kind of ordeal described by the chronicle. It does not, however, mention Ben Sira leading the victims, thirty thousand apostates, or the collective execution by fire summarised here. It supplies a comparison of setting and motifs, rather than a demonstrated identification of the second persecution. [S007 ; S008 ; S005]

Translation Choices

Disaster, persecution and people

Destruición is rendered as “disaster”, since this passage describes religious persecution without mentioning the destruction of a city. The Hebrew heading uses shemad (שמד, “persecution or coercion to abandon one’s religion”). “Thirty thousand people” renders almas and נפשות (nefashot, “people”, literally “souls”); the number has not been changed. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Forms of the name

Ben means “son of”. The forms Ben Sira and ben Sirach belong to the transmitted name; Sirac/Sirach reflects a Greek or Latin adaptation. Joshua and Jesus can represent the same Hebrew name, Yeshua (ישוע). The Joseph attributed to Jerome is retained as a reading of the book and discussed in the historical commentary, since the compared editions transmit it. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S006]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 3–3 ; H1928, section 2 ; G1856, p. 3–3.

Account III

Persecution in Babylonia and a Change of Power

The third persecution took place in the year 4004, before the Ishmaelites gained the upper hand over the Persians. The Persians turned against the Jews, with whom they had previously lived on friendly terms and whom they had honoured. Among the Jews there were still men of outstanding wisdom, comparable to those of Jerusalem before its destruction. The king tried to protect them but could not: the insurgents were numerous, and he feared that they would rebel against him, for the wars of the Ishmaelites against the Persians were already beginning. Seeing that the uprising was being justified on religious grounds, he reluctantly sided with the insurgents. He had three leading men of Israel, named Amimar, Morica and Messarfia, leaders of the communities in exile, arrested and cruelly tortured, so that they would abandon the Law and advise their people to do the same. Sustained by divine favour, however, they remained faithful to their Law. When the king saw that he could not make them yield, he sentenced them to death. He then imprisoned the leading Jews. For many days they suffered terrible torments, until they reached the limits of their strength. Those who could endure no more abandoned the Law.

From that time onwards, however, the greatness of the King of Persia began to decline. The Ishmaelites marched against the Persians and destroyed them; having gained the upper hand, they captured all the kings of Persia. The king of the Ishmaelites was a benevolent man, like those rulers who love justice. He summoned the Jews and treated them kindly, permitting them to follow whichever religion they wished, since no benefit could come from a religion imposed by force. The surviving Persians acknowledged that the injustice done to the Jews had caused their ruin, and allowed them to practise the religion of their choice.

This is found in the chronicles of the kings of Persia which were brought to the King of Spain. For it is the custom of Christians to seek knowledge of ancient matters, so as to draw instruction from past events when occasion arises. They do this through the prudence with which they govern themselves.

A Sasanian Court Imagined in the Sixteenth Century

Cropped detail. Accession of Yazdgard II, Shah Tahmasp's Shāhnāmeh, about 1530–1535. This Safavid illumination depicts a Sasanian king who preceded Pērōz. It accompanies the Persian setting of the account, without depicting the reported persecutions. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

An identifiable group of martyrs

Sherira Gaon's Epistle, § 110, identifies the three leaders: Amemar son of Mar Yanqa, Mesharshiya son of Paqod, and the exilarch Huna son of Mar Zutra. It distinguishes their arrest in Tevet, Huna and Mesharshiya's execution on 18 Tevet, and Amemar's execution in Adar. The Aramaic distinguishes "were arrested" from "were killed", a distinction blurred in the older French translation reproduced online. [S009]

Two chronologies combined in the narrative

Sherira gives Seleucid year 781, corresponding to 469/470 CE. Ibn Verga's year 4004 corresponds instead to 243/244. The Arab conquest belongs to a further period, the seventh century. The translation therefore preserves the book's date while this commentary separates the stages. Ibn Daud, p. 61, also records the group of martyrs and coercion directed at young Jews. These sources do not confirm the initially benevolent ruler's portrait or the collective explanation of defeat attributed to the Persians. [S009 ; S010 ; E1744 ; H1928]

Separate traditions about the end of Persian rule

The Epistle provides a longer sequence than the entry on the three martyrs alone. Sections 108–109 mention a persecution under Yazdgard; section 110 associates the arrests with the closure of communal institutions and the delivery of Jewish children to the magi. Later, section 112 describes further disruption of study and the academies near the end of Persian rule, followed by the movement of scholars from Pumbedita towards Nehardea. These entries do not describe a single crisis immediately followed by the Arab conquest.

Section 113 then recounts Rabbi Isaac's meeting with ʿAlī at Peroz-Shabur. This tradition offers a precise comparison for the theme of a favourable change of government, but contains neither the general decree nor the speech on freely chosen religion attributed by Ibn Verga to an unnamed king. The Aramaic describes Isaac going to greet ʿAlī; Landau's translation develops the caliph's kindly reception. This difference prevents even this comparison from becoming proof of the reported speech. Finally, a recovered rabbinic chronicle is not, merely because of its contents, the "chronicle of the kings of Persia" that the narrator says was brought to Spain. [S009]

Translation Choices

The three victims and their titles

The Spanish names Amimar, Morica and Messarfia. H1928 names Amemar bar Mar Yanuqa, Mesharshia and Huna Mari; Wiener gives the same three persons and explicitly attaches the title of exilarch to Huna Mari. Both the order and the forms of the names therefore differ. “Leaders of the communities in exile” renders Hebrew rashei ha-golah (ראשי הגולה, “heads of the exile”) without implying that all three men held the office of exilarch. The Spanish names remain in the narrative; the historical correspondence is discussed above. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

A revolt justified on religious grounds

The former wording that the king “adopted their purpose” obscured the political action. The Hebrew and German make clear the pressure exerted by the insurgents and their religious justification: he reluctantly sides with them. “Heads of the captivity” does not mean prison officials. “Exile” here describes the situation of Jewish communities outside their homeland. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 3–4 ; H1928, section 3 ; G1856, p. 3–4.

Account IV

Compulsory Conversion and Recovered Freedom

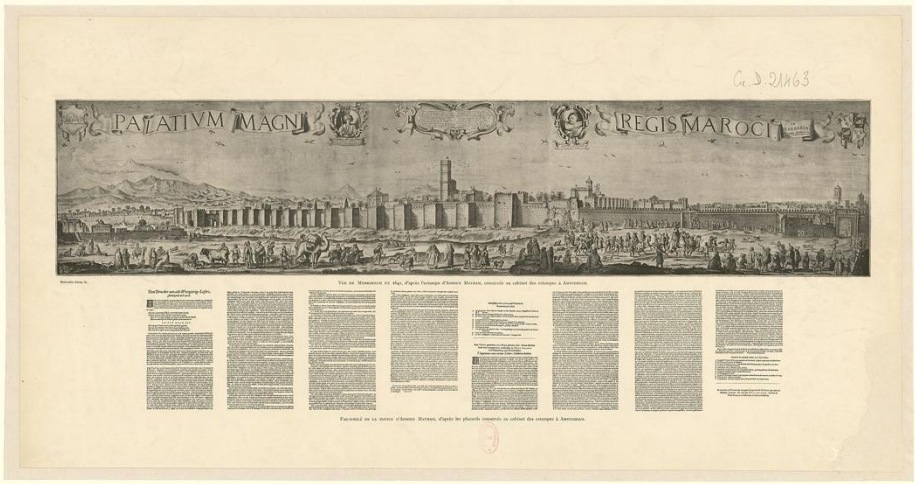
The fourth persecution took place in the year 4872, when Benunbrat carried war across the world. He had a proclamation made throughout his kingdom that whoever did not follow his religion would die, and that their property would pass into the royal treasuries. Hearing this, the Jews went to the king's palace with their children and families. At the gate they cried out loudly: "Save us, O king!" Hearing them, he said: "What a foolish people, without understanding! I summon you to my religion only to save you and keep you from going to hell."

They answered: "Lord, our salvation lies in keeping our Law. God has commanded us to observe it. You are master of our bodies and our possessions; but as for our souls, He who gave them to us and will call them back to Himself is the king who will judge them. You who sit upon the throne will not have to answer for our souls."

The king replied: "You are fools! I have not come to debate with you, for I know that you are never without answers. But I tell you that my will is for you to observe my religion; otherwise, behold the sword that threatens you."

The Jews said: "Do not be angry, lord. You are our king and we are your vassals. If we do not do your will, banish us to foreign lands: no punishment could equal that, since we should leave our homeland to seek peoples whom we have not known." He answered: "I do not wish my servants to serve another king."

Seeing this, the Jews went to the great men of the kingdom and begged them to intercede with the king: let him relent and take all their property, provided he left them free to observe their Law. They did so, but to no avail. In the extremity of their distress, many abandoned the Law. A month later this king died suddenly; his son reigned in his place and feared that his father might have died because of the evil he had done to the Jews. He summoned those who had been coerced and, reassuring them, allowed them to follow whichever religion seemed best to them. Many therefore returned to their own; others feared that this might be a stratagem to discover what was in their hearts, and continued for a long time to practise the religion that had been imposed on them.



Marrakesh in an Old Print

View of Marrakesh after Adriaen Matham's print of 1641, reproduced by the Demoulin brothers. It locates a centre of Moroccan power discussed in the commentary. The city shown is much later than the proposed Almohad setting. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

Ibn Tumart and a distorted succession

German Ben Tomard makes an identification with Ibn Tumart plausible. Al-Marrakushi dates his death to 524 AH, or 1129/1130, and names ʿAbd al-Muʾmin as successor, with a distinct genealogy: he was not his son. Ibn Verga's year 4872 corresponds to 1111/1112. His sequence—a ruler's rapid death followed by restoration of religious freedom under his son—therefore does not agree with this chronicle. [S011 ; E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

What the chronicle confirms about the Almohad setting

Writing in 1224, al-Marrakushi describes religious coercion and outward professions of Islam by Jews. His passage on distinctive clothing, however, concerns al-Mansur and his son, long after Ibn Tumart. It illuminates the general setting of forced conversion without validating Ibn Verga's particular scene, the king's words or the intercessor's identity. [S011]

What a change of ruler means in the external source

Al-Marrakushi's clothing detail makes the discrepancy concrete. Al-Mansur's son replaces a particularly humiliating dark-blue costume with yellow garments and turbans after requests for intercession. The chronicler says that this distinction still exists when he writes. He thus describes a modification of compulsory dress rules for people whose religious profession remains suspect to the authorities, rather than general permission to return openly to Judaism. Appeals to influential people and a change after a succession have a parallel, but their religious outcome differs. Ibn Verga's account cannot be dated by simply transferring these details to Ibn Tumart's reign. [S011]

The speakers' biblical vocabulary

The appeal "Save us, O king!" recalls 2 Kings 6:26–27, where a woman addresses the king during the siege of Samaria. The phrase "a foolish people, lacking judgement" recalls Deuteronomy 32:6. In the account these expressions are assigned respectively to the Jews and the ruler who seeks to convert them. They are correspondences of language and staging, rather than proof that historical speakers quoted these verses. They reveal the narrator's work in a dialogue for which no contemporary transcript is supplied. [S012 ; S013 ; H1928]

Translation Choices

Benunbrat, Ben Homard, Ben Tomard

Benunbrat follows the Spanish. The Hebrew reads בן הומרד, Ben Homard, while Wiener writes Ben Tomard. These forms point towards Ibn Tumart, but they do not resolve the date or the succession described in the account. The transmitted name has therefore not been replaced by a certain identification. The Jewish year 4872 is also retained. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The king's responsibility and religious freedom

The Hebrew wording "you remain innocent upon your throne", rendered by Wiener as schuldlos, contrasts royal authority over bodies with the souls' responsibility before God. "You will not have to answer for our souls" expresses that distinction. At the end, the Spanish describes explicit permission to follow the religion of one's choice; the Hebrew says that the new king "gave them to understand that he did not concern himself with what they believed". Wiener follows this second reading. The more explicit Spanish permission remains in the body. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 4–6 ; H1928, section 4 ; G1856, p. 4–6.

Account V

The Granada Massacre and Its Memory

The fifth took place in the city of Granada. Such grave accusations were brought against Rabbi Joseph Levi that he was killed together with the entire congregation, which numbered more than fifteen hundred households. Nowhere had the Jews lived in greater honour and prosperity; they were wise and virtuous. The other communities, near and far, mourned them, so great was their reputation and so great the fear that the same might befall themselves.

This massacre took place on 9 Tevet (a month of the Jewish calendar), the day on which, according to Megillat Ta'anit (מגילת תענית, "Scroll of Fasting"), the ancients had ordained a fast without giving a reason. It seems that they ordained it through the spirit of prophecy, foreseeing the destruction that would take place on that day. So says Abraham the Levite in his book. This Abraham died by hanging because he refused to abandon the Law: the king of Spain had tried to force him to do so and, unable to make him yield, had ordered his execution.

Granada in Civitates orbis terrarum

Georg Braun and Frans Hogenberg, plate of 1572, reproduced in the Cologne edition of 1582. An early view of Granada, several centuries after the massacre of 1066. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

The cited source and the central figure

Abraham ibn Daud's passage is found on p. 73 of Neubauer's edition. It names Joseph ha-Levi ha-Nagid, son of Samuel ha-Nagid, and dates the massacre to a Saturday, 9 Tevet 4827, in 1066/1067. The usual conversion is 30 December 1066 in the Julian calendar. Nagid (נגיד, "leader") is Joseph's title. Ibn Daud records deaths among Granada's residents and visitors from distant places. [S010]

Additional details and limits of corroboration

Ibn Daud adds that Joseph's widow, Nissim's daughter, found refuge and assistance at Lucena. The page does not confirm Ibn Verga's more than 1,500 households. It already associates the massacre with the fast of 9 Tevet without establishing the fast's historical origin. The later death of Abraham ha-Levi mentioned at the end is a separate account and must not be confused with Joseph's massacre. [S010 ; E1744 ; H1928]

9 Tevet: the event's date and the interpretation of a fast

The calendar correspondence explains how memory is constructed here: Ibn Daud does more than date Joseph's death; he connects a known catastrophe to a fast day whose cause is left obscure. Shulhan Arukh (code of Jewish law), Orah Hayyim (the section on ritual life) 580:2, still transmits a list in which the misfortune of 9 Tevet remains unidentified. This sixteenth-century text witnesses the liturgical tradition, rather than supplying a contemporary source for the massacre or confirming that it was prophesied. The two uses of the date must therefore remain distinct: dating a death and explaining why a community fasts.

Nor should 9 Tevet be confused with the tenth, which has a precise biblical reference: Ezekiel 24:1–2 requires the recording of the tenth day of the tenth month, when the king of Babylon begins the siege of Jerusalem. This verse explains a different commemoration. It neither recounts Granada nor predicts Joseph ha-Nagid. Granada's connection with the calendar of misfortunes belongs to Ibn Daud's interpretation, adopted by Ibn Verga, while the notice of the widow's reception at Lucena supplies a separate detail about the massacre's human aftermath. [S014 ; S015 ; S010]

Translation Choices

Abraham and Joseph: two distinct readings

The 1855 facsimile has been checked: its main text names Abraham Levi, author of Sefer ha-Qabbalah (ספר הקבלה, “Book of Tradition”), and then attributes the hanging to him; its apparatus records Joseph as an alternative. The Spanish retains Abraham and the reference to his book, as does Wiener in German. H1928 omits the reference to the book and reads instead: “This Rabbi Joseph Levi was hanged for the sanctification of the Name, for the king of Spain wished to force him to change his religion and, unable to make him yield, ordered him to be hanged.” Sanctification of the Name, qiddush ha-Shem (קידוש השם), here means remaining faithful to God at the cost of one’s life. We retain Abraham, which distinguishes the chronicler from the Granadan victim. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; H1855]

Households and the date of the massacre

Casas and בתים (batim, “houses, households”) here count family units within the community, not an established number of individual victims. “This decree was carried out” has been replaced by “this massacre took place”: Hebrew זאת היתה (“this took place”) and the German date the event to 9 Tevet without mentioning a written sentence at this point. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 6–6 ; H1928, section 5 ; G1856, p. 6–6.

Account VI

The Shepherds and the Paths of Relief

The sixth was the pitiless cruelty of the Shepherds, the Pastoureaux, of which no equal is known. The accounts of it differ; what follows is what is read in the chronicles of the kings of Spain. In the city of Agen, a young man arose and gathered a great number of people. He said that a dove had appeared to him and continued to come every day, alighting sometimes upon his shoulder and sometimes upon his head, and addressing him in prophetic words. When he stretched out his hand to catch it, it changed into a beautiful maiden, a virgin, who said: "Young man, I appoint you a shepherd upon the earth, and you shall inflict defeat after defeat upon the Ishmaelites. The sign of this will be that you shall see it written upon your arm." Many testified that they had seen it; others declared that they had seen the likeness of a cross marked upon his arm; still others said that they had heard these same words while the young man stood beside a spring, but had seen nothing else.

Hearing this, the people sought out the young man, fell down before him and, taking him with them, made him their captain and prince. Yet only shepherds followed him from place to place, and there were very many of them in those villages. The young man's fame grew; people came from every kingdom to see him. In a short time thirty thousand shepherds assembled. They planned to proceed to Granada and from there to the other kingdoms of the Moors.

While they were deliberating, one of them said: "I do not approve of our plan. The Moors are so numerous and we so few; they are skilled in war and we are unused to it; they have weapons and we have none. Our whole undertaking will be fruitless. If you think fit, let us march first against the Jews: they are a feeble people, with no one to defend them, and we can destroy them without weapons. Once we have grown strong through their spoils and their riches, which are great, we shall take up arms. We shall gather many men to help us, and then fight the Moors, certain of victory."

A Jewish tailor happened to be there. Unaware of what they were plotting, he mocked them and their undertaking. At once, in senseless fury, the Shepherds fell upon him and tore him to pieces. The tailor's mockery and their violent retaliation led them to resolve to erase the name of the Jews from the world. Others write that

this hatred arose from a dispute between one of them and a Jew, which developed into a quarrel. Seeing that the Jew had the better of the argument, the Shepherds killed him; from there the evil spread to every place within their power.

The Jews sent messengers to inform the King of France. Being a pious king, he was grieved; he sent men everywhere to deliver them and ordered all the religious to oppose the Shepherds and turn them from so unjust a design. If their signs were true, they were to come before him: he would help them and fight for them. The Shepherds mocked his words.

The Jews then appealed to the pope, who had a major excommunication pronounced against the Shepherds wherever they were, ordering people to rise against them. It was of no avail: they were numerous, and the villagers joined them. The discontented likewise saw that the time had come to rise against the Jews. They killed every Jew they found in that place, leaving none, and then went to Martel and killed them all, except for a few who gave their possessions to the great men so that they would hide them in their houses.

When the governor of Toulouse learned of this, he sent knights to arrest the Shepherds and bring them before him. They did so, seizing many and bringing back ten cartloads. They reached Toulouse by night. The clergy arose and released the Shepherds; in the morning they cried out that a miracle had occurred, that the Saviour had delivered them and thereby revealed the truth of their cause. The city was stirred into uproar to rescue the Shepherds from the governor's power; he tried to save the Jews but could not.

Those who had taken refuge in the tower of Narbonne, seeing that the Shepherds had been arrested, thought they no longer had anything to fear and came out. Attacked by the Shepherds, they fought fiercely. Yet their adversaries, aided by the villagers, killed a hundred and fifty Jews. On hearing this, the governor himself marched against the Shepherds. Seeing the great multitude assembled and unable to overcome it, he attempted to rebuke them; they sought to rise against him, and he was forced to withdraw and return home.

This man was good and pious. He sent word to all the Jews in the surrounding district that they should not leave without an escort. If they wished to depart, he would send a knight of his own kin to conduct them to Carcassonne, a fortified town where they might find refuge. He entrusted all the Jews who presented themselves to

this knight, strongly charging him to guard them, since they did not deserve death. But the villagers made an agreement with the knight, who sold them into their hands, and they killed them all.

This great fire spread through the places under English rule, as well as Bordeaux, Castelsarrasin and the Agenais; everywhere they killed many. From there they went to the town of Bigorre, and then to Morco and Condom. They left none alive. This happened in the large towns; in the smaller ones no count could be made. In the end, a hundred and twenty communities were massacred by the Shepherds.

Many Jews had gathered at Castelsarrasin, and the Shepherds sought to break down the gates. Seeing this, and finding no remedy, the Jews decided to kill one another rather than fall into their hands. They cast lots to determine who should kill whom; more than two hundred people thus killed one another, and two threw themselves from the tower.

Emboldened, the villagers returned to Toulouse. The governor came out to meet them with humility and entreaties: "We are brothers and of the same religion, unlike these rebellious Jews. But it seems to me that you have no right to seek their death. Compel them instead to follow our faith, which is the true one. Moreover, the inscription says only that you must march against the Ishmaelites." They answered that they would not kill the Jews of Toulouse if they embraced their religion. All did so except one woman, who hid in the house of a prominent man she knew. In the town of Gascony they killed everyone except twenty people, who fled to Lleida. Three hundred people lived in the village of Luis, and they were very rich. They gave their possessions to a lord so that he would send knights to protect them and conduct them unharmed to the Kingdom of Aragon. But as soon as they came out, the townspeople advanced against them and killed them all.

In Aragon too the Jews were in great distress and took refuge in fortified towns. From there they sent messages to the pope, who ordered all the bishops under his authority to excommunicate the Shepherds so that they would abandon their evil design. This had no effect. The Bishop of Toulouse was a son of the King of Aragon; he gave his protection to the congregation of Lleida, which was saved.

The Shepherds travelled through the whole Kingdom of Aragon and would easily have killed all the Jews had the king not been so good and pious. He did all he could to save the communities of his kingdom, posting knights and guards in every province. Even this would not have sufficed without his son, Don Alfonso, who risked his life for the cause. He went to Huesca, arrested forty of them and had them

hanged at his father's command. Likewise, at Mount Cenor he seized some and hanged them, and drove the others from his kingdom. The King of France also had it proclaimed throughout his kingdom that any Shepherd found there was to be killed.

Leaving Aragon, the Shepherds reached Navarre and the congregation of Pamplona; three leagues from there, in a place called Monreal, there were many Jews. They killed a great number of the Shepherds, who withdrew from the place.

Don Alfonso then told one of his knights that, if he defeated the Shepherds and killed them, he would give him great riches and make him foremost among his vassals. The knight answered: "How could I act against the divine will?" Alfonso replied: "If that is indeed the case, God will save the young man from your hands; but if the whole thing is false, you will kill him." The knight went out and fought, striving to reach the place where the young man stood. He shot an arrow at him, and the young man fell dead. At this sight, the Shepherds fled.

Five hundred of them, still unaware of the young man's death, came to Tudela. Hearing this, the knight advanced against them and killed a multitude, until they dispersed and wandered as fugitives from kingdom to kingdom. Seeing the Shepherds' power decline, the lords and bishops punished them under the authority of the pope's excommunications. Before long they all perished, some by the sword and others by plague, with not one remaining. Yet there was no remedy for the evil already done.

So I found it in the chronicles of the kings of Spain, and I translated it into Hebrew. I have heard that very wealthy men lived in Tudela who, seeing what was happening, pledged substantial donations and gathered wheat and oil in granaries to feed the poor for three years. The leading Jews of France and Germany, seeing their brothers' charity, did the same in a time of such need and distress. May God reward their zeal.

The Shepherds Besiege a Tower

The violence of 1320 depicted c. 1380–1400. *Chroniques de France ou de Saint-Denis*, British Library, Royal MS 20 C VII, f. 55v. The scene is identified as Verdun-sur-Garonne; it does not establish the location of Ibn Verga's Castel Cerzen. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

The Shepherds of 1320 in a near-contemporary chronicle

The continuator of William of Nangis, under 1320, describes shepherds and young peasants professing to travel to the Holy Land, their violence in Aquitaine and suppression near Toulouse. He records a royal order to protect the Jews as the king's people and resistance to that order. This corroborates the movement and the conflict between authorities and armed groups, without validating Ibn Verga's exact speeches. [S016]

The tower: a parallel without full agreement

The continuator also records the death of about five hundred people in a tower, without naming the place in this passage. It therefore confirms neither Castelsarrasin, Ibn Verga's two hundred victims, nor the drawing of lots. Extreme violence attributed to the besieged is transmitted as chroniclers' allegations; its details must retain that attribution. [S016 ; E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Montclus in the Aragonese chancery records

James II's acts of 22 July and 22 August 1320 acknowledge the Montclus massacre, survivors and property losses. Miret publishes them from ACA register 218, folios 103 and 102. On 7 July 1321, burial of the victims' bones and resettlement are authorised (register 220, folios 56 and 55). An act of 4 May 1321 mentions Infante Alfonso's intervention (register 219, folio 310). The published transcriptions were consulted; the original manuscript acts were not. [S017]

What remains specific to the narrative

The 1321 order concerning baptised children requires them to live among Christians, showing limits to royal protection. No document consulted confirms the dove, the thirty thousand participants, the hundred and twenty communities, the forty executions at Huesca or the leader's death by an arrow. Montclus remains an Aragonese episode distinct from the French tower episode. [S017 ; E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Survivors and property after the Montclus massacre

The documents published by Miret continue the story beyond repression. The charter of 7 July 1321 grants ten years' exemption from several royal levies to Jews who remained at Montclus and those who would settle there. It explicitly seeks to rebuild an almost destroyed community. Another instrument, dated 4 May 1321, concerns objects looted and sub-

sequently bought: two inhabitants of Aínsa had been fined for such purchases. Losses therefore involved more than an overall estimate; some transfers of property produced identifiable proceedings.

Miret also reproduces a pardon granted in 1333 to García Bardaxín, the castle keeper's former lieutenant, concerning accusations of involvement in the killings. Its wording covers the possibility of his guilt without deciding it. It therefore cannot establish his personal guilt, but documents the affair's long judicial aftermath. These records usefully extend the account's ending: relief, resettlement and the settlement of responsibilities continued after 1320. They prevent the language of total destruction from being read literally as the permanent disappearance of all Jewish life in every affected locality. [S017]

Translation Choices

Restoring the geography cautiously

Agen follows the Hebrew and Wiener; the Spanish says Guiena, suggesting Guyenne. Martel replaces Cerdel: the Hebrew has Mardil, which Wiener identifies as Martel. Castelsarrasin and the Agenais expand the forms Castel Cerzen and Aguines; Monreal replaces Mondiel on the agreement of Hebrew and German. In Wiener's explicit reading, "England" means territories under English sovereignty: the account describes no journey to Britain. Other names remain uncertain: Morco corresponds to Morzayn in Hebrew and Marsan in Wiener; Mount Cenor becomes Segor/Segura in those versions. These have not been turned into certain identifications. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Twenty survivors, followed by Tudela

For Gascony, the Spanish says that "the rich" escaped. The Hebrew and German give twenty survivors, which is the reading adopted. The forms עשרים (esrim, "twenty") and עשירים (ashirim, "rich people") are close, offering a possible explanation without establishing the origin of the divergence. At the end, both Spanish occurrences of Toledo are corrected to Tudela on the Hebrew and Wiener. The title "king", once attached to Don Alfonso in Spanish, is also removed: the other passages and both comparison versions describe him as the king's son. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The governor and the prisoners

After the Shepherds' release by night, the Spanish says that the governor "tried to save the Jews but could not". The Hebrew and German say of the Shepherds: "He wanted to have them put to death but lacked the power." The translation retains the action described in the Spanish. "Governor" replaces "prince", which misleadingly suggested a separate sovereign. Later, "the inscription" means the words supposedly seen on the young man's arm; the former wording "the writing" obscured that reference. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The transition after the tailor's murder

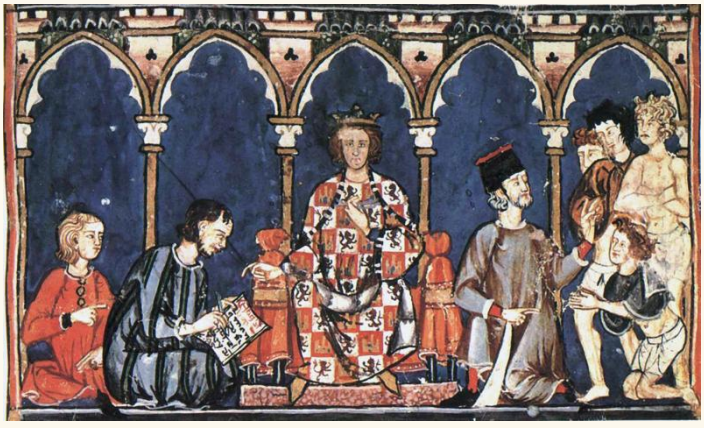
Spanish castigo has been rendered as "retaliation", so that the sentence describes the killers' actions without presenting the murder as a judicial sentence. The Hebrew and German have a different transition: "One man had offended, and anger broke out against the whole Jewish people, for they resolved to erase the name of the Jews from the world." This construction echoes the biblical contrast between an individual and the community. The narrator then gives another account of how the attack began; both traditions are retained. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 6–13 ; H1928, section 6 ; G1856, p. 6–12.

Account VII

King Alfonso and the Objections of Thomas

The seventh was a discussion between the pious and mighty King Alfonso of Spain and the learned and subtle Thomas. The king said to him: "Thomas, welcome to my court, for your counsel will keep me from shedding Jewish blood. Six days ago, a certain bishop came here and preached before a great gathering that the Jews could not celebrate their Passover, called Pesaḥ (פסח, the Jewish Passover) in their language, without the blood of a Christian.



Alfonso X and His Court
Libro de los juegos, 1283. Alfonso X's court, El Escorial library. This miniature illustrates a Castilian courtly setting; it does not identify the Alfonso of the dialogue. [provenance]

"Although I see more signs of madness than learning in this man, what can I do if the people believe him and demand justice? They enter my palace; they almost show me disrespect, or take me for a Jew, if I do not punish the Jews for something that has become a certainty in their superstitious minds. All this is contrary to reason; yet I wish to know what I might answer these fools, who are many, and I dare not attempt to turn them from their folly.

"I know that you understand the Jews' Law, their traditions and their customs. You will know whether their Law gives grounds for this, or whether anything of the kind is found in their Talmud (תלמוד, "study"), which is the explanation of the Bible. You have studied these matters, as your reputation declares and as I myself know. If they are guilty, I shall banish them from my kingdom; if the accusation is false, I shall risk my life to save them, for, after all, they are my vassals.

"The second thing I ask is that you tell me the cause of the Jews' ruin from ancient times onwards. Do not tell me that this is no concern of mine: there is a secret here, which I shall reveal to you one of these days. I cannot explain their ruin either through natural causes or as a punishment, for we see many peoples who sinned more than they did and were not punished for it; on the contrary, they enjoyed great prosperity.

"In the days of King Latinus, the planet Saturn was worshipped. This king pulled down its temple, built another to Venus, and burned the priests of Saturn upon the altar of Venus. Yet Latinus and his people enjoyed happier times than any known in the world. Trustworthy writers even say that this heavenly body is worshipped on remote islands of the sea. A temple stands there, containing an image with its face turned upwards. Certain abominations are committed there with a maiden whom they bring to it; a dough is kneaded with the blood, and whoever eats of it is called holy. The maiden never marries, but prostitutes herself to anyone. Half her earnings provide for her maintenance; the other half goes to the ministers of that temple. She charges a large sum, for whoever comes to her is sanctified for ever.

"Near this island there is a certain cult whose offering consists of seven mice and seven bats. Its people are said to enjoy the best that the earth affords and never to have been subjugated by another nation. After King Latinus, there was a king in Rome who pulled down the altar of Venus and raised a temple to Saturn. We see that the Romans ruled the whole world and subdued lands that others had not conquered: Germany and Burgundy, whose inhabitants are the bravest in the world. We find that the inhabitants of Dines worshipped the Moon, as did all the people of Carvate; those of Cresmin and Gosmin worshipped the Sun, and the Chaldeans fire.

"There are islands where the element of earth is worshipped: their people would deserve to be placed beneath it, leaving their god above them. In ancient times, there were places in Chaldea where people prostrated themselves before a hen; elsewhere, before the image of a he-goat, an ass, or a mule and a horse together. Some prostrated themselves before the first person they met in the morning as they stepped out of

their house. All these enjoyed great prosperity. In Rome, where there were men of understanding, a king named Janus arose. Because he emerged victorious from battles, the people made him a god and called him the god of gods; and still they prospered.

"If it is true that the Jews were punished for their sins, how are we to explain such an exile? We do not see a father banish his son when he sees him sinning: he rebukes him in his own house. The Jews are called children of God, as Scripture says, and this continued until the coming of our Saviour, of whom David says: 'The Lord said to me: You are my son.' I ask further: if the Jews sinned, in what did the sanctuary of Jerusalem sin? All Scripture agrees that it was a holy thing. The Jews say that it was there that God began to create the world, and that the prayers of all men are received there. The Ishmaelites call it the gate of heaven; Christians say that souls ascend from there to glory, that prophecy comes from there to the prophets, and that our Saviour was born there, as David says: 'The Lord shall send the rod of your strength out of Zion; from the womb of the morning', and so forth.

"If we say that this ruin came upon them through natural causes rather than as a punishment, we know that four things are essential to war. The first is the intelligence needed for stratagems. Scripture bears witness that the Jews are more intelligent and cunning than other nations. They were therefore not defeated in war for want of this.

"The second is courage and strength. Titus, their enemy, relates that three young Jews, brothers, defended a gate of Jerusalem against his army for three days and three nights, to defy him. At last, covered in shame, he assembled all his men and rebuked them. Together they made one final effort; yet an immense number perished, and the young men reached the gate and closed it, with no one able to prevent them.

"Another is wealth, with which to maintain the soldiers. There were Jews who promised grain to feed the army for two years. What I know of their wealth is that, when a king marched against them, they sought to make peace with him and gave him all the silver and gold in the Temple so that he would cease fighting them. The following year another king came, and Scripture says that they gave him all the silver and gold in the Temple; it does not say that they gave him what remained. This is plainly seen in their Book of Kings: it seems that in one year they had gathered again everything they had taken out the year before. If this happened in Spain, the people would not be able to lift their heads for seven years.

"The last is the multitude of men. Lyra writes that among the Jews, six hundred thousand in Judah bore swords and eight hundred thousand in Israel drew the bow. No such number is found in all the kingdoms of the world. Thus I can find no natural reason for the ruin of such a people."

Thomas answered as follows: "Mighty and holy king, I hear astonishing things. I wonder how a wise and discerning heart such as yours can entertain something so contrary to reason. Although I know that you do not believe it, I am astounded that you ask the question. The Spaniards too, more discerning than all other nations, believe the idle tales of old women who tell stories as they spin by moonlight. Tyrants, for their part, seek pretexts for increasing their possessions through the sweat of others. I can find no excuse for them, unless it is that hatred of the religion also plays a part in this matter. That is why they seek every occasion to ruin the Jews, seeing them so abased. They do not believe their own accusations; they use them to pursue the designs they harbour. They do not understand the implications of their enterprise, for the defender of the Jews is mighty; he acts not because he loves them as in former days, but because it is the divine nature to care more closely for the most downtrodden beings than for those in a higher position. The reason is plain: what is lowest and weakest is also most exposed to destruction. God's mercy extends over all his works, and he does not wish any of his creatures to perish, even an ant or a fly. How much more is this true of the Jews, who possess a Law, even though it has now been superseded. God was so close to them in former times; today they endure such a bitter exile in obedience to what they believe to be the divine will.

"As for your question, O king, I say that when a man is offered food to which he is unaccustomed, he loathes it and his nature abhors it. If a Christian were told to eat the flesh of a dog or a cat, he would spit and flee, as a Jew does before pork and prohibited fat (ḥelev, חלב, a category of prohibited animal fat). Yet pork is very well suited to the human temperament. If that is so, why should he avoid it? Is it because the pig is loathsome and filthy in what it eats? Why, then, does he eat the hen, which eats every kind of worm on the rubbish heaps? Fat is nevertheless the best part of the animal. He abstains because he is unaccustomed to eating it and wishes to obey the divine commandment.

"It would be stranger still for him to be so hard-hearted as to kill a man to obtain his blood, while living in that man's country and under his authority, knowing that he would be torn to pieces if discovered. All the more so because the Law forbids killing. And what shall we say of their faint-heartedness, when a hundred Jews are

standing in a square and a young stranger comes and cries, 'Get the Jew!', and they all run away? Likewise, when a man is brought to the square for execution, they flee the place: their nature cannot endure the sight of killing, even of their enemies. This is because God cursed them, as Scripture says: 'I shall put faintness into their hearts, and the sound of a driven leaf shall pursue them.'

"We see, accordingly, that the Jews do not eat the blood of any animal. Even fish blood, which the Talmudists say is not called blood, they have forbidden themselves to drink and hold in abhorrence, lest they become accustomed to it, although they see so many peoples eating blood. How much more must they abhor human blood, which they see no nation consume! Consider, my lord, that if a Jew is eating a piece of bread and blood from his teeth gets upon it, he may not continue eating it until he has cleaned it. It is well known that a man finds another's blood more repugnant than his own; yet even his own blood is abhorrent to him through habit.

"The reason why the Jews were commanded not to slaughter animals with a notched knife is precisely to keep them from eating blood. The shock caused by the damaged blade makes the blood rush to the heart, which is the principal part, and it no longer comes out. That is why the flesh of an animal slaughtered by a stranger decays more quickly than one slaughtered by a Jew: the stranger's slaughter does not remove all the animal's blood, and this retained blood causes the decay.

"This is plain, and I have tested it myself."

The king replied: "I am displeased with you, Thomas, because you understood me to believe the accusations made against the Jews; that is an affront to me. What I ask you is what arguments I can put to these senseless people to quieten them. You say that the Jews are forbidden to kill men; their enemies may reply that this applies only when the victim is another Jew, but not to a stranger. I have heard it said that, according to the Talmudists, if an Israelite's ox kills a stranger's, its owner is exempt from liability."

Thomas answered: "I have already discussed this with an eminent man of the Abrabanel family, who had come from Seville, his native city. He replied that the Talmud contained a clear answer, where it says that robbing a non-Jew is forbidden and is regarded as more serious than robbing an Israelite. But in the case of the oxen, it is a matter of damage that one owner's animal causes to another owner's animal, and the Jew does not know how to guard them as well as the non-Jew, who con-

stantly tends livestock. Moreover, even supposing we say that damage caused by an Israelite's ox need not be compensated, this does not grant him permission to inflict harm with his own hand or to steal another's property, much less to kill anyone."

The king said: "I am very glad of what you say, and still more of what Abrabanel said. You would give me still greater pleasure by bringing him to my court. This also gives me grounds for reproaching my people: since the Jews have laws and equitable judgements, virtues worthy of praise, such as justice and charity, and are men of understanding, how can people hate them? Such conduct does not befit those who love truth.

"Concerning their charity, a great bishop preached before me, saying that whoever calls a Jew a dog is mistaken: it would be more fitting to call him a pig, for he resembles the pig in character, not the dog. When a man strikes a dog, all the other dogs run after the injured animal to bite it and make its wound worse. But when a stone is thrown at a pig, all the others cry out with it. So it is with the Jews. If one of them comes into our churches and steals the chalice, they all seek to save him: the tailor goes to a prince who is his friend, the goldsmith to the duke; the others do likewise, some with gifts and presents, others with entreaties, until they deliver him from that distress. This should be regarded as an excellent quality."

Thomas answered: "I have never seen a discerning man do harm to Jews. No one hates them but the common people, and these have their reasons: the Jews are proud and wish to rule; they do not reflect that they are exiles and servants, driven from one people to another. On the contrary, they wish to make themselves lords, and that is why the people envy them. The wise man says that hatred born of envy is never forgotten. The proof is that, when the Jews came to this kingdom, they arrived as servants, dressed in rags. Many years passed without their wearing costly clothes or displaying haughtiness; in those days, they were not accused of eating blood. Had this been so, it would have been recorded in the chronicles of the kings of Spain, according to the well-established custom of providing examples for those who come after. It is plain that, in the days when they gave no occasion for envy, they were loved. Today the Jews lord it over others: a man with two hundred ducats dresses in silk and clothes his children in embroidery, like great lords with an annual income of a thousand doblas (gold coins). That is why they are accused of this, perhaps in order to banish them from the kingdom. Solomon said of them: 'Under three things the earth trembles: under a servant who reigns.'

"The second cause of hatred is that, when the Jews came to this kingdom, they were poor and the Christians rich; now it is the other way round. The Jews are intelligent and skilful in seeking their own profit; moreover, lending at interest has greatly enriched them. Consider: the Jews possess "three shares" of Spain's lands and estates (the text does not say out of how many), all because of such oppressive usury."

The king said: "These reasons explain how the hatred arose, although the Jews have some defence in asking who compels a Christian to pay them interest. I also consider their refusal to eat and drink with Christians. Nothing brings divided hearts together more than the habit of eating together: in a certain place in the islands, people even swear by the bread they share. And I swear by our Saviour, who made me king, that at times I become so angry that I wish to kill the Jews or banish them, for I have heard that, if a worm falls into their cup of wine, they remove it and drink the wine; but if one of us touches their cup, they pour it away, regarding us as an unclean people."

Thomas answered: "The Jews are not to blame for this; it is the Talmud that has put fetters upon their feet. The rule has been made so burdensome that no remedy remains to them. It is true that the Bible says: 'They ate the fat of their sacrifices; they drank the wine of their libations.' But they did not understand that this concerns the sacrifices and libations offered to the Sun and the Moon before the Messiah came into the world. The Talmudists came and said that all wine poured as a libation for any worship outside the sanctuary was forbidden. They made this so strict that, even if it is not known to have been used for a libation and there is only doubt, it is forbidden."

The king said: "You say that the fault lies with those who compiled the Talmud; I say that it lies with those who obey it. Nevertheless, I now understand that, in this matter of wine, the Jews are following the Law."

Thomas said: "That is so, without doubt. I shall relate what happened to your father. One day he said to a Jew who was his physician: 'I have heard that you regard us as unclean, and that this is why you take care that we do not touch your wine. Does God allow such a thing?' The physician answered: 'My lord, you are ill; there is therefore nothing to discuss but your health. Let water be brought to wash your feet: it will do you good, and afterwards I shall answer your question.' As soon as he had finished washing the king's feet, he drank that very water. Seeing this, the king said to him: 'You have already answered my question.' The nobles said that they did not understand. The physician replied: 'Which is more unclean: water in which feet have

been washed, or something that has touched a hand or a face? If our conduct were a matter of uncleanness, I should not have drunk the washing water.'" Alfonso said: "The physician was right and must have been very discerning."

The king asked Thomas: "What do you advise me to do so that the Jews are not destroyed among this people?" Thomas answered: "My advice is that you have it proclaimed throughout the kingdom that all estates acquired by Jews through usury must be restored to their owners, as the judges shall decide. Further, let no Jew wear silk, and let them wear a red badge so that they may be recognised as Jews."

The king replied: "Your advice seems good to me. I am only astonished that their Law allows them theft in the matter of usury." Thomas said: "God forbid that it should permit such a thing! But the Jews, driven by covetousness, interpret it to their own advantage. The Bible says: 'To a stranger you may lend at interest', and it calls a stranger one who has no faith at all. It also says: 'To your brother you shall not lend at interest.' Now we are the Jews' brothers, for Scripture says: 'Is not Esau Jacob's brother?' They themselves acknowledge this brotherhood: 'Thus says your brother Israel.'"

The king said: "This explanation differs from one I have heard. In Egypt there is a certain group among the Jews for whom the words of the verse 'To a stranger you may lend at interest' mean: even if he is a Jew; and 'Not to your brother' means his own brother specifically."

While the king was speaking of these matters, certain men came before him and said that a dead man had been found in a Jew's house and that he had been killed in order to take his blood. The king said to Thomas: "Answer these fools, for I fear I may grow angry with them." Thomas answered them with all that he had told the king and rebuked them severely. Finally he said: "The king now knows the sickness that torments you and knows that you have grounds for complaint, since the Jews have taken your possessions and estates. He has already ordered their restoration, together with what you paid in excessive interest. He has also ordered that they shall wear neither silk nor clothes like yours. This is enough for your well-being, without your seeking your own dishonour or pursuing idle tales."

Then the people knelt and said: "Long live the king our lord, who loves justice!" The king said: "You are my people and my children. I swear by the altar of our Saviour that you will suffer no harm, provided you tell me the truth of this death."

They answered: "What can we say? How can we justify ourselves? You, my lord, are wise and know our sufferings. The Jews consume our possessions; they have even taken our oxen through usury, leaving us nothing with which to plough the land. We were seeking to have them banished from the kingdom." The king said: "So then, the Jew did not kill the Christian, but you killed him and deserve to be punished?" They said: "No, my lord. We found him dead in the square tonight. We told those present that we were going to bury him, and then we threw him into a Jew's house. We have three men of standing as witnesses." These came before the king, who set the accused free because of his oath. He rejoiced greatly to see for himself that the accusations brought against the Jews were false, and ordered it to be written in the chronicles.

Thomas too was very glad, for his words had proved wise and true. The king addressed him thus: "You have come, O Thomas, to enlighten me; God will reward you in the next world." He answered: "Would that I might receive that reward from you in this one!" The king said: "Tomorrow we shall return to the other questions. Perhaps I too shall reward you, on condition that you bring me this Abrabanel if he is in the city; if he is away, write to him in my name."

Thomas answered: "You will take pleasure in speaking with him, especially since he descends from the royal house." The king replied: "That is false. From what we see, that entire line was extinguished when Nebuchadnezzar marched against them, for fear that the people might strengthen themselves through it."

Thomas answered: "Know, my lord, that when Nebuchadnezzar went to Jerusalem, mighty kings accompanied him to help him: some out of fear of him, for he then ruled the world, others out of hatred for the Jews and their Law. The greatest of them was King Hispano, whose kingdom was called Spain after his name. His son-in-law, named Pyrrhus, of the line of the kings of Greece, went with him. Pyrrhus and Hispano destroyed the Jews and brought down their valour; it was they who captured Jerusalem. Nebuchadnezzar, seeing the help they had given him, gave them a share of the booty and the captives, according to the custom of kings.

"Know also, my lord, that Jerusalem had three divisions running from north to south. From the city walls on the west to the first division lived the craftsmen, foremost among whom were the grinders of spices, since they were needed for the service of the sanctuary. It is of them that the prophet says: 'Wail, inhabitants of the Mortar.' From the first division to the second lived all the scholars and merchants; scholars need merchants more than merchants need scholars, for the merchant does not feel

his lack of learning, whereas the scholar feels his lack of money. From the second division to the third were all the descendants of the royal house, of David's family, together with the priests who ministered in the Temple.

"When Jerusalem was divided among these kings, Nebuchadnezzar took the first two parts, all the people of the surrounding country and the inhabitants of the other cities, and carried them to Persia and Media. He gave the third part to Pyrrhus and Hispano. Pyrrhus put all the captives aboard ships and took them to ancient Spain, that is, Andalusia, and to the city of Toledo. From there they dispersed, for they were numerous and the land could not contain them. Some members of the royal house went to Seville, and from there to Granada. At the destruction of the Second Temple, the emperor resided in Rome and ruled the world. From Jerusalem and other cities he took forty thousand households of the tribe of Judah and ten thousand of the tribe of Benjamin, and sent them at that time to Spain, which was under his dominion, together with some priests. Most of the tribe of Benjamin and the priests went to France, as did a small number of the sons of Judah. Thus the Jews in this kingdom belong to the royal house or, at least for the most part, to the tribe of Judah; there is therefore no reason to be surprised if a family descended from David is found among them."

The Exodus in the Golden Haggadah
The Exodus in the Golden Haggadah, c. 1320, British Library, Add. MS 27210, f. 14v. This biblical memory of the departure from Egypt accompanies Account VII's reflections on exile and origins. [provenance]

The king said: "You tell me things I have never heard. If I did not know your family, I would say that you too were a Jew, so strongly do you defend their cause." Thomas answered: "You affront me, my lord, with an insult that could be no greater."

The king said: "I do say that you are not one of them. Even if I said that you were, it would be no great dishonour, since you are a Christian today. The world knows that no one can show an origin, branch and stock as pure as the Jews'. The mighty kings who were our ancestors declared that they descended from the Goths. Some writers say that the Goths descend from Gad, son of the patriarch Jacob. One of his descendants came to Rome and became a Christian; he prospered so greatly that he became the foremost of the consuls, and then attained kingship. From him descended the family of the Goths. If you examine other peoples, you will not find the stock from which they spring. Rome, which ruled the whole world to its remotest limits,

beyond which none could pass, is uncertain of its inhabitants' lineage. Sallust said that they were Trojans; Virgil, that they were Greeks; others, that they were sons of Romulus.

"After the Caesars came, family lineages became entangled. At first the Empire was in Rome; from there it passed to Constantinople, whose inhabitants were Romans who had come to settle there because of the Emperor Constantine. Even today there are Greeks called Romans on account of Rome. Then the French came and said that they knew of no established origin for the Romans, and that they themselves descended from King Eliphaz. They transferred the Empire to France in the time of Charlemagne. The Germans came next and claimed that they, unlike the French, possessed an established genealogy; they waged war and transferred the Empire to Germany in the time of Caesar Antony. Neither the one people nor the other knows its origin with certainty.

"And why should we be surprised, when even in our own faith the family of our Saviour is not known? Matthew traces his genealogy through Mary's husband, named Joseph, and says that Joseph descended from David; Luke says that he was not of the royal line—I mean Joseph. Now we believe that Joseph did not know Mary, either before or after the birth, which came about through the work of God. If that is so, how shall we establish Jesus' descent from David? And we say that Obed begat Jesse, Jesse David, and David Jesus." Thomas answered: "My lord, it was Mary who belonged to David's line. Moreover, it is no defect in our faith to say that he did not descend from a man, but from God and his spirit."

The king said: "So I believe. My only purpose is to say that families have no manifest origin, whereas among these poor Jews a foundation and a beginning can be found. What the prophet Balaam says, 'It shall not be reckoned among the nations', which we take as contempt, is assuredly to their honour. Because they did not mingle with the gentiles, they knew their descent and their stock, as the text continues: 'Who has counted the dust of Jacob?'"

Thomas turned to the nobles and said: "There is no crown like that of kings! The king my lord speaks in the Jews' favour twice as much as I do, and no one says to him what he said to me." The king replied: "Why do you take amiss what I said in jest and amusement? Let us leave this and return to the essential matters. I ask you about what you told me: that the commandments were given only to those who came out

of Egypt. That applies to the commandments which depend upon that departure; but the others, which are true ordinances and laws, why were they not given to Christians?"

Thomas answered: "The Jews say that this is no question, any more than asking why God did not make the ass a philosopher and the mule a prophetess, or why he did not give the Moon the light he gave the Sun." The king said: "I am not asking you what fools say, but what your own opinion is, unless you are as foolish as they are." Thomas replied: "I also debated this with Abrabanel, and resented him for many days on account of it, although he is a great scholar." The king said: "Do you not say that there should be no hatred in debate? You have leave to speak; tell us, then, what he said to you."

Thomas replied: "He told me: 'Coral stands midway between mineral and plant, and the sponge between plant and animal, because it possesses sensation; the ape between animal and man; man between animal and Jew; the Jew between heaven and earth; and heaven between the angels and the Jew. The Jew's food is therefore different. Plants feed upon the earth, animals upon plants, and every plant is agreeable to animals. But man, whose rank is higher than the animal's, does not feed upon all herbs, only upon those suited to his temperament. Likewise, he feeds upon animals, but not upon all of them, since he eats neither the horse nor the mule. The Jew, whose rank is above that of man, eats only those animal species suited to him, and even these only after many preparations: salting, washing, and the removal of prohibited fats and blood. Thus the flesh is changed until it seems to be another food, so that he should not be said to eat the flesh of beasts. The Christian, however, eats everything without distinction. This is why the Prophet said concerning food: "And I have separated you from the peoples." Likewise, the commandments were given only to those who were of a higher rank than man, since he said of them: "And you shall be a treasured possession to me among all peoples." Therefore the commandments were not given to you.' "

The king said: "And what did you answer him?" Thomas said: "I answered: 'It is true that we were not given all these commandments, but that is because of our nobility and perfection. Prohibited fats and blood strengthen desire, as do the flesh of swine and other animals. The Jews, who pursue lust, as the Prophet testifies when he says of them, "Therefore, harlot, hear the word, etc.", must consequently be forbid-

den foods that excite that desire. Christians, however, through their good temperament and perfection, transform everything they eat according to their own temperament, just as honey sweetens the bitterness of orange peel.' "

The king said: "He could have refuted you by appealing to all the other commandments, those that do not concern food." Thomas said: "These too arise from our nobility and good temperament: very little suffices to bring us to perfection. We see men of robust constitution who, when they fall ill, recover their health with few remedies, because health is natural to them; others, of weak constitution, need many remedies to recover. Such are the Jews, whom six hundred and thirteen commandments fail to make good. The Christian resembles the diurnal sphere, and the Jew the sphere of the Moon. As the Philosopher writes, the angels, because they are pure intellects, need perform no action of their own for their perfection, except to move the spheres. The diurnal sphere (the sphere of the heavens' daily motion), because it is the highest of material realities, must perform an action of its own: movement, but a single movement suffices. The sphere that follows it, being further from perfection, performs two movements; and many movements are known in the Moon, for its rank is very far from that perfection."

The king said: "You have answered well; yet that is no reason to withdraw your affection from this scholar. Everyone agrees that religions are sustained only through the imagination. The Jew imagines that no other Law or faith can equal his own; 18 the Christian considers the Jew merely an animal in human form, whose soul is in hell; and if you ask the Moor, he will say of both sides that hell is full of us.

"In very distant islands of the sea, there are people who kneel before the image of a mule and bear it on their banners; whoever is tall enough to reach the image kisses it. When Christians go there, these people mock them, saying that we worship the image of a man, although it is the noblest of all forms, so much so that it is said of God's throne: 'A likeness as the appearance of a man.' And of the living creatures: 'The likeness of their faces was the face of a man.' Yet God, who allowed the Jews no images, commanded that cherubim in human form should be made in the sanctuary."

After this, the king said: "Enough conversation for today; the sun is setting. Come back tomorrow, for what you have said has pleased me greatly." Thomas returned the next day, and the king said to him: "Other matters have distracted us, and I have not heard an answer concerning the cause of the Jews' downfall." Thomas replied: "First, O king, I shall ask you about something I have heard concerning you." The king said: "What wrong have I done? Let whoever knows it tell us."

Thomas said: "You sent a general to war, and because he erred in his conduct, you sentenced him never to see your face again. Afterwards another went there and, although he also erred, you imposed no punishment on him. What justice is this, my lord, when both are equal in their offence, yet one is punished and the other is not?"

The king replied: "Whoever told you this did not tell you the truth. I had warned the first about the greatest difficulties of the war and all its particulars, and he acted contrary to every instruction. As for the second, I had not even sent him to war: he thought that he was fulfilling my will, went there, and acted according to his judgement. What, then, had he done to deserve being put to death?"

Thomas replied: "Listen, my lord, to what you are saying. The first captain represents the Jews, who had been forbidden to worship the heavenly bodies. Forty prophets came after Moses to warn them, and they acted to the contrary. Therefore God no longer wished them to see his face, as the Bible says: 'And I shall surely hide my face.' It says again: 'And I shall cast them into another land, as on this day.' But all the other peoples who practise idolatry were neither called by God nor given commandments. According to their own understanding, they wished to honour the host of heaven, as one honours princes in honour of the king. This is why he said of the Jews: 'You alone have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I shall call you to account.' They were also punished because none of those peoples serves two gods, and whoever acknowledges two denies the One. Yet the Jews served many, so much so that it is said of them that Samaria, their capital, had three hundred and sixty-five houses of idolatry, as many as the days of the year: each day they worshipped in one of them and, at the year's end, in them all together. This is deeply contrary to God, who abhors multiplicity.

"I asked three great scholars of Germany who were better, they or their fathers. They answered: 'Our fathers, without a doubt, whose little finger was thicker than our loins; the holy House proves this, for it was restored to them after seventy years.' I said: 'If they were better than you and served many gods, why do you not believe in the Trinity?' They replied: 'Quite the contrary: from our fathers we received the warning to serve only one God, since all the prophets had warned them that, if they practised idolatry, they would fall into great ruin.' "

The king said: "They answered you better than you questioned them. I tell you, Thomas, that I am very far from the opinion of the kings who preceded me, whose purpose was vain when they tried to make the Jews Christians by force: in secret, they remained Jews in every respect. It is well said that three kinds of water are wasted:

baptismal water upon the Jew, water that falls into the sea, and water poured into wine. My reason is that the Jews witnessed that fearful and holy manifestation, those wonders, and the fire from heaven when the Law was given to them. That conception was impressed upon them and became natural to them. To strip away that old conception, rooted in their hearts, and replace it with a new one is almost to overturn their nature. Christians, when they adopted the conceptions of their faith, had received no others from heaven: they possessed only things drawn from their own understanding, namely the worship of images. Whoever has no firmly established conception can receive a new one."

Thomas said: "That is why I say that it is impossible to tear the Law from the hearts of the Jews except by fire, since it was given by fire." The king said: "You speak truly; but they will answer that it is for God, who gave it by fire, to withdraw it by fire, and not for you. I remember hearing two ambassadors from the Jewish communities of Castile, the aljamas, at my father's table: one was named Don Joseph ben Benveniste, the other Don Solomon ben Yaish. In my father's presence they were told to become Christians. They replied that their Law had been given before six hundred thousand men, with wonders, the manifestation of the Divine Presence (shekhinah, שכינה, 'divine presence'), and fire from heaven; it would have to be withdrawn in the same way. 'Let God come, then, lead us to another mountain, show us his greatness, and tell us to abandon the Law of Moses and take another: you will see, O king, whether we persist in it.' That is why I say that they should not be blamed for this persistence; all the more since the matters concerning our Saviour, though not contrary to reason, are not readily accessible to it either. This is why our faith is called an interpretation of the Law, rather than a new law. In it I live and in it I shall die; with it I shall go to the grave, for it is our salvation and will carry us to heaven with the kings who preceded me. I say this not to take the Jews' part, but to affirm that we have no power to make them abandon their Law."

Scenes from the Life of Moses

Sister Haggadah, second or third quarter of the fourteenth century. British Library, Or. 2884, f. 12v. A medieval depiction of Moses, a scriptural figure in the debate. [provenance]

Thomas said: "And how many things do the Jews believe that surpass understanding?" The king said: "Name some of them." Thomas continued: "They say that, when they stood at Sinai, God tore open the heavens for them; yet the heavens cannot suffer decay or division. They say that God sat in Moses' tent: according to this, God is a body; and they flee our faith because our Saviour had a body! They say that in the second Temple no fire descended from heaven, but they found a pit in the mountain full of oil. They took some and poured it over the wood arranged upon the altar, and that oil turned to fire.

"They say that Habakkuk had gone into the fields to bring food to the reapers when an angel came and carried him many leagues away to the lions' den where Daniel was; both ate and drank, and Habakkuk returned to the reapers before mealtime had even arrived. They say that the goats of one of their righteous men rose up against wolves and devoured them. One of them said that he had put vinegar into his lamp and that it burned instead of oil." The king said: "I too have heard such follies

told of the Jews: a bird laid an egg that destroyed sixty cities; in one place in the sea, a piece of iron thrown into it did not reach the bottom in seven years. I am astonished that they should say such things, being learned men, unless they conceal some secret meaning, or some malicious fool inserted them into the Talmud to discredit it entirely. However that may be, no argument or question can be drawn from this to induce them to believe in the Trinity. Such things strengthen faith in the people's hearts, since they show divine power and its providence towards the righteous, for whose sake it changes nature; perhaps this was the intention of whoever told them. The Trinity conflicts with their faith, because they believe in unity, and ordinary people have neither the means nor the study required to understand how three can be one. That is why they tell you that they believe in things which confirm their faith, not in what destroys it."

Thomas said: "These matters should be written down and discussed before some scholar. Let us return to the subject: I say that the cause of the Jews' downfall is natural, if one does not wish to attribute it to punishment. You spoke, O king, of their wealth; they possessed far more. Solomon spent one thousand and eight talents of gold and seven thousand of silver on the Temple. Their population too was much greater. It is recorded in Chronicles that Israel had one million one hundred thousand men drawing the sword, and four hundred and seventy thousand from the royal tribe." The king replied: "Two things astonish me: first, where Solomon obtained so much wealth; second, how all these Jews have so greatly diminished, when they formed so vast a multitude." Thomas replied: "The ships of Ophir brought him a prodigious quantity every year, and his father left him a great treasure that he had plundered from the peoples. This is why Solomon would not use it to build the Temple."

The king said: "You deserve a great punishment, for you insult me and all kings by calling what they take in war plunder; but your wisdom earns pardon for your offence. And what do you answer concerning the great decrease in the Jewish people?"

Thomas replied: "Their numbers were reduced by great wars, as I shall relate. Those who survived and came into your kingdom suffered a great plague that year. It was they who brought it into the world, as Scripture says: 'The Lord shall make the plague cling to you': to you, not to another nation. This was while they were in their own land; after they left it, the plague came to us. As the proverb says: woe to the wicked man, and woe to his neighbour."

The king replied: "If another man said this, I would think he had a cat's brains. For Tullius, a greater man than you, says that fifty years before the Jews came to Spain there was so great a plague that the gates of the great cities were closed, particularly Córdoba, Toledo, and Seville. In my own time I too witnessed a great mortality: a hundred Christians died each day, but not a single Jew, so that Christians carried their children by night to the Jews' houses, to see whether they could save them. In Rome and all its surrounding districts there was plague for three consecutive years, so that the inhabitants thought the gods were angry with them and determined to kill them all. The faults the Jews possess are enough, without imputing faults they do not have. I therefore tell you that you only began as their advocate in order to pour out this poison at the end. Let us return to the subject: you have still not answered how the Jews fell through a natural cause."

Thomas replied: "I say, my lord, that their greatness and exaltation caused their ruin. A tree provides an example: when it grows excessively high, it falls, because the wind strikes it harder. Likewise, a wind of pride swept over the Jews, and he who hates pride cast them down. The Prophet says of them: 'He cast down from heaven to earth', referring to what we have said: their ascent to heaven caused their fall. They rose against one another, until their hearts were divided.

"It is well known that everything in the world can tolerate a companion except pride, which admits no equal: from pride comes hatred between people, and from hatred division. Each claimed that dominion and kingship belonged to him. To dominate one another, they brought foreigners into their midst; these, knowing their secrets and their internal divisions, ceased to fear or respect them and, marching against them, brought them to ruin. Before this, what Scripture says applied to them: 'The kings of the earth did not believe that there would come an oppressor and an enemy to the gates of Jerusalem.' They could not resist their enemies, for a divided multitude dwindles to little. Each sought only to anger his companion; thus their strength weakened, and their multitude became merely a multitude of mosquitoes, of no use at all. The Prophet says of them: 'We all wandered like sheep.' Naturalists say that, among animals, no species is more foolish than sheep; this is why the Prophet says: 'We wandered like sheep.' Yet they lacked the sheep's good quality, its love of gathering together; on the contrary, each looked only to his own way, as the text continues: 'Each turned to his own way.'

"From this arose disputes among the Jews, according to the wickedness of their temperaments. Nicholas of Lyra explained it well; having once been one of them, he knew the matter. He said that the words of Scripture, 'You shall kindle no fire in your dwellings on the Sabbath day', do not concern fire itself, whose prohibition was already established by the words, 'You shall do no work.' They concern the fire of quarrels, which they must not kindle on their Sabbaths, as is the Jew's custom when he is idle."

The king said: "He explained it well, like a thief who knows the household's secrets. But concerning the Sabbath I have a complaint against our Messiah: why did he not command its observance, since it bears witness to the creation of the world, on which we agree? If you say that the first day replaced it, that would be true if Christians observed it by abstaining from work; but their observance consists only of eating and strolling. Jews, however, observe it by ceasing from work and reading the divine Law. Likewise, the Ishmaelites read their Qur'an on Friday; in this they have the advantage over us."

Thomas replied: "Christians are not obliged to cease from work, because the observance of the Sabbath has two purposes: one is to recall the creation of the world, the other slavery in Egypt, as Scripture says: 'And you shall remember that you were a slave, etc.' Since Christians were not in Egypt, why should they commemorate that slavery by ceasing from work?"

The king said: "Since our conversation leads us here, I ask you why Moses chose the Sabbath day, Muhammad Friday, and our Saviour the first day." Thomas replied: "Moses says that the day of rest should be honoured, since God rested on it: his perfection is seen in his rest, not in the making of certain things, as if he needed them and derived his perfection from them. Muhammad says that a man rejoices on the day when he finishes his work; he therefore commanded the observance of the sixth day, since the world was completed on it. Our Saviour chose the first day because the beginning of the work should be honoured, so that everyone should recognise God as the First.

"I come to the natural cause. I say that at several times they brought evil upon themselves with their own hands. The first was in the days of the son of Nebat (Jeroboam), when the Jews came to ask the son of Solomon (Rehoboam) to lighten their yoke. He replied that he would make it heavier still. He should not have answered thus, for an anointed king should honour his people and his servants: he does not know what the day will bring, and whether or not he is king depends upon the

people; by himself, a king is king only in name. They, in the wickedness of their temperament and their rashness, grew to hate the kingship of the house of David; as they had changed their God, they changed their king. They should have taken counsel and waited until he consented to their request.

"Great wars followed, and their numbers dwindled, for evil eventually destroys itself. What use was their knowledge, of which the king my lord speaks, if it served their own harm instead of increasing their strength against their enemies? The son of Nebat then went to Egypt and brought Shishak against them. He revealed the Jews' secrets to him and the way in which the city could most easily be taken. Those in the city who belonged to the son of Nebat's party wrote to Shishak telling him how to proceed. When the supporters of Solomon's son learnt of this, they made war within the city and killed one another: they themselves accomplished what the enemy could not.

"One day your father grew angry with the Jews and wished to destroy them. One of his counsellors said: 'Beware, O king: no king has attempted such a thing without bringing ruin upon himself. If you wish to avenge yourself upon them, order them all to go into a single city, with no foreigner dwelling there, and let them choose their governors from among themselves. You will see them divided among themselves and killing one another for that reason, without your being the cause.'

"The second downfall occurred in the time of King Abijah, who spoke kindly to them. They answered that they wanted no share in the house of David. War followed, in which four hundred thousand men died, and a further five hundred thousand of Israel's bravest and most illustrious men.

"The third occurred in the time of a king of Judah who sent all the Temple vessels as a gift to the king of Egypt to obtain his help. This too caused their downfall: they profaned the holy vessels and gave them to foreigners. The king of Egypt marched against them and killed many, saying that the day had come to avenge upon the Jews what they had done to his fathers in the sea.

"The fourth occurred during the wars of two kings, one of Judah and one of Israel. The king of Israel accused the priests of failing in their duty, and twenty thousand of them were killed in one day.

"The fifth occurred in the time of the king named Menahem, who wrought great slaughter among the Jews. Sennacherib, hearing of their division, came with a great army. Menahem gave him a thousand talents of silver to maintain him upon the

throne, promising to be his servant. He would not take them from his treasury and laid the burden upon the people, who had to sell their children to bring him the money.

"The sixth occurred when Nebuzaradan marched against them. The Talmudists say that twice as many people died in that war as had come out of Egypt. The Temple was then burnt, and two hundred thousand people died of hunger; this is what is written in the ancient Chronicles.

A Battle in the Maccabean Period

Jonathan Maccabeus fights Bacchides and escapes across the Jordan. Fouquet's workshop, c. 1465–1475, BnF, Français 247, f. 270v. This scene concerns the Maccabean wars; it does not depict Eleazar's death beneath the elephant. [provenance]

"The seventh was the destruction of Alexandria, where very many Jews had gone because of the wars of Jerusalem. There they prospered, built a temple, and began trying to dominate one another. One party sent an ambassador to the emperor Trajan, asking him to march against them. He did so, and war raged within and without; five hundred thousand people were put to the sword.

"The eighth was caused by two brothers, named Hyrcanus and Aristobulus: the younger would not let the elder reign. Aristobulus sent a gift to Pompey, the Roman general, to obtain his help: it was a golden vine weighing five hundred talents, adorned with precious stones and pearls. Pompey then came with a great army. The two brothers fought within, and Pompey without; a great multitude of Jews killed one another. The kingdom remained with Hyrcanus, and Aristobulus was taken prisoner to Rome in chains.

"The ninth occurred in the time of Herod's war; it too was caused by their internal divisions.

"The tenth was the destruction of the second Temple, when Titus marched against them. Without this, they would not have fallen; there was also a great famine, in which four hundred thousand died, as Josephus testifies. As evidence of their intransigence, it is related that Titus asked only that they place the Roman standard at the gate of Jerusalem three times a year, so that Roman dominion over them should be acknowledged. They refused; if they quarrelled with their own brothers, how would they behave towards foreigners?

Pompey in the Temple

Pompey and his soldiers in the Temple. Workshop of Jean Fouquet, c. 1465–1475, BnF, Français 247, f. 293v. This medieval interpretation accompanies the passage on Hyrcanus, Aristobulus and Roman intervention. [provenance]

"There was a Jew named Manasseh, married to a Moabite woman, contrary to Ezra's decree, which had ordered, in accordance with his Law, that all Moabite wives should be sent away. Manasseh would not do so. All the priests assembled and expelled him from the Temple service. Manasseh, with the help of his father-in-law Sanballat, then gathered all the chief priests and told them that, if they restored him to his office, he would let the matter rest; otherwise, he would act in such a way that they would all regret it and never be able to put it right.

"The priests mocked his words. Manasseh then gathered many people through lavish gifts, for he was rich, and set about building a temple on Mount Gerizim. He went with Sanballat to King Alexander, taking great riches to win him over and ob-

tain his permission; Alexander granted it. All the neighbouring towns rejoiced, because this spared them the trouble of going to Jerusalem, and also because of the profit they would derive from those who came there to celebrate Passover.

"Manasseh was cunning. He had it proclaimed throughout the surrounding country that whoever came to his temple would give no offerings or tithes beyond what he wished, for God wanted nothing forced, only what was voluntary. He drew the hearts of the poor to himself and built the temple. All the neighbouring lands abandoned the temple at Jerusalem, chosen by God. Great wars followed between the Jews who went up to Jerusalem and those who went to the new temple, and many died on one side and on the other. The rightful priests marched against the new priests appointed by Manasseh; at the pilgrimage festivals they died by the thousand. This temple stood for nearly two hundred years, until a king named Hyrcanus arose, a pious man and a lover of the Law. He went out to overthrow the temple, killed many of the people, and inflicted severe punishments. The Jews returned to Jerusalem, but a third of them had already perished in the war.

"I shall further relate that there were two Jewish brothers, sons of a righteous man among them. The elder did not know the sanctuary service as the younger did. Their father ordered the younger to succeed him as high priest; he refused, saying that his brother should be high priest as the elder. So it was. But after some time the younger regretted it and devised a stratagem to make the elder commit an error and remove him from office. He said: 'Come, I shall teach you the manner of service.' He dressed him in garments that priests did not wear, and put a girdle upon him which was not priestly but like those worn by women. He made him approach the altar, then went to the priests in the Temple and said: 'My brother has a mistress with whom he sins; the garment and girdle he is wearing are hers. He swore to her that, on the day when he was chosen as high priest, he would wear her clothes for love of her.'

"The priests then rose to kill the elder. He begged them to hear him first and told them of his brother's trick. Having found that he spoke the truth, they pursued the younger to kill him. The younger escaped into the royal palace; they sought him there, and he fled to Alexandria in Egypt. He built a temple there, of which he was made high priest. This temple stood for nearly two hundred years."

The king said: "I marvel at the details you tell me about the Jews and preserve in your memory." Thomas replied: "Perhaps, my lord, you will again say on this account that I am one of them! The reason is that, when I preach to Christians and rebuke them, I offer as evidence the misfortunes of the Jews and the cause of their downfall.

"I shall give two further causes. The first is that in the beginning, when the Jews stood in God's favour, he fought for them, as is plainly seen in the Bible. Therefore they did not learn the stratagems of war, having no need of them. Thus Deborah said: 'Was a shield or spear to be seen?' When they sinned, God hid his face from them, and they were left deprived of everything. They knew neither weapons nor the art of using them; divine favour was no longer with them. They were left defenceless and fell like sheep without a shepherd.

"The second is that they had no siege engines to batter down walls, such as the Romans and Greeks had invented, nor fearsome iron battering rams, nor elephants carrying towers. They had never used or even seen them, and did not know how to guard against the damage they caused. They said to one another: 'See what fearsome animals, of which we have never heard!', thinking that they were beasts of the field."

The king replied: "It is well known that a man cannot picture the true form of something he has never seen. Thus we find that in ancient times men came down from the mountain to the plain mounted on horses and plundered the inhabitants of the countryside. These people, who until then had never seen men on horseback, thought that the two together formed a single animal, human in its upper half, the whole making one body. They called them centaurs. Hercules passed that way and, seeing the centaurs, mocked the people of the plain, pursued these beings, and showed them that they were men riding horses.

"When we went to a certain war, we took a wagon bearing a great battering ram. We set it before the city gate and pushed it forward at a run. The poor people in the city thought it was an animal and fled; thus we entered and captured the city. But your claim that the Jews did not know what it was is false. Josephus writes that, when Titus ordered the battering rams brought up to the wall, a young man came out, dug beneath the wagons' wheels, put sulphur and pitch there, and set it alight. All the battering rams burnt, together with those guarding them.

"After this, three remaining rams were brought forward. Titus says that four young men came out of Jerusalem: Tapetios the Galilean, Magnos of Hebron, Loriminos of Samaria, and Arios of Jerusalem. They went against them, killed the guards and many men of the Roman army, attacking them as a master might attack his maidservant. The army withdrew, and they set fire to the battering rams. How, then, can you say that they did not know what they were and took them for animals? During the war of Antiochus, a young man came out and drove a sword into the belly of a great elephant, because Mattathias had said that, if someone could be found to kill

the elephant, the tower on its back would fall. They therefore knew what that tower was! But the first cause admits of no doubt; it remains to learn why God banished them from his house."

Thomas replied: "Because they brought foreign gods into God's house, they received a punishment matching their offence: to go into a foreign land and serve them there. This is known from what Jeremiah says; the Law also says: 'And there you shall serve other gods.' They then went to Babylon, where they remained seventy years. I have a subtle reflection on this: why seventy? Because the influence of the planets is distributed over that number of years, after which the cycle begins again. Saturn's years are eleven; Jupiter's twelve; Mars's seven; the Sun's ten; Venus's nine; Mercury's twelve; and the Moon's nine. Thus they remained captive for the years of each, because they had served them all."

The king said: "And now that they are no longer idolaters, why do they suffer so long a captivity?" Thomas replied: "Know, my lord, that a man's sins against his neighbour are graver than his sins against God, because the good order of countries and the peace of the world depend upon them. Christians carefully guard against theft, fraud, usury, and similar things; they are less attentive to their duties towards God, for there are people who pray only once a year. With the Jew it is the opposite: none misses his prayer, but he does not guard against theft or fraud, and therefore God, who hates theft, has punished them. The end of their exile has been delayed, and they have no Messiah; yet these fools call upon him at the close of every Sabbath."

The king said: "And why do they invoke him while pronouncing the blessing over wine?" Thomas replied: "I can give no reason for this, unless their wine might entice him. As for the destruction of the Temple, what happened to it was what happened to our Saviour: he came to atone for Adam's sin and accepted death for it; likewise, the sanctuary was intended to atone for Israel's sin and was burnt for that people."

The king replied: "You explain one strange thing by another like it. No one has ever seen a king, because his servants sinned against him, kill his son to atone for their offences, or burn his palace." Thomas replied: "The case of our Saviour is different: if he underwent death, only his flesh underwent it, for he went at once to his Father and remains alive before him for ever. When he died, his death and killing were real only in the eyes of men."

The king said: "Enough of the Jews; what you have said is sound, and applies also to the Temple. Yet I think of another reason: even when God is angry and rebukes them, he remembers his love. Since his intention was to banish them in proportion to their sins, as you say, he did not wish the Temple to remain in foreigners' hands; all the more since that worship was intended only for those who had come out of Egypt. Praised be the God of truth, who knows what is true! We speak according to our understanding, without reaching the essence of things. Nevertheless, I rejoice to discover that the Jews are not guilty of what is imputed to them. May evil befall whoever seeks to harm one who does not deserve it, for God says so."

The Opening of Surah Maryam

Opening of Surah Maryam in a fourteenth-century Mamluk Qur'an, Egypt or Syria. Metropolitan Museum of Art, no. 1975.29.1. The reproduction accompanies the dialogue's references to religious traditions; it is not a depiction of Alfonso's court. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

King Alfonso and the form of the dialogue

The narrative supplies neither a regnal number for Alfonso, a date, nor a diplomatic document recording this conversation. Its Abrabanel, a scholar of Seville, cannot be identified with Isaac Abravanel without further evidence. Alfonso X's Partidas nevertheless offer a precise textual comparison: VII, XXIV, II reports an allegation of ritual crucifixion, while law XI requires a distinctive badge. Both issues recur in the dialogue. This affinity with Castilian legal language illuminates its setting without establishing the king's identity or the conversation's historicity. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S019]

The seven mice and the seven bats

Maimonides's Guide of the Perplexed III, 29 supplies a precise literary parallel: it attributes to books on ancient cults an offering to the Sun consisting of seven beetles, seven mice and seven bats. Verga's account retains the mice and bats, omits the beetles, and places the practice near an island. The parallel identifies an earlier written tradition; it establishes neither the location proposed in the dialogue nor the historical reality of the described rite. It also does not establish whether Verga consulted the Guide directly or used an intermediate source. [S035 ; E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

A documented imperial investigation

Frederick II's privilege of 1 July 1236, following the accusation at Fulda, reports consultation with converts familiar with Jewish law. The emperor invokes the prohibition of blood and absolves the Jews of Fulda and Germany. This closely parallels Thomas's argument. The document was consulted in a published translation; it does not prove that Alfonso's dialogue reproduces this investigation or derives directly from it. [S018]

The legal passages actually invoked

The ox discussion corresponds to Mishnah Bava Qamma 4:3, concerning compensation for damage caused by an animal. Bava Qamma 113b distinguishes prohibited robbery from rules about lost property. Keritot 21b specifically discusses human blood on bread; it also permits blood remaining between the teeth under stated conditions. Thomas therefore condenses a more qualified discussion. Leviticus 7:23–27 specifies prohibited fats and blood; Mishnah Avodah Zarah 2:3 supplies the legal setting for the wine prohibition. [S022 ; S021 ; S020 ; S023]

Biblical army totals and Assyrian tribute

1 Chronicles 21:5 gives 1,100,000 men for Israel and 470,000 for Judah, supporting correction of the Spanish number. In 2 Chronicles 13, the 400,000 are Abijah's army strength (v. 3), while 500,000 denotes Israelite deaths (v. 17): adding them as two groups of dead is the narrative's confusion. For Menahem, 2 Kings 15:19–20 names Pul, not Sennacherib. An inscription of Tiglath-pileser III lists Menahem of Samaria among his tributaries, providing external corroboration without confirming Ibn Verga's stated amount. [S024 ; S025 ; S026]

Manasseh, Sanballat and the sanctuary of Onias

Josephus, Antiquities XI, 7.2–8.4, recounts Manasseh's marriage to Nicaso, Sanballat's daughter, followed by the proposed temple on Mount Gerizim during Alexander's conquests. This clarifies "father-in-law". The other priestly conflict, involving women's garments, comes from Menachot 109b. That text transmits two opposing versions of the brothers' conduct and the religious purpose of Onias's sanctuary. Ibn Verga follows the version in which the accused brother clears himself and the accuser flees. The two sanctuaries and traditions must be distinguished. [S027 ; S028]

Tracing the wonder stories

The vinegar lamp and the goats occur in Taanit 25a, concerning Ḥanina ben Dosa. The Talmud speaks of bears where Ibn Verga relates wolves. The egg that floods sixty cities and breaks three hundred cedars appears in Bekhorot 57b. The axe that has not reached the bottom after seven years belongs to Bava Batra 73b, which also invokes the movement of the water. These comparisons identify specific narrative traditions; they do not independently verify the wonders themselves. [S029 ; S030 ; S031]

The golden vine and the Roman siege engines

Josephus, Antiquities XIV, 3.1, relates Aristobulus's gift of a golden vine and cites Strabo, who says he saw it in Rome. The five hundred talents express its value; Ibn Verga makes them a weight. War V, 11.5 describes three fighters setting Roman siege engines ablaze, followed by defenders holding the rams amid the flames. This explains the core of Ibn Verga's scene, although names and details differ in transmission. This episode from the siege of 70 must be distinguished from the Hasmonean disputes of Pompey's time. [S032 ; S003]

The elephant: a mistaken identification

1 Maccabees 6:43–46 names Eleazar Avaran as the fighter who goes beneath the elephant, kills it and is crushed to death. He supposes that the animal carries the king, without that identification being established. Ibn Verga names Mattathias and develops the tower differently. The translation preserves his name; this comparison identifies the transformation of a recognisable story rather than concealing the discrepancy. [S033]

Genealogies and the limits of identification

The argument about Jesus's ancestry refers to Matthew 1 and Luke 3. Both genealogies pass through David: Matthew through Solomon, Luke through Nathan. It would therefore be inaccurate to say that Luke removes all Davidic descent. No document consulted establishes the identities of King Alfonso, Thomas or the two Castilian delegates in this conversation. The attributions to Nicholas of Lyra and the landownership figures likewise remain assertions within the dialogue. [S034 ; E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Two wonder stories that do not come from the Talmud

The story of Habakkuk's transportation to Daniel has a more precise reference than the general designation of a Talmudic tale: Daniel 14:33–39, in the Greek additions, describes an angel seizing him by the hair and taking him from Judaea to Babylon with a meal prepared for the reapers. Daniel eats, and the angel immediately returns Habakkuk. The prophetic Book of Habakkuk does not contain this scene. The dialogue develops the journey and meal differently; the comparison identifies its narrative material without documenting a supernatural journey.

The liquid that rekindles the altar fire appears in 2 Maccabees 1:18–22 and 1:31–36. In this tradition associated with Nehemiah, descendants of the priests find thick water where the fire had been hidden; sprinkled over the sacrifice, it ignites when the sun appears. The text subsequently names it naphthar (which it explains as "purification"). Ibn Verga calls it oil. These references show that the speakers bring material of different origins into their criticism: Greek additions to Daniel, Maccabees, and rabbinic traditions. Identifying each separately prevents the Talmud from becoming an undifferentiated source for every story cited. [S036 ; S037 ; H1928 ; E1744]

The Hebrews in the Wilderness

The Hebrews in the wilderness: water, battle and Law. Master of the Josephus, 1415–1416, BnF, Français 247, f. 49r. [provenance]

Jerusalem in Flames in the Chronicle of 1493

Jerusalem in flames, Nuremberg Chronicle, 1493, f. 63v. This old woodcut accompanies the traditions of the destruction of the city and sanctuary discussed in Account VII. [provenance]

Translation Choices

The first military totals

The printed Spanish gives 6,000,000 and 8,000,000; the first French translation reproduced these figures faithfully. The 1855 and 1928 Hebrew editions have 600,000 and 800,000, confirmed by the 1856 German translation. This edition adopts the two smaller figures. The Hebrew adds that the men of Israel also carry spears. Agreement between witnesses supports correcting the transmitted number; it does not prove that these totals are historically exact counts. The attribution to Nicholas of Lyra belongs to the dialogue. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The Law in Thomas's speech

The judgement that the Law has "now passed away" is spoken by the Christian character Thomas and is retained as such. This development is also present in the main 1855 Hebrew text; its apparatus states that the first edition lacks it. The 1928 Hebrew moves directly from "the Jews, who possess a religion" to the dietary question. The judgement must therefore not be attributed to this edition, nor should the textual difference automatically be treated as an error by the first French translator. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; H1855]

Pork and prohibited fats

"Tallow" is not a second animal. Spanish sebo here renders Hebrew ḥelev (חלב), certain animal fats prohibited as food by the Law. The sentence lists two prohibited foods—pork and these fats—not two species of meat. The first French rendering, suif, had a lexical basis, but could suggest candle-making material and mislead a reader into looking for an unknown animal. "Prohibited fat" makes the dietary and legal sense clearer. Leviticus 7:23 names cattle, sheep and goats; this is not an indiscriminate prohibition of every fat from every animal. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S020]

Bread or liver?

"Bread" is retained. The 1928 Hebrew and the 1855 main text literally read "liver" (ha-kaved, הכבד), but Wiener's note records "bread/a loaf" (ha-kikkar, הככר) in the first edition and endorses that reading. The Spanish is therefore a useful witness here, not a text to be mechanically corrected from 1928. The legal case of human blood on bread occurs in Keritot 21 b. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; H1855 ; S021]

Additional passage: the status of Christians

Before this answer, Hebrew transmits a fuller discussion, also present in German and absent from Spanish. It is translated here:

"He told me that anyone who knows Hebrew should not raise this difficulty, because there is a difference between the terms nokhri (נכרי, 'foreigner'), notsri (נוצרי, 'Christian') and goy (גוי, 'nation', here 'non-Jew'). A nokhri is someone who has estranged himself from his Creator and does not believe in the principles of religion; but a Christian, since he believes in the creation of the world, miracles and Providence, will not be called a nokhri."

The king said: "If we believe in the Trinity, how are we not regarded as strangers in the Jews' eyes?"

Thomas said: "That great scholar has already shown me a commentary by one of the great ancient authors, dating back more than six hundred years. Its words are these: 'Whoever believes in God's existence, creation, prophecy, reward and punishment is a person of religion. Christians believe all these things. If they believe in the Trinity, it is not in order to deny unity, but because they say that it constitutes unity; they will therefore be called people of religion. According to religion, we have no right to kill them or damage their property so long as we have no kingship or government and they are not subject to our power. If they do not fulfil the commandments, they are not guilty, for these were prescribed only to the people who came out of Egypt, and most commandments depend on that foundation.'

"That Abrabanel also told me that, even if we assert that there is no difference between a Christian and a nokhri, an explicit answer remains: the Talmudists say that robbing a goy is forbidden, and they condemn it more severely than robbery committed against an Israelite. How, then, could we say that if an Israelite's ox has killed that of a nokhri, its owner is exempt from compensation? We must necessarily accept one of two explanations: either there is a difference between nokhri and goy, or they pronounced this exemption only in the case of the oxen, because the damage is caused by one person's property to another's, and a Jew does not know how to guard livestock as well as a non-Jew, who owns it constantly. Even if we were to say that damage caused by an Israelite's ox is permitted, this would not authorise him to cause harm with his own hands or to rob another person, still less to kill him. If this too had been permitted, the text would have had to say so, since that would be the more extraordinary claim."

The clause that relates the legal statement to a particular situation of power is retained. These distinctions belong to the dialogue's argument; they are neither universal definitions of the Hebrew terms nor a complete account of Jewish law. The final paragraph also supplies the fuller form of the argument about the ox, abridged in Spanish. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Additional passage: jurisdiction in Toledo

Before the quotation from Proverbs, the Hebrew adds to Thomas's speech: "Through their pride, the Jews had acquired such authority in Toledo that they struck Christians; their leading men proclaimed that anyone who struck a Christian would be punished by their courts." The 1856 German also transmits this sentence. Within the argument, it appears to concern a claim to a separate jurisdiction; it also mentions punishment for violence. It is not

a finding independently verified by this edition. Earlier, the Hebrew and German say that these families' luxury exceeds even that of great lords, whereas the Spanish compares it with the lords' luxury. The two degrees of comparison are thereby distinguished. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

"Three shares": an unspecified proportion

The first French translation made this explicit as "three-quarters". The witnesses checked literally say "three shares", without an expressed denominator. "Three-quarters" is a possible interpretation of the expression, but that arithmetic precision is not written in the passage. The main text therefore retains the transmitted wording. In any event, this is an assertion by Thomas in a polemical dialogue; no land survey establishing such a proportion has been identified in the sources consulted. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Fats in the dietary argument

Spanish sebo here renders the Hebrew legal term ḥelev (חלב), prohibited fats, rather than all the fat in meat. This clarifies the same term corrected near the beginning of the account. The speech presents a theory attributed to Abrabanel, not our own physiological or hierarchical account. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Imagination and representation

The Hebrew explicitly names imagination (dimyon, דמיון), followed by each believer's imaginative faculty. Spanish lo aparente permits "appearance" or "what seems true"; our first French version obscured this reference to the faculty of representation. We follow the two Hebrew witnesses consulted here. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Additional passage: cemeteries

Before the Christian's representation, the Hebrew witnesses add: "And whoever believes something else is in his eyes like a beast. I have heard that when they pass our cemeteries they say: 'Your mother is greatly ashamed; she who bore you is confounded' [Jeremiah 50:12]." Spanish omits both clauses. They are offered here as the fuller reading; the body retains the abridged Spanish version. The 1855 apparatus already records the absence of the second clause in an earlier printing. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; H1855]

Ezekiel's living creatures

The reference is to the living creatures in Ezekiel 1:10. The first French version's quadrige wrongly suggested a team of horses. Spanish refers to their group of four; Hebrew simply says "the living creatures". [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Additional passages: the Trinity and Kabbalah

The Hebrew expands the argument attributed to Thomas: after condemning multiplicity, "But the Trinity is not multiplicity; it is simple unity to one who understands. I met three great scholars of Germany and studied books of Kabbalah (קבלה, Jewish mystical tradition) with them; I saw explained there how the Trinity is unity." He adds to his question: "All the more since the books of your Kabbalah appear to show that it is perfect unity." Finally, after the king's reply, Thomas answers: "If the Trinity is unity, the punishment of their fathers supplies no argument against it." These three expansions, present in 1855 and 1928, are absent from Spanish. Their full alternative reading is supplied here without silently replacing the abridged dialogue. They are the character's polemical arguments, not the editors' definition of Kabbalah. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; H1855]

The communities of Castile and their delegates

Algamas is older Spanish aljamas, the Jewish communities, not a king's name. The Spanish names remain alternative readings: Joseph ben Censat and Solomon Benyaes. The body adopts the surnames legible in the 1855 and 1928 Hebrew, supported by the 1856 German. The first name transcribed גושפי (Gushfi/Giuseppe) is rendered Joseph, as by Wiener; שולימאן (Suleiman) is rendered Solomon. This reading does not claim a historical identification of the two delegates. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Interpretation of the Law

Perush (פירוש) here means explanation or interpretation. Older Spanish declaración can likewise mean explanation: modern French déclaration was misleading. Wiener expands this to "explanation of the Law". A more explicit possible translation is thus "an interpretation of the Law rather than a new law"; the body adopts that explicit wording, supported by German. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Goats or rams?

Spanish says "rams/sheep"; Hebrew and German say "goats". We adopt the latter reading. The story belongs to the tradition concerning the goats of Ḥanina ben Dosa; it is not presented as the editors' zoological observation. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S029]

The egg and the sixty cities

Both Hebrew texts and the German say that the egg destroyed sixty cities. Spanish describes an egg as broad as sixty cities, faithfully followed by the first French translation. This is a witness difference, not an initial French mistranslation. The body follows the Hebrew reading, which makes the Talmudic allusion intelligible; the book's number remains sixty. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S030]

One thousand and eight or eighteen hundred talents?

The 1855 Hebrew, checked on the image, and 1928 read 1008 kikkarim (ככרים), rendered "talents". Spanish likewise has 1008, but uses quintales; this must not automatically be converted into modern metric quintals. The 1856 German genuinely prints 1800 talents: it is not an OCR error. We retain 1008, supported by Spanish and both Hebrew witnesses, while making the change of unit explicit. No conversion into kilograms is assumed. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; H1855]

One million one hundred thousand men

Spanish unambiguously prints 10,100,000; the first French version reproduced it. Both Hebrew texts and the German have 1,100,000, in keeping with the author's stated reference, 1 Chronicles 21:5. We adopt this reading and explicitly preserve 10,100,000 as the Spanish variant. The second group is called "sons of royalty" in Hebrew; in the cited verse these are the 470,000 men of Judah, hence "royal tribe" rather than a class of noblemen. The preceding Hebrew sentence shifts from wealth to population; that change of subject has been restored. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; H1855]

The comparison with sheep

Spanish says "more enduring/patient under suffering". The Hebrew witnesses say "more foolish", directly explaining the straying evoked by Isaiah 53:6. The body follows Hebrew; the first French translation correctly followed the Spanish reading. This remains the character's comparison, not an editorial zoological judgement. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The Friday recitation

We retain Spanish "read their Qur'an", supported by an earlier variant recorded in the 1855 apparatus and by German. The main 1855 and 1928 Hebrew texts have al-jumʿa (אלגומעה), the term for the Friday assembly/prayer: another possible reading is "perform their Friday recitation". This word must not automatically be treated as the title of the Qur'an. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

God as "the First"

Spanish leaves "that one is first/principal" without explicitly naming God; our first version took this as the chosen day. Both Hebrew witnesses name God, supported by German. We adopt that referent; the alternative translation of Spanish alone is "each considering his day the foremost". [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The figures attributed to Abijah

Four readings must be distinguished: Spanish 1744 and the main 1855 Hebrew give 400,000+50,000; the earlier printing cited by Wiener and the 1928 text give 400,000+500,000; German 1856 retains only 500,000. We follow the Hebrew

400,000+500,000 reading while preserving the alternatives. This does not mean that 900,000 deaths are attested by the Bible: 2 Chronicles 13:3 assigns 400,000 men to Abijah, and 13:17 reports 500,000 Israelite deaths. The account's confusion between army strength and deaths remains visible. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; H1855]

Menahem's tribute

The same distinction of unit as in the earlier amount applies: Spanish uses quintales, Hebrew kikkarim, rendered talents without metric conversion. The number 1000 is common to the witnesses consulted. The ruler's identification as Sennacherib belongs to the text; it has not silently been replaced by the ruler named in 2 Kings 15:19. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Trajan or Tarquin?

Spanish Tarquino led to "Tarquin". Hebrew names Troginos, and German Trajan. We adopt Trajan without treating every detail of the Alexandrian war related here as established fact. The alternative Tarquin is explicitly preserved. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The golden vine: weight or value?

The Hebrew unit is the talent, as in the preceding amounts. These witnesses describe a weight of 500 talents; we do not silently change this weight into monetary value or kilograms. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

An ambiguous parenthesis about the siege

The first French version supplied "this division", which Spanish "without this" does not specify. The 1855 Hebrew הדבר can mean "the plague" or "this circumstance"; Wiener translates the former and notes the latter. Two expansions therefore remain possible: "Without the epidemic, they would not have fallen" and "Without this circumstance, they would not have fallen". We leave the reference open. Hebrew 1928 omits the whole parenthesis. Hebrew 1855 then attributes the testimony to ben Gorion, the Josippon tradition, whereas Spanish says only Josephus. Finally, Hebrew מעזותם denotes their boldness/intransigence, not physical strength. Here davar (דבר) can mean "thing, circumstance", while dever, written with the same consonants, means "plague". The reference remains uncertain. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; H1855]

Manasseh and Sanballat

Spanish makes Sanballat the spokesman; the 1855 and 1928 Hebrew say that Manasseh gathered the priests with Sanballat's help. We adopt that construction, making the acting subject explicit. "Father-in-law" is retained from Spanish and the announced marriage; Hebrew חתנו denotes an affinity by marriage, while German renders brother-in-law. The relationship variant remains recorded. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; H1855]

The two sanctuaries and the additional sentence

Hebrew expressly distinguishes the two opposing groups, those of Jerusalem and those of the new temple; we restore the member absent from Spanish. Both Hebrew texts also contain, just after the abandonment of God's chosen temple: "For the Jews have no law when their own advantage is at stake." This polemical generalisation is spoken by the character Thomas; absent from Spanish, it is supplied here as a fuller variant rather than silently inserted into the body. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Which brother flees?

A Spanish omission changes the fugitive's identity. Both Hebrew texts and German say: "He begged them to hear his words first, told them of his brother's trick, and was found to be speaking the truth; they then pursued the other to kill him." It is therefore the younger accuser who escapes and founds the Egyptian temple, not the innocent elder. We restore these sentences in the body. The abridged Spanish, followed by the first French version, would instead leave the elder as the continuing subject. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; H1855]

Siege engines and battering rams

Spanish distributes the names differently: arietes then trabucos, battering rams followed by throwing engines. Hebrew distinguishes siege engines (sollelot, סוללות) and iron battering rams (eilei barzel, אילי ברזל), supported by German. We follow that distribution; the following story specifically concerns the burning of battering rams. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The tower carried by the elephant

Spanish announces a reward: "he would give him the tower". Both Hebrew texts say that the tower would fall if the elephant were killed; German confirms it. The body adopts this second reading, which establishes that the fighters had recognised the tower. The name Mattathias remains the book's own; it is not silently corrected by comparison with the Maccabean account. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; H1855]

The seventy astrological years

We retain the Spanish numbers: 11+12+7+10+9+12+9=70. The main 1855 Hebrew prints 11 for the Sun, but its own note corrects this to 10 from an earlier printing and the expected total; 1928 and German likewise give 10. This is an astrological distribution reported by Thomas, not modern astronomical periods. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; H1855]

Carefulness and fraud

Advertidos here means attentive/careful, not merely warned by instruction. Hebrew נזהר, "guards against", confirms that Thomas attributes behaviour to these Christians. Hebrew אונאה denotes fraud/wrongful dealing, whereas Spanish has fuerça, coercion/violence; the revision renders that term more precisely and exposes the variant. The collective assertion remains the character's. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The sanctuary and atonement

The first French pronoun left its referent unclear. Hebrew says "for them", Israel; the verb לכפר specifies atonement. We make that link explicit in Thomas's argument. The analogy and the following Christological reply are retained in their own wording; they are not harmonised with a later Christian doctrine. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Refuting an argument through the commandments

The Spanish image of "breaking your head" concerns a refutation in debate. German explicitly renders the act of refuting. "He could have refuted you by appealing to the other commandments" therefore preserves the argument and makes the action intelligible. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Who can kiss the image?

In the scene with the mule, el mayor que llega need not mean the most important person. Wiener understands the person tall enough to reach the image carried above the crowd. This concrete reading explains the ensuing comparison of height and is adopted in both translations. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

"Form", representation and imagination

In the discussion of belief, "form" could suggest a physical object unrelated to the argument. Hebrew dimyon (דמיון, "imagination") and German Vorstellung support "representation", "conception" or "to imagine", according to the sentence. These equivalents restore the continuity of the discussion while preserving each speaker's position. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 13–52 ; H1928, section 7 ; G1856, p. 12–48.

Account VIII

An Accusation at Écija

The eighth persecution occurred in the fourth year of the great King Alfonso of Spain. In the city of Écija, three troublemakers arose, threw a corpse into a Jew's house, and went to the judges crying that they had found a dead Christian in a Jew's house. The judge then came with his men to that house. The Jew answered: 'May God see and judge my cause: I did not kill this man, and my enemies seek to destroy me!' He was imprisoned.

It was the eve of the Passover of unleavened bread (Pesaḥ, פסח, the festival of the Exodus). The news spread through the city; on the first night of Passover the inhabitants rose up and killed the Jews they found. Many fled to noblemen's houses and were saved there; but they fasted throughout the festival, since they did not eat leavened cereal foods (ḥamets, חמץ).

The news spread to the town of Palma, whose inhabitants acted like the others. From there the Jews sent messengers to the principal towns so that representatives would be dispatched to court. Three Jews went: Don Abraham Benveniste, Don Joseph ha-Nasi (הנשיא, "the prince" or "the leader"), and Rabbi Samuel ben Shoshin. When these agitators learnt that the Jews had sent messengers, they ran after them. The Jews were very afraid and hid for a day in the forest. The accusers went to court and cried out before the king. He answered: 'I have long known your designs and falsehoods: you seek to destroy a poor people. Already in my time everything has been exposed as false, and today you come again in the same manner. I administer justice and cannot tolerate your wrongs. You have no excuse except your ignorance. Go, and return before me tomorrow: I shall show you your shame and disgrace.'

The accusers departed discontented. The next morning the Jews' messengers arrived. Having learnt their names, the king ordered them to be written down. It was agreed that Don Joseph ha-Nasi should speak, for he was a great scholar who knew several languages. He began, and all the nobles and the king admired his intelligence and the strength of his arguments.

The king said: 'I greatly rejoice in what I have heard you say; those who speak for a just cause have a natural grace and charm. I hold your words to be true and have no doubt of them. Yet I ask you: if you considered one of your people an honest and

truthful man, and stolen property was found in his possession, would you say that he had not stolen it?' They replied: 'Who can deny what he sees, when the stolen property is in his hands and bears witness against him?' The king said: 'Listen, then, to what you say. Consider that a Christian was found dead in a Jew's house, in his possession. How could I acquit him, even though he has the reputation of a peaceable man and not a murderer?' The messengers replied: 'My lord, a man who stole in the sight of witnesses cannot be equated with one in whose house the body was found: perhaps others threw it there.'

The king said: 'You speak truly; I know well that the Jews are innocent of this accusation. But you have other sins: because of them and out of hatred, the peoples rise against you every day.' The messengers said: 'Let Your Majesty say what seems right; we shall obey you as servants, or receive it as children from their father.'

The king replied: 'You know well that you came into our lands naked and hungry, and Christians welcomed you with love. You repaid them ill: through lending at interest (ribbit, ריבית), you took their lands, their oxen, and their cattle. Moreover, if you are servants, why do you dress like noblemen? It serves only to attract envy and hatred. I have ordered in my kingdom that you should not dress in silk; but you will excuse yourselves by saying that, if you have not heeded God's voice, how would you heed mine?

'You have gone beyond your proper station. My heart tells me that afflictions will bring you back, perhaps when it is too late. If you leave my kingdom, it will not be as at the departure from Egypt, which was with joy and gladness, but with groaning and tears. I am astonished at your way of thinking: your custom is to begin rich and die poor. When you come into the world, your star rises above your head; then it descends towards your feet. With Christians, on the contrary, their star begins at their feet and rises towards their head. When a Christian is born, he wears patched garments and grows up in them; but as a grown man and an old man, he wears embroidered clothing.

'Furthermore, what are these gatherings, when you go into the streets on the day of a circumcision or some similar ceremony, dressed like princes? The people see you and are consumed with jealousy. You, their leaders, think only of your own honour and let the sheep in your care perish. Why do you also teach your children to play instruments, when you are bound to weep and lament continually? God has pro-

claimed that you are wicked, and for this reason scattered you; he has done so to no other nation. If you thought of your captivity, your dispersion, and the danger in which you stand, you would not occupy yourselves with such things.

'All this shows that you have lost all awareness of your situation and all good sense. If the people of my nation do all these things, they have the right to do so: their nation's position as a ruling power requires it, and you see how far its power extends. As you learnt the bad from my people, why did you not learn the good in their customs, conduct, and social life, and act in the same way? You learnt their evil and taught them evil. Do not think that the man who tells you this hates you. If God knew your character from the beginning and loved you, how could I hate you? I therefore say this only to save you from your enemies.'

The messengers answered as follows: 'We have heard well, my lord, what you have said. These are all the words of a pious and just king, who shows mercy when he rebukes. But we shall offer some defence for our sins, if we are granted permission.' The king said: 'May you know how to answer! I am not trying to win an argument; let the honour I have shown you by speaking to you at such length in private suffice.'

They replied: 'Of all the maladies Your Majesty has spoken of, you have still forgotten one very painful affliction from which we suffer: no one pleads our cause without some envy or hatred colouring his words, even when the good is plain to see. What you say, O my lord, and the anger you show arise only from the way those who report the facts to you make them worse.

'As for lending at interest, that was so in former times. Afterwards it was ordered that it should no longer be practised, and we ceased to do so, except during the past three months: we were compelled to lend to them at interest, for they could neither plough nor sow without it. Remembering the royal decree, we came to the palace, but could not speak to you. The viceroy asked what we wanted; we told him what had happened. He answered that we were in no way guilty: if the king had prohibited it, that was for the Christians' benefit; since they did not wish to use that benefit, we were excused, provided that we took only a small, fixed interest, as we did.

'What shall we say of theft? We resemble mice: one eats the cheese, and they accuse them all. Naturally, there are bad people and good, yet the blame falls upon us. Is there no one who steals among Christians, despite all the noble qualities and high distinctions ascribed to them? Yet we see hangings for theft every day. But political

power conceals many faults as cosmetics cover the blemishes of a woman's face; exile does the opposite: it reveals a spot as small as a mustard seed and makes it the size of the Sun's globe.

'Concerning the wearing of silk, since the prohibition was proclaimed, no man has been found to have broken the ordinance. We are the messengers of your servants and the richest among them. It would not have been fitting to come to the palace except in costly clothes; yet those we wear are black and of little value.'

One of those present then said: 'The women wear silk, embroidery, and golden ornaments.' The messengers replied: 'The proclamation said only that no Jewish man should wear silk; it did not mention women. We thought it customary in kingdoms to grant women liberty and honour.' The king said: 'In that case you will go about like a charcoal-burner's donkey, and your wives like the pope's mule: that is not just.'

Concerning the gatherings, they said: 'What can we do? Our Law commands us to show kindness; may a nation as oppressed as ours find in its union the means to survive! As for music and similar things, who can resist the wish to imitate what he sees his neighbours do? All the more so the young men and children, who are difficult to restrain and lack the understanding needed to avoid what is improper.'

The king replied: 'You have a case. Do not grieve; go home and return tomorrow. Many such affairs have befallen you, and light has appeared from the midst of darkness.' The next morning they came before the king. He said that an inquiry should be made into how the affair had happened. The accusers said: 'My lord, we bring here a letter from the judges, describing how they investigated.' The viceroy said: 'Let the Jew be brought and tortured: he will confess what he did.'

The messengers said: 'If this is to be established by torture, the Jew will certainly say that he killed the man and drank his blood. Jews are fearful and physically frail; the slightest suffering makes them confess to anything.'

The king said: 'Do not fear this. I have sworn upon my faith not to condemn any Jew on the strength of inferences or confessions obtained by torture, because of what happened to me at the beginning of my reign. Two gold spoons were stolen from me. Two honourable men, named Judah Anqawa and Samuel Anqawa, came in and out of the palace. Those there said that these Jews had stolen them, according to their custom. I had them tortured; they confessed to stealing them, and I had them

hanged. Three days later the spoons were found in the possession of one of my servants. When the affair was cleared up, it became apparent that they had chosen to die at once in order to escape a lingering death under torture.'

One of the king's counsellors said that in former times no one was condemned on the strength of a confession extracted by torture. He brought a book of chronicles, and the king grew angry because it had not been brought to him in the matter of the spoons. He therefore said: 'Only the strongest of all can bring the truth of this affair to light.' The nobles said: 'And who is that?' The king replied: 'Tell me yourselves.'

They said: 'This question has already arisen in ancient times. Some say it is woman, since she could cause the first man and Solomon, with all his wisdom, to fall. A sage asked Plato which were more numerous, men or women. He answered: "Since all men listen to women, the whole world consists of women." Others say it is wine, which made Noah drunk, although through his merit the whole world had been saved. Others say it is the king, for if he orders mountains to be uprooted, they will be uprooted. Others again say it is the desire that drives human beings.'

The king said: 'These are powerful; but wealth is more powerful than all. There is no envy like that of kings, no hatred like their hatred, no ambition for honour like theirs, and no joy like that of victory. Despite all this, if money is given to a king, he will abandon the war he is waging against his enemy. Thus even the most difficult affairs are settled with money. Let it be proclaimed throughout my kingdom that whoever reveals the truth shall receive five hundred doblas (gold coins), and his household shall be free of royal taxes: you will see the truth come out.' A herald immediately went out with trumpets. On the third day a young man of eighteen came and said: 'King and lord, I fear God and shall tell what I know.' The king replied: 'You may well fear God, but you love money more. Speak: you will immediately receive a great reward.'

He said: 'I am the servant of a man named Juan de la Vera. He had quarrelled with the Jew in whose house the dead man was found, concerning land that the Jew had taken from him on account of an interest-bearing loan many years before. One night my master told me: "If you kill this Jew, I shall give you a costly silk garment and twenty doblas." I answered: "I am young and have never been involved in such a thing. Do it yourself: a man's strength comes with age."

'After this I saw my master send for six of his neighbours. When they arrived, he told me to go out into the street. I thought there must be something afoot and listened behind the door. I heard my master say: "After what these Jews did, as every-

one knows, to our Saviour, it is right to kill them. If kings protect them, it is for their own profit, because of the tribute they pay. A man is being buried today, and his grave is near us. Let us take him out and throw him into the house of this Jew, our neighbour. The people will rise, and we shall share the spoils."

'The neighbours said: "But if the grave is found empty, the affair will immediately be known." My master said: "There is a large stone near the grave; we shall put it in the dead man's place." They went away and were slow to return; as for me, I fell asleep and learnt no more.'

Juan de la Vera was summoned. He answered: 'King and lord, this boy's testimony is not admissible: he bears me ill will over his wages.' The king said: 'Now we no longer need the boy. Let people go and see whether the stone is found there instead of a corpse: the stone will be the witness against you.' They went and found the stone, as the boy had said.

Juan de la Vera said: 'The Jew took out the body and put the stone there.' The king said: 'Wretch! You say that the Jews took it out to draw its blood. Once a man is dead, what blood comes out of him?' During this discussion two men arrived who testified that they had seen Juan de la Vera carrying the body that night, without knowing for what purpose.

The king said to the nobles: 'I have already told you that nothing is as powerful as money. Praised be he who reveals the truth!' He ordered Juan de la Vera to be buried up to his head and left there until he died, and the neighbours to be hanged. Fear gripped the country, and calm returned.

Toledo in the Sixteenth Century

Georg Braun and Frans Hogenberg, plate of 1572, edition of 1582. The account takes place in Écija; this view of Toledo shows another Castilian centre and does not depict the judicial scene. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

Court and places: unresolved identifications

The account names an Alfonso, his fourth regnal year, Écija or Osuna, Palma and several delegates. These details suggest a Castilian setting, but no contemporary record bringing together Juan de la Vera, the two Anqawas, the delegates and the substituted corpse has been identified among the sources consulted. A precise date or an identification with better-known people of the same name would therefore be premature. The Écija/Osuna variant and the missing regnal number in Spanish are material limitations. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

A comparable royal procedure, without verification of this trial

Partidas VII.24.2, compiled under Alfonso X, discusses ritual-murder accusations connected with Good Friday and reserves knowledge of the facts to the king before punishment. This is a legal text reporting an allegation, not evidence that the alleged rite existed. Laws 4–6 of the same title protect certain religious practices and prohibit forced conversion while preserving a highly unequal status. This framework illuminates the appeal to court and the argument over royal protection; it does not identify Ibn Verga's hearing with a case in royal records. [S038]

Confession under torture: a necessary legal distinction

The counsellor's alleged rule is broader than that of the Partidas. VII.30.1 permits torture as an investigative method; VII.30.4 then requires confirmation of the confession outside the torture session and release if it is found false. The same text nevertheless allows renewed torture in certain cases when the accused retracts. The account therefore expresses a criticism of forced confession that should not be converted into an exact description of Castilian law. Without another located record, the two-spoon episode remains a precedent narrated by the king within this account. [S038]

The strongest power: an earlier literary tradition

The competition between wine, the king, women and truth appears in Josephus, Antiquities XI.3.2–7: Darius consults three guards, and Zerubbabel wins by defending the power of truth. Mountains levelled at a king's command already occur in that version. Ibn Verga gives the motif a different setting: Alfonso awards victory to money because a reward will expose the plot. The parallel traces an older story pattern; it establishes neither direct copying from Josephus nor the historicity of the Spanish hearing. The maxim about men and women attributed to Plato has not been identified here in a Platonic dialogue. [S027]

Scriptural details that clarify the account

Exodus 12:15–20 explains the reference to unleavened food during the festival: it prohibits leaven and prescribes unleavened bread, rather than a ritual week-long fast. The young servant's refusal and reply recall Judges 8:20–21: the young Jether is afraid to draw his sword, and Gideon is asked to act himself with a man's strength. The parallel supports an intelligible translation of the phrase while leaving the medieval anecdote in its own setting. [S039 ; S040]

Adam, Noah and Solomon as examples in the contest

The courtiers' briefly mentioned examples can be identified. The woman who causes the first man's fall refers to Genesis 3:6 and 3:17; Noah's drunkenness to Genesis 9:20–21; and the influence of women on Solomon to 1 Kings 11:1–4. In the last passage, the issue is the king's inclination towards other gods, rather than romantic weakness detached from its setting. The speakers use these episodes to compare different powers: desire, wine and authority.

The story's conclusion turns the contest into a method of inquiry: the promised money brings a servant forward, after which discovery of the emptied grave and the arrival of witnesses allow his statement to be checked. Even within the anecdote's own logic, therefore, the king does more than purchase an accusation. The ending explains why he makes wealth prevail where the tradition recounted by Josephus made truth prevail. Biblical references establish the origin of the examples, whereas the material checks belong to this literary trial, for which no independent judicial record has been found in the sources consulted. [S041 ; S042 ; S043 ; S027 ; H1928 ; E1744]

Translation Choices

Place and fourth regnal year

Spanish names Osuna and gives no regnal year number. Hebrew 1928 gives Isiga, identifiable as Écija, and the fourth year; Wiener 1856 confirms Écija and that year. These agreeing details are adopted. They do not by themselves identify the king: the translation retains "Alfonso of Spain", without a regnal number. Palma likewise receives no more specific identification. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Fasting or remaining in distress

Spanish says that the refugees "were in great distress", while Hebrew hith'annu (התענו, "they afflicted themselves" or "they fasted") permits both senses. The reference to prohibited food and Wiener's fasteten favour "fasted". Their conduct while in hiding does not mean that every kind of food was forbidden to them. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Names and titles

Benveniste, Anqawa and ben Shoshin follow the Hebrew forms; Spanish has Benbeniste, Ancoua and Bensuçan. Ha-nasi (הנשיא, "the prince" or "the leader") is a title: its use does not identify this delegate with the sixteenth-century Joseph Nasi. In the spoon episode Hebrew clearly gives both men the name Anqawa, which Spanish leaves less explicit. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The stolen object and witnesses

Spanish can suggest that human witnesses already accuse the possessor of the object. Hebrew and German make possession itself the evidence against him. That reading is adopted because the next reply expressly distinguishes a theft witnessed by others from finding a body that someone else may have planted. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Interest, political power and exile

Usura and ribbit (ריבית, "interest on a loan") here denote lending for a return. The next passage specifies permission for a small, fixed interest: "usury" could misleadingly imply an excessive rate. The mustard-seed image magnifies the exile's faults rather than placing a tiny blemish against the Sun. Spanish solimán names a cosmetic, whereas Hebrew and Wiener speak of a fair complexion. The intelligible Spanish image is retained. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Two accusations absent from Spanish

Hebrew and German preserve two further elements in the royal speech. After the processions, Hebrew reads: “Fourthly, when you dine with a non-Jew, you rinse the cup because he has touched it. The non-Jews say: ‘We complain of our king, who has admitted to our country people who mock us and call us unclean.’” Wiener renders the gesture as “you set aside the cup he has touched”, rather than rinsing it. After music comes: “Sixthly, why do you teach your sons fencing when you do not go to war? It is only so that you can better kill the Christian!” These words spoken by the character are translated in full here: they supplement the abbreviated speech transmitted by Spanish without being silently inserted into it. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Fearfulness and confessions under torture

The previous “tender-hearted” could suggest kindness. Hebrew describes fearfulness and physical frailty in a discussion of resistance to pain. “Fearful and physically frail” expresses that meaning. This characterisation belongs to the delegates’ argument. The Spanish oath “upon my faith” is shorter than Hebrew and German: “by the sacrifice of our Saviour”. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Spoons, bowls and a book of chronicles

Spanish cucharas and Hebrew kappot (כפות, here “spoons”) support “gold spoons”, against Wiener’s Schalen, “bowls”. Conversely, Spanish “book of laws” is corrected to “book of chronicles”: Hebrew sefer divrei ha-yamim (ספר דברי הימים, “book of annals”) agrees with German Chronik. The counsellor thus invokes a historical precedent; no particular law code can be identified. Comparison with the Partidas, discussed above, further cautions against turning this sentence into a claim that torture had legally been abolished. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The youth’s strength and the neighbours’ departure

“A man’s strength comes with age” makes the young servant’s reply intelligible: he contrasts his inexperience with his master’s maturity. The phrase echoes Judges 8:20–21. Later, “they went away and were slow to return” follows Hebrew, where Spanish says “they went away and gathered together” and Wiener “after agreeing”. The Hebrew detail explains why the boy falls asleep. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

An insult in the fuller versions

In the murder proposal Hebrew and German read: “If you kill this Jew, this swine, I shall give you a very costly silk garment and twenty gold coins.” Spanish omits the insult. The difference is preserved here as a variant of the conspirator’s speech. Doblas, retained in the narrative, is the Spanish name of a gold coin; Hebrew kefulot (כפולות, literally “doubles”) and Wiener’s generic Goldstücke do not establish its weight or value here. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 52–61 ; H1928, section 8 ; G1856, p. 48–56.

Account IX

Sisebut and Forced Conversion

The ninth persecution took place when the Goths ruled in the western lands and other kingdoms, above all in the city of Rome. In those days a mighty king reigned there, named Sisebut; this was in the year eight hundred according to the Christians' reckoning. He sought to make all the Jews in Spain receive baptism in place of circumcision. If they did so, they would enjoy the same standing in his kingdom as the Christians who practised his religion.

Understanding his intention, the Jews came from all the towns to gather in the principal city, where they fasted and raised their voices in weeping and lamentation. Christians came to ask what was happening. When told, they answered: 'Accept what is asked of you. The king is obstinate and does not change his mind; you will obtain nothing from him by ingenuity or by spending money. If you will not grant this, he will compel you to abandon your entire Law, and you will see that your fasts avail you nothing. Give way on this one point, then, so that he does not demand more.'

They replied: 'The commandment of circumcision is the foundation of our entire Law. You say he asks us for a limited concession, but he asks nothing less than everything. We shall all die rather than abandon one commandment of the Law, all the more the foundation of the whole Law.'

They immediately gathered and came before the king. They told him to put them to death: they would not abandon a single commandment, still less the greatest. The king said: 'Poor fools! Why have you adopted so foolish a resolution? I swear that, if you do not receive baptism, I shall make you abandon everything, and your resistance will avail you nothing.'

He then ordered that, if they were not baptised within a month, they should be forced to abandon their entire Law and then killed. The Jews brought the nobles a rich gift of silver and gold, so that they would persuade the king to take their property for the war and leave them their Law. The king replied: 'Among kings I shall be called a greedy king. They will say that I asked them to be baptised only so that they would come to a financial settlement with me. Besides, these poor people owe me allegiance to a religion, not money: I can compel them to accept mine, as they would do to us if they had a kingdom.'

Robert, the scholar, replied: 'My lord, Moses their teacher and Joshua his servant compelled no nation to accept their Law. They required only that it observe the seven commandments of the first man, Adam. Furthermore, whenever Joshua approached a fortified city to fight against it, he had it proclaimed that he would grant peace to anyone willing to make peace with him and accept the law — by which I mean the seven commandments; that anyone who wished to leave the city and flee should flee; and that anyone who wished to fight should draw his sword and come.'

The king said: 'Joshua was king in his time, and I am king in mine. Of the three courses, I shall take the one that suits me best: let them accept just one commandment instead of the seven that Joshua compelled them to accept.'

After this the king sent for the Jews and said to them: 'I seek your welfare; why do you reject it so firmly? I have heard from the pope and the cardinals that anyone who does not receive baptism remains defiled for ever and cannot be saved.' A Jewish scholar replied: 'It is written in our Law that Israel scorned a great gift God had given them: the desirable land flowing with milk and honey. What was their punishment?' The king said: 'It is obvious: not to see it.' The scholar replied: 'Let our king hear us: Your Majesty grants us heaven, and we scorn it; let our punishment be not to go there.'

The king said: 'No one should be compelled over material things; the Holy Land was a material possession. In matters concerning the soul's salvation, however, compulsion is necessary, as it is used on a child to make him learn.' He immediately had all the leaders of the people arrested. They remained imprisoned for many days in harsh conditions. Under these great hardships and sufferings, most of the Jews of Spain abandoned the Law. After this king's death, they went to seek God in other places. Many found Him; others perished without finding refuge.

Sisebut

Mariano de la Roca y Delgado, Sisebut, 1854. This imaginary portrait belongs to a historical series of Spanish rulers. It represents the king named in the account, but preserves no visual evidence of his actual appearance. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

The historical core: conversion under Sisebut

Isidore of Seville, a contemporary of the king, states in §60 of his History of the Goths that Sisebut used royal power to compel Jews to adopt Christianity. He criticises that method of conversion while praising the ruler's qualities elsewhere. He dates Sisebut's accession to Hispanic Era 650, corresponding to 612, and assigns him eight years and six months of rule; the succession leads to 621. This supplies independent early support for a policy of forced conversion, but not for Ibn Verga's dialogues, one-month deadline or imprisonment details. The year 800 and a reign at Rome do not fit this Spanish Visigothic setting. [S044]

The council of 633 confirms coercion and its aftermath

Canon 57 of the Fourth Council of Toledo expressly refers to people compelled to become Christians under Sisebut. It prohibits future compulsion to believe, yet orders those already baptised, even by force, to remain Christian. It therefore confirms imposed baptisms and explains the difficulties faced by those seeking to resume Jewish practice after the king's death. It supplies neither a count of converts nor the destinations of the refugees mentioned at the end of the account. [S045]

The legal tradition behind Joshua's three alternatives

Maimonides, Laws of Kings 6:5, transmits the tradition of three messages sent by Joshua: leave, make peace or fight. The same chapter, 6:1–4, links peace to acceptance of the seven commandments and political submission; it does not describe a general absence of coercion. In 9:1 Maimonides distinguishes six commandments given to Adam and a seventh added for Noah. The account's "seven commandments of the first man" thus compresses a tradition whose details differ between texts. These passages clarify the character's argument without establishing that a scholar called Robert presented it to Sisebut. [S046 ; S047]

The rejected land in Numbers

The reply about heaven rests on Numbers 14:22–23: after refusal to enter the promised land, the condemned generation is denied sight of it. The account turns that passage into a debating argument: let rejection of paradise be punished only by exclusion from it. This is an identifiable use of scripture in a disputation tradition, separate from the historical information about Sisebut's reign. [S048]

Circumcision and the contemporary witness's language

The Jewish reply about the importance of the commandment is clarified by Genesis 17:9–14. Circumcision is the sign of the covenant with Abraham and his descendants; the text prescribes the eighth day and presents its abandonment as a breach of the covenant. This explains why the characters refuse to treat its proposed replacement by baptism as a minor concession. The Bible supplies the religious meaning invoked in the dialogue, without attesting the words spoken before Sisebut.

Isidore's external testimony also has a scriptural construction. In section 60, his criticism of Sisebut's zeal echoes Romans 10:2: zeal without knowledge. He reproaches the king for employing power where persuasion through the reasons of faith was required, yet continues to praise his other qualities. This is a reservation expressed within a project of Christianisation, rather than approval of the Jewish reply. Comparing both texts makes the speakers' arguments intelligible while preserving the contemporary chronicler's own position. [S049 ; S050 ; S044]

Translation Choices

Sisebut, the date and Rome

Spanish Sisboc and Hebrew Shishboq (שישבוק, the transmitted proper name) most probably correspond to Sisebut, the name adopted by Wiener. Isidore of Seville confirms that Sisebut compelled Jews to be baptised, supporting this normalisation. Rome and the year 800, however, occur in all three compared versions. They remain as the narrative's statements, with their chronology corrected in the historical commentary rather than silently replaced by a date absent from the text. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The promised status and money

Hebrew and German clearly attach "practising his religion" to the king's Christians. Baptism is presented as a condition of equal standing with them; the text does not promise that converts could continue Jewish observance. We therefore use "the same standing". In the Christians' warning Spanish speaks of subtlety and skill, while Hebrew and Wiener expressly say that expenditure will achieve nothing. That detail is adopted because it anticipates the attempted financial intervention that follows. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

A longer reply in Hebrew and German

Before condemning their decision, the king says in Hebrew, followed by Wiener: "Poor, foolish and presumptuous people! You ask in your prayer: 'May the kingdom of arrogance soon be uprooted.' But you pray against yourselves, for you have no kingdom other than arrogance! Why have you taken so foolish a decision?" Spanish abbreviates the reply by omitting the play on the prayer. The longer reading is fully translated here as a variant of the royal speech. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Robert the scholar and the seven commandments

Roberto el sabio and Robertus der Weise identify a learned interlocutor; "Robert the Wise" could improperly suggest a king bearing that byname. Hebrew dat (דת, "religion" or "religious rule") does not always mean the whole Mosaic Law: the speaker himself specifies the seven commandments. The three courses are leaving, making peace or fighting; they are not three political parties. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Cardinals or bishops; salvation of the soul

Spanish speaks of the pope and cardinals; Hebrew names the pope and prelates, rendered by Wiener as bishops. No evidence identifies the historical entourage intended: the Spanish formulation is retained with this alternative. The final argument contrasts material possessions with the soul's salvation; the former "bodily matters" was an obscure literal rendering. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 61–64 ; H1928, section 9 ; G1856, p. 56–59.

Account X

Joseph at the Castilian Court

The tenth persecution took place in the time of King Don Alfonso, son of King Don Sancho, son of Alfonso the Great, who reigned over Castile, Toledo, León, Galicia, Seville, Córdoba, Murcia, Jaén, the Algarve and Molina: ten kingdoms. Alfonso was one year old when he became king. The great lords therefore wished to entrust the government to two infantes (princes of the royal family): one was Don Pedro, son of King Don Sancho, and the other Don Juan. Both died in war on the same day. They then raised Don Juan, son of the Infante Don Manuel, to the kingship.

At that time there was a man at Écija called Joseph, son of Ephraim, son of Abiboshet the Levite (a descendant of Levi). God stirred his heart to go to court and collect the tribute and royal dues, which he always did justly. A man of understanding, he could play musical instruments, was very handsome and enjoyed divine assistance. Seeing his uprightness, the king put him in charge of the affairs of the kingdom. No one was greater than he throughout Castile: he was second only to the king and foremost among the Jews. He had sons of great lords as servants, who ate at his table. He acquired a chariot and horses, and fifty men who ran before him.

At that time there lived a man called Gonzalo Martínez, a very valiant man and Joseph's servant. Joseph had appointed him governor of several places in the kingdom, but he rose against him. Jealous of Joseph his master, he said: 'Can a Jew be allowed to rule over us?' He sought a way to destroy him, saying: 'God has withdrawn from them: they abandoned Him, and He abandoned them. Now I shall be able to take revenge on Joseph and the others.'

He went to the king and said: 'My lord, if you heed my advice, I shall give you great riches with which to wage war.' The king said: 'And how will that be?' Gonzalo Martínez said: 'Sell me ten Jews from your kingdom, and I shall give you eight talents of silver (an ancient measure of weight) for your treasury.' 'Which ones?' said the king. Gonzalo said: 'The first is Joseph, whom you chose as governor and who has exhausted your treasury and your subjects' resources; then Samuel ben Waqar the physician, whom you made your adviser; and eight other rich men of the kingdom. You must sell them to me with their children and their households.'

The king said: 'Let it be as you say.' Gonzalo said: 'Let this be written and sealed with the royal seal; I shall deliver the silver without any shortfall.' The king ordered the seal to be given to Gonzalo. A deed was drawn up, as the persecutor ordered, declaring that the king had sold Joseph, Samuel the physician and eight other notables to Gonzalo Martínez, together with their children, their lands and all their property.

Joseph and Samuel were arrested on the same day. Joseph died in prison; the king was greatly grieved and ordered that he should be taken to Córdoba with great honour, accompanied by many chariots and horsemen. He released Joseph's wife and children from all claims, accounts and demands concerning the sums he had collected.

Gonzalo seized Samuel and two of his brothers, imprisoning them with their children. Large quantities of silver and gold and a substantial treasure were found in Samuel's possession. Gonzalo put irons on his feet and tortured him; he died under the torments. He was placed in a coffin in the prison and was not buried until a full year had passed. No man of that time was as distinguished as Samuel: a great scholar, royal adviser and observer of the stars. Samuel's deeds were recorded in the Chronicles of the Kings of Castile.

After this the king raised Gonzalo above all the great lords and made him Grand Master of the Order of Alcántara. He acquired a magnificent household, grew proud and sought to destroy all the Jews, beginning with those who frequented the palace and then proceeding to the others. Seeing that he could not attack them all together, since the king might not allow it, he brought accusations against the leading representatives of Israel, Don Samuel ben Yaish and Rabbi Moses Abudiel, who interceded for their people with the lords of the land. He took them to his house and said: 'The king is demanding a great sum from you, which you will be unable to pay.' He pretended to seek a settlement between them, while seeking their destruction. God showed them mercy: they reached an agreement with the king for a certain sum. Moses returned to his place at court; he was the king's secretary, and his power grew in the kingdom of Castile. The king learnt that Gonzalo Martínez was speaking against the Jews.

It happened at that time that the Moors made war on the king of Castile. A great multitude of them crossed the sea with Abu Malik, son of Abu al-Hasan, king of Morocco. The king of Castile was greatly distressed, and the lords said: 'What can we do against such a multitude?' Gonzalo replied: 'I shall offer advice by which a great sum of money can be raised.' They said: 'What advice?' He replied: 'If it please the king,

let him order the seizure of all the Jews' property throughout the kingdom; I shall give four million in money for everything found. Furthermore, let him drive them all out of his kingdom: I shall get the people to give the king as much again, in place of the tribute and dues the Jews pay him every year.'

The king heard him and consulted his advisers. As they said that it seemed very good to them, Gonzalo said: 'How could my loyalty be shown except by such counsel? And if you fear God, He has already forgotten them and driven them from Him; He has not looked upon them again. If He is angry with them, how can you show them pity? For so long they have had neither king, nor magistrate, nor priest, nor law! They are a rebellious people who bring neither help nor profit: when the king goes out to war, they eat and drink at home. What use is there in leaving them in the kingdom? Destroy them; there is no reason to let them stay. Let letters be sent to banish all those living in the kingdom; let it be commanded that whoever is found to have a Jew in his house shall have his goods confiscated and be put to death. Let the king appoint officers to guard all the booty, the silver and gold, and bring it to him.'

The king heard this and remained silent. The lords rebuked Gonzalo, saying that he had not given good advice: the custom of Castile and its kings was to love the Jews and protect them. 'Who would obey the king in such a matter?' God moved the heart of Archbishop Don Gil and put words into his mouth to answer that oppressor. He said: 'Who made you the king's adviser? You give him counsel that brings shame upon your house. The Jews are a valuable treasury for the king, and you seek to destroy them; you want him to do what his fathers did not do! It is not the Jews you hate, but the king himself.'

The king heard this and made no answer. The lords and the others rebuked Gonzalo: 'You do not love the king; it is he whom you hate, not the Jews.' Moses heard this and was afraid. He wrote to all the Jews to inform them. They gathered in their towns, fasted, wept and cried to the God of their fathers: 'O Lord, let us not be destroyed through this wicked man's counsel! Righteousness belongs to You, and shame to us, to the man of Judah and the survivor of Jerusalem who are in Spain. The peoples will hear, come against us and wipe us out: what will You do for Your great name? Why should You be like a man bewildered, You who are among us? Answer us, Lord, answer us! The peoples will know that You fight for Israel.' The cry of the children of Israel rose to God, and He delivered them from their persecutor.

The Moors assembled and came in great numbers. The king mustered his own men to prevent them from crossing the sea and made Gonzalo his general. Gonzalo gathered the army and advanced confidently against the Ishmaelites (the Muslim troops). He killed many of them, who lay stretched out on the plain, as a great panic sent by God spread among them. Ten thousand of them fell that day, all men bearing swords. A man drew his bow at random and struck Abu Malik, their general, between the joints of his armour. This prince, here called "the king", said to his young servant: 'Take me out of the battle: I am wounded.' He fell from his chariot and died.

Gonzalo Martínez left the battle joyful and satisfied. He said in his heart: 'Now the king will fulfil my wishes against the Jews, and I shall take revenge on my enemies.' He did not know that God had withdrawn from him. As he came away victorious, God, jealous for His people, turned the king's heart against him. The king ordered a knight to arrest him. The knight departed and found him in the countryside with his horses and chariots. Gonzalo asked him: 'Do you come in peace?' He replied: 'No: the king has ordered me to arrest you.'

Gonzalo fled, entered a fortified town and took refuge in one of its towers. He had insolent messages sent to the king and spoke ill of him. God allowed this so that the king would not pardon him. The king was filled with anger and ordered all Gonzalo's brothers arrested. After imprisoning them, he seized Gonzalo's property and that of his brothers throughout his kingdom and had it brought to the royal treasury.

The king then ordered Gonzalo's arrest. He had barricaded himself in that tower, and they fought against him. He spoke against the king; his men shot an arrow from the tower and struck the knight who carried the king's arms; he fell dead at the king's feet. Furious, the king ordered the tower to be set on fire. Gonzalo was captured; the king put him on trial and commanded that his throat be cut. This was done, and he was then burnt.

Blessed be the merciful God, who moved the king's heart to avenge His people and saved them in the twelfth month, the first Adar (אדר ראשון, the additional month in a Jewish leap year)! Israel then sang this song to the Lord: 'I shall sing to the Lord: He has shown His greatness and seen His people's distress. The Lord is a man of war; He has fought for us. Your right hand, Lord, is glorious in power; in the greatness of Your majesty, You overthrow those who rise against You, and You have

brought the consequences of his deeds back upon his own head.' All who spoke of his downfall said: 'How the oppressor has vanished! The Lord has broken the rod of the wicked; his pride has descended into the grave, into hell for ever.'

After this, when King Alfonso had grown calm, he remembered Gonzalo and what he had done. His servants said to him: 'Let the book of the Chronicles be brought and read before the king.' In it they found recorded what Gonzalo had imputed to Samuel and his brothers, together with the deed of sale. One of the king's servants said: 'If it please the king, let the persecutor's brothers and all their possessions be sold, because he laid hands on the Jews: let him be repaid according to his deeds!' The king commanded it. Gonzalo's property and that of his brothers were sold to the Jews at the palace. The deed was sealed with the seal taken from Gonzalo, and that seal was handed to Moses. He went out very happy, as were all the other Jews in the kingdom of Castile, at the good the Lord had done for Israel.

Royal Law under Alfonso XI

Opening page of the Ordenamiento de Alcalá, promulgated by Alfonso XI in 1348, in a fourteenth-century manuscript. The collection illuminates the legal world of the Castilian court; it does not attest the conversation between the king and Joseph. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

The reign and identifiable people

The king is Alfonso XI of Castile. The opening genealogy omits his father, Fernando IV: Sancho IV was his grandfather, and Alfonso X his great-grandfather. The king's minority and the two infantes refer to the regency that began in 1312; Pedro and Juan died in the Granada campaign of 1319. Juan Manuel was recognised as the young king's guardian by some town councils without becoming king of Castile; chapter XVIII describes his recognition at Cuenca, Madrid, Cuéllar and Sepúlveda. The royal chronicle preserves distinctions that Ibn Verga's opening compresses. Don Gil corresponds to Gil de Albornoz, archbishop of Toledo from 1338 to 1350; the Spanish version's title of cardinal anticipates his later career. Gonzalo Martínez's office as Grand Master of Alcántara and his conflict with the king securely identify the narrative's setting. A document preserved in Zaragoza (ES/ADPZ 744/19), dated 21 October 1312, concerns the young Alfonso's custody; its description was consulted in DARA. Dates are checked against García Fernández's documentary study: the erroneous marginal years at the beginning of the 1787 printing are not adopted. [S051 ; S052 ; E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S056 ; S057]

Joseph and Samuel in the royal chronicle

Chapters XCVIII–XCIX of the Crónica de Alfonso XI name the physician Don Simuel Abenhuacar and Don Yuzaf, formerly the king's favourite and adviser. They describe mint revenues being leased to private contractors for an agreed payment, frontier customs and rivalry between the two men: Yuzaf outbids Samuel for revenues previously held by him; Samuel subsequently obtains a restriction on exports to the kingdom of Granada. This corroborates their involvement in royal finance, while offering a different perspective from their joint presentation in Ibn Verga. The passage does not corroborate their sale to Gonzalo or the retention of Samuel's corpse for a year. The royal chronicler's economic accusations remain his own assertions; they do not themselves constitute an audited finding. [S051 ; H1928 ; E1744 ; G1856]

The battle and Abu Malik's death

Chapter CCIII locates the fighting near the vega de Pagana and the río de Patrite. Abu Malik is the Marinid prince Abū Mālik, son of Abū al-Ḥasan. The Castilian chronicle describes him fleeing on foot, hiding in undergrowth, receiving two lance wounds from a soldier who does not recognise him, and dying beside a stream where he tries to drink. It reports an estimate of more than ten thousand killed and captured together, which does not precisely corroborate Ibn Verga's ten thousand dead. The arrow shot without deliberate aim, the joint of the armour and the command to leave the fighting instead reproduce 1 Kings

22:34–35, the death of Ahab. The combatant who dies in this narrative is Abu Malik, not Alfonso XI. That distinction corrects a serious ambiguity in the previous translation. [S051 ; S053 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; E1744]

Gonzalo's downfall: corroboration and different explanations

Chapters CCIV–CCVIII corroborate the loss of royal favour, rebellion, provocative letters, refuge in the order's strongholds, missiles fired at the king, and execution followed by the burning of the body. The final fortress is Valencia de Alcántara. The chronicle explains the political conflict through Leonor de Guzmán's hostility, connected especially with her brother's accession to the mastership of Santiago, and Gonzalo's subsequent disobedience; Ibn Verga presents the deliverance of the Jews. These explanations should not be conflated. The chronicle specifies that the castle gates are burned and Gonzalo subsequently surrenders from the great tower; it names Alfonso Fernández Coronel as the executioner. These supply additional, sometimes corrective details, rather than confirming every intention attributed to the protagonists. [S051 ; E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The narrative's biblical construction

The offer of money for a people accused of being of no service to the king, the royal ring, the annals opened before the ruler and the final transfer of the seal explicitly connect this narrative with Esther 3, 6 and 8. The song reworks Exodus 15 and the oppressor's fall in Isaiah 14. These correspondences explain the chronicle's language and some of its narrative transitions. They do not supply an additional medieval deed of sale or documentary proof of the proposed sum. [S054 ; S055 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; E1744]

The collective prayer: four passages brought together

The communities' supplication is constructed from precise biblical passages. "Righteousness belongs to you, and shame to us" recalls Daniel 9:7–8; the reference to the people of Judah and Jerusalem is transferred to the exiles in Spain. Fear that the nations will exterminate Israel, followed by the question about God's "great name", echoes Joshua 7:8–9 after the defeat at Ai. God's comparison to a bewildered man, despite his presence among the people, comes from Jeremiah 14:8–9. Finally, the repeated "Answer us" adapts Elijah's prayer in 1 Kings 18:36–37, asking that the people recognise God.

The combination gives Castile's Jews a shared biblical voice without removing their place of exile. It also clarifies the transition to the battle: the expected answer becomes the deliverance subsequently narrated. These references are more precise than a general comparison with Esther, identifying the prayer's language. They do not establish that an identical formula was recited in every town, or that Alfonso's military intentions were those attributed to him by the narrator. [S058 ; S059 ; S060 ; S043 ; H1928]

Translation Choices

Names and ranks: comparison without forced uniformity

Molina is retained with the German, against Spanish Málaga and the ambiguous Hebrew form מוליגא (Moliga, a spelling of the place name): the Castilian royal title names Molina as a lordship, distinct from the Andalusian city of Málaga. Écija, given by Hebrew and German, replaces Spanish Usuna. The patronymic Abiboshet is preserved with Spanish and Hebrew; Wiener offers Benveniste. The royal chronicle confirms Yuzaf but does not settle his full genealogy here. Samuel ben Waqar corresponds more closely to Hebrew and the royal chronicle's Abenhuacar than Spanish Benyacar. "Grand Master", conversely, follows Spanish and the royal chronicle against Wiener's "bishop"; "Archbishop Don Gil" follows the meaning of the Hebrew title and the historical office. "Second only to the king" avoids turning a statement of rank into a precisely documented administrative office of viceroy. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S051 ; S052]

The genealogy and regency are not rewritten

Alfonso's erroneous genealogy and Juan Manuel's elevation "to the kingship" belong to the compared versions. They therefore remain in the translation, with their historical correction in the commentary. Infante is explained as a dynastic rank; the word does not itself mean "viceroy", an explanatory equivalence used in the German. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Two differences in quantity and an unspecified currency

Spanish asks for eight quintals of silver; Hebrew has ככרי כסף שמונה (kikkerei kesef shemonah, "eight talents of silver"), as does German. Talents is retained without modern conversion: a biblical weight is not automatically a Castilian quintal. For all the property, Spanish has four hundred thousand ducats; Hebrew has four hundred myriads, or four million, and Wiener four million gold pieces. The translation retains four million, shared by Hebrew and German, but leaves the currency unspecified as in Hebrew. The second payment is the same amount. None of the historical passages consulted provides the contract that would allow these sums to be judged economically; the adopted number therefore rests on textual comparison, not presumed plausibility. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The arrow, the dying figure and the execution

Spanish abridges the passage so far that Gonzalo appears to kill Abimelech himself. Hebrew and German have an unnamed archer: "A man drew his bow without deliberate aim and struck Abu Malik between the pieces of his armour." This reading, consistent with 1 Kings 22, is adopted. "The king" in the following sentence designates this Muslim prince; the clarification prevents the death being assigned to the king of Castile, who continues acting immediately afterwards. The ending retains "cut his throat", supported by Spanish degollar,

the Hebrew verb and the royal chronicle, against Wiener's "strangle". The commentary carefully distinguishes Ibn Verga's account of Abu Malik's death from the Castilian chronicle's. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S053 ; S051]

Prayer, annals and calendar

After "You fight for Israel", Spanish continues the prayer with petitions; Hebrew and German return to narration: the cry rises and deliverance follows. That transition is adopted. Similarly, Spanish asks for the accusation to be entered in the annals; Hebrew and German describe the discovery of what is already written there, consistent with Esther 6. Spanish gives only Adar, while Hebrew and German give the first Adar: that detail is preserved without assigning it an exact Gregorian date. Finally, in the song the printed Hebrew בנו (banu, here "against us") would give the opposite meaning; Spanish and German have "for us", which is adopted as consistent with the celebration of deliverance and the immediate context. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S054]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 64–71 ; H1928, section 10 ; G1856, p. 59–65.

Account XI

Exile and Trials of Faithfulness

The eleventh persecution took place in the year five thousand two hundred and fifty (1489–1490). General measures of persecution were then imposed in Savoy, Piedmont, Lombardy, Sicily and Rossia; neither their particulars nor their cause is found in writing. In Florence too there were persecution and expulsion, and many Jews abandoned the Law. Even after this they found no rest, according to the divine word: 'And among these nations you shall find no rest.'

After some time, many sought to leave for other kingdoms where they could resume practising their religion openly. When their intention to return to Judaism was discovered, people rose against them by the thousand and seized their property for the king. Many of those who were in Sardinia were killed along the roads.

Those who remained in Provence after this persecution practised Judaism in secret, especially the women. They presented these practices as mere habits: when asked why they lit a lamp on the eve of the Sabbath, and why they brought vegetables and various festive dishes to the table on Friday evening, they said their mothers had been accustomed to do so.

Joseph son of Verga said: 'I heard another similar thing from the excellent physician Moses Hamon. Going to war with the most powerful king on earth, Sultan Suleiman, he saw closed shops in Egypt. The inhabitants closed them on the Sabbath, although they were fully Muslim. He asked them why they closed them. They replied that they knew nothing about it and had no intention other than following their fathers' example, having seen them close their shops on the Sabbath. The custom went back to the terrible persecution and forced conversions that had once taken place in that country.'

Returning to the subject, I say that at the time of this calamity a great plague struck all the peoples of those lands, and none of those compelled to abandon the Law died. Seeing so great a plague, the people said: 'Since it falls upon us and not upon the forced converts, let us order them to go wherever they wish.' A great number then departed to save themselves. But many remained in those lands, thinking it was some stratagem by the people to discover their true faith.

A great many therefore stayed, practising Judaism despite the inquiries to which they were subjected and observing the Law of Moses as best they could. After some time, inquisitors rose against them and inflicted great suffering: they began burning them and taking their property. At last a king had pity on them and ordered that there should be no more inquisitors in his kingdom, and that no one should bring accusations against them, for they acted in all sincerity.

The Crossing of the Sea in the Haggadah
Rylands Haggadah, Catalonia, 1335–1340: the Israelites cross the sea while Pharaoh's army is engulfed. This Exodus image accompanies the biblical language of deliverance and exile in Account XI; it does not depict its medieval migrations. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

A general date does not settle every location

The Hebrew year 5250 corresponds to 1489–1490; it should not be read as 1250 CE, the number printed in the Spanish version. The account brings together several regions without naming their authorities, then moves to Provence and an Ottoman anecdote. Loeb's documentary study records a Savoy investigation conducted by Jean Bectoz in 1466 and Louis of Provence's action against Hebrew books; it separately cites Ibn Verga's account 11 under 1490. This provides a precise local lead, but does not justify dating every episode to 1466 or treating all the measures as one decree. Florence and Provence remain separate locations in Hebrew and German. [S061 ; H1928 ; E1744 ; G1856]

The physician and the limits of corroboration

The shop anecdote is expressly attributed to Joseph ibn Verga, who says that Moses Hamon told it to him. Hamon is identifiable as the Jewish physician of Suleiman I; the National Library of Israel catalogues a file in his name. That identification does not independently corroborate the shop scene or the supposed origin of Saturday closure. No city is named in the Hebrew reading "in Egypt". The king who eventually stops the prosecutions in the first story remains anonymous; the account does not permit a surviving decree to be assigned to him. The absence of deaths among forced converts is an assertion within the chronicle, not a recovered mortality record. [S062 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; E1744]

Provence: separately documented departures and conversions

Danièle Iancu-Agou's notarial research clarifies the Provençal section: local expulsions at Arles in 1493 and Tarascon in 1496 preceded the general measures of 1500–1501. Documents also trace people who remained by changing religion and name. In 1512 Louis XII still taxed new Christians of Jewish origin; the study distinguishes surviving copies of the tax list from corroboration in notarial records. Conversion, settlement and the survival of a fiscal category are thus documented. These records do not by themselves establish secret observance among all converts or identify the unnamed women in the account. Above all, they show why the year 5250 cannot date the entire sequence.

The opening quotation of Deuteronomy 28:65 foretells the absence of rest among the nations, shaping the reading of successive journeys and disappointed hopes of refuge. It is an explicit quotation, rather than an additional geographical clue. Moses Hamon's episode, presented as a recollection transmitted to Joseph ibn Verga, must remain a separate dossier from this Provençal evidence. [S064 ; S065 ; S063 ; H1928]

Translation Choices

Year and places: three actual divergences

The Hebrew number, written out in full, agrees with Wiener's 5250: that reading is retained against Spanish 1250. For the Italian city, Florence follows פלורינציא (Florentsia, "Florence") and German Florenz; Spanish has Provence here, then repeats it for the women's episode. The translation distinguishes the two. For Hamon's destination, Hebrew מצרים (Mitsrayim, "Egypt") and German Aegypten outweigh Spanish Tiberia. No particular campaign is added to resolve the discrepancy. Finally, Rossia preserves an obscure designation: German suggests Rossano with a question mark, which is insufficient to identify the city. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Conversions and inherited customs

"Return to Judaism" replaces "become Jews": all three versions describe people who had previously been Jewish and had been converted by force, called אנוסים (anusim, "people under compulsion") in Hebrew. The lights are lit on Friday before the Sabbath; ירקות (yeraqot, "vegetables") here denotes plant foods brought to the table, without implying medicinal herbs. The women's passage may express either a cautious answer or an inherited custom whose origin they no longer explain: the wording preserves their explanation without assigning them a definite intention. Similarly, "fully Muslim" conveys the Hebrew contrast without the awkward "wholly Ishmaelites". The opening quotation corresponds to Deuteronomy 28:65. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S063]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 71–73 ; H1928, section 11 ; G1856, p. 65–67.

Account XII

A Murder at Ocaña and a Jewish Envoy's Address

The twelfth persecution took place in the time of King Don Manuel, son of Alfonso, in the town of Ocaña. A little boy of three entered the house of a Christian man. The man hated the child's mother and said: 'Throw out this wicked woman's son.' When the boy did not leave quickly enough, he rose, kicked him in the belly and killed him. Seeing him dead, he hid him; when night came, he threw him through the window of his Jewish neighbour's house. The neighbour was not then in the town.

The Jewish man's wife rose while it was still night. Terror seized her and she nearly fainted: she realised that the body had been placed in her house to have her accused of murder. She went to the door to see whether she could throw him in front of some Christian's door. She heard the boy's mother crying out and searching for her son. The neighbours were telling her: 'He went into this Jew's house and never came out again; it is the eve of their Passover: this is their custom!' Hearing this, the poor Jewish woman was left breathless with terror.

She devised a way to save herself: she took the boy, fastened him against her belly and put her clothing over him. She sat on a birthing stool and cried out as though she were pregnant and feeling the pains of childbirth. She ordered her son to summon the midwife, who came; she revealed her stratagem to her.

Meanwhile, the judge arrived with his men. He searched the whole house, the chests, the oven, the well and every hiding place, but found nothing. The woman remained on the birthing stool all day. In the evening she spread the report that she had miscarried. With two of her relatives, she had the boy taken to the fields, concealed in manure, and they buried him.

The next day the Christian quarrelled with his wife and struck her on the head, putting her life in danger. She cried: 'Do you mean to kill me as you did the neighbour's son?' The boy's mother heard her and went to the judge. He ordered the man

arrested; the investigation established that it was true. Under torture he confessed to committing the murder and throwing the boy into a Jewish woman's house in order to make her responsible.

The child's mother then asked for the Jewish woman to be arrested, so that she would return her son for burial, since his killer was now known. Out of fear, the Jewish woman tried to deny it. The judge swore that she would suffer no harm on that account, provided she explained everything in detail. She therefore related the affair as it had happened. The judge was greatly pleased by the woman's intelligence and ordered a letter to be written to the king, who praised her.

A leading man of the kingdom was present. He said: 'My lord, no one matches the Jews in ingenuity. The Romans, clever and shrewd themselves, marvelled at what a man sent from Jerusalem told them. His words were recorded in the annals of Rome's rulers, and I copied them from there.' The king said: 'I shall be glad to see them and shall be grateful to you.' He brought them. This is the text, translated from Latin into the holy tongue (Hebrew):

'You who wield power! Prosperous people, blessed by fortune! The constellations of our heavens and the Lord whom we abandoned allowed Jerusalem, mistress of Asia, mother and sovereign of all the Hebrews, to be made subject to Rome and the Romans. Great indeed was Pompey's power, and great the multitude of his armies that subdued us. I say that our God's anger was far greater, and our sins, immeasurably more numerous, brought us to ruin.

'I wish to make something known to you; I regret that you have not been able to experience it yourselves. Our God is so good that, had there been ten righteous people among us amid fifty thousand wicked people, or had one of them been so good that the people might be forgiven for his sake, you would have seen, O Romans, what the Egyptians saw, and how much more powerful our God was than all your gods. Know also for certain that as long as we are sinners, you will be our masters. As long as our God's anger rests upon the Hebrews, the Romans' dominion will continue.

'On this point I hold one view, and your faith another. I cannot bring you to faith in the one God, and you will not make me worship several gods. I shall therefore leave the matter to God, who created us by His power and governs us by His goodness; I shall now state the object of my embassy.

'You know what peace Rome enjoyed with Judaea, and Judaea with Rome. We submitted to you in everything, and you refused us nothing that was just. Since nothing is more loved by all and less put into practice than peace, and nothing more hated than war, which everyone nevertheless seeks, I offer you sincere advice and ask you to consider it justly. Let us punish those who incite you to harm us; let us remove those who strive to set us against one another. The firmest foundation of peace is to remove those who disrupt it. What use is it for them to say publicly to you and us, "Peace, peace!", and then secretly to say to you and us, "War"?

'I tell you that after you deposed the Idumaean ruler because of his bad government, you sent us Coponius, Marcus, Rufus and Valerius as governors in his place. They were four abscesses, the smallest of which could have poisoned the whole Roman Empire, and all the more our poor kingdom of Palestine.

'What a calamity, if the judges sent by Rome to correct bad customs invent new vices themselves! What harm to justice, if those who should restrain the follies of youth delight in leading the dissolute! What shame for Rome, if those who should judge fairly and exemplify every virtue indulge in every vice and encourage every kind of debauchery! They have perverted and weakened justice. They have taught the youth of Judaea new forms of depravity that our fathers never heard of, that books never recorded and that our own age had not yet witnessed.

'O Romans, believe me in one thing: of all the counsels the Jews have received from Rome, let Rome receive one from Judaea. First seek to obtain things from us by request, before resorting to command. Many kingdoms perish under a captain who sheds much blood; they are preserved if they have a good judge who is no killer, but knows how to win hearts through trust. The judge who knows how to win hearts more than riches deserves to be loved.

'If the judges you sent have failed to secure the people's obedience to a just order, it is because they first imposed many unjust orders. Just decisions make hearts willing to cooperate; unjust decisions harden them. We are so burdened by every kind of misery that even when we are ordered to do good, we submit reluctantly; how much less, when we are commanded to do evil, should we obey willingly? Believe one thing: a judge's lack of restraint makes subjects lose respect and their sense of shame.

'We Jews hold it as established, and have learnt it from the mouth of our God, that any king who entrusts the task of dispensing justice to an unworthy man, out of greed for property or to honour that man, must know for certain that when he least expects it, he will see his honour turned to disgrace, his credibility lost, and great pun-

ishment brought upon his house. Since I have other things to communicate in secret, I wish to finish what I have to address in public. In conclusion, I say that if you wish your kingdom, for which you have exposed yourselves to great dangers, to endure for a long time, know how to judge and command as Romans: we shall obey as Jews. Send us a merciful governor; do not be cruel in punishing our weakness, and we shall be humble before your commands. Once more I humbly beg you to ask us before commanding us: through requests and not orders you will find love, like that of children for their fathers, instead of rebellion, like that of servants against their masters.'

All the lords of Rome and its senators marvelled at his words. They ordered them to be entered in the book of records, following their custom of writing down the speeches of ambassadors who came to their dominion.

King Manuel said: 'What cleverness and cunning, mingled with learning and audacity, these words contain! There was much in those words to take offence at. Yet, because of the wisdom and excellence of the speech, the Romans forgave this man, although he had spoken of matters concerning religions; the Hebrew's eloquence made them forget it.'

Antonio de Guevara Writing

Presumed portrait of Antonio de Guevara, sixteenth century. His Reloj de príncipes supplies a precise textual parallel to the speech reproduced in Account XII. The illustration represents the writer involved in that comparison, rather than the account's ambassador. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

A corresponding passage located in Guevara

The ambassador's long speech occurs in the same sequence and with numerous precise verbal correspondences in Book III, chapter X of Antonio de Guevara's Reloj de Príncipes, published in 1529. It includes Pompey, Jerusalem's subjection, the four governors compared to plagues, criticism of their abuses, and the preference for trust over commands. The correspondence traces a specific literary source much more precisely than a shared theme would. Guevara's surviving text is Spanish. Ibn Verga's assertion that the speech was extracted from Roman annals and translated from Latin remains a claim within the account; the located parallel establishes neither those particular annals nor the historical occurrence of this embassy. [S066 ; E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The four governors and Roman chronology

Josephus corroborates the succession Coponius, Marcus Ambivius, Annius Rufus and Valerius Gratus. It belongs to direct Roman administration of Judaea after Archelaus's deposition in the early first century CE, not the years immediately after Pompey's capture of Jerusalem in 63 BCE. Guevara nevertheless places the embassy three years after that capture: his setting is incompatible with the governors he names. Ibn Verga preserves the reference to Pompey and the list of administrators but omits the three-year interval. The names have a historical basis; the accompanying speech is not thereby a recovered senatorial transcript. [S067 ; S066 ; H1928 ; E1744 ; G1856]

The Ocaña incident remains distinct

All three compared versions place the opening story in Ocaña under a "King Manuel, son of Alfonso". This combination does not allow secure dynastic identification; it would be unjustified to replace it without evidence by Manuel I of Portugal. The people in the trial remain unnamed, and no independent judicial file matching the entire affair has been identified. The literary correspondence with Guevara concerns the ensuing Roman speech, so it does not corroborate the child's death, the search or the judgement. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

A revealing numerical difference in the borrowed speech

Comparison with Guevara reveals a detail obscured by the general resemblance. In the consulted chapter of the Reloj de Príncipes, the ambassador imagines ten thousand good people among fifty thousand bad ones. Ibn Verga speaks of ten righteous people. The latter number brings the sentence distinctly closer to Genesis 18:32, where Abraham obtains a promise that the city will be spared if ten righteous people are found there. The difference identifies

an adaptation, or a different stage of transmission, without by itself deciding which intermediary text was used. It does not authorise "correcting" the translation's ten righteous people to ten thousand.

Likewise, the denunciation of people who publicly proclaim "Peace, peace!" while stirring up conflict recalls Jeremiah 6:14 and 8:11. The speech transforms the prophetic opposition between proclaimed peace and its absence into a criticism of intermediaries who turn two peoples against one another. These correspondences give the staged diplomacy a biblical language. They neither make ancient a speech recovered in a sixteenth-century author nor retrospectively corroborate the Ocaña trial that precedes it. [S069 ; S068 ; S066 ; H1928 ; E1744]

Translation Choices

The simulated childbirth and the neighbours' accusation

Hebrew and German say that the woman remains on the birthing stool all day; Spanish can suggest that the judge stays there. The former reading is adopted because it explains how the body evades the search until night. The midwife is told of the stratagem. "Putting her life in danger" follows the meaning made explicit by German, rather than asserting the death of a woman who continues speaking and whose death is not narrated. The neighbours' words about a supposed Passover custom remain their accusation: Wiener adds "to kill children" in parentheses, whereas Spanish and Hebrew leave the allusion implicit. The translation retains that implicit form. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Archelaus: an earlier mistranslation resolved

Spanish speaks of removing the Idumaean king's "primogeniture"; Wiener turns this into exile of the "eldest son". Hebrew describes the removal of his honour or dignity. Guevara explicitly names the exile as Archelaus, son of Herod, and Josephus confirms his deposition before Coponius. "After you deposed the Idumaean ruler" is therefore adopted; Archelaus is no longer presented as Herod's eldest son. The shortened forms Marcus, Rufus and Valerius remain in the account; the full identifications appear in the commentary. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S066 ; S067]

Justice, obedience and the number of righteous people

"Entrusts the task of dispensing justice to an unworthy man" follows Hebrew, German and the parallel passage in Guevara. Ibn Verga's more ambiguous Spanish can suggest a king imposing an undeserved punishment. The subject here is the appointment of magistrates. Similarly, the contrast between reluctant obedience to a just command and refusal of an unjust one becomes clear through Hebrew, German and Guevara; the translation avoids saying that subjects "submit to evil". Ten righteous people among fifty thousand wicked people are preserved with all three Ibn Verga versions, although Guevara has ten thousand good people. This is an actual difference between the texts, not a reason to rewrite Ibn Verga. The ten righteous also recall Genesis 18:32. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S066 ; S068]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 73–78 ; H1928, section 12 ; G1856, p. 67–72.

Account XIII

A Sermon Turned to the Jews' Advantage

The thirteenth persecution took place in the time of the king named above. A friar arose and preached before a great crowd, summoning the Jews to his sermon. They were very afraid that he might speak against them, for they had heard that he intended to attack them in his speech and stir the people against them.

The Jewish leaders therefore went to the king. They knew that he had already recognised the falsity of the accusations against them and established their innocence. They said: 'King and lord, you are our father; it is for you to save us from those who speak against us. My lord, you know from experience whether we have committed any injustice. A friar has now arisen, and from what we have heard, he intends to speak against the Jews.'

The king replied: 'Truly, your teacher knew you well when he wrote of you: "The sound of a leaf blown by the wind will put them to flight." Since I long ago ordered it to be made known that everything said against you is false, whom do you fear? The friar you mention is to invite me to his sermon; I shall break his teeth if he tells lies.'

On Sunday the king was invited to hear him. The friar began: 'What can be done to a wicked people such as this? What can be done to these Jews?' Hearing this, the king rose angrily and left. The friar followed him and said: 'My lord, the end of a speech explains its beginning. Let me finish and explain my words: what can be done for them except to grant them honour, favour and mercy for what they have done for us? They cast away their prosperity and power and placed them in our hands. Had they been good and upright, they would be our masters, as Scripture says: "And I shall set you above all the nations of the earth." How my heart rejoices when people say the Jews are wicked, since their sins ensure our dominion! We should therefore do them good, for they strengthen our kingdom. The greater their offences, the more we should honour them, instead of fabricating malicious accusations against them, contrary to justice and reason. Jesus said of them that to touch them was to touch the apple of His eye.'

The king was pleased by the friar's words, although he saw that his intention had been different. The friar added that as soon as the Jews had sinned, God had hidden His face from them and left them to nature: if it prospered them, so be it; if it humbled and killed them, so be it as well.

The king said: 'The natural course of events changes people's fortunes, sometimes for better and sometimes for worse. The Jews have fallen and have never risen again. If this resulted from the natural course of events, they ought to have risen again at some point. Furthermore, Scripture contradicts you, for it says: "And I shall surely hide My face from them, and many grievous troubles shall come upon them."' The friar agreed with everything the king said.

A Preacher before the Pope

Bartolomeo degli Erri, Saint Vincent Ferrer Preaching before a Pope, fifteenth century. The scene shows public preaching and its audience in late medieval art. It provides no basis for identifying the anonymous friar of Account XIII as Vincent Ferrer. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

The documented setting of sermons addressed to Jews

Nicholas III's letter Vineam Sorec, dated 4 August 1278, instructs friars to summon Jews collectively or individually and to repeat sermons intended to convert them. It requires the pope to be told who refuses these summonses, where they live and under whose authority. The copy transcribed by the IRHT is addressed to the Franciscan minister in Austria; its apparatus also records a letter of the same date to the Dominicans of Lombardy. The act documents the kind of practice echoed by the account. It does not prove that Ibn Verga's sermon occurred in 1278 or that one of those recipients delivered it. The king is simply the ruler of the preceding account; neither his precise identity nor that of the preacher is established here. [S070 ; E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The quotations allow the dialogue to be checked

The sound of the leaf comes from Leviticus 26:36, pre-eminence among nations from Deuteronomy 28:1, and the hidden face from Deuteronomy 31:17–18. The saying about the apple of the eye, attributed to Jesus by the preacher, corresponds to Zechariah 2:12 in Hebrew numbering, frequently 2:8 in Christian Bibles. The translation reports the character's attribution; the verse's historical source is corrected here. This is not a verified transcript of a sermon preserved elsewhere. The king's argument about decline without recovery likewise remains his assertion within the dialogue, rather than becoming a historical finding added by the editor. [S071 ; S072 ; S073 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; E1744]

What the preaching letter actually prescribes

Vineam Sorec does not describe a monk's improvised intervention before a king. The letter charges the provincial superior with choosing friars whose conduct, learning and experience suit the mission, and with reporting regularly on their results. It also provides support after baptism: converts are to be recommended to local prelates and lords, protected in their persons and possessions, and assisted against harassment by Jews or others. This particular protection belongs to the conversion programme. It therefore differs from the story's royal decision to allow Jews to remain in their religion.

The papal preamble also draws on Isaiah 5:1–7: a carefully cultivated vineyard, identified with Israel, produces disappointing fruit. Nicholas III turns this prophetic image into a justification for Christian missionary work. Ibn Verga's sermon takes a different course, reversing the accusation of wrongdoing into a paradoxical reason for political gratitude towards Jews. The comparison illuminates two distinct uses of the same Scriptures, but does not make the letter of 1278 a record of the sermon narrated here. [S074 ; S070 ; H1928]

Translation Choices

Sunday, the cleric and the king's threat

ביום הראשון (bayom harishon, "on the first day [of the week]") means Sunday; German renders it correctly, whereas Spanish says "the next day". Sunday is adopted without adding a date. Spanish frayle suggests a member of a religious order, but Hebrew כומר (komer, "Christian cleric") is less specific; no particular order is named. "If he tells lies" makes explicit the Hebrew and German condition, abridged in Spanish to "if he speaks". The king therefore does not threaten every kind of speech indiscriminately. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The meaning of the conclusion and the characters' voices

All three versions contrast abandonment to the natural course of events with the continuing adversity that the king believes he observes. German makes the alternation particularly clear: now much, now little. The revised wording therefore speaks of changing fortunes, avoiding the obscure "things give a person much, little". It retains the objection and the cleric's final agreement in full. Hebrew and German name Jesus where Spanish says "our Saviour": the name is adopted, without changing the erroneous attribution of Zechariah that belongs to the reported speech. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 78–80 ; H1928, section 13 ; G1856, p. 72–74.

Account XIV

Sancha and the Price of Protection

The fourteenth persecution took place in Rome, where there lived a pious pope, a lover of justice, upright in his words and conduct, and honest in his government. Yet he had a sister named Sancha, a great enemy of the Jews, who sought only to harm them. In her hatred of Israel, she begged her brother the pope to banish the Jews from all his dominions. She told him that, since he represented the Saviour, he could not allow the Saviour's enemies to remain on his lands under his authority. She added that, ever since their rebellion against the Saviour, their souls had remained impure, as she had heard from the holy prelates; they also remained defiled by Adam's sin. Those who had received the Christian faith had been purified, while the others remained impure. The Saviour would demand redress for this offence unless he drove them from his lands and from the seat of his holiness, Rome, which stood in the place of the sanctuary in Jerusalem. If he expelled them, he would receive his reward in paradise, for all the kings would learn from him to do the same.

The pope replied: 'Women have no judgement after all! If the Saviour forgave them and said that whoever touches them touches his eye, how should we fail to forgive them? How could a woman occupied with her distaff understand such profound questions? This is nothing but wickedness of heart! You say that they have not received baptism and remain impure; but since they observe the covenant of circumcision, they have been purified. Baptism merely took the place of circumcision, because our Saviour had pity on our children and wished to spare them the shedding of their blood at birth, just after leaving their mothers' wombs. Indeed, the survival of the Jewish people seems a marvel to us, since their blood is shed when the child is at its weakest.'

Understanding the pope's answer and his intention, Sancha said no more about it. But a few days later she renewed her request. She brought prelates to testify that, as they passed with an image of Jesus, they had seen Jews mocking and exchanging signs. Her flattering words, together with these statements, persuaded the pope to listen, and he decreed the general expulsion of the Jews from all his dominions.

The news distressed the Jews wherever it spread. Those in the dominions of Rome were especially grieved: it was there that they had grown up, become wealthy and acquired houses, estates, and abundant silver and gold. At that time a king named Robert reigned in Naples, a kindly ruler and a friend to the Jews, who maintained close ties of friendship with the pope. The Jews sent him messengers with a gift worthy of him, begging him to persuade the pope to turn away from his anger and abandon their destruction. They told him of all Sancha's actions and explained that she was the source of all the trouble. If he had to pledge a sum of money to help them, they would repay him at once.

They also sent gifts to the prelates, so that they would appease Sancha. If they could not persuade her to have the decree revoked, they were at least to ask her to postpone the expulsion: the Jews would then have time to sell their houses and estates, gather their money and recover the sums owed to them. They could also await King Robert's answer and learn whether he would bring them some relief. They pleaded with the prelates, without success.

Meanwhile King Robert's reply arrived; his favourable words restored their strength and courage. He also sent messengers to the pope with arguments and entreaties. The pope replied that he had already pronounced the decree and made a promise to Sancha. Although he had acted against his will, a pope's word and promise could not be withdrawn. But if Sancha released him from his promise, he could change his decision.

When King Robert heard this answer, he understood what had to be done. He sent messengers to Sancha and promised her a hundred thousand florins on behalf of the Jews. She agreed; the money was collected and given to her. Sancha then became a friend to the Jews. She begged the pope not to drive them from his lands, for, she said, her heart had been moved to pity for them. The pope replied: 'It is the money that has taken pity on you!' He then ordered the expulsion decree to be torn up. The Jews remained in their homes, but they had endured great anguish before this outcome was reached.

The Arms of Sancha of Majorca

Heraldic detail from an Histoire ancienne jusqu'à César, about 1335–1340. Arms associated with Sancha of Majorca appear in a depiction of Greek warriors before Troy. The decoration accompanies the discussion of Sancha's identity; the scene itself is ancient and legendary. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

Robert and Sancha: identifiable names, an erroneous relationship

Robert most probably corresponds to Robert of Anjou, king of Naples and titular king of Jerusalem: the latter title expressed a dynastic claim, not actual rule in Jerusalem. Sancha of Majorca was his wife. If this is the queen intended, the account therefore wrongly makes her the pope's sister. A contemporary act allows at least the names and royal status to be checked: Clement VI's letter Gratias agimus of 21 November 1342 calls Robert and Sancha king and queen of Sicily, the title used by the Neapolitan monarchy. It concerns their support for the Franciscans in the Holy Places. It mentions neither this expulsion nor the payment of a hundred thousand florins. [S075 ; S076 ; E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

A documented papal expulsion in a different territory

The pope in the account remains unnamed; identifying him as John XXII is a historical hypothesis. Valérie Theis's research documents the expulsion of Jews from the Comtat Venaissin in the early 1320s and the forced sale of their property. Note 4 quotes part of a document issued by Clement VI on 18 December 1345 confirming that John XXII had expelled them from that county. This was papal territory in France, rather than Rome. The comparison therefore establishes neither the account's geographical setting nor its conclusion through Sancha's intervention. [S077 ; S076 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; E1744]

The religious dialogue is not a papal letter

The saying about the eye corresponds to Zechariah 2:12 in Hebrew numbering, often 2:8 in Christian Bibles; it is not originally a saying of Jesus. As in the previous account, its attribution to the Saviour belongs to the dialogue. None of the papal documents consulted contains this conversation about baptism and circumcision. The documentary comparisons clarify the setting and correct Sancha's relationship; they do not turn the words attributed to the pope into an authenticated doctrinal declaration. [S071 ; S075 ; E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

A royal founder and a sacramental argument clarified

Gratias agimus gives concrete substance to Sancha's piety. The brief reports that the royal couple obtained the sultan's permission for Franciscans to remain at the Holy Sepulchre and access places on Mount Zion; the queen built an establishment and planned to maintain twelve friars and three servants. This dossier explains her actual relations with the papacy and the Franciscans. It proves neither the hundred thousand florins offered to save the Jews, nor kinship with the pope, nor a reversal obtained through a confidential disclosure at court. Money devoted to the sanctuaries must not become the story's money merely through association.

The dialogue about baptism replacing circumcision also has a precise scriptural background. Colossians 2:11–12 brings together circumcision not made by human hands and burial with Christ in baptism. The passage does not explain this association by the pain of infants. Luke 2:21, moreover, places Jesus's circumcision on the eighth day. These texts illuminate and delimit the argument assigned to the pope, without making it an authenticated papal declaration. [S078 ; S079 ; S075 ; H1928]

Translation Choices

Naples, Jerusalem and the pope's "sister"

Hebrew places Robert in Naples, as does German; Spanish places him "in Jerusalem". Naples is adopted as the place where the character rules. The ruler's two royal titles explain how Jerusalem could have entered the transmission of the account: this variant does not name a different king. "Sister", however, appears in all three versions. Replacing it with "Robert's wife" would rewrite the relationship on which the entire plot rests; the translation therefore retains the narrator's assertion, corrected in the commentary. Sancha follows the Spanish and German form; Hebrew renders the name שאנגישה (Shangisha). [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S076 ; S075]

The prelates, the image and the payment

Spanish speaks of cardinals; Hebrew uses הגמונים (hegmonim, "Christian bishops or prelates"), rendered as "bishops" in German. The general term "prelates" avoids assigning a rank not specified in every version. Hebrew and German describe their passage with an image, German specifying a cross; Spanish abridges the scene by placing them near an image. Their movement is retained without identifying the object specifically as a cross. Finally, Hebrew and German explicitly say that Sancha accepts the money, that it is collected and given to her, and that she then becomes favourable to the Jews. These actions, missing from the Spanish abridgement, are restored in full: they explain the pope's last remark. All three versions give a hundred thousand florins; no independent record of the payment has been found. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Who takes pity on whom?

Spanish means "You have taken pity only on the money"; German likewise makes the money the object of her pity. In Hebrew, the pope says that "the pity of the money has been stirred towards you". "It is the money that has taken pity on you!" preserves this ironic personification: the money has helped Sancha by enriching her, after which she claims to want to help the Jews. This construction explains the change of subject and makes the point intelligible; the Spanish and German wording remains an alternative reading. The passage concerns the character Sancha's conduct and supplies no independent proof of the transaction. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 80–83 ; H1928, section 14 ; G1856, p. 74–76.

Account XV

A Holiday Game Turns Into Massacre

The fifteenth persecution took place in the town of Monzón. During the intermediate days (ḥol ha-moʿed, חול המועד) of Pesaḥ, the Jewish Passover, the Jews went out into the countryside to enjoy themselves. They played a children's game: one person stands in the middle, blindfolded; all the others move around him, and whoever he manages to catch takes his place.

Some villagers passing that way began talking with the Jews, and a quarrel followed. As they left, they said to one another: 'How can we take revenge on these people? Let us accuse them before the judges: we shall say that they named the man they had placed in the middle Jesus, struck his head in mockery, and said, "Here is Jesus; he sells good wine!"'

They went before the judges and told them this. The judges believed them and, deeply outraged, declared that this wicked action must be reported to the king. But the crowd rushed forward without waiting. They seized their swords and massacred the Jews, leaving alive only a little boy who had hidden in the forest and the very young children, whom they made Christians. The next day, Jews arrived from a neighbouring town. The boy came out to meet them and said: 'Where are you going? This is what has happened!' They fled and took the boy with them. Some Christians noticed and pursued them without catching them; nevertheless, the fugitives came within a hair's breadth of death. When they returned to their town, they found it in turmoil: news of what had happened in Monzón had already arrived. They saved themselves only by paying very large bribes.

Children's Games

Pieter Bruegel the Elder, Children's Games, 1560. The square filled with players illuminates the range of communal amusements evoked at the beginning of the account. This Flemish painting depicts neither Monzón nor the massacre related by Ibn Verga. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

Monzón: what a register of 1397 allows us to verify

The account names Monzón but gives no date or name for a king, judge or victim. An independent document attests an organised Jewish community in the town in 1397: the Maestre Racional register preserved in the Archive of the Crown of Aragon under shelfmark 2400, folios 6–8. The entry of 1 March names Bonjua Çaporta and Içach Abnaxech as community officials, then lists taxpayers, including Isaac Gallipapa, described as a fisich ("physician"). The transcription consulted is reproduced on pages 248–250 of Francisco Andrés Lascorz Arcas's thesis; the original register was not examined directly. This document supplies verifiable names and a chronological reference, but it does not describe the massacre. It prevents the community's permanent disappearance in 1391 from being presented as an established fact on the basis of this undated account; it does not rule out an earlier attack followed by a return or the community's re-establishment. [S080 ; E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The scene of mockery and its Gospel model

Luke 22:63–65 describes Jesus' guards striking him, covering his face and mocking him. The blindfold, the blows and the mockery help explain the form taken by the accusation in the account. This parallel does not authenticate the charge: all three versions of Ibn Verga present it as something invented by the villagers after their quarrel with the Jews. The remark about good wine does not occur in this passage of Luke. No sufficiently precise external text has been found to explain that formula or identify a judicial file corresponding to the episode. [S081 ; E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

A community still administered in the mid-fifteenth century

A second document extends the check supplied by the register of 1397. On 24 January 1451, the jurats (communal officers) Astruch Alpaperri and Simuel Benastruch declared under oath the taxpayers of the moravedí (royal tax) in the aljama (organised Jewish community). The transcription gives 148 assessed units, each owing three sueldos and six dineros (local units of account), for a total of 518 sueldos. It lists men, widows, heirs and a few occupations, including a weaver and a shoemaker; this is a fiscal roll with its own categories, rather than a count of every Jewish inhabitant.

At a precise date, the text attests community officers, named taxpayers and administrative relations with a royal commissioner. It prevents the narrative formula "all were killed" from being treated as proof that the community disappeared permanently before 1451. By itself, however, it does not disprove an earlier attack followed by reconstitution, nor does it date the children's game. The documentary dossier and the anecdote answer different questions: the former establishes the presence of an organised Jewish community; the latter describes the progression from a quarrel to a religious accusation and collective violence. [S080 ; H1928]

Translation Choices

Monzón and the Spanish form Montesuma

The Spanish scan on page 83 reads Montesuma in a line omitted by automated text recognition. Hebrew has מונטישון (Montishon, a place name) and German Monzon. Monzón is adopted on this agreement, supported by the register of 1397 expressly naming the Jews of Monçon. That documentary evidence establishes the town and its community; it does not corroborate the massacre. Montesuma remains a Spanish variant whose precise origin has not been established. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S080]

The game, the festival days and the bribes

Hebrew חול המועד (ḥol ha-moʿed, “the intermediate days of the festival”), Spanish and German all refer to the days between Passover’s solemn festival days. The game described corresponds to blind man’s buff, but its modern name is not added to the text. At the end, Spanish says “large gifts”; Hebrew שוחד עצום (shoḥad atsum, “a very large bribe”) and German Bestechung specify corruption. “Bribes” restores that precision and explains how the fugitives escape danger. The remark about wine is retained because all three versions agree; replacing it with a more explicit Eucharistic allusion would invent an explanation not supplied by the text. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The boy in the forest or hidden in the town

Hebrew and German distinguish a boy hiding in the forest from the very young children whom the attackers make Christians; German specifies baptism. Spanish gives a different scene: “They left nobody alive except a little boy who had hidden in the town among the other children; people thought they were all alike.” It does not mention the conversion of the young children here. The translation adopts the explicit distinction in Hebrew, supported by German, and combines the two categories of spared children in one sentence to avoid an apparent contradiction between “no survivors” and the converted children. No external document located allows these two scenes to be distinguished on historical grounds; the Spanish version therefore remains available to the reader. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 83–84 ; H1928, section 15 ; G1856, p. 76–77.

Account XVI

The Sleepless King and Israel's Guardian

The sixteenth persecution took place in Spain. Some Christians came saying they had found a murdered man in a Jew's house. One of the king's advisers, who was with him, spoke against the Jews. This emboldened the crowd: they told the king that if he would not administer justice, they would avenge the dead man themselves.

The king said: 'Exalted and praised be the true ruler, the just judge, the faithful God in whom there is no injustice! I shall now expose your lies and my adviser's malicious accusations. You will see it and tell those who come after you.'

He then summoned all the Jews before him. When they arrived, he asked: 'What does this saying of David mean: "Behold, he who guards Israel neither dozes nor sleeps"? If he does not doze, all the more so he does not sleep! In Hebrew, sleep, shenah (שינה), is a deeper state than drowsing, tenumah (תנומה), as I have been told.' The Jews replied: 'Our commentators explain precisely that he does not doze and, all the more so, does not sleep.'

The king said: 'That merely turns my question into an answer! They have not understood what the verse refers to. I can explain it, because I have seen it happen with my own eyes. Last night I could find neither rest nor sleep. So I rose from my bed, went out into the outer courtyard and put my head out of the window. The moon was shining. I saw men running; one carried a human shape on his shoulder. I sent three men to follow them discreetly, look carefully to see whether it was a murdered man or something else, and report back to me. My servants did as I had ordered. They watched from a concealed position and found that it was indeed a dead man. They recognised two of those carrying the body, and the men who can testify to this are here before you.'

The men came forward and testified to what they had seen. The adviser asked: 'Why did you not arrest them?' They answered: 'They quickly threw the body into a Jew's courtyard and fled. Besides, they were armed, while we had no weapons. The king had not ordered us to arrest them, only to see what was happening.'

The king then returned to his point: 'This is what the verse means: "Behold, he neither dozes nor sleeps." God does not doze, and he does not allow the man who guards Israel to sleep.' The accusers departed in dismay, and those responsible for the false accusations were punished.

Ahasuerus Has the Chronicles Read

Philips Galle after Maarten van Heemskerck, 1564. The sleepless king has the chronicles read to him: Esther 6:1–3. The commentary examines the precise connection between this biblical episode and the king's providential sleeplessness in Account XVI. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

The commentators' explanation is found in David Qimḥi

The dialogue turns on Psalm 121:4. David Qimḥi, known as Radak through an abbreviation of his title and name, gives an explanation in his commentary very close to the one reported by the Jews: since drowsing is less than sleeping, someone who does not doze obviously does not sleep either. He adds that God guards Israel at all times, even in exile and while people sleep. This is therefore an explanation actually attested in Jewish exegesis, rather than an incoherent answer invented by the translation. The king's criticism and his own reading belong to Ibn Verga's dialogue. The invocation of a faithful God without injustice echoes Deuteronomy 32:4. The attribution of the psalm to David is the character's: the heading of Psalm 121 does not name its author. [S083 ; S082 ; S086 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; E1744]

The king's sleepless night: a precise parallel in Esther and the Talmud

In Esther 6:1–3, the king's insomnia leads to the chronicles being read and Mordecai's service being recalled. Megillah 15b discusses this very night: Rabbi Tanḥum relates the disturbance of sleep to the King of the universe, while Rava applies it literally to Ahasuerus. This comparison illuminates Ibn Verga's interplay between divine vigilance and that of a human ruler. It supplies a precise literary antecedent, not a judicial record of the murder described here. The account places the affair in Spain without naming a town, date or king. No independent judicial file corresponding to the nocturnal scene and the three servants has been identified. [S085 ; S084 ; E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The transfer from divine guardian to king

The sequence of Psalm 121 makes the royal reinterpretation particularly clear. In verse 3, the worshipper is assured that his guardian does not slumber; in verse 4, Israel's guardian neither slumbers nor sleeps; in verse 5, the Lord is explicitly named as guardian. The psalm therefore does not directly designate a human ruler. The story's king transfers this function to himself and understands his insomnia as God acting upon the Jews' earthly protector. This transfer belongs to the interpretation staged by the narrative, rather than the verse's ordinary grammatical meaning.

The comparison with Esther 6:1–3 also benefits from precise limits. In Esther, the king's sleep is disturbed, and a reading of the chronicles recalls Mordecai's service, which has gone unrewarded. In Ibn Verga, wakefulness leads to the physical observation of a corpse being transported and prepares the refutation of an accusation. The biblical book supplies a parallel in which royal wakefulness becomes aid for the Jews; it contains neither this nocturnal planting of a body nor this fabricated crime. Here the outcome depends on the king's double role as a providential figure and an eyewitness. [S082 ; S085 ; H1928]

Translation Choices

The order of the verbs and the meaning of the objection

Spanish reverses the two verbs, giving “sleep” before “doze”; Hebrew and German follow the order of the psalm: “doze”, then “sleep”. The Hebrew biblical text and David Qimḥi’s commentary confirm the latter order, adopted here. The words שינה (shenah, “sleep”) and תנומה (tenumah, “drowsing”) are written without the erroneous internal spaces in the former presentation. The king’s question concerns an apparent repetition: why rule out sleep after already ruling out drowsing? “All the more so” restores the Hebrew and German reasoning, obscured by the Spanish reversal. The commentators’ answer therefore remains logical, even though the king finds it insufficient. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S082 ; S083]

God keeps watch and keeps the human protector awake

The final explanation does not merely repeat the psalm: it moves from “does not sleep” to “does not allow sleep”. Spanish and the Hebrew construction allow the sense that God keeps awake the person who protects Israel, here the king. This reading is adopted because it connects the verse directly with the scene described. German attaches the title of protector more clearly to God himself, so another possible reading is: “He who guards Israel does not doze and does not let others sleep.” Both readings lead to the ruler’s saving insomnia. This is the character’s figurative interpretation, distinct from the verse’s ordinary grammatical meaning, in which the same guardian neither dozes nor sleeps. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The accusers and the servants

At the beginning, Hebrew גוים (goyim, “non-Jews”) is rendered as “Christians”, following German’s explicit wording and the Spanish setting. Spanish simply has muerto (“dead man”). “Murdered man” follows הרוג (harug, “a man who has been killed”) and German Ermordeter; “dead man” alone obscured the murder charge. The three servants observe the people carrying the body: the king does not order them to make arrests. This distinction is retained in their answer to the adviser. At the end, Hebrew specifies that those punished are the מעלילים (ma‘alilim, “people making false accusations”). Naming them expressly avoids the vague “those who had committed the deed”, which could confuse the accusers with the Jews they accused. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 84–85 ; H1928, section 16 ; G1856, p. 77–78.

Account XVII

The Ambassador Who Challenges the Punishment

The seventeenth persecution took place in France. Two ill-intentioned men arose and told the king that they had seen a Jew seize a Christian and force him into his house, plainly to kill him, since it was the eve of their Passover. The king was just and devoted to truth; he recognised that the accusation against the Jews was false. He rebuked them, ordered them to be removed from his presence and said that whoever came with such a story should be beheaded.

These men became enraged at being regarded as false witnesses before the king. They assembled many of the people and swore that a Jew had seized a Christian and forced him into his house; they had seen him enter with their own eyes, and he had never come out again. They also said they had approached the king, who had pardoned the enemies of the faith without pitying the Christians who followed his own religion. The people replied: 'Then let us go against them!'

They found two Christians who said they had gone to the Jew to ask for a loan at interest and had seen him come out of his chamber holding a bloodstained knife. The king asked the Jew: 'What was that knife?' He replied: 'I slaughtered some birds for Passover.' The nobles told the king: 'Birds are not slaughtered in a chamber. Since there is an indication of guilt, let him be tortured, and he will confess the truth.'

The king ordered him to be tortured. He confessed to killing the Christian and declared that fifty Jewish men had advised him and been with him. The king ordered their arrest. On hearing this, they went into mourning and cried out, seeing that the nation faced destruction. They assembled, went to the king and said: 'King and lord, your royal predecessors established that when a man confesses something under torture, his confession should be accepted as true concerning himself, but not against others. If this man killed the Christian, we know nothing about it; such wickedness never entered our minds. We are neither fools nor madmen, to expose ourselves and our children to such danger, and God has never commanded such a thing. Were this not the rule, anyone who stole something could say that all the town's leading men had been with him.'

The king asked the nobles: 'Is there anything about this matter in our Chronicles?' They answered yes: it appeared exactly as the Jews had said. The king became suspicious: 'Why did you not tell me before the Jew pointed it out? Bring me the book, and I shall see it there.' It was brought, and everything was found as the Jews had said. He ordered them all released from prison except the man in whose house the dead body had been found.

At that time a Moorish dignitary was at court as his king's ambassador. The king asked him: 'Honourable man, does anything like this occur in your kingdom?' He replied: 'We have never heard or seen such a thing. We must thank our kings, who do not fall into such errors or entertain matters grounded neither in reason nor in religion. It is impossible for a Jew to dare kill a Christian while living under his dominion and within his kingdom, still less for something so monstrous as this: making a sacrifice of human blood. We see no nation on earth doing such a thing, even when they incline to abominations contrary to reason. Yet this has never entered their imaginations, being infinitely remote from human understanding. In your lands, however, you allow yourselves to be persuaded and listen in your royal courts to things unworthy of belief.'

The king became angry and said: 'If the accused confesses, what can I do according to justice? What does it matter that the thing is beyond reason, if he confesses it?' The Moor replied: 'In our kingdom, a confession obtained through torture serves only as an indication, to which other evidence must be added; it is not sufficient by itself to pass judgement on the accused.'

One of the Christians present said to the Moor: 'Honourable lord, if this is not found among you, it is because the Jews have no quarrel with you as they do with us on account of our Saviour. They take a Christian, give him the same name and consume his blood to take vengeance on Him.'

He replied: 'Now I believe even more strongly that it is all a lie. How could one man wrong them and they take vengeance on another? Moreover, it is for Jesus to take vengeance on them, not for them to take vengeance on Him, since they killed Him. I say this according to your opinion: according to my religion, the Jews did not kill Him, for He ascended alive to heaven. I say "according to your opinion", because I have seen painted on the wall of one of your churches every manner of death they inflicted upon Him. One consisted of turning Him on a wheel, as cloth weavers or

bookbinders do. After such vengeance, what remains for them to avenge? Jesus ought to have asked His Father to punish the Jews. Praised be He who has separated us from falsehoods and placed our portion among those who believe the truth!'

The Christians answered: 'You say He ought to have asked His Father for vengeance against the Jews: He did so. What we see proves it, since they wander in captivity, driven out and dragged about. This is solely in payment for that blood.'

The Moor said: 'If the Father punishes them for His Son's sake, will the Jews take vengeance on Him a second time, to receive a second punishment? All this is nothing but foolishness. Moreover, if God has punished the Jews, what further punishment do you seek? For all that, I am not trying to save the Jews: they are neither of my religion nor my countrymen, and I do not love them, for I know what they did to so many prophets. But I speak the truth, since the king asks my opinion of this.'

Hearing his words, the king became very angry, for they covered all Christians with disgrace. Yet, seeing that everything rested on sound arguments, he kept silent and remembered his words.

On the third day the people, considering the affront the Moor had inflicted on the Christians and seeing that they were regarded as wicked and foolish for believing everything, rose up. They brought two more false witnesses, who said: 'We entered this Jew's house, for we had business accounts with him. There we saw a gathering of those whom he had named as having advised him to do it. As soon as we entered, they all fell silent. We said to ourselves: "There is certainly something going on." We went out, hid behind the door and heard the Jew say to them: "If it is discovered that I killed the Christian, will you stand aside?" They answered: "We are rich and shall be able to save you; do not be afraid."'

Hearing this, the king was delighted because of what the Moor had said. He asked him: 'What will you say now, noble Moor, who came to insult me in my own house?' He replied: 'I insult only those who invented these stories. As for this testimony, it seems even less credible to me than the earlier one. Would the Jews have spoken about something so dangerous in a place where Christians could hear them? I know they are very shrewd and fearful. How could they have held such a council somewhere they might be overheard, or spoken loudly enough to be heard so clearly?'

When the Moor had finished speaking, all the people rose and said: 'Is he our king? You, my lord, are our judge; we look to you for justice, lest the people's anger rise beyond remedy.' In his anger against the Moor, the king accepted the witnesses'

words and pronounced an exceptionally cruel sentence: all the Jews who had participated in the council were first to be arrested and each placed in a barrel. All the barrels were to be closed, with nails driven from outside so that the points faced inwards, and then rolled through the streets of the town.

A nobleman then spoke to the king—and he was nothing other than an angel: 'My lord, it is a statute of the ancient kings of France that whenever justice is executed upon fifty men or more, the king's hand must be first against them, followed by all the people. You must uphold it: begin by rolling the barrel before us, and we shall follow you.' The king said: 'I do not intend to break the statutes of the kingdom, but to uphold them. I shall begin carrying out justice as you say.'

The king stepped forward. As he raised his foot to roll the barrel, the sinews of his legs contracted; he fell to the ground and fainted. When he recovered, he ordered the Jews taken out of the barrels: God had seen this falsehood, and it was He who administered justice. On seeing this manifest miracle before their eyes, the people no longer raised either hand or foot.

The king was carried home in a cart. He asked the Jews to pray for him; they did so. After a few days the king recovered, and the Jews lived in honour in that kingdom.

Afterwards, some Christians came and said to the king: 'My lord, that miracle was performed only for those Jews who, it seems, were innocent and knew nothing about the affair. But the man in whose possession the corpse was found ought to be punished.' The king investigated the matter, and they found Christians who testified that they had seen a certain man throw the corpse into the Jew's house. The king ordered that man's hands and feet to be cut off, and it was done. Fear gripped the country, and calm returned. Some books treat this matter differently; this, however, is what I have read in the Chronicles of the learned men of France.

The King's Justice at Vendôme

Charles VII's lit de justice at Vendôme in 1458, illumination attributed to Jean Fouquet, about 1459–1460. The image gives a visual setting to the exercise of royal justice. It depicts a different trial from Account XVII, whose ruler remains unnamed. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

A French chronicle still to be identified

The narrator says that he read this account in a chronicle and explicitly acknowledges other versions. He supplies no town, year, king's name or ambassador's name. Comparing the three linguistic traditions does not identify the volume invoked. Hebrew and German "chronicles of the learned men of France" and Spanish "chronicles of the kings of France" do not by themselves designate the Grandes Chroniques de France. The present failure to identify the source does not demonstrate invention; it prevents attribution to a particular judicial dossier. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Confessions under torture: an old legal problem

Digest 48.18.1.23 warns that torture does not always produce reliable evidence: some withstand it, while others prefer false confession and accusations against other people. The following paragraphs also discuss denunciations and confessions. This legal text provides a specific parallel to the ambassador's reasoning. It does not establish that the rule attributed here to earlier kings was a French statute, or that the character's speech by itself describes the law of any particular Muslim kingdom. [S087]

The king's hand and the biblical procedure

The requirement to begin the execution recalls Deuteronomy 17:7: the witnesses' hands are to act first, followed by the people's. Ibn Verga puts the king in that position and adds a threshold of fifty prisoners. The parallel explains the wording; it does not turn these two additional provisions into documented French law. The angelic intervention, paralysis and recovery belong to the transmitted narrative and have not received independent corroboration in this investigation. [S088 ; H1928 ; G1856]

A separate documentary parallel: Fulda in 1236

The imperial privilege of 1 July 1236, following the Fulda accusation, reports an inquiry into the alleged use of Christian blood and testimony from converts familiar with Judaism; Frederick II absolves the Jews of the accusation. It thus documents another case of a ruler investigating the charge and consulting knowledgeable people. Its setting, ruler and procedure differ: it is not the identified source of the French episode. [S018]

The stricken king and the testing of testimony

The miraculous ending has a biblical parallel more precise than a general motif of punishment. In 1 Kings 13:4–6, Jeroboam stretches out his hand to have a man of God seized; the hand becomes unusable. The king then asks the prophet to intercede, and his hand is re-

stored. Ibn Verga likewise associates a hostile royal gesture, physical incapacity and healing obtained through the prayers of those the king threatened. The characters, the affected part of the body and the judicial setting differ. This is a parallel of narrative construction, rather than evidence that the punishment of the fifty men took place.

The multiplication of witnesses calls for another distinction. Deuteronomy 19:15 requires two or three witnesses, but verses 16–19 also order diligent investigation when testimony is false and turn the intended punishment against its author. The story similarly introduces several accusers without their number guaranteeing their truthfulness. The comparison clarifies its logic of verification and final reversal; it does not turn the practices attributed to French kings, the ambassador or the people into provisions of biblical law. [S043 ; S089 ; H1928]

Translation Choices

The king's suspicion

"Suspicion" is given by 1928, the old edition quoted in the 1855 apparatus and German. It explains the king's distrust of advisers who concealed the rule. The 1855 main text prints "grace"; Spanish describes distress. Spanish alternative: "the king was grieved". [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Confession, evidence and judgement

Hebrew and German concern judgement passed against the accused; Spanish can suggest instituting proceedings. We render the Hebrew judicial meaning. Spanish alternative: "it is insufficient to institute proceedings against him". The character's speech does not by itself comprehensively describe Islamic law. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

A wheel or a bookbinder's tool?

Spanish describes Jesus being turned on a wheel. Hebrew can mean "they turned a wheel over him, as makers of clothing or bookbinders over a book". The comparison with a bookbinding tool suggests a motion applied to the body, but the precise image has not been identified. Spanish remains in the text; the Hebrew alternative is supplied without treating the scene as historically attested torture. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

An argument dismissed as absurd

"Incidental" failed to convey the reply's function: the character rejects reasoning he considers childish and empty. Hebrew and German support "foolishness", rather than a remark about a merely secondary detail. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The chronicle invoked

Hebrew and German refer to France's learned men, Spanish to its kings. The text follows Hebrew; "Chronicles of the kings of France" remains the Spanish alternative. Neither formula automatically identifies a precise title. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 85–92 ; H1928, section 17 ; G1856, p. 78–84.

Account XVIII

Coin Offences and Expulsion from England

The eighteenth persecution took place in England. A terrible persecution struck the large communities then renowned for their learning, understanding and standing, particularly London. There were nearly two thousand householders there, all learned and wealthy men. It was there that Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra wrote the letter he called the Letter of the Sabbath.

A decree ordered them to abandon their Law. When they refused, remaining faithful to the sanctification of the Name (qiddush ha-Shem, קידוש השם, "sanctification of God's Name"), they were accused of counterfeiting money. The charge reached the king, who investigated. He found that those who had invented the accusation were themselves making counterfeit money and blaming the Jews, who were thus saved.

The Christians later returned and sought someone to testify against the Jews—for the accusers could always find the testimony they wanted—that he had seen a Jew clipping coins. The king understood that everything was false; nevertheless, because of the popular tumult, he wished to rid himself of these troubles. The people might rise to kill them all, as was their custom, without his being able to prevent it. He therefore expelled them from the kingdom. This happened in the year five thousand and twenty from the creation of the world.

The Expulsion of the Jews from England

Miniature from the Rochester Chronicle, fourteenth century, traditionally associated with the expulsion of 1290. It shows a group of Jews being driven away by an armed man. This visual document accompanies the royal records and chronicles discussed in the commentary. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

The Sabbath Epistle belongs to the twelfth century

Abraham ibn Ezra's preface gives the year 4919 and the Sabbath night of 14 Tevet, in 1158. It places him in a town on an island called "the edge of the earth", without naming London in its opening sentence. The work therefore places him in an English setting almost a century and a half before the expulsion of 1290. Ibn Verga brings together memories from different periods; the epistle does not date the coinage accusations. [S090]

The expulsion: surviving orders from 1290

Register C 54/107 preserves Edward I's order to the sheriff of Gloucester, dated 18 July 1290, concerning protection for those leaving, their pledges and their journey to London. The account thus points to a documented expulsion, but its year 5020 corresponds to 1259–1260. The writ confirms organised protection during departure; it does not confirm the story of informers who were themselves counterfeiters or the king's recognition of innocence in each narrated episode. [S091]

The crown's stated reasons and the narrative's explanation

In the writ of 5 November 1290 the king himself justifies expulsion by lending practices he condemns and by the honour of the Crucified. This royal explanation differs from the narrator's emphasis on preventing popular violence. The two documents have been read in their Latin transcription and the National Archives' published translation; they should not be mistaken for records of the courtroom scenes narrated here. [S091]

Coin cases within a longer sequence

Counterfeiting and coin-clipping must be distinguished: clipping removes metal from a coin's edge. The National Archives dossier places the arrests of 17 November 1278 in this second category, twelve years before the expulsion. A judicial catalogue entry for Oxfordshire in Hilary term 1278 already records a clipping case mentioning Belaset, wife of Josce of Germany, and Contessa of Oxford. This reference establishes the existence of a dossier and named individuals; the catalogue entry alone cannot establish their guilt. Nor does it identify the anonymous counterfeiters discovered by the story's king.

Royal policy also had an earlier framework: the Statute of Jewry, around 1275, prohibits usurious lending and regulates residence and the identifying badge, while permitting lawful trade and labour. Its text exempts Jews from ordinary urban taxes because they are taxable to the king. The surviving records therefore trace successive regulation, prosecutions and fiscal decisions. They supplement Ibn Verga's explanation through popular pressure, without verifying the two favourable investigations he attributes to the ruler. [S091 ; S092 ; H1928]

Translation Choices

Householders and houses

Hebrew counts householders or heads of families, not necessarily two thousand distinct buildings. The number remains the account's assertion, without independent demographic validation. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Sanctification of the Name

Hebrew expressly names sanctification of the Name, fidelity to religion even under threat. Spanish abbreviates this to refusal to abandon the Law. The phrase is restored and explained immediately; it does not mean that all these people died. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Who escapes?

Hebrew concludes the inquiry with "they were saved", referring to the Jews, as does Spanish. German instead attaches the end of the sentence to the informers: "they had tried to put the blame on the Jews, and had then fled". The Spanish and Hebrew reading is retained. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

A transmitted date at odds with the historical record

Spanish, Hebrew and German give 5020. The royal writs date the general expulsion to 1290, within Hebrew year 5050. Silently changing the text to 5050 would conceal a real disagreement between the transmitted account and the archives. We therefore retain 5020 and explain the historical identification in the commentary. The figure of two thousand householders likewise remains the narrator's statement, not a verified census. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S091]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 92–93 ; H1928, section 18 ; G1856, p. 84–85.

Account XIX

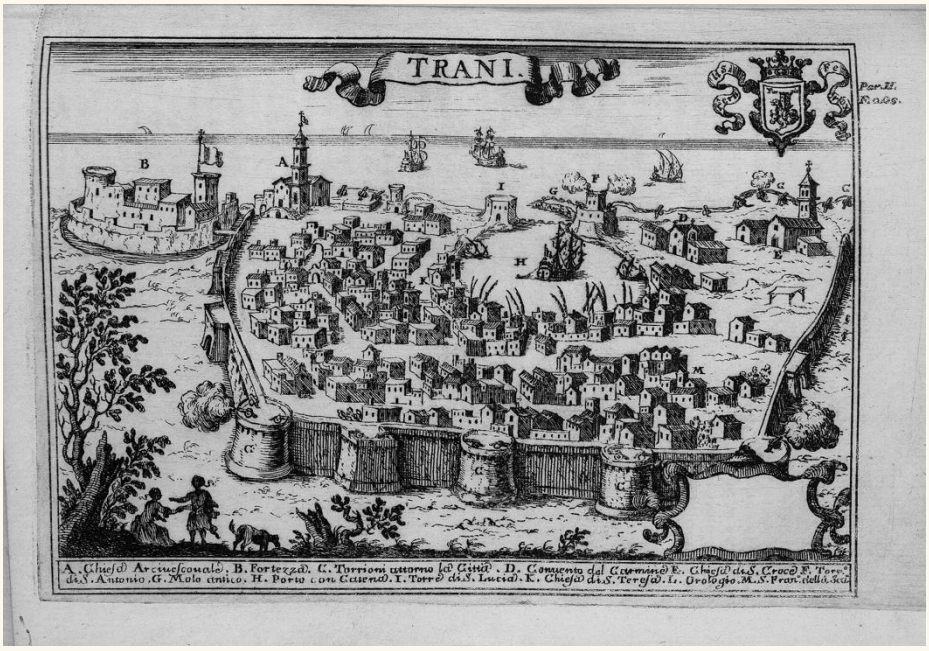
The Cross Hidden in the Dung Heap

The nineteenth persecution took place in the year of the banishment mentioned above. The communities of Naples and Trani were forced to abandon the Law; most did so. I have found no written account of its cause, but this is what I heard from the elders.

A friar quarrelled with a Jew in the town of Trani and wished to turn against them all. He placed a cross in a Jew's dung heap, then said in the morning that he had dreamt the Jews had put the cross in a dung heap. Many Christians immediately went out to investigate; it was found in the dung heap at a Jew's house. Filled with fury, all the people wanted to kill all the Jews.

On hearing this, the judges rose to prevent it, for they suspected the friar had done it. Seeing that they could not remedy matters because the crowd was so large, they approached the Jews and told them to become Christians to save themselves: they could see no other remedy. Most did so; others fled to Naples and were pursued.

The inhabitants of Naples heard about it. Those who believed the story rose against the Jews living there, demanding that they surrender the newcomers, otherwise they would kill them all. Both groups faced great danger, except for some prominent men who hid in the nobles' houses. Some were forced to change their religion, while the others remained hidden. When the people had quietened down, they were still afraid and departed for distant lands. In Trani, Bari and Naples there were men most distinguished in learning, particularly orators and poets. Their like was nowhere found on earth, except among the people of Provence, who excelled in this above all Jewish families. After some time, the king learnt that the whole affair had been the friar's deception and ordered him to be hanged; but out of respect for holy orders, he was banished to distant islands.



Trani and Its Harbour

View of Trani published in 1703 in Il regno di Napoli in prospettiva. It locates the Apulian town named with Naples in Account XIX. The monuments and urban arrangement shown belong to a representation much later than the medieval conversions. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

Trani, Naples and conversion within the kingdom

The geography of Hebrew and Wiener—Trani, Bari and Naples—forms a coherent southern Italian setting. Ferorelli traces conversion campaigns, departures and privileges for new Christians in the Angevin registers. For 1294 he records, among others, 310 converts at Trani and 72 at Bari. These figures establish a specific regional context; they do not mean that all these conversions resulted from the episode of the cross. [S093 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Names and documents that clarify the setting

Ferorelli records an annual pension of six gold ounces in 1267 for Manoforte, a former master of a Trani synagogue who had become Christian, in return for preaching. He cites Angevin register 29, fol. 19, and Del Giudice's edition, volume I, pp. 314–315. He also reports an order to search for Jewish books in 1270 and requests in 1294 to Charles II for permission to return, subject to examination by inquisitors (register 68, fol. 249). These references come from his archival investigation; the original registers have not been examined directly here. [S093]

The cross in the dung: narrative tradition and documentary records

On page 53 Ferorelli retells a story of a concealed cross at Trani, assigning it to 1260, but does so in a discussion following Basnage and qualifies its historical reliability. This later retelling is therefore not, by itself, independent confirmation of Ibn Verga's episode. No judicial document identifying the friar, his sentence or the islands of banishment has been located among the sources examined. The preceding account's years 1259–1260 must remain distinct from Angevin measures in subsequent decades. [S093 ; E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

What happens to converts in the Angevin records

The records analysed by Ferorelli trace a history that the anecdote interrupts after the flight and discovery of the fraud. In 1315, King Robert permits twenty-one neophytes (new converts) from Trani to carry normally prohibited weapons during commercial journeys so that they can defend themselves against robbers. The passage names, among others, Giacobbe, son of the notary Leone; Bartolomeo, son of Pietro of Bari; and Angelo di Tunisi. The order also includes provisions against harassment and false proceedings. These people thus appear in a dossier of protection and economic activity, rather than solely in a list of baptisms.

Likewise, the numbers associated with Trani and Bari in 1294 derive from fiscal measures concerning converts. They attest the administrative importance of conversion, but are not a record of a collective baptism prompted by a hidden cross. Two levels must therefore remain distinct: documented religious and social changes in the Angevin kingdom, and the particular explanation involving a fraudulent friar transmitted by the narrative tradition. The former cannot by themselves verify the latter or supply a name for the banished religious figure. [S093 ; H1928]

Translation Choices

Trani and Verona

Both Hebrew witnesses and German locate the affair in Trani, not Verona. The same correction applies to repetitions on pp 103–104. Bari is the usual form of Spanish Bara. The alternative geographical reading remains Verona in Spanish. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Poets or musicians?

Hebrew meshorrerim can designate singers or poets; paired here with eloquence, German understands poets. We adopt that reading. Spanish alternative: “rhetoricians and musicians”. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Opposition to the cleric’s execution

Hebrew and German explicitly add the people’s reaction. The fuller ending reads: “The king ordered him to be hanged. But because of his priestly dignity the people opposed this, and the king ordered him banished to distant islands.” Spanish retains only respect for the religious order and banishment. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

An orally transmitted explanation

“I have found no written account of its cause” follows Hebrew and German in distinguishing an explanation not found in writing from what the narrator says he heard from elders. Spanish alone could read “I have not learnt its cause”. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Why Trani is adopted

The agreement of the Hebrew and German versions corrects Spanish Verona. External evidence concerning Trani, Bari and Naples reinforces that geographical choice. It does not, however, justify replacing the unnamed king with Charles II or dating the incident itself to 1294: that would go beyond what the documents establish. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S093]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 93–94 ; H1928, section 19 ; G1856, p. 85–86.

Account XX

The Converted Confessor and the Offended Queen

The twentieth persecution took place in France, where there was a general banishment. The writings of that kingdom do not give its cause. In the Chronicles of Germany, it is written that a preaching friar desired a beautiful woman. She rejected his advances. After he had persisted for some time and spoken to her each day, she told him that her religion made it shameful for her to marry an uncircumcised man; but if he were circumcised, she would do so.

Driven by desire and love, the friar secretly became a Jew and married her. The preachers learnt of it: adding this affront to their hatred of the Jews, they sought to lay hands on them. This friar was an important man and the queen's confessor. All the friars went to her and revealed the affair: the Jews had made him one of themselves and circumcised him.

The queen took it very badly. She sought a way to take vengeance and defend her honour. She went to the king, fell on her knees, told him everything and begged him to banish the Jews from his kingdom. The king refused, for he valued them greatly and derived much profit from them. With these reasons he sought, day after day, to turn the queen from her intention. Seeing that she achieved nothing, she approached the nobles at court to have them speak to the king. They too knew that the Jews were blameless; but, fearing the queen, they advised the king against their own will to banish them, until they persuaded him.

He proclaimed that they must leave his kingdom within three months. Anyone remaining after that time would be put to death and their property confiscated for the king. Some prominent men were accused of having circumcised the friar and were burnt. Thus the Jews were forced to abandon their houses as they stood and leave the whole kingdom in haste: they were not allowed time to gather their wealth and possessions.

Confession among the Seven Sacraments

Rogier van der Weyden, The Seven Sacraments, mid-fifteenth century. Confession appears in the left wing. This representation illuminates the confessor's religious function in Account XX, without identifying its characters or corroborating the anecdote. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

Unidentified characters and chronicle

The episode names only a king, a queen and her confessor. Its reference to "chronicles of Germany" supplies neither an identifiable author nor a title. The compared versions share this lack of precision. None of the French ordinances examined securely identifies this sequence: the confessor's secret conversion, the queen's intervention, execution of those involved in circumcision and expulsion within three months. The transmitted account is therefore retained without assigning it to a familiar queen or expulsion merely on resemblance. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Rabbi Aqiba and capital sentences

The discussion preserved in the longer variant draws on an identifiable source. Mishnah Makkot 1:10 attributes to Rabbi Tarfon and Rabbi Aqiba the claim that they would have prevented all executions had they sat on the Sanhedrin (judicial council). Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel objects that this would multiply murderers. Makkot 7a explains the questions concerning a victim already suffering a fatal lesion or struck through a pre-existing perforation. Ibn Verga thus reproduces a real debate, but gives the critical reply to "all the Talmudists" instead of naming its speaker. [S094]

The saying cited against the Jews

The Mekhilta on Exodus 14:7 contains the saying about the "best of the gentiles", attributed to Rabbi Shimon ben Yohai. Its setting is Pharaoh's armed pursuit of the Israelites: Egyptians who had sheltered their animals during the plagues subsequently provide the chariot teams. In Ibn Verga's dialogue the councillors invoke this saying and the king interprets it as a reference to judicial customs. That defence by a character must be distinguished from the context of the rabbinic source itself. [S096 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The passage attributed to Plato

The community of women and children is indeed discussed in Republic V, 457c–d. It concerns the guardians of the ideal city, women and men trained for the same duties. The text does not prescribe a community of wives within every trade, as Ibn Verga's dialogue states. The note preserves the difference between Plato's proposal and a character's summary of it; it does not justify replacing the character's words with a corrected quotation from the philosopher. [S095]

Allusions that still require identification

The honey test for judging wine, the interlocutors' two explanations and the abbreviated reference to Jesus's punishment are translated as they stand in the variant. The investigation has not securely identified the precise honey-and-wine passage. The transmitted "etc." is not expanded into an additional scene. These limits allow the reader to distinguish an actually located quotation from an accusation or allusion reported in the dialogue. [H1928 ; G1856]

The biblical passages behind the two rabbinic discussions

Tarfon and Aqiba's position belongs to a debate over the conditions for conviction, rather than the removal of the penalties written in the Torah. Numbers 35:30 forbids a capital conviction based on a single witness; verse 31 simultaneously prohibits accepting a ransom for a murderer liable to death. The talmudic reasoning examined in Makkot (a tractate of the Mishnah and Talmud on judicial punishments) concerns what judges can establish about the victim's condition and the cause of death. The dialogue thus turns a controversy over evidence and the exercise of judgment into a court argument about Jewish justice.

The scriptural chain behind the Mekhilta (a rabbinic commentary on Exodus) can also be reconstructed. Exodus 9:20–21 distinguishes Pharaoh's servants who shelter their livestock before the hail from those who leave it outside; Exodus 14:6–7 later sends Pharaoh out with his chariots. The commentary connects the available teams with those who previously heeded the divine warning. This connection is a rabbinic interpretation: Exodus does not itself formulate the saying quoted by the advisers. Distinguishing verses, ancient commentary and polemical reuse prevents their respective authorities from being conflated. [S097 ; S098 ; S094 ; S096 ; H1928]

Translation Choices

A prominent cleric

Principal here describes the man's prominence. Hebrew and German do not make him superior of his order; that office was added by the earlier translation. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The extended debate absent from Spanish

Spanish abbreviates a long dispute present in both Hebrew witnesses and German. It belongs after the advice to expel the Jews and before the final decree. The expanded reading is:

The nobles said: "Our lord and king, no defence should be sought for these Jews: they hate our faith and us. They say, 'Kill the best of the non-Jews'; they also say that one may eat honey without teaching its use to a non-Jew, and similar things."

The king replied: "These things do not make them liable to banishment. A bishop has already disputed them with Jewish scholars before my father. They explained that the best of the non-Jews' practices was the death penalty they apply: it makes the people fearful, everyone hears and fears, and this is necessary to preserve so corrupted a world. But according to Jewish law, Rabbi Akiva said that had he sat in the Sanhedrin (judicial council), nobody would ever have been executed: perhaps the victim already suffered a fatal lesion, or had been struck where there was already a perforation."

The nobles said: "Should people with such laws receive pity?"

The king replied: "I heard that all the Talmudists sharply rebuked him: he would thereby have multiplied murderers among the people. Moreover, opinions can contain grave errors. Plato, chief of the philosophers, said that the wives of men in one occupation should be shared by all men in that occupation: what shame, confusion of families, disgrace and debauchery! Who has a soul firm enough never to be seduced by a strange opinion?"

The nobles asked: "And what does our lord say about the use of honey?"

The king replied: "I heard that they meant good wine is recognised by remaining sweet and pleasant after honey has been eaten. Non-Jews might think this a remedy; hence they say not to teach it to them, lest they mock them because it would be false."

The nobles answered: "We heard that this test identifies good wine suitable for libations on their altars. They forbid teaching it to a non-Jew lest he offer it before Jesus, considering it sinful to teach someone how to worship Him."

The king said: "Were we born today, not to know that they reject our God and, all the more, His worship?"

An adviser said: “How can our lord tolerate their contempt for Jesus in his kingdom? The Talmudists’ book says Jesus is condemned, and so forth.”

The king asked: “I hear this only today. When did you hear it?”

They replied: “Many years ago, and we have verified it.”

The king said: “Why, in all that time, have you told me nothing until today? The queen’s insistence must have brought you to all this.”

The following day they again spoke against the Jews until they persuaded the king.

The 1855 apparatus specifies that the early edition omits only the final exchange about Jesus’s punishment, from that reference to “until today”. The Talmudic quotations and Plato are examined in the commentary, without treating the dialogue’s allegations as rules accepted without context. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 94–95 ; H1928, section 20 ; G1856, p. 86–89.

Account XXI

Philip Expels the Jews from France

The twenty-first persecution took place in the year five thousand and sixty-six from the creation of the world. A cruel king arose, named Philip, son of Philip. He banished all the Jews from his kingdom, treating them with great cruelty. He took all their gold and silver, movable possessions and lands; they left naked and deprived of everything. The number living in that kingdom was so great that it was thought to be twice the number of those who left Egypt; they were also very learned. Rabbi Levi ben Gershom wrote this in his commentary on the verse: 'Who has counted the dust of Jacob?'

He composed it fifteen years after the banishment. A few, though very few, abandoned the Law; all those of Toulouse abandoned it. This banishment took place in the month of Av, on the day when Christians celebrate the feast of Mary Magdalene.

Philip the Fair and His Family

Philip IV surrounded by his family, Paris manuscript of 1313. This image belongs to the reign of the king who ordered the expulsion of 1306. The heraldry and royal figures help identify the dynasty; they do not depict the expulsion. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

Philip IV and the expulsion of 1306

"Philip, son of Philip" here corresponds to Philip IV, son of Philip III. The continuation of Nangis's chronicle reports confiscation and expulsion from the kingdom under the year 1306, placing departure in August. Ibn Verga names Mary Magdalene's feast, 22 July, in the month of Av. Initial arrest and seizure should be distinguished from the subsequent departure: the difference in month does not by itself establish two separate expulsions. [S099 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The number of exiles and the reference to Gersonides

Comparison with those who left Egypt measures the catastrophe in biblical terms; it is not an administrative count with an explained method. The reference to Gersonides requires separate treatment: in the commentary on Numbers 23:10 actually consulted, the author explains the dust metaphor and Israel's four groups, but the expulsion and figure cited by Ibn Verga are absent. Another recension or location remains possible. The attribution is therefore retained as the narrator's, without turning it into independent verification of the number. [S100 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Toulouse: an unresolved statement

The assertion that the entire Toulouse community changed religion is not established by the texts directly examined here. It cannot be inferred solely from a community's disappearance after confiscation or expulsion. The translation retains the statement shared by the compared versions; the commentary treats it neither as a confirmed statistic nor as a mistranslation. Local records identifying people and conversions would be needed to resolve the point. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Confiscated books and the biblical measure of loss

Confiscation concerned more than money and houses. The BnF records that in 1372 Charles V brought from the Trésor des Chartes more than two hundred Hebrew manuscripts seized on Philip the Fair's orders in 1306. He returned some to the Jews of Paris, sent others back to the treasury, lent seven to Thomas of Bologna and retained five at the Louvre. This documented trajectory adds a material consequence for books and their transmission to the history of expulsion. It measures neither the number of expelled scholars nor the number of converts in Toulouse.

The narrative's demographic comparison combines two different references. Exodus 12:37 gives approximately six hundred thousand men on foot, with children distinguished; doubling this number produces a literary magnitude without supplying a medieval census. Numbers 23:7–12 places the "dust of Jacob" within Balaam's blessing, although Balak had summoned him to curse Israel. The image conveys innumerability and a blessing that overturns the king's intention. Its use by a chronicler or commentator does not turn it into independent fiscal data. [S101 ; S097 ; S098 ; H1928]

Translation Choices

5046 or 5066?

Spanish, the 1855 main text and German print 5046 (1285–1286). The 1855 apparatus corrects this to 5066 (1305–1306), followed in 1928 and supported by the chronogram וילך, value 66. The text follows this checkable correction, compatible with the 1306 expulsion; 5046 remains recorded. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The expulsion chronogram

Hebrew adds: “The sign of that year, by the abbreviated reckoning, is: He drove him out and he departed (ויגרשהו וילך).” The highlighted word וילך equals 66: ו 6 + י 10 + ל 30 + ך 20. Adding 5000 gives 5066. Spanish omits the sentence, which explains the preceding date correction. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Why 5066 is adopted despite the German reading

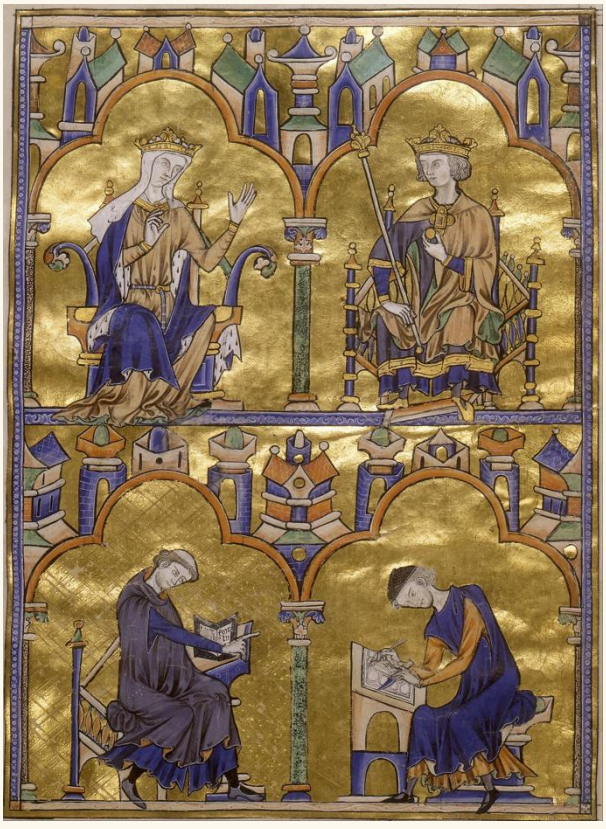
Wiener translates 5046, as do Spanish and the principal Hebrew text of 1855. However, the Hebrew apparatus records the correction, the 1928 edition gives 5066, and the chronogram וילך (va-yelekh, “and he went away”) has the value 66. Agreement with Philip IV and the expulsion of 1306 supplies an additional external check. This combination of evidence, rather than an automatic preference for the latest edition, supports 5066 in the text. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S099]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 95–96 ; H1928, section 21 ; G1856, p. 89–89.

Account XXII

An Expulsion Confined to Certain Towns

The twenty-second persecution had occurred earlier, in the year five thousand and fourteen. It was a banishment confined to some of these towns, not a general one; its cause was unknown.



A Queen and a Young King

Moralized Bible, Paris, 1227–1234. The upper figures are usually identified as Blanche of Castile and the young Louis IX; the catalogue retains this as a probable identification. The image evokes the royal milieu before the measures of 1253–1254 examined in the commentary. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

A backward step in the chronology

5014 corresponds to 1253–1254, within Louis IX's reign. Its position after the account of 1306 is not a chronological sequence: Hebrew explicitly says "earlier". The preamble to the recall ordinance of 1315 remembers that Saint Louis had expelled the Jews and later recalled them. This confirms the memory of a measure under Louis IX, but the preamble does not supply 1254, the towns concerned or the exact scope of the measure mentioned here. [S102 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Prohibited practices with expulsion as the penalty

A text closer to the stated years is article 32 of the great ordinance of December 1254. It orders Jews to abandon usury, blasphemy, sorcery and magical signs; those refusing are to be expelled. It prescribes manual labour or commerce without usury. The surviving text thus establishes prohibitions backed by a penalty, rather than listing towns from which every Jew must necessarily depart. December 1254, moreover, already falls within the Hebrew year 5015: the ordinance supplies a neighbouring context, rather than an exact match for 5014.

Rowan Dorin compares this text with Matthew Paris's account of an earlier order sent by Louis IX from the Holy Land, usually dated to 1253. He observes that describing this policy as an indiscriminate expulsion obscures the declared possibility of remaining by changing occupation. This distinction makes a tradition of partial departures more intelligible without identifying Ibn Verga's towns. The chronicler professes ignorance of the cause: the practices targeted by a nearby ordinance can now be specified, but this does not establish that each local expulsion mentioned resulted from that ordinance. [S103 ; S104 ; H1928]

Translation Choices

In 5014, rather than before that year

Hebrew and German say “earlier, in 5014”, not “before 5014”. Their syntax is adopted. Hebrew adds a date mnemonic: “The hand of Israel grew increasingly heavy” (ותלך יד ישראל הלוך וקשה, Judges 4:24). יד equals 14: י10 + ד4. The date corresponds to 1253–1254, rather than an unspecified earlier limit. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 96–96 ; H1928, section 22 ; G1856, p. 89–90.

Account XXIII

An Intercession Before the King

The twenty-third occurred about fifty years later. There was a general banishment, causing great distress: the Jews expelled in the earlier banishments had returned through gifts of money. A new, cruel king arose and pronounced that if the Jews became Christians, they would enjoy the good things of the land; otherwise, they would be put to the sword without remedy. He gave them three months to consider what was best for them.

At that time a great scholar lived there, beloved by the king, named Abogardan Dalcadim. He repeatedly begged the king to have pity, without success. The king refused to listen and told him that the people had risen against the Jews; their expulsion was in their own interest, since it would save them from the enemies who had risen against them.

The King and the Prelates

Miniature from the Grandes Chroniques de France, about 1332–1350. A king's ecclesiastical entourage provides a visual parallel to the intercession in Account XXIII. The miniature does not identify the meeting described by Ibn Verga. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

A sequence of returns and expulsions

The starting point of the "fifty years" is too uncertain to date this account by simple addition. The king is unnamed, and Abogardan Dalcadim remains unidentified after comparison of the spellings. Neighbouring accounts recall French measures from several reigns; this does not justify selecting one arbitrarily. Gifts securing a return, a three-month deadline and the scholar's intervention remain details of this tradition, without an independently identified document confirming the whole sequence. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The biblical wording of the alternative

The promise of enjoying the land's good, opposed to death by the sword, echoes Isaiah 1:19–20. The correspondence helps explain how the narrator expresses the royal ultimatum in familiar scriptural language. It is not a transcription of the supposed ordinance and does not establish that the king's exact words have survived. [S105]

Documented returns that do not identify the scene

An act of 22 August 1311 clarifies what a return followed by another departure can mean. Its abstract records Philip IV's expulsion of Jews whose presence had been tolerated after 1306, the suppression of commissioners for Jewish affairs, and restrictions on pursuing debtors. This involves the same king, rather than a new ruler. The sequence shows that tolerated return should not be confused with Louis X's formal recall in 1315, still less with the entire scene narrated here.

The 1315 act, for its part, regulates precise financial rights: the division of outstanding claims between Jewish creditors and the king, and the preservation of the original lord's rights when a Jew resides on another lord's land. It mentions neither Abogardan Dalcadim nor personal gifts purchasing the recall. These acts clarify the differences between permitted presence, fiscal interests and renewed expulsion. They supply neither the ultimatum's three months nor its alternative between baptism and the sword. Individual elements resemble one another at a certain level, but their combination and chronology must remain those of an unidentified tradition. [S106 ; S102 ; H1928]

Translation Choices

An unidentified name

The forms vary slightly and no secure identity has been established. A transliteration close to Spanish is retained. Hebrew would yield Abogardan Dalkadyah; German gives Abugardan Delcadin. No substitution of a famous person is introduced. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Fifty years: approximate in Hebrew

Spanish gives “fifty years later”. Hebrew and German specify “about fifty years later”. The starting point remains insecure within this sequence of accounts, so this indication alone cannot establish a definite year. The approximate duration supported by Hebrew and German is adopted in the text. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 96–96 ; H1928, section 23 ; G1856, p. 90–90.

Account XXIV

Philip's Death and the Exiles' Return

The twenty-fourth occurred in the year when this Philip, the king responsible for the banishment, went hunting. He came across a roe deer and swiftly pursued it on horseback. Before him lay a large pit; he fell into it, broke his neck and died. Everyone knew that his cruelty to the Jews had caused this death, seeing that, in the ordinary course of nature, the pit was not deep enough for a fall into it to be fatal.

After this cruel king, his son succeeded him. He was a pious man and a lover of justice. He considered what had happened to his father and sent the Jews a messenger to say that if they wished to return confidently to their lands, he would guard them like the apple of his eye. Many returned out of love for their land and birthplace. Most kings of Spain and France, the nobles, scholars and leading figures of the country loved the Jews; hatred arose only among the common people, who envied them.

The Jews said: 'Even if the king keeps his promise to us, if the people rise against us, whom can we trust? We see above all what has happened: the people caused so many of our banishments. What benefit shall we gain from the promise of the king and his judges unless we have the people's goodwill, when they always seek our harm?' Some said: 'Let us stay where we are and not return to be banished once again.'

After a few days they said: 'Let us return to the lands where we were born, for they are our mother. The king is just and upright; he will fulfil his words.' They therefore set out again. On the road, travellers robbed them. The king ordered an investigation, without discovering who had done it. He commanded that the Jews be given clothing and enough to live on for that year from his treasury, since they had come trusting in his word and beneath his protection. They lived securely in their towns.

An Image of Philip IV's Death

Miniature of 1479–1480 depicting Philip IV's death during a boar hunt. This visual tradition, more than a century later than the king's death, differs from the deer and fall described here. It illustrates the diversity of accounts of his death. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

Philip IV's death and the variant date

Philip IV's succession by his son Louis X places the change of reign in 1314. Nangis's continuator records a long illness, the king's removal to Fontainebleau, his testament and death on the eve of Saint Andrew, 29 November 1314. This differs from immediate death through a fall into a pit. The Hebrew chronogram, giving 5055 (1294–1295), is also incompatible with that succession. The interpretation of death as punishment belongs to the account; the chronicle describes the circumstances differently. [S099 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Louis X's recall: a surviving ordinance

The ordinance of 28 July 1315 permits return for twelve years. It regulates the repurchase of synagogues and cemeteries, old debts—one third for the Jews and two thirds for the king—the distinguishing badge and personal protection. The document confirms recall under Philip IV's son while specifying its legal and financial conditions. It supplies a more precise basis than the account's promise of absolute protection. [S102]

Popular demand and the reported compensation

The ordinance's preamble also invokes a popular request for the return. This prevents extending the opposition described in the account to the entire population. The episode of travellers robbed and then supplied with clothing and a year's maintenance has not been found in that act. General protection is documented; this particular compensation still requires another source. [S102]

The recall document's guarantees and religious language

The guarantees of 1315 are more precise than the king's personal assurance in the anecdote. Article 10 provides, after the twelve authorised years, a further year to recover and safely remove possessions should another expulsion occur. Articles 19–20 appoint two auditors to enforce the ordinance and examine, among other matters, properties sold for less than half their proper value. Article 9 also provides for the return of books still held by the crown, except condemned Talmuds. The text thus coordinates the duration of residence, possible departure, scrutiny of sales and limited restitution of property.

The preamble contains its own biblical reference: it evokes divine joy over one sinner who repents, greater than over many righteous people. It thus reuses Luke 15:7 to explain why Jewish presence may be admitted in the hope of conversion. This allusion belongs to the consulted royal act, rather than the words Ibn Verga attributes to Louis X. Comparison reveals two explanations for the recall: the Christian and administrative reasons articulated in the ordinance, and the narrative portrait of a just son learning from his father's death. [S079 ; S102 ; H1928]

Translation Choices

A date incompatible with Philip IV

Hebrew dates the episode through a formula from Exodus 11:1: “When he sends you away, he will drive you all out” (כשלחו כלה גרש יגרש). The highlighted letters כלה total 55; abbreviated reckoning gives 5055, or 1294–1295. This does not agree with Philip IV’s death in 1314. Spanish omits the chronogram. We preserve the difference and do not invent another selection of letters to produce a convenient date. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The neck or the head

Hebrew and German specify the neck; Spanish says the head. The text follows the more precise term in the first two witnesses. Alternative: “smashed his head”. This remains the account’s version of the death, without correction from an external chronicle. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Roe deer, stag and royal protection

Spanish corço supports “roe deer”, whereas German has Hirsch, “stag”, and Hebrew tsevi (צבי) names a deer or gazelle with varying older usage. “Like the apple of his eye” renders the Hebrew image of protection. “Scholars” restores the group named in Hebrew and supported by German, obscured by Spanish conocidos. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 96–98 ; H1928, section 24 ; G1856, p. 90–91.

Account XXV

Another Expulsion After the Return

The twenty-fifth persecution took place seven years after their return. New accusations were brought against them, and they were banished again. The king was upright: he allowed them to take their possessions and appointed men to guard them against robbery on the road. For many, this protection proved ineffective: villagers and travellers robbed them.

The Coronation of Charles IV

Coronation of Charles IV the Fair in a fourteenth-century miniature. His reign, beginning in 1322, belongs to the chronology considered for this renewed expulsion. The image does not resolve the attribution problems between the royal decisions compared in the commentary. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

The return as a chronological marker

The account names no ruler, town or absolute date. Its only chronological indication is the seven-year interval since the return narrated earlier. If that return is the readmission of the Jews by Louis X in 1315, the calculation leads to 1322. The ordinance of 28 July 1315 supplies a documentary anchor: it allowed a twelve-year residence and then, in the event of another compulsory departure, provided a year to recover and remove property under royal protection. It therefore documents a regulated readmission, but contains no account of this escorted departure. The chronological connection remains an identification inferred from the sequence of the book. [S102 ; E1744]

A disputed general expulsion

It would be too definite to call this episode 'Charles IV's expulsion of 1322'. Elizabeth A. R. Brown specifically reconsidered the evidence for that general expulsion in her 1991 study. The debate requires three things to be kept distinct: the readmission of 1315, supported by a dated act; departures and hostile measures in the early fourteenth century; and the particular memory preserved by Ibn Verga. No independent act or narrative consulted identifies the escorts, the places where the robberies occurred or the people robbed. This brief passage also leaves the territorial scope of the ban unspecified. These limits do not erase the chronicle's testimony; they prevent us from attributing administrative precision to it that it does not supply. [S107 ; E1744 ; H1928]

The concrete guarantees offered to those returning

The complete ordinance of 1315 brings the royal act closer to the account than the date alone would suggest. Article 10 promises the Jews, after the twelve permitted years, a year in which to recover their assets and carry them safely under the king's protection to the frontier. Departure with property and royal protection therefore have a precise administrative counterpart; the safe-conduct does not, however, establish the physical presence of an escort or show that the arrangement was implemented on the departure described here. Articles 7–9 provide for the restitution or replacement of synagogues and cemeteries, and for the return of books still held by the crown, except condemned copies of the Talmud. Article 4 assigns the king two thirds of recovered debts dating from before the expulsion, leaving the remaining third to the Jewish creditors. Finally, articles 19–20 establish two royal officers to enforce these provisions and examine cases of real estate sold for less than half its fair value. This framework restores the material stakes of the return: homes, communal premises, books and outstanding debts. Above all, it illuminates the account's contrast between protection promised by the sovereign and robbery along the roads. [S102]

Translation Choices

Accusations and protection

The opening refers to new accusations, rather than unspecified new events. The final sentence says that the escorts failed to protect many travellers; it does not revoke permission to take their possessions. All three editions agree on the seven-year interval. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 98–98 ; H1928, section 25 ; G1856, p. 91–92.

Account XXVI

Plague and Accusations of Poisoning

The twenty-sixth persecution took place in the year five thousand one hundred and sixty from the creation of the world. An exceptionally severe epidemic struck the regions of Lower and Upper Germany, Provence and Catalonia. The chronicles record nothing comparable, and no such outbreak had been heard of except the one in Rome and its surroundings, where everyone had nearly perished; but this epidemic surpassed them all in its extent.

People from those lands arose and said the Jews had thrown poison into the rivers, causing the deaths. They all gathered, went to cry out before the king and told him what had happened. The king asked: 'Have any Jews died?' They answered: 'Not a single one.' The king replied: 'If they threw poison into the rivers, what did they drink?' They answered: 'Water from wells.' He said: 'And in the other lands, where they have no well water, what did they drink? That already answers what you say; but in truth, the disease cannot arise from this. How much poison would they have thrown into the river for its abundant water not to dilute it? Moreover, the water flows, and fresh water arrives containing no poison. Lastly, someone who dies from poison develops no abscesses. Go and drink from the wells, and you will see whether you escape the disease or die.'

Seeing the king's intention, the people withdrew. But a Jew mocked them, saying: 'Your schemes have done you little good.' They took heart again and sought witnesses to suit their wishes. These testified to seeing Jews go out at midnight and carry something to the river, without knowing what it was; they murmured formulas over the river that the witnesses could not understand. Witnesses came to testify, and others recounted Jewish misdeeds, until the king said: 'Even if there is only a suspicion, they ought to be banished.'

The people rose and said: 'Since they have killed so many of us, how can they leave unpunished, rich, gorged on the fruits of our labour and the interest they have taken from us? Let the king order them to change their religion or be killed!'107 The nobles supported this proposal, namely the abandonment of the Law. It was decreed throughout Germany and Provence. The anguish was without equal. Everywhere in Germany the Jews remained firm in the Law and did not abandon it.

Burying the Victims of the Plague

Pierart dou Tielt, about 1353: the people of Tournai bury plague victims. This near-contemporary illumination gives visual form to the demographic catastrophe. It depicts no poisoning of wells and supplies no evidence for that accusation. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

The plague and the accusations of 1348

The closest documentary parallel is the accusation of water poisoning during the Black Death. In Quamvis perfidiam, dated 26 September 1348 by its Latin closing formula, Clement VI rejects that charge: the disease also kills Jews and reaches places where they do not live. The document therefore confirms both the accusation and an official intervention against it. It confirms neither the identity of Ibn Verga's king nor his interlocutors' words. The dialogue and the king's change of position should not be presented as a transcription of this bull. [S108 ; E1744]

The transmitted date and the shape of the account

The text nevertheless retains the year 5160, or 1399–1400, rather than 5108–5109, which would correspond to 1348–1349. The discrepancy occurs in the printed Spanish, the Hebrew text consulted and Wiener. It is consequently a problem in the transmission, not merely a numeral mistranslated into French or English. The list of regions may combine memories of several outbreaks and episodes of violence. No ruler is named, and Provence, Catalonia and the German territories did not belong to one king. These features are preserved instead of being harmonised with a modern reconstruction. Finally, 'not a single one' and the assertions about poison are statements by the characters. The passage is not a demographic or medical investigation: its documentary significance lies principally in the memory of a collective accusation and the arguments raised against it. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S108]

A fourteenth-century Jewish tradition concerning the same violence

Joseph ha-Kohen preserved a passage attributed to Ḥayyim ben Abraham Gallipapa, a fourteenth-century rabbi whose original work no longer survives in full. It explicitly opens with the year 5108, identified as 1348. It locates attacks in Barcelona, Cervera and Tàrrega, then mentions Solsona, the Tarragona region and Provence. It also describes defensive measures in communities such as Monzón, Lleida and Huesca, and reports the allegation, in German lands, that Jews had cast death into the wells. The convergence with Ibn Verga is therefore both geographical and narrative: plague, accusations of poisoning, plunder and the search for protection. Gallipapa also supplies a local scale absent from the royal dialogue. His casualty figures belong to this tradition; they are not a count independently established by this commentary. The passage preserved by ha-Kohen provides an earlier textual link through which to investigate the condensed memory of these disasters. It does not identify Verga's unnamed king. [S108]

What Clement VI actually ordered

The bull of September 1348 supplies an institutional perspective. It observes that people of both sexes and all ages had been killed even though the accused were willing to appear before the competent judges. It orders ecclesiastical authorities to announce during Mass that no one may seize, beat, wound or kill them on their own initiative, under penalty of excommunication. Any complaints must follow ordinary judicial procedure. This intervention corroborates the conflict between popular violence and the jurisdiction of public authorities, which is central to the account; it does not describe the forced conversion presented as the outcome by Ibn Verga. [S108]

Translation Choices

The year 5160

The reading 5160 was checked against the image of Spanish page 98. OCR could produce 5150. The narrative has not been silently redated to 1348. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Abscesses and reported speech

Hebrew moresa (מורסא, an abscess or suppurating swelling), supported by Wiener's "Geschwüre", is more specific than Spanish "herida". "Abscesses" renders that older terminology; the medical assertion remains the king's statement in the narrative. The murmuring is likewise reported by accusers who say that they cannot understand it. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Who demands forced conversion?

At the end, the crowd asks the king to impose conversion or death. The Hebrew is a demand, as the German confirms. This clarifies the Spanish "y mando el Rey", which could make the narrator appear to announce a royal order at that point. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 98–100 ; H1928, section 26 ; G1856, p. 92–93.

Account XXVII

Massacres in Spain and the Converts' Flight

The twenty-seventh persecution took place in the year five thousand one hundred and fifty. A general persecution struck most of Spain, including the communities most distinguished for their learning and numbers. People of the land had suddenly risen against them to kill and plunder the Jews unless they abandoned the Law. Many of their most respected members resisted in defence of their Law, prepared to face whatever might befall them in order to preserve it. Many were killed in sanctification of God.

The same happened in the kingdom of Aragon, Valencia, Majorca, Barcelona and Lleida. In those places, many abandoned the Law because of the great afflictions and terrors they endured. Nevertheless, He who is the Glory of Israel neither lies nor deceives. All those who had been forcibly converted sought a way to escape: they chose exile for themselves, wandering from people to people, into their enemies' lands, until they found somewhere to observe their Law freely.

The Lord helped them. But those who left for Arab lands suffered things on the road that cannot be told, as they wrote to their relatives who remained in their country. The villagers in particular rose against them, saying they were leaving to practise their Law. They arrested them and put them in chains until the king was informed. Some escaped by giving money to their persecutors. Others, unable to endure the suffering, said: 'Let us choose someone to lead us and turn back, for this has already been prophesied to us: "You shall perish among the nations, and the land of your enemies shall devour you."'

Valencia in the Sixteenth Century

Anton van den Wyngaerde, view of Valencia, 1563. The panorama locates one of the cities affected by the Iberian violence of 1391. Made almost two centuries later, it helps identify the urban setting and does not depict the massacres. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

The Iberian violence of 1391

The list of towns closely corresponds to the violence of 1391: Valencia, Majorca, Barcelona and Lleida appear in the letter Hasdai Crescas sent to the Avignon community in the autumn of that year. The letter predates Ibn Verga but survives through later authors and editors; it supplies a specific connection, not merely historical background. It describes attacks, forced conversions and attempts at protection. Ibn Verga nevertheless gives the year 5150, or 1389–1390; its discrepancy with 5151, the Hebrew year of the attacks in summer 1391, is retained and identified. The broad correspondence does not establish every stage in the converts' escape. [S110 ; E1744 ; H1928]

Comparing the letter with documentary records

The letter's own transmission requires scrutiny. Eduard Feliu compared its editions with Catalan and Latin documents, including royal letters of 12, 16 and 18 August 1391. He disputes changes attributed to Carmoly in the version published by Wiener, including the passage concerning Crescas's son. The version used must therefore be specified and its variants considered. The royal documents confirm concrete attempts at protection in Barcelona; they do not identify the villagers or the travellers placed in chains in this account. Ibn Verga mentions letters sent by fugitives to their relatives, but neither reproduces them nor identifies their writers. This indication of provenance deserves preservation; by itself it cannot locate those letters in a particular archive. [S109 ; E1744]

The progression of the attacks from city to city

Crescas's letter supplies a sequence that can be checked: Valencia on 9 July 1391, Majorca on 2 August, and Barcelona on Saturday 5 August. It distinguishes those who died, those who were baptized and those who found refuge. In Majorca it mentions the royal castle; in Barcelona it first describes an attempt at protection by the governor, who supplied food and drink, followed by an attack on the refuge with bows and crossbows. The documents assembled by Feliu allow these details to be compared with municipal and royal chronology, instead of imagining a simultaneous massacre in every city. Dispersal, forced conversions and departures do belong to the same historical sequence. The chaining of fugitives on their way to Muslim lands, however, is a continuation particular to Verga's account, which this letter does not describe. [S109 ; S110]

A biblical episode actually reused: wishing to return to Egypt

The proposal to appoint a leader and turn back draws on Numbers 14:4. In that passage, following the scouts' report on Canaan, the Israelites fear death by the sword and the captivity of their families; they demand to return to Egypt (14:1–4). Ibn Verga transfers the expression to fugitives who wish to return to the country where they underwent forced conversion. The correspondence concerns a decision to turn back when confronted with a new danger; the medieval account is set neither in the wilderness nor in the time of Moses. Similarly, the quotation from Leviticus 26:38 belongs to the covenant sanctions foretelling dispersal. It supplies a biblical language for the calamity being narrated, without dating it or providing a second account of the event. [S111 ; S112]

Translation Choices

Valencia or Galicia

The Spanish prints “Galicia”. The Hebrew reads Valencia, and the German gives “Valencia”. Valencia is retained as the correction of a corrupted place-name, consistent with the Aragonese sequence and the documentation of 1391. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S110]

A biblical allusion and its subject

“He who is the Glory of Israel” refers to 1 Samuel 15:29 and designates God. The Spanish obscures the allusion by making Israel itself the subject. The sentence does not claim that every person remained unwavering. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Destinations and the closing quotation

The Hebrew reads “Arab lands”, where the Spanish says “towards the West”; this is a genuine geographical divergence, and the two expressions need not designate the same area. The former, also followed by Wiener, is retained. The ending echoes Leviticus 26:38; the Hebrew makes it possible to restore “the land of your enemies” as the subject. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 100–101 ; H1928, section 27 ; G1856, p. 93–94.

Account XXVIII

Starvation and Banishment to Pera

The twenty-eighth persecution took place in Greece, according to what I heard from the elders. A royal decree ordered the Jews to abandon the Law. From the oldest to the youngest, they stood firm in it. Seeing that he could not make them yield, the king took counsel on what to do. The council decided they should be driven from their houses into the countryside for three days, without food or water.

They neither ate nor drank, remaining steadfast throughout the three days, except for the children and young people who could not endure it: they fled from their parents' houses and went to the Greeks' homes. The king, seeing that he could not draw them to his religion and recognising their firmness in refusing to abandon their own, took pity on them. To appease the people, he pronounced another sentence: they were not to live in Constantinople but in another town opposite it, called Pera.

He decreed that some should practise no trade except tanning, and should establish workshops by the sea for that occupation. Others say this did not happen at that time, but resulted from another decree on a different matter.

Constantinople and Pera

Constantinople and the district of Pera in Braun and Hogenberg's Civitates orbis terrarum. This sixteenth-century published view clarifies the relationship between the two shores and the Jewish settlement of Pera mentioned in the account. It does not date the reported expulsion. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

Pera in an earlier account

In the twelfth century Benjamin of Tudela places the Jews of Constantinople across the water, in the quarter he calls Pera. He also describes tanners pouring foul water outside Jewish houses. These details provide a specific early parallel for Ibn Verga's topography and the occupation he mentions. They are not the same account: Benjamin does not relate the three-day expulsion without provisions, and his tanners are not described as Jews compelled to practise that occupation. [S113 ; E1744]

What can be dated

Ibn Verga expressly reports what he heard from the elders. He gives neither a ruler's name nor a year. This passage alone therefore cannot securely assign the decree to any particular Byzantine emperor known for conversion measures. The account itself preserves uncertainty in its ending: some attributed the occupational restriction to a different time and a different affair. This internal reservation deserves as much weight as the similarities with Benjamin's journey. Comparison reveals an early topographical core and several measures whose association remains uncertain. The documents consulted do not recover an order imposing the forced fast, the officials who enforced it or a list of its victims. The three days, the young people's flight and the ruler's change of mind thus remain features of the tradition reported here, without an identified independent attestation. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The quarter and its inhabitants in Benjamin of Tudela

The Itinerary enables us to reconstruct a more varied community than the isolated reference to tanning would suggest. Benjamin counts approximately two thousand Rabbanite Jews and five hundred Karaites, separated by a fence. The former follow rabbinic tradition; the latter belong to a movement that rejects the Talmud's normative authority. He names scholars, silk workers and wealthy merchants. He states that crossing the water was necessary to trade with the inhabitants of Constantinople. This description explains why the location opposite the city mattered economically as well as residentially. The figures remain the traveller's estimates, not an administrative census. The ruler in his description is Manuel, identified by the edition as Manuel I Comnenus. That name belongs to the context of the twelfth-century journey and cannot thereby become the name of Verga's anonymous king. [S113]

The physician's exception and the difference between the accounts

Benjamin adds that only one Jew, Solomon the Egyptian, the ruler's physician, was permitted to ride a horse and obtained relief for his fellow Jews. This detail offers a point of comparison with other court physicians mentioned by Ibn Verga. Above all, it shows how the description combines collective restrictions, personal privilege and commercial activity. The dirty trade then appears through the wastewater thrown out in front of the houses. We can thus trace the movement of a group of earlier elements—a separate quarter, difficult relations with the city, and tanneries—into the condensed version of account 28, while keeping the forced deprivation of food, absent from Benjamin, distinct. [S113]

Translation Choices

Tanning and workshops

The expression concerning hides denotes tanning, rather than every leather trade. For the workplace, Spanish “tiendas” and German “Läden” support “workshops”. The 1928 Hebrew presents ḥanuyyot (חנויות, shops or workshops), followed by the variant oniyyot (אניות, boats). The maritime variant is recorded without being inserted into the body. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 101–101 ; H1928, section 28 ; G1856, p. 94–95.

Account XXIX

Confessions Extracted Under Torture

The twenty-ninth persecution took place in the time of old King Alfonso, an upright man. Men appeared before the governing judges and said that on the eve of Passover they had seen a Christian enter a Jew's house, then immediately heard him cry: 'Christians, help me!' The judges sent men to search the Jew's house, but they found nothing. The judges said: 'Last year the same accusation was made against them, and everything proved false. Why do you pursue groundless accusations? Why do you frighten these poor people, who have harmed nobody?'

The people rose with great tumult and said: 'If the judge of the land will not give us justice, we shall go to the king; he will give it to us.' They appeared before the king and told him the story. He replied: 'Bring the Jew before me.' They immediately brought him. The king questioned him, and he answered: 'God forbid! No Christian has entered my house these past days.'

The king told the accusers: 'You deserve death: you heard the Christian cry for deliverance and recognised his voice. Why did you not break down the Jew's doors and enter to save him from his assailant?' They answered: 'We feared the judges would hold us guilty of breaking down a man's doors.'

The Jew said: 'Ten days ago, a servant ran away, entered my house and shut the door. Why did you break it down then? The pieces can still be seen.' They went to look and answered nothing. The king then said to the nobles: 'Have you seen this Jew who kills Christians, so old and ill that he cannot kill a flea? This is nothing but their wicked hearts, and they should be punished.' Turning to them, he said: 'Liars and deceivers, take care not to bring such accusations before me.' The next day they assembled and came before the king to say that there were witnesses and strong indications. The king said: 'If so, an investigation is required.' He summoned the secretary, who wrote down the Jew's name and the identifying features of his house. He asked those who said they knew the Christian what his name was. They answered: 'Pedro de Guzmán.' His wife's name was Beatriz, the bishop's servant; she lived in such-and-such a square.

The king asked what he looked like. They said he was short, red-haired, with a forked beard, and blind in one eye. The king sent for the woman and questioned her about her husband. She replied that he had gone to a Jew's house to collect a debt and had not returned home.

He questioned the witnesses. They said: 'We knew this Christian, whose description we have given. Finding him at the Jew's door, we were told by him that he was waiting for a Jew who owed him a debt. Just then the Jew arrived and went inside with him. Shortly afterwards we heard him cry: "Help me!" We then entered the Jew's house through the window. We searched it thoroughly without finding the Christian, but there was much blood on the floor.'

The king said: 'With such an indication, he should be tortured.' This was done. The Jew confessed to killing him and throwing him into the river during the night. He was sentenced to be burnt. When the sentence was proclaimed, the bishop appeared before the king and heard it. He asked: 'Is this Pedro de Guzmán by any chance Beatriz's husband, or another man?' They answered: 'Beatriz's husband.'

Astonished, he said: 'How is that possible? The proclamation says he killed him on the first of January; I saw him alive yesterday in a village near the town. He will come today, or tomorrow at the latest.' The king said: 'In that case the Jew is a fool, or has lost his judgement, since he confessed to something he did not do.' The bishop replied: 'One cannot trust torture or the methods of the powerful.'

The Jew came at the king's command. On hearing this, he said: 'King and lord, I am no fool; but they drove me out of my senses through the severity of the torture. No pity remains among Christians. They inflicted torments on me that are not inflicted on traitors to the king. Seeing that after so much torture I was to be tortured again, I chose to die once rather than so many times.'

The king then sent two servants, accompanied by a Jew so that a bribe might not induce them to hide the Christian. The Christian came before the king, who rose and said: 'Praised be He who brings truth to light! Praised be the Lord of justice! Why did He order fools like us to sit in judgement, when we are like beasts of the field, unable to see what makes us stumble?

'I shall also say what I have heard: in ancient times the Greeks were accustomed to weep on the day a child was born and rejoice when an old man died. For one ought to weep for someone born, since he comes into a world of tears, and rejoice when he dies, since he goes to rest. But it is fitting that the Jews should weep when they are

born and when they die and during the days between the two. The ordinary hardships of their exile are not enough: people also seek charges against them to bring about their destruction. I care for them, not because they are Jews, but because they are poor and downtrodden. We have no kingdom except the one given us by the King of the world, who said through His prophet: "I shall look upon the poor and humble in spirit."

'My thanks are due to you, bishop, for you prevented me from shedding innocent blood. God sent you so that such injustice should not issue from my hand.' The bishop replied: 'The King of the world has also granted you another favour, my lord: you see with your own eyes that one should not believe what a man says under torture. The Jew said he had killed the Christian, yet here the man stands, alive. Praised be He who enlightens the judgement of upright and just kings like you! May He always do the same for you.'

A Legal Scene in the Vidal Mayor

Vidal Mayor, about 1290–1310: two men before a king and a man addressing a family. The initial belongs to an Aragonese legal text. It illuminates the medieval judicial setting of Account XXIX; the scene does not depict a session of torture. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

A judicial case without a secure identification

The account describes an investigation in enough detail to name Pedro de Guzmán and Beatriz, give the husband's appearance and mention a bishop. It nevertheless cannot be securely assigned to a particular trial: the ruler is only 'old King Alfonso', the town is unnamed, and no office or episcopal see is specified. The surname Guzmán cannot determine which of the many Iberian kings called Alfonso is intended. The acts and narratives consulted supplied no independent dossier combining these elements. Proper names provide leads for research, but do not justify inventing a date, court or archival collection. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Internal chronology and an ancient tradition

Two chronological details do not immediately agree: the Christian's supposed entry is first placed on the eve of Passover, whereas the proclamation dates the murder to 1 January. The editions consulted transmit this difficulty, which the translation preserves. It may result from combined traditions or textual alteration, but no document settles the matter. A feature of the king's speech can, however, be traced: in V.4 Herodotus attributes mourning at births and rejoicing at funerals to the Trausi, a Thracian people. Ibn Verga assigns it more broadly to the 'Greeks'. This is an identifiable ancient literary motif, without proof of direct borrowing from Herodotus or of the speech's verbatim authenticity. The closing quotation concerning the poor and the contrite in spirit echoes Isaiah 66:2 and explains the narrative's biblical phrasing. [S114 ; E1744 ; H1928]

A Castilian legal framework for understanding the investigation

The Siete Partidas provides a precise point of comparison for the use of confessions. Part VII, title XXX, law II, reserves the decision to torture prisoners to the competent judges and requires prior grounds for suspicion. Law III prescribes the presence of the judge and a scribe; it calls for open questions and discourages questions that already suggest the murderer or an accomplice. Law IV requires renewed questioning on the following day, away from torture, before accepting a confession as established. It explicitly considers the possibility that a prisoner has made a false statement through fear of blows or pain: if the judge discovers its falsity before execution, he must release the prisoner. Verga's account thus belongs to a legal world in which information extracted by coercion itself required examination. His king pursues that examination as far as finding the supposed victim alive. This shared problem does not identify the king as Alfonso X or prove that a particular trial applied these laws exactly as the story describes. [S115]

The two traditions in the final speech

The reflection on birth and death also has a specific biblical parallel: Ecclesiastes 7:1–4 contrasts the day of death with the day of birth, and the house of mourning with the house of feasting. This comparison illuminates the speech's language, but the information about the Trausi's custom comes from Herodotus's Greek account, not from this biblical passage. The last sentence refers directly to Isaiah 66:2, which links divine attention with the poor and the broken in spirit. These references distinguish the materials brought together by the narrator: a judicial investigation, an ancient exemplum and a prophetic quotation. [S114 ; S116 ; S117]

Translation Choices

Confessions and explicit subjects

The text distinguishes the accusers, judges, king and Jewish prisoner. Pronouns have been clarified where their sequence risked confusing those people. “The ordinary hardships of their exile” renders galut ha-tiv‘it (גלות הטבעית, literally exile in its ordinary condition): the king contrasts that condition with additional accusations. The earlier “natural captivity” was opaque. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Ten days and the recognised voice

The Hebrew and Wiener give ten days for the incident with the servant, against three in the Spanish. They also say that the accusers recognised the voice, whereas the Spanish includes a negative. The Hebrew and German readings are retained; both corrections affect the logic of the questioning. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The house and the methods of the powerful

The clerk records an identifying feature of the house, not a list of its inhabitants: “a description of his house” follows Hebrew siman beito (סימן ביתו, a sign identifying his house). Later, “the methods of the powerful” follows the “princes” of the Hebrew and Wiener; the Spanish gives “diabolical works”, a divergence explicitly recorded here. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 101–105 ; H1928, section 29 ; G1856, p. 95–98.

Account XXX

Maimonides and the Epistle to Yemen

The thirtieth persecution took place in the year four thousand nine hundred and six. General and severe decrees were issued throughout Barbary and the eastern lands against the communities there, which were considerable in numbers and standing. The king sought to compel them to change their religion, and forced every community in his kingdom to follow the law of Muhammad.

At that time our master Moses ben Maimon, Maimonides, fled to Zoan in Egypt, called Cairo. He remained under the sultan's rule for the rest of his life, living there with great honour as his physician. For his wisdom, the king and his nobles raised him above all the men of the East. This master then wrote the letter called the Epistle to Yemen, to strengthen the surviving communities, exhort them to observe the Law of Moses, and give them confidence in the future redemption.

Maimonides' Mishneh Torah

Opening of the Book of Love in a Mishneh Torah illuminated about 1400. This copy of another work by Maimonides accompanies the Epistle to Yemen discussed in the account. The manuscript postdates the author and does not here contain the quoted letter. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

Events belonging to different dates

The account brings together forced conversions in North Africa, Maimonides's settlement in Egypt and his Epistle to Yemen. These events are connected in his biography, but were not a single measure imposed by the same ruler at the opening date. The epistle was addressed around 1172 to Jacob ben Netanel al-Fayyumi in Yemen; its immediate setting was a local persecution. This corrects the chapter's chronological interpretation without rewriting it: its 'then' compresses a career and does not reliably date the letter. The year 4906 retained in the Spanish corresponds to 1145–1146. [S118 ; E1744]

A personal letter about life in Egypt

Maimonides's letter to Samuel ibn Tibbon gives a more precise personal account of his medical work. He distinguishes his residence in Misr, or Fustat, from the court at al-Qahira, Cairo, and describes his journeys, his duties to the ruler and the patients awaiting his return. The comparison establishes court medical practice but does not verify every phrase of praise in the chronicle. Biblical Zoan belongs to the chronicle's geographical vocabulary: it should not be taken to mean that Maimonides lived at ancient Tanis. Finally, presenting his entire residence as being under 'the sultan' suppresses changes of rule and stages in his career. The commentary restores these distinctions rather than inserting rulers' names which the narrative does not supply. [S119 ; E1744 ; H1928]

What can be recovered from the letter to Yemen

The epistle's address names Jacob, son of Netanel al-Fayyumi, and extends to the scholars of Yemen's communities. Maimonides explains that he knows his correspondent by reputation without having met him. The opening sets out the request he received: an insurgent leader is compelling Jews in the territories he controls to abandon Judaism, a policy compared with forced conversions in the Maghreb. Maimonides chooses to reply in Arabic so that men, women and children can understand it. The work is therefore more than a eulogy or a book sent after a journey: it answers an identifiable crisis through correspondence between Egypt and Yemen. Later, he examines the case of a messianic claimant and advises temporarily removing him from public view so that his announcements will not trigger reprisals. This section supplies concrete context for the neighbouring messianic material without equating the Yemeni claimant with David Alroy. [S120]

The physician's practice in his own words

In the letter to Samuel ibn Tibbon, Maimonides describes morning visits to the palace, prolonged when the ruler, a member of his household or an officer falls ill. On returning to Fustat, he finds patients—Jews and non-Jews, prominent people and ordinary townspeople—waiting until evening. The Sabbath remains the time when he can receive the community for study. These details explain what service as a court physician means here: several locations, several groups of patients and severe demands on his time. They supplement Verga's brief presentation with a personal statement, without turning the chronicler's praise into administrative titles. [S119]

Translation Choices

4906 or 4900

The Spanish and Wiener give 4906; the 1928 Hebrew gives 4900. The base edition's numeral is preserved. Their equivalents are 1145–1146 and 1139–1140 respectively; neither should be used to date the Epistle to Yemen. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Maimonides and Zoan

The Spanish has a corrupted construction around "Moseh Bar Zoan". The Hebrew distinguishes Moses ben Maimon from the verb "fled" followed by the place Zoan; Wiener confirms that reading. The passage therefore does not name an author called Moses Bar-Zoan. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The letter's title and an invocation

Iggeret Teiman (איגרת תימן) means "Epistle to Yemen". After the future redemption, the Hebrew and Wiener add an invocation absent from the Spanish: "May it be revealed soon, amen." It is supplied here as a variant rather than silently added to the narrative. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 105–106 ; H1928, section 30 ; G1856, p. 98–99.

Account XXXI

David al-David and the Messianic Revolt

The thirty-first persecution took place seven years before the decree mentioned above. Israel suffered great anguish because of an evil man who claimed to be the Messiah. The king and his nobles were deeply angered against the Jews, saying they sought the kingdom's ruin by seeking a Messiah.

This accursed man was called David al-David. He came from the town of Amadia, where there was a large community of nearly a thousand households, wealthy, powerful and highly esteemed. It was the first of the communities settled around the river Sambatyon, numbering more than a hundred, at the entrance to the land of Media. Their language is Chaldean (Aramaic). From there to the province of Golan is a journey of fifty days. They are subject to the king of Persia and pay him an annual tribute of one gold coin for each person aged fifteen and over.

David had studied under Hasdai, the rosh ha-golah (ראש הגולה, head of the Exile), and a celebrated man who headed the academy in Baghdad. He was greatly learned in the Talmud (a collection of rabbinic discussions and teachings), in other branches of learning, and in magic and enchantments. Confident in his strength and proud of heart, he rose against the king. He gathered the Jews who lived on Mount Haptan and persuaded them to set out with him to fight all the nations. He showed them signs, without their knowing how he performed them. Some said it was through enchantments and tricks; others said he drew his power from the holy Name. Those who joined him called him the Messiah, praising and exalting him.

When the king of Persia heard of the affair and saw David prospering, advancing against him and gathering many followers, he became greatly afraid. He sent an ambassador inviting David to appear before him in complete confidence and show him the signs he performed. Those signs would allow the king to know whether David was the true Messiah; the king would then acknowledge that God had granted David kingship, accept him as king and humble himself in his service, since that was the divine will.

David appeared without any fear. The king asked him: 'Is it true that you are the Messiah?' He replied: 'I am the Messiah, and God has sent me to redeem the people of Israel.' The king said: 'I shall put you in prison. If you can escape, I shall know you are the Messiah; otherwise, lifelong imprisonment will be the punishment for your folly. I shall not kill you, for you are mad.'

After having him imprisoned, the king summoned all his nobles and counsellors and asked what he should do with the Jews who had rebelled against him. While they were deliberating, they heard that David had escaped from prison and gone far away, without anyone knowing which road he had taken. On hearing this, the king sent several horsemen after him to seize him. They went, returned and told the king that beside a river they had heard his voice but had not seen him, and so had been unable to seize him. The king suspected deceit: David had bribed them and they had released him, or they were claiming they had been unable to catch him.

The king himself mounted his horse and pursued him with his servants. They reached the riverbank but did not see him. They called him, and he replied: 'You fools! I am going on my way. If you have the strength to follow me, follow me.' He spread his cloth over the river Gozan and crossed it. The king and his servants saw him. The king said: 'No man can do this except one whom the King—the King of the world, I mean—has made king. We must acknowledge him as such.' His servants said: 'We know of things performed solely through enchantments and illusions of the eyes.'

The king then ordered a rowing vessel to be brought. He crossed the river with many swift horsemen, but they could not catch David, who travelled ten days' distance in a single day. Seeing that this course was of no use, the king sought another. He sent messengers to the heads of the Captivity, ordering them to seize this man and bring him before him. Otherwise, he would kill them all, leaving neither child nor old man; he would subject the leaders to great torments and then burn them one by one.

He also wrote to the amīr al-mu'minīn (Commander of the Faithful), who lived in Baghdad, asking him to exercise proper diligence in this affair and convey all these threats to the heads of the Captivity. They heard this, assembled and sent messengers to David, urging him to abandon his folly for his own good and that of all those left in such great danger. Otherwise, they would impose the ḥerem (חרם, exclusion from the community) on him, in this world and the next. They also wrote to Zakkai the

nasi (prince or communal leader) in Assyria and to Rabbi Joseph Barkan al-Falaḥ, the astrologer, asking them to write to him on their behalf: they remained in this distress, and divine mercy was needed to save them.

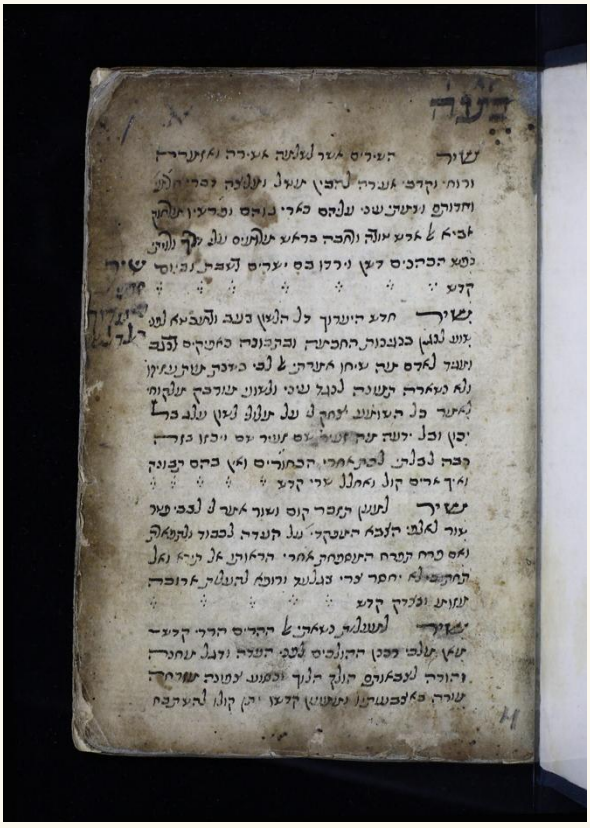
They all wrote to David, warning him to abandon his evil course. He received and read the letters, mocked them, and neither listened to them nor feared them. Then the merciful God moved the heart of a Turkish king called Zid al-Din, who was subject to the king of Persia, very friendly towards the Jews and well acquainted with David's father-in-law. He said to him: 'You know your people's condition and the distress they suffer on account of the king of Persia. It lies with you to save yourself and your people. The Jews will give you ten thousand gold coins for this: I stand surety for them and shall pay you if you kill that sinful man who has endangered so many innocent souls. You will also receive a reward from God, since you will have saved your innocent people.'

Seeking both to save his people and to profit, the man resolved to carry this out. That night he invited David to a feast and gave him drink. At midnight, while David slept unsuspectingly, drunk, he cut off his head and brought it to King Zid al-Din. On seeing it, the king said: 'Your blood be upon your own head.' He sent it to the king of Persia with trustworthy witnesses attesting that this was the Messiah he had demanded. The king's anger against David subsided; yet he said he wished to take revenge on the Jews who had followed him, and ordered all the communities to hand over those who had attached themselves to him. They replied that they did not know them and did not know where to seek them. The king then ordered them to be imprisoned. From their prison they chose intermediaries to reach a settlement with him for a large sum of money: a hundred talents of gold.

Our master Moses writes that the sultan, having this David before him, asked whether he was the Messiah; he answered that he was. The king said: 'What is the sign?' He replied that they should cut off his head and he would come back to life. The king therefore ordered it cut off, and he died. It was said that this spared him death under cruel torture.

Solomon, son of Verga, the compiler, says: 'I found in the writings of our master Moses that at the beginning of the kingdom of the Ishmaelites, a man beyond the River declared himself the Messiah. The Jews were in great danger, and ten thousand of them abandoned the Law. His sign was that he went to bed a leper and rose healed. Afterwards he fell, and Israel remained in the same captivity and under the same hatred.

‘Likewise, another appeared in the West, in the province of Fez, and declared himself the Messiah. This brought great distress upon Israel. Ten years earlier, another Messiah had arisen. Another appeared in France, on whose account many communities were massacred. Likewise, in the time of Rabbi Solomon son of Adret, another Messiah arose, as he writes in the answers to questions that he composed.’



Benjamin of Tudela’s Journey

Opening page of a sixteenth- or seventeenth-century copy of Benjamin of Tudela’s travels. His account of David Alroy is an important earlier tradition for historical comparison. The reproduced leaf is a later copy, not the twelfth-century traveller’s autograph. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

An identifiable earlier narrative

Benjamin of Tudela's Itinerary already relates the story of David Alroy at Amadia: study in Baghdad, a messianic movement, imprisonment, a marvellous escape, intervention by Jewish leaders, murder by his father-in-law and payment of a hundred talents of gold. This sequence establishes a specific narrative connection with Ibn Verga. Benjamin gives twenty-five days from Amadia to Gilan, against fifty days to Golan here; names and several scenes also differ. The earlier tradition concerns the same figure, but its different versions must remain distinguishable. [S121 ; E1744 ; H1928]

Two deaths belonging to different dossiers

The death subsequently attributed to 'our master Moses' belongs to another dossier. In his 1194 letter to the scholars of southern France, Maimonides discusses a claimant who appeared in Yemen about twenty-two years earlier and offered decapitation followed by resurrection as proof of his mission. This locates the anecdote, but does not attribute it to David Alroy. The chronicle thus places together two traditions that the commentary must distinguish. The sentence remains in the narrative with its old attribution, so that translation does not erase the difficulty. The reference to seven years before the preceding persecution likewise supplies no independent date for David. Finally, the wonders and dialogues are features of these transmitted narratives; no court record verified here confirms them word for word. [S122 ; E1744 ; G1856]

The officials and places named in Benjamin's tradition

Benjamin's passage clarifies the political structure of the affair. The king of Persia asks the caliph of Baghdad to exert pressure on the Jewish leaders; they must then persuade the claimant to desist. The account names the head of the Exile and Jacob, the academy's director, followed by Zakkai in Mosul and Joseph Burhan al-Mulk, described as an astronomer. These intermediaries explain the communities' final appeal to the head of the Exile to negotiate the king's appeasement. The claimant's education in Baghdad, his base at Amadia and the intervention from Mosul thus form a precise network already present in a twelfth-century tradition. Variations in the names transmitted by Verga can be examined against it, without reducing the passage to an isolated adventure or relocating its participants to Yemen. [S121]

The mantle on the water and the limits of a biblical comparison

The crossing on a mantle already belongs to David's story in Benjamin. It may be compared with 2 Kings 2:8 and 2:13–14, where Elijah, followed by Elisha, strikes the Jordan with a mantle and crosses after the waters divide. The differences are decisive: Verga's character uses the cloth as a floating support, whereas the biblical text describes a passage on dry ground. This is a motif of miraculous power involving a mantle and a river, not the same episode or proof of direct borrowing. The comparison with Maimonides belongs to a different category: his letter of 1194 is the identifiable source of the story about the Yemeni who expects to rise after being beheaded. That story is added to David's dossier in the compilation; it does not make his death a variant of the same event. [S121 ; S122 ; S123]

Translation Choices

The compiler and the titles

Ha-maʿatiq (המעתיק) here means "the person who transcribes or compiles". "The translator" followed the Spanish literally but misleadingly suggested that Solomon translated the book. Rosh ha-golah means "head of the Exile"; nasi, "prince" or "leader"; ḥerem, exclusion from the community. Hebrew letters distorted by PDF extraction have been restored. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

David's learning: the fuller reading

The body follows the shorter Spanish formulation. The Hebrew and Wiener read: "He was a great scholar in the Talmud, in all the external sciences, and in all the books of diviners, magicians and Chaldeans." The "external sciences" are branches of learning outside religious study; in this list, "Chaldeans" means practitioners of astral divination. Earlier, "Chaldean" as a language means Aramaic. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Mountain, river and proper names

Mount Haptan follows the Hebrew and Wiener, against Spanish "río Haptan". Gozan is preserved: Wiener identifies it as the Kizil Ozein, a geographical interpretation. The title amīr al-mu'minīn is restored from Benjamin's parallel; its Spanish and Hebrew forms are corrupted. The Turkish ruler is Zid al-Din in the Hebrew, Cid Aladin in the Spanish and Seifeddin in Wiener. The astrologer appears as Joseph Barkan al-Falaḥ in the Hebrew, Joseph Baharan el-Palagel in the Spanish and Joseph Borhan Alphulk in Wiener. These variations prevent certainty about every name. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S121]

A corrupted Spanish construction

The Spanish makes the Turkish ruler "subject to David's father-in-law", without explaining why he suddenly addresses that man. The Hebrew and Wiener restore a coherent sequence: the ruler is subject to the Persian king, friendly towards the Jews and acquainted with the father-in-law. This restoration is retained as the correction of a gap that confused the subjects. The Persian king's earlier promises likewise use explicit subjects: it is the king who would promise to acknowledge David. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Two additional Hebrew and German sentences

After the beheading, those editions add: "Some fools are waiting for him to return to life; but the fool has still not returned." Later their fuller wording is: "Ten years earlier, a Messiah had arisen in the city of Córdoba, and the remnant of Israel had nearly been annihilated."

The Spanish omits the first sentence and shortens the second to "ten years earlier there was another Messiah". Both additional readings are supplied in full here, in the translation choices. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The weight of the gold

The Hebrew gives a hundred kikkar (ככר, a unit of weight called a "talent"), supported by Wiener. The Spanish says a hundred "quintales". "Talents" is retained as a correction of the unit; no modern kilogram equivalent is imposed, since that would require identifying the intended system of weights. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 106–111 ; H1928, section 31 ; G1856, p. 99–103.

Account XXXII

A Messianic Claimant in Persia

The thirty-second persecution took place in the kingdom of Persia, at a different time. A Jew arose and proclaimed himself the Messiah. He was very successful and gathered a great multitude of Jews. When the king heard of his strength and his intention to make war upon him, he ordered the Jews in his country to assemble. He told them that unless they persuaded this man to abandon his plan, he would put them all to the sword, destroying their children and wives in a single day.

All the people of Israel then assembled and went to the man. They fell to the ground before him, begged for mercy, cried out and wept, asking him to abandon his purpose. Why should he endanger himself and all these poor people, when the king had sworn to kill them? How could he bear to see so great a calamity befall the congregations of Persia? He answered, "I have come to save you, and you will not have it? Whom do you fear? Who will stand against me? What can the king of Persia do? Will he not fear me and my sword?"

They asked what showed that he was the Messiah. He answered that his success proved it, and that the Messiah needed to perform no other miracle. They replied, "Many have tried the same thing and failed." He then drove them from his presence in great fury. The next day they returned to him fasting, with their little children, to move him to pity. He said that for the sake of those children he would desist, if the king of Persia gave him back what he had spent on that war, and that he would return home without harming him. The Jews said, "How could so powerful a king submit to reimbursing a Jew's expenses?" He replied, "If you return again, even if he gives me all I have spent and half his kingdom, I shall not be satisfied."

Seeing the wickedness of his spirit and that no argument, however just, could prevail, they went in sorrow and tears before the king and said, "My lord, when a man seeks dominion and kingship, neither law nor reason can remove the madness from one who has embraced it. We see that this man, who in this matter is a complete madman, will not listen to anything we tell him. He puts himself in so great a danger, and us with him, although we are innocent. We therefore marvel that you, my lord, pay any heed to this madman. If you leave him alone, he will fall of his own accord, as we

see happen to everything inherently false, which collapses for want of a foundation, like a tree without roots. We spoke words to this man that should have broken a heart of stone, but he remained in his madness. He told us that if you gave him what he had spent on making war, he would return to his country. That is enough to show that he is manifestly mad."

The king answered, "Why do you call him mad on that account? If the poor man has no treasure and has spent money on credit, expecting to win and return to his country, what else can he do? Hurry back to him, then. Tell him that I agree to his request, and that he may safely send a man to me with his account of expenses. I shall immediately send him payment in good coin." So it was done. When the man had returned home and the war had ceased, the king ordered all the Jews in his kingdom to assemble and said to them, "One of you came to make war upon me, and I have been told that you were all in agreement with him. You did not think that the evil would recoil upon you." The Jews offered ample explanations in their defence, but to no avail. At last he said, "Give me back what I have spent; then I shall see what to do with you." When they again tried to appease him, he ordered all their leaders to be closely confined. In their distress they had to pay that sum, and many sold their children to meet it. After receiving what he demanded, he declared that in return for the affront to him, they would suffer an affront themselves: they were to walk barefoot and wear breeches that stopped at the thighs.

Joseph, son of Verga, says, "I heard from the lips of a great personage, Rabbi Moses Hamon, that the king sentenced them to carry a heavy, thick piece of wood on their backs, hanging from their necks, as an object of mockery. For this reason they went out of their houses only in cases of great necessity. One person would swing the wood round in front of them, another would strike them and push it back behind them. They were the plaything and laughing stock of passers-by, and people insulted them in every square and street."

The Court of Kayumars

Cropped detail. Attributed to Sultan Muhammad, Tabriz, about 1524–1525. The first legendary king of the Shāhnāmeh sits amid his court. The illumination offers an old image of Persian sovereignty; it depicts neither the messianic claimant nor the unnamed king of Account XXXII. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

The report attributed to Moses Hamon

The clearest transmission detail occurs at the end: Joseph ibn Verga says he heard Moses Hamon describe the compulsory carrying of a piece of wood. Hamon is identifiable as a physician to Suleiman I in Constantinople and a contact of Ottoman Jewish communities; his letters are cited in the older bibliography of the family. This identifies the milieu in which Joseph received his information. It does not automatically date the Persian revolt: the text does not say that Hamon witnessed it himself, and he may have reported an older tradition. [S124 ; E1744 ; H1928]

A distinct revolt within the compilation

Neither the claimant nor the king is named. Reimbursement of the war, followed by recovery of its cost from the communities, forms a different sequence from David's murder in the preceding chapter. Indeed, the Hebrew and Wiener begin 'at another time', where the Spanish says 'at that time'. These differences prevent the two chapters from being merged into one biography. No fiscal act, clothing decree or independent Persian account consulted securely identifies the collective reimbursement. The sale of children and humiliating clothing requirements are preserved as specific narrative details without assigning them a conjectural ruler or year. The final addition establishes only the chain of information Joseph claims: Hamon, then Joseph, then the compilation. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The difference from the precedent of David Alroy

Comparison with Benjamin of Tudela helps us read this second dossier without imposing the first claimant's name on it. In David's story, the leaders of Baghdad and Mosul send an injunction to the rebel; the conflict ends after his assassination and a payment intended to appease the king. Here, the communities' representatives must first persuade the sovereign that they do not support the fighter. Payment then changes function: the campaign expenses reimbursed by the claimant become a sum demanded from the Jews and secured by hostages. This fiscal arrangement and these personal guarantees are distinctive features of account 32. The similar Persian setting indicates a family of traditions about the dangers of messianic mobilization; it does not authorize us to combine the two affairs or assign the first one's date to the second. [E1744 ; H1928 ; S113]

The language of Esther and Ottoman transmission

The threat against all the Jews, including women and children, on a single day closely recalls Esther 3:6 and 3:13: a conflict beginning with Mordecai is extended to his entire people through a royal command. The biblical chapter also joins a decision to destroy the Jews with

money offered to the treasury (3:9). Verga's financial mechanism is different: a war indemnity is transferred to the communities. Recognizable biblical wording must therefore be distinguished from identifying the event with Esther's story. As for Moses Hamon, his intervention in another affair under Süleyman is also recorded by Joseph ha-Kohen, following the events of 1545: he secures referral of accusations to the central authority. This second account illuminates his role as an intermediary at the Ottoman court. It is neither an original firman nor evidence that Hamon witnessed the Persian revolt. [S125 ; S126]

Translation Choices

Success, expenses and reimbursement

"Prospering" here means succeeding in the undertaking, not growing rich. The king agrees to pay the claimant's war expenses, then demands reimbursement from the communities. Subjects have been made explicit to distinguish those successive transactions. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Relative date and clothing

Hebrew and Wiener read "at a different time", against Spanish's "at that time". The former reading is retained: it makes explicit the discontinuity between two episodes with unnamed actors and different endings; no external document requires them to be assigned to the same crisis. The garment is described as ending at the thigh: Spanish çaragueles denotes hose or loose trousers. This is not permission to wear footwear reaching up to the thighs. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The piece of wood

The Hebrew has ʿets (עֵץ, wood or a piece of wood), described as heavy and thick; Wiener specifies Klotz, "block of wood". "Piece of wood" avoids giving the object the overly specific shape of a thin staff while preserving its suspension from the neck, behind the back. The Spanish reads palo. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 111–113 ; H1928, section 32 ; G1856, p. 103–106.

Supplementary Piece 32a

Two Stones and the Limits of Knowledge

There was a conversation between King Don Pedro the Elder and the learned Nicholas of Valencia. Nicholas said, "I have heard, my lord, that you wish to go to war against your enemies, whom people call infidels. If so, why seek the enemy outside and leave the enemy within, the Jews? It is their insolence alone that troubles me: to your face they say that your Law is false."

The king said, "Let one of their most learned men be summoned, and we shall ask him." When he came, the king asked, "What is your name?" He replied, "Ephraim Aben Sancho." The king said, "You seem to be made of two things: in your lower half, where the mark of circumcision lies, you are Ephraim; in your upper half you are a Christian, as the name Sancho shows." The Jew replied, "My king and lord, Sancho is my family name: it is Sansi, corrupted in common speech." The king said, "Am I asking for your daughter, that you explain your family to me?" He replied, "My lord, I said Sancho to distinguish myself, since there are many Ephraims in this country, and you wished to know who I was, for you asked my name."

The king said, "Let us leave that. I summoned you to tell me which of the two religions is the true one: mine or yours?" He replied, "My Law is better for me, in accordance with my condition, since I was a slave of slaves in Egypt, and God brought me out with signs and miracles. Your Law is good for you, since it has continually held dominion." The king said, "I am asking about the religions in themselves, regardless of those who profess them." The learned man said, "After three days' study I shall answer you, if that pleases you." The king answered, "Let it be so."

After those three days the learned man returned, entering as though angry, with a troubled face. The king said, "Why have you come in such an ill humour?" He answered, "Because I have been insulted over something for which I was not to blame. It is for you, my lord, to hear my case. This is what happened: about a month ago a neighbour of mine went far away and left two of his sons two precious stones, to please them. The two brothers came to me today and asked me to explain the properties of the stones and the difference between them. I answered, 'Who can

know this better than your father? He knows stones very well, being a lapidary (an expert in precious stones). Send and ask him, and he will tell you the truth.' For this they insulted and struck me."

The king said, "They wronged you by insulting you; they should be punished." The learned man replied, "May your ears hear, O king, what comes from your mouth. Esau and Jacob were brothers; each was given a stone, and I am asked which is better. Send a messenger, my lord, to the Father in heaven, the great lapidary: he will tell you the difference between them."

The king said, "Do you see the Jews' ingenuity, Nicholas? This learned man deserves gifts and honours; as for you, let it be punishment enough that you have spoken falsely against them." Nicholas said, "If it is the rule of pious kings to subject all Laws to their own, why do you not subject these people?" The king answered, "You have never seen anything obtained by force prosper. As soon as the action of the one who constrains it ceases, it returns to its former state, like a stone thrown upwards which, when the force of the hand is spent, returns to the centre. Likewise, when air enters the depths of the earth, it immediately breaks a way through and returns to its element. That is why I advise you, Nicholas, not to pursue this people by force. You can reach them only through an argument freely accepted and continual persuasion, day after day. For the drop, however weak, leaves its mark on marble, for all its hardness; how much more will gentle words impress hearts of flesh! I have heard that a wise man, wishing to admonish his children, prepared a feast of tender tongues and tough tongues. They all left the tough ones and took the tender ones. Their father said, 'My children, if you acted like this when speaking to people, how good and fair your lot would be!'"

Nicholas answered, "By that path too we achieve nothing. This people is not accustomed to accepting advice; its nature is that of the asp (peten, פתן, a venomous snake), which grows deaf in one ear as it ages and, when the charmer comes, puts the other to the ground so as not to hear. As David says, 'Like the asp that shuts its ear.'133 Titus, the army's commander, sent a letter to Rome. I copied its contents, which had been translated from Latin into Hebrew. It contains Josephus's words to the Jews who stood on the wall. I shall bring it before you." He did so and read it. It ran as follows:

"O chosen people! Children of Abraham! Disciples of Moses! Inhabitants of Jerusalem, dwelling of the Shekhinah (שכינה, divine presence), joy of the earth! May these words be received upon the altar of your wisdom. Let ears hear, let hearts un-

derstand, let pride flee, let understanding rule, let discernment pronounce its judgement, free of the net of desire. Know that the desire to conquer leads its owner to the grave he has unknowingly dug for himself. Have you heard what a man said to Alexander when he returned joyfully from war? He said, 'O Alexander, you return rejoicing in victory in a small war; would that you might win the great one!' The king asked, 'What war is greater than the one I have won?' He answered, 'The war against your own desires.'

"I beg you, young men, master your desires and show your strength, so that you may have the wisdom of old men while still young. In old age that effort is no longer needed: the years themselves instruct your souls. What good is it to have the understanding of the wise and live like beasts? The enemy seeks peace and promises to preserve the Sanctuary, while you expose it to destruction. Your enemies spare it, and you are the first to set it on fire. What are the wise men doing, the counsellors of Jerusalem beside whose advice all other counsel seemed foolishness? Where are the mighty arms supported by the merit of pure hearts, which shot a thousand arrows without once missing their mark? Not one in a thousand of your arrows strikes the enemy! You remain like a ship in the midst of the sea, with a storm all round it, a reef ahead, and above it cloud and darkness, fire and brimstone. You have filled the Sanctuary with innocent blood and set the wicked free; and because your hearts are divided, if the enemy kills one of you, you yourselves kill a thousand. Hear now, princes of holiness, what Titus said: 'In vain did I take the trouble to bring so many siege engines from Rome, for each Jew is a siege engine against his fellow.'135 Know for certain that confidence without uprightness is like a ship without a mast. Why have the Romans prospered, if not through their uprightness? They appointed a trustworthy man in every square in Rome to report daily who had broken any of the Roman laws, and nobody was found to have broken them. You break all the laws of your God every day. You have profaned the Sabbaths and festivals; you have taken beautiful maidens from their chambers and their mothers' bosoms. The wise man does indeed say that no old man is so decrepit that he will not desire a beautiful figure when he sees one, nor any youth so withdrawn from the world that he will not be inflamed. But this applies in peace. In war, when the books of danger lie open, no indecency should be seen among you, according to your King's commandment. Yet you have sinned in speech and thought.

"Alexander, who did not see the divine light, held a scimitar in one hand and gave to the poor with the other, so that one hand would help the other. You have shed the blood of the righteous with both hands. Look also at the Romans' rising star, since

they rule as far as Britain and the Mountains of the Giants. You ought to humble yourselves, since you see that this is the divine will. Follow the example of the wisdom of nature: it makes the reed bend before a strong wind, and that very yielding allows it to rise again; for when the violence has passed, it returns to its former state. Understand that no nation's prosperity endures unless its goodness endures. The Chaldeans transgressed the laws of reason; God grew angry with them and transferred their kingdom to the Medes. He grew angry with these and transferred it to the Greeks; with these in turn, and transferred it to the Romans. He will grow angry with them and transfer it to you, if you direct your ways towards the good.

"I know that the commander of your army will strengthen your hearts with his words; he would do better to instil fear than courage. You take much advice from this man. Know, however, that a hundred pieces of advice from one man are less useful than a single judgement reached by a hundred men: divine influence resides in the understanding of the many. Why do you seek the advice of a soldier without understanding, whose life is devoid of good works? You will say, 'How can we submit, when we have always been free?' For my part, I have not seen an hour in which you were not subject to others. For God, blessed be he, saw that no remnant of us could survive unless we subdued our desires; and the Romans have prospered only to make you subject. Abraham was unique in wisdom and wealth, yet often humbled himself before the common people. Jacob was subject to the Egyptians' power because he saw that this was God's will. The strength of Judah and his brothers would have sufficed to terrify Egypt, how much more to kill Joseph; yet they feared to approach him, because God had made him king. Even in your greatest prosperity, in the days of King Saul, he took your sons to run before his horses, and maidens dressed in brocade to be his cooks and bakers. I see with my own eyes that you search by candlelight for your own death, and with torches for the burning of the house of our God. How will they not burn it, when you are the first to set it alight?"

While Josephus was speaking, they shot arrows at him from the wall. Despite this he resumed, to finish his speech, and said, "O faithful city, Jerusalem! O dwelling of the divine presence! O glory of Palestine! O joy of the angels! I no longer grieve for your ramparts, which have already fallen, nor for your gates, which have been broken, nor for your walls, which have been breached. What grieves me and makes me weep is to see you devoid of virtuous men. O Jerusalem, dwelling of repose! If they kill me, you will require an account of my blood before God, for they seek to kill me in payment for my seeking to save their lives. I grieve also because your children have taken the strangers' implements, swords and spears, and cast their own weapons, their good

works, upon the ground. Did Abraham even need to pray when Sarah was taken from him? While he lay in his bed, the Lord struck Pharaoh with plagues; and when Pharaoh sought to uncover Sarah's nakedness, God exposed his own nakedness to the physicians, whose treatment could give him no relief. When Abraham awoke, he found Sarah beside him, wearing the royal crown upon her head. O Jerusalem, who brought the enemy against you, if not your children? Who brought Antony and Sosius? Who brought the Emperor Nero? Your children sent for him because of their quarrels. Speak thus, Jerusalem, in the ears of those men who stand upon the wall to save you, while they work for your destruction. Tell them that if nobody will take pity on you, they should pity the house built by the nobles and the holy prophets. As long as you delay your submission, you delay your redemption. Would that the days of affliction had already passed! For every passing day brings you nearer to peace for your kingdom."

After these words they threw a large stone at him from the wall, and he had to flee. Nicholas said, "See, my lord, whether advice is of any use with these men. Neither counsel nor understanding can stand against the Jews' folly." The king said, "If this is of no use, now or ever, let us spend our time seeking the perfection of our own souls, rather than that of the Jews' souls. In any case, the words of this letter greatly please me, and the Jews seem to possess a fine eloquence in conducting their discourse." Nicholas said, "The Jews were the mother of eloquence so long as they brought up their children with the books of the Bible, which are its very essence. Whoever wishes to know how to speak to win a king's goodwill should look at what Abigail said to David. Whoever wishes to understand how to praise God should read Hannah's prayer; and whoever wishes to learn how to complain should study Judah's words to Joseph when he approached him."

The king said, "Do they have metrical verse?" Nicholas replied, "It was the natural craft of the Levites in the Sanctuary. In Rome, among the books brought from Jerusalem, I saw one composed by a man called Lazarus the Levite. It began with the globe of the earth: does it move, and why does it stand at the centre? On this he composed an excellent metrical song, according to the Christians' understanding of it. He also spoke of precious stones, plants and their properties, and composed a very fine song on them. Then he treated the human species and divided it into four classes: the wise, merchants, soldiers and tillers of the soil. He devoted songs to them which David would have marvelled to hear. He spoke of the four elements; then he rose to the heavens and began with the moon, its benefits and its motion, and likewise with each

star. Next came the mazzalot (מזלות, the twelve signs of the zodiac), their qualities and their size; then the ten orders of angels, and how many ministers stand before God; finally the holy forms, belonging to a boundless wisdom."

The king said, "I asked you one thing, and you have told me two: they enjoy fame and renown in the sciences. I am all the more puzzled by the statements attributed to the teachers of the Talmud (a collection of rabbinic discussions and teachings): they depart from reason and the demonstrations of learning. Be that as it may, since we have come to discuss the order of the world and nature, I have some questions to ask, if you will answer them; for it is the glory of kings to search things out." Nicholas said, "Ask, my lord: I can answer you."

Question I. Is there a natural cause for the earth's being in the middle of the world, and how does it avoid inclining towards one side? Answer: "At the beginning of creation, the heavens and the earth were created together from the same matter. That is why they love one another like two brothers born of the same womb. Every part of the heavens loves the earth and draws it towards itself. Since each part draws it and none has greater strength than another, this attraction keeps it in the midst of them all." The king said, "I maintain, on the contrary, that the heavens hate it because of its coarse matter: each part repels it equally, and it remains at the centre." Nicholas said, "That too is Aristotle's opinion. There is also Avicenna's, which says that the earth is the centre and the heavens the circle, and that it is the nature of the centre to stand in the middle." The king said, "Arguments can be raised against all these views. What seems most certain to me is what I have heard reported in the Talmudists' name: it stands there by the divine will and word. They cite Job's words: 'He hangs the earth upon nothing.'"

II. How are gold and stones formed within the earth? How can dark and ugly earth bring forth something radiant? Answer: "They are formed from the rays of the sun and stars." The king said, "How do these act within the earth?" He answered, "And how is a child formed in its mother's womb? That is why David says, 'I was woven in the depths of the earth,' to compare the two things. More marvellous still is the formation of the pearl: it comes from the shell of an animal called Zarep in Arabic. These shells move through the sea. On one day of the year, when rain falls, they rise from the depths and open—they are like two ears, one over the other—receive the drops, and close again. There the pearl is formed, whose nature is to strengthen the heart and eyes."

The king said, "That is not how I have heard it told: a strong wind rises upon the Ocean Sea, the waves mount, and the animal you mention opens its mouth and collects the water. Some days later it opens its mouth to the sun's ray, and that stone is formed within it. All these things are marvellous." Nicholas said, "What is there in the world that is not marvellous? David said, 'Your works are wonders, and my soul knows much.' He meant that it knows much, but not everything. And who will explain why the lodestone attracts iron?" The king said, "I have heard that he meant this: your works are marvellous, but the greater marvel is that my soul knows; that is the meaning of 'much'. According to your explanation, however, David was boasting of something he perhaps did not know, for we know how little even the wisest attain. As for the lodestone, I have found it written that it partakes of the nature of iron: thus everything draws towards its like."

III. Why do plants grow upwards? Though composed of two elements that rise, fire and air, they are also composed of earth and water, whose weight should seemingly suffice to constrain the light elements, or at least to make the plants incline to one side or another instead of upwards. Answer: "They have a nefesh tsomaḥat (נפש צומחת, vegetative soul or principle of growth) that compels the two heavy elements to rise. I once had a discussion with a certain Joseph Benveniste, who told me that the Talmudists had felt the same difficulty and ascribed this to the stars, saying: 'There is no blade of grass below without its star above, which says to it: Grow.'"

IV. What natural cause determines the variety of colours in plants? Answer: "When the element of water predominates, the colour tends towards white; earth, towards black; fire, towards red. The same applies to the other colours, whose cause is explained in the books."

V. Why is a tree thick below and slender above? Answer: "Because the elements of earth and water lack the strength to rise so far."

VI. Why are animals' senses more powerful than human beings'? It is said that the lion hears from a great distance, the raven smells from a great distance, and bees and the eagle can see for many leagues. Answer: "Each of these animals has only one sense; that sense concentrates the power of the others. This sense must possess such strength because it enables the animal to find food. We see that all animals fear the lion and hide among rocks and trees. If the lion could not hear the ox lowing from afar, it would find it very difficult to obtain food. When it hears it from a great distance it roars, because it sees that it cannot reach it in a single day. That is what I have read."

VII. Why was man not given the lion's strength? Answer: "That, my lord, is not a question worthy of you: you might as well ask why God did not make the fly a philosopher, the gnat a prophet, and man a star in heaven. We have indeed seen men stronger than lions, for David killed them." The king said, "At that time David was not yet speaking through the spirit of holiness; how can we believe him?" Nicholas replied, "I saw something similar done for amusement in Rome. A mighty bull had been brought there from I know not where, which had killed many men. The natural philosophers say that the bull's strength lies in its forehead, as the lion's does in its claws. A strong man came forward, struck it on the forehead with his fist, and killed it. Then he roasted it and ate the whole of it at one sitting."

The king replied, "What is this dream you have dreamt? Is there a stomach that could bear eating a bull?" Nicholas said, "I have seen more than that: a creature two cubits high and one wide, whose head had no skin and showed only the bone at the back, and which had no ears, but a hole at the back of its head, through which, people said, it heard. It had two fingers on each hand and feet like a horse's." The king said, "You have already left the realm of the wise and entered that of fools, since you come to reinforce one falsehood with another." Nicholas said, "It is recorded in the Book of Animals that on remote islands there are men without heads whose eyes are in their chests." The king said, "What is so marvellous about that? I shall show you a thousand men in my kingdom with no heads, and you are one of them."

VIII. Why do streams flow into the sea without filling it? Nicholas said, "If I have no head, how can I answer?" The king said, "It is natural for anyone to lose his temper, but it soon passes. If his anger remains within him, it is a clear sign that he is a fool, as the wise man says: 'Anger rests in the bosom of fools.'"

Answer: "The sun absorbs all the excess."

IX. It is said that a king of the North covered a horse's eyes to test it, and put its mother before it. It mated with her; when its eyes were uncovered and it saw what had happened, it climbed a mountain and threw itself down. Have they not thus made the horse a rational being, subject to commandments and observing them?

Answer: "God gave it this nature in order to admonish human beings through it."

X. Why is snow white? Since it comes from water, should it not resemble it? Answer: "Water is as white as snow, but contact with the earth makes it impure. Once the cloud has lifted it from that place, air and heat purify and cleanse it until it returns to its own nature."

XI. Why does hail sometimes fall in small round stones, and sometimes otherwise? Answer: "If it arrives round and small, it is because of the great distance: the air makes it so by eating into it and rounding it. For hail coming from nearer by, there is not enough time."

XII. Why are raindrops large in summer? Answer: "Heat gathers the parts together, and the drops grow thick: water flees heat, and its parts unite to resist it."

XIII. Why do some spheres move slowly and others swiftly? Why do some circle the world and others not? Answer: "By your life, my lord, do not question me about heavenly things, for I do not even know what lies above the roof of my house. The wise say that most of what is said about natural things is true; most of what is said about mathematical things is false; and all that is said about divine things is false, because those matters exceed the powers of human understanding."

Historical Commentary

Characters and the parable of the stones

King Don Pedro the Elder, Nicholas of Valencia and Ephraim Aben Sancho are not identified here by a dated act, independent chronicle or precisely located office. The king's name alone cannot determine a historical ruler. The two stones do, however, belong to a traceable narrative tradition: in the Decameron, first day, third tale, Melchizedek answers Saladin with the story of three rings. This earlier parallel helps place the form of the dialogue, but its differences matter: two brothers and two stones in Ibn Verga, three heirs and three rings in Boccaccio. It establishes neither direct borrowing nor the historicity of the Spanish audience. [E1744 ; S127]

The speech attributed to Josephus

The Jewish War, V.9.3–4, supplies a genuine antecedent to the address to the besieged: Josephus urges them to end their resistance and invokes biblical episodes, including Abraham and Sarah. Book V also reports his being injured by a stone while approaching the city. Ibn Verga nevertheless transmits a much more composite speech, presented by Nicholas as a letter of Titus translated from Latin into Hebrew. No separate document corresponding to that letter has been identified in the sources consulted. The ancient scene and later reworkings must be distinguished: stories about Alexander, maxims, Saul and biblical phrases are assembled into a new composition. The assertion that the Romans observed every law belongs to that transmitted speech; it is not a finding established from Roman archives. [S003 ; E1744 ; H1928]

Stories and quotations that can be traced

The feast of tender and tough tongues has a specific parallel in Vayikra Rabbah 33:1, where the teacher addresses his disciples. The saying about a plant and its star corresponds to Bereshit Rabbah 10:6. These references recover concrete traditions without turning the royal dialogue into a verbatim record. The expressly mentioned biblical examples can also be located: Abigail before David, 1 Samuel 25:23–31; Hannah's prayer, 1 Samuel 2:1–10; Judah before Joseph, Genesis 44:18–34. The chapter uses older texts as examples of eloquence, illuminating the culture in which it was written and transmitted. [S128 ; S129 ; E1744]

The questions of natural philosophy

The ninth question repeats a story in Aristotle's History of Animals: a horse belonging to the king of Scythia, deceived into mating with its mother, subsequently throws itself from a precipice. One precise difference remains: Aristotle has the mare's head covered; here it is the horse's. The passage is therefore traceable as a transmitted animal story, not as a verified zo-

ological observation. The explanations of snow, pearls and animals' single sense are preserved for the same reason. As for the cosmological book attributed to Lazarus the Levite and supposedly seen in Rome, no identifiable manuscript has been found in the sources consulted; no conjectural shelfmark or date is supplied. [S130 ; E1744]

Sarah in Egypt and the warning about kingship

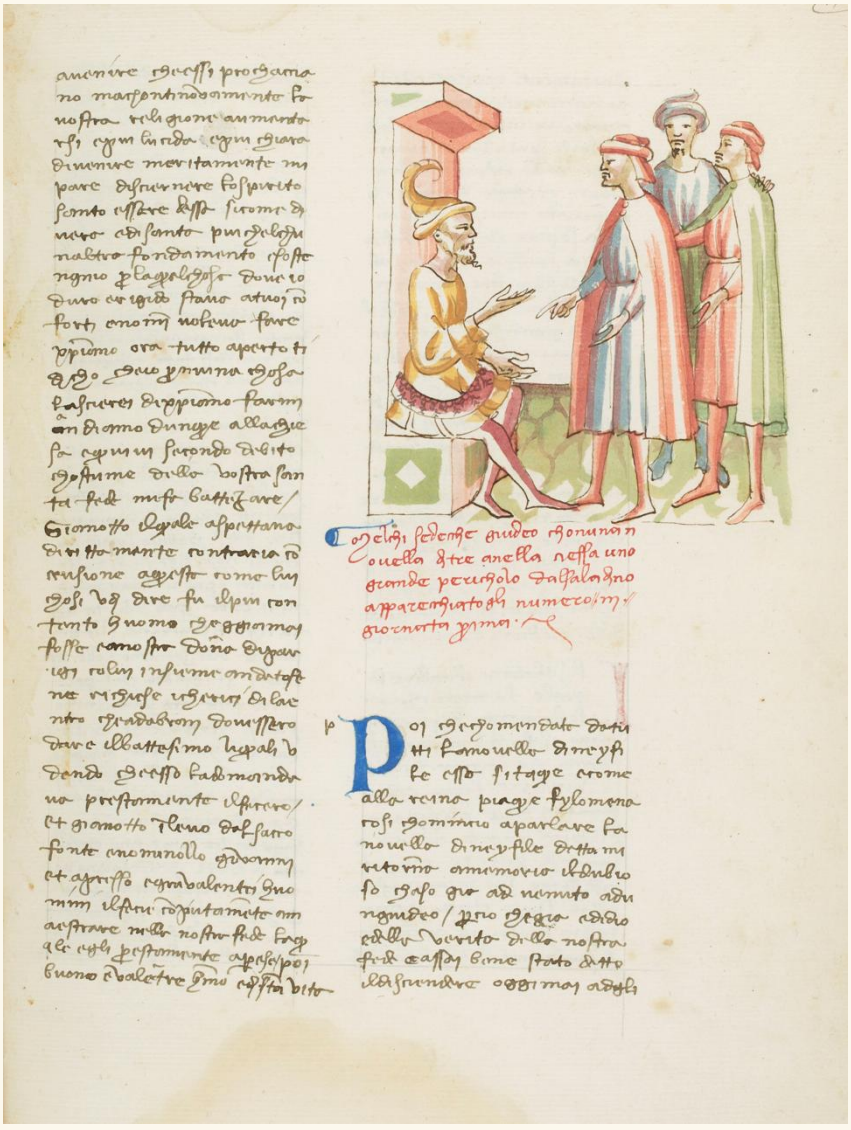
The example of Abraham and Sarah refers specifically to Genesis 12:10–20: famine takes the couple to Egypt, Sarah is brought into Pharaoh's household, plagues strike him, and she is returned to Abraham. This is a different episode from the encounter with Abimelech in Genesis 20. Josephus' speech in War V.9.4 already invokes the Egyptian episode to contrast divine assistance with the use of arms; Verga's version adds or heightens details absent from Genesis, including the physicians and the crown. Another quotation requires its original setting to be distinguished from its application: the warning that sons will be requisitioned for chariots and daughters employed in kitchens comes from 1 Samuel 8:10–18. Samuel is warning the people before Saul is chosen; in the Bible, the passage is therefore not a record of an order actually issued by Saul. [S003 ; S131 ; S132]

Three examples of eloquence in three different situations

The examples of persuasive speech cited near the end of the address are not interchangeable. In 1 Samuel 25:23–35, Abigail intervenes after Nabal's insult and turns David away from a punitive expedition. In Genesis 44:18–34, Judah, who does not yet know that he is addressing Joseph, offers to remain a slave in Benjamin's place to spare their father. Hannah's song in 1 Samuel 2:1–10 follows Samuel's birth and his presentation at the sanctuary; it should be distinguished from her request for a child in 1 Samuel 1. Verga brings together diplomatic intervention, a plea for a family member, and a prayer of thanksgiving to illustrate the power of speech. The references identify the scenes he invokes; they are not three further attestations of the conversation with the king. [S131 ; S132]

The deaf asp in an ancient exegetical tradition

The image used by Nicolas has a precise Christian antecedent. Commenting on Latin Psalm 57, corresponding to Hebrew Psalm 58, Augustine explains in sections 6–7 that the asp resists the charmer by pressing one ear against the ground and stopping the other with its tail. He then relates the image to Stephen's listeners, who stop their ears in Acts 7:57. Nicolas changes the detail: one ear is already deaf through age, while the other is closed against the ground. The difference allows the circulation of an exegetical comparison to be traced without assuming that Ibn Verga copied Augustine directly. The passage belongs to the history of interpretation and animal imagery; the polemical accusation which the character draws from it remains his own. [S133]



Saladin, Melchizedek, and the Three Rings

Saladin and Melchizedek in the Decameron, I.3. Florence, 1427, BnF, Italien 63, fol. 19r. The three-ring parable offers a literary parallel to the two precious stones in Dialogue 32a. [provenance]

Translation Choices

A substantial omission at the beginning of the Spanish

After Nicholas's initial accusation, the Hebrew adds the following passage, also present in Wiener: "They are the Jews, whose hatred of us is so great. It is written in their books that they are forbidden to greet us. I heard from a man who knows them that a Christian should accept from a Jew only the middle of his words. This means that when a Christian approaches, the Jew says of him: 'May he arrive at an evil hour!' When he draws near, he says: 'Greetings, my lord, and may God grant you life!' When he goes away, he says: 'Go like Korah into Gehenna and like Pharaoh into the sea!' The king answered: 'Have you heard this with your own ears?' Nicholas replied: 'I heard it from one of them who joined our religion.' The king said: 'He should not be believed: a man who changed his religion can easily change his words. Moreover, hatred arising from religion is only an accidental hatred: the man's object is simply love of his own religion.'" Nicholas then resumes the accusation of insolence preserved in the Spanish. "Accidental" here means dependent on a circumstance, as opposed to essential. Gehenna designates the place of punishment in the formula. This development is supplied in full as a variant alongside the main account. [H1928 ; G1856 ; E1744]

The snake, siege engines and stars

The Spanish has basilisco, "basilisk", where the Hebrew has peten (פתן, a venomous snake) in a quotation from Psalm 58:5; "asp" follows that reference without claiming a certain zoological species. Spanish bombardas becomes "siege engines": Hebrew solelot here refers to siege works or devices, not Roman cannon. The Spanish "twelve planets" are the mazzalot (מזלות, zodiacal signs) in the Hebrew. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Two differences in the speech

The Spanish makes the Medes succeed the Chaldeans; the Hebrew and Wiener reverse their order. The body retains the Spanish sequence without implying agreement between all editions. At the end the Spanish promises "rest for your kingdom", rendered "peace for your kingdom". The Hebrew text consulted instead gives "the ending of your kingship", and Wiener "the destruction of your dominion". That last wording is difficult to reconcile with the preceding sentences about redemption; without decisive evidence, the variant is preserved without harmonisation. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Shorter Hebrew additions

The Hebrew speech expands the praise of Jerusalem's counsellors: "Every other wisdom was inferior. Where are men able to understand times such as these?" The Spanish shortens this development. Concerning Lazarus, the Hebrew specifies that his poem was esteemed by

"learned Christians and Jewish poets" and mentions "the four holy forms"; the Spanish retains only the Christians and omits the number four. In the Roman bull story, the Hebrew and Wiener give "a hundred men" killed, against Spanish "many men". These readings are supplied here without replacing the base text. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Older concepts preserved

Nefesh tsomaḥat (נפש צומחת, vegetative soul) denotes the principle of growth in this philosophy. The claim that each animal has only one sense really occurs in the editions: it is not a mistranslation and has not been replaced by a modern theory. In the final question, Spanish speaks of "astrological" matters, whereas Hebrew limudiyyot (למודיות, "mathematical") and Wiener refer to mathematical sciences. The broader term is retained, respecting Hebrew's classification without reducing the study of the heavens to divination. The adverse judgment on these sciences remains the character's own. The Spanish alternative is: "Most of what is said about astrological things is false." [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Abraham's prayer and the shellfish's name

"Did Abraham even need to pray?" is a rhetorical question: the next sentence says that God acted while he slept. Hebrew and German thus clarify the ambiguous "did he need only to pray?" In the pearl discussion, Hebrew introduces an Arabic name rather than the animal's presence in Arabia. Zarep retains the Spanish spelling; Hebrew has a form that may be transliterated Tsarif. Without a secure linguistic identification of the transmitted name, the language is specified but no modern species is imposed. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 113–128 ; H1928, section 32a ; G1856, p. 106–120.

Supplementary Piece 32b

Psalms, Parables and Rival Readings

There was a disputation between a Christian and a Jew before King Alfonso of Portugal. The Christian said, "We have many psalms that show our Saviour to be the true Messiah. Among them is the one that says, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?', words spoken when he was put on the cross. It is of him that it says, 'I was poured out like water; mighty bulls surrounded me': these are the Jews' judges. 'They opened their mouths against me', because they said that he was a seducer and deceiver. Where it says, 'They surrounded me like dogs', it refers to the Jews. 'They pierced my hands and my feet' means that the Jews nailed his hands and feet to the cross. It also says, 'He did not preserve his life', because he willingly accepted death to remit Adam's sin. As for 'the people born, whom he has made', this must be understood as the Christian people, which was born and given a new Law."

The Jew answered, "Learned sir, understand that a Hebrew verse can be made to take any form one wishes, as a painter shapes an image. But an interpretation is verified only if it agrees with the verses that follow. This psalm contains many things contrary to your interpretation. First I shall tell you what a learned Jew said on a similar occasion before the king of Spain: 'My king and lord, yesterday I grew angry with a cockerel I keep at home, because its crowing tormented me. I struck it with a stick and chased it until I shut it in a dark chamber. Then I beat it every day until I tore its skin and broke its bones. Next I put it in a pot and covered it as was fitting. After its death a miracle happened to it: its spirit returned, and it crowed as before. I found that Jeremiah had prophesied this whole affair when he said, "I am the man who has seen affliction." That man is the cockerel, for the word gever (גבר) means "man", but also "cockerel" in the Talmud (a collection of rabbinic discussions and teachings). "Under the rod of his wrath": that is the stick. "He led me": that is the chase. "Into darkness and not light": that is the dark chamber. "Surely, against me he turned again": those are the later persecutions, or the fact that I turned it over in the pot, as cooking requires. "He made my flesh old": because I had torn its skin and broken its bones. "He built against me": that is the pot. "He made me dwell in darkness; he made my fetters heavy": that is the lid. "Even when I cry and call": that is the cockerel's crowing. See now, my lord, whether it is right to say that the prophet dealt with anything of this kind, all the more when the other verses do not follow this meaning.'

"Here that learned man's words end. Likewise, I say that although the psalm contains some verses which can be applied to the Messiah, most of it points elsewhere. For it says, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? My God, I call by day, and you do not answer.' If he willingly accepted death, how could he pray to be answered and saved from death? Again, how does he say, 'In you our fathers trusted', when he had no father? 'I shall declare your name to my brothers', when he had none? 'You who sit among the praises of Israel', and 'all the seed of Jacob honoured him', when they were his enemies? Finally, when it says 'to the people born', it means us, since captivity and afflictions make us as though born anew every day." The king replied, "Why do you not answer the essential point: 'They pierced my hands and my feet'?" He replied, "My lord, that is an error by the translator Jerome: it is written ka'ari (כארי, "like a lion"), with aleph (א) and yod (י), not vav (ו). He did the same with the verse that says, 'My honour turned to shame', where he read, 'How long will you be heavy of heart?'146 He asserts that these are God's words against the Jews when they refused to believe in the Saviour. 'Like a lion, my hands' refers to those in captivity: what happens to them is what happens to animals before a lion, which traces a circle with its tail around the mountain. No animal has leave to step outside it; on the contrary, they draw their hands and feet together before the lion."

The king replied, "It should have said, 'I drew my hands and feet together', especially since this story about the circle may be no more than an old wives' tale. I have also heard in a discussion that you say in your Talmud that there was a frog as large as sixty houses; that a serpent swallowed it; that a raven came, swallowed the serpent, and leapt upon a tree. All this, as far as one can see, is plainly false. You also say that a piece of iron fell into the Ocean Sea, was tossed about for seven years, and did not reach the bottom. Who saw, in the depths of the sea, whether it went down or not? You say that a learned man saw the sea's waves rising, with three hundred leagues between one wave and the next."

The Jew replied, "Some learned men write that when the ancients wished the people to hear them, they used to take a harp and play it. When the people were drawn by the sweetness of its sound, they would say what seemed appropriate to put the affairs of the community in order and guide people towards upright conduct. Since our ancients could not play, they took another path, speaking in examples and metaphors: the intelligent man will know what they mean. We learnt both these things from the Psalmist, who says, 'I shall incline my ear to a parable; I shall unfold

my riddle upon the harp.' The image of the frog represents natural science, which sings God's works, as the frog does. It is said to be as large as sixty houses: these are the sixty particulars it contains.

"The first is the element of earth, divided into seven climates (geographical zones), each with its own constitution and nature. Each part is divided into five: rocks, mountains, hills, valleys and plains. Within the earth are bones, veins and the lung, silver, gold, iron, copper, tin, lead, quicksilver (mercury) and sulphur: thus the earth's interior contains eleven things. The bones are the great stones, resembling human bones; the veins are the channels running through the earth and the springs; the lung consists of precious stones whose appearance resembles that of the lung. There is a white kind, called diamond, and a red kind, the ruby. Of the latter there are two varieties: one very red, the other tending towards green. Hyacinth is the green stone; it is useful against ailments of the eyes and the weakening of sight in old people. What the earth produces comprises five things: seed-bearing grass, grass without seed, fruit-bearing trees, trees without fruit, and a tree of composite nature, situated at the earth's extremity, which comes out when the sun rises and goes back into the earth when it sets. It has an earthly nature in its growth and a heavenly nature in its rising and setting. What grows upon the earth comprises seven parts: man, divided into body and soul, whose body and soul differ in nature; the behemah (בהמה, domestic beast), the ḥayyah (חיה, wild beast), the sherets (שרץ, small swarming creature), and the remes (רמש, creeping creature); and finally the composite of man and beast, half human and half beast, which you call the centaur. We thus arrive at thirty-four parts in the earth, what springs from it, and what grows upon it.

"The element of water is divided in two: fresh water, that of rivers, and salt water, that of the sea. There are fish and frogs in it, notably the one called timsah (the Arabic name for a crocodile): all animals move their lower jaw, but it does not. There are also domestic beasts, wild beasts, small creatures and creeping creatures in the sea. Thus the Talmudists received the tradition that there is an ox in the sea and an ox on land: the land ox is permitted, and the sea ox forbidden, because it lacks the signs of ritual purity. For the ass it is the reverse: the land ass is forbidden and the sea ass permitted, because it bears the signs of ritual purity. In the sea there is a creature composed of man and fish, which is called a mermaid; then snow, hail, rain, onyx, coral and Leviathan (the biblical sea creature). These are fifteen things found in the sea, or sixteen with the sponge.

"The element of air and what arises from it include birds of prey and birds which are not birds of prey; the chameleon, which feeds on air alone, drinking it on the mountain heights; and the composite creature, the eagle, which rises as far as the element of fire because it consists of that element and air: these are five parts. The element of fire and what it generates include the salamander, thunder, lightning and the thunderbolt: that makes five. Altogether, then, there are sixty parts, of which Solomon says, 'Sixty are the queens': this is the work of nature. 'And eighty concubines' denotes the twenty particular properties that partake of nature. 'And maidens without number' means hidden things. I shall explain the special properties later, after interpreting the passages in question.

"The devouring serpent is mathematical science. He called it so because the serpent coils into a circle, like the vault of heaven, indicating that this science is higher than natural science: that is the meaning of the serpent swallowing the frog. The raven signifies divine science; Solomon also uses this comparison when he says, 'Black as the raven', and the verse says, 'He makes darkness his hiding place', showing its depth. The raven is said to have swallowed the serpent, which indicates its greatness above mathematical science. It is also said to have climbed the tree: this is the Law, of which the verse says, 'She is a tree of life', showing that all sciences are contained within it. The waves of the sea denote human desires, for each desire is wider than the sea. The iron denotes human understanding, sharp as iron; the seven years, the seven sciences. This means that even with all these it can never reach the depths of knowledge."

The king said to the Jews, "I see that your words are good, but that they do not constitute decisive proofs. Since that is so, we as Christians shall abide by what we have received as true, and you by what you believe to be true. You will receive a reward, since your intention is directed towards God; and if a demonstration showed you the contrary of what you follow, you would join us." The Christian said, "That is not how they judge us. One of their wise men said that we are like blind men: we aim for the royal road but go astray and fall into the depths." The king replied, "That is no wonder, for the wise man said that religions endure through the representations people form of them. However, I shall punish them if you swear not to say more against them than what has just been said." The Christian replied, "By the life of my lord and by his crown, if the waters of the sea were ink and the forests pens, they would not suffice to write down all the evil I have spoken against them." The king

replied, "That is the work of the imagination of which I spoke to you. And now, let us turn to, etc." I could not transcribe what is missing, because the writing was so faded that it could not be read.

David and the Music of the Psalms

David playing the lyre, Paris Psalter, Constantinople, tenth century. The personification of Melody sits behind him. This opening image of the psalter accompanies the debate over interpretations of the Psalms; it does not depict the speakers in the dialogue. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

An undated controversy

The dialogue identifies the ruler only as Alfonso of Portugal. Both speakers remain anonymous, and neither place nor year is given. Those details have therefore not yielded an identifiable historical session. The texts they discuss can, however, be located. The opening concerns Psalm 22 in Hebrew numbering, 21 in the Septuagint and Latin tradition. Its first words recur in the Gospel accounts of the crucifixion, Matthew 27:46 and Mark 15:34. The dialogue transmits its characters' competing interpretations; it is not a judicial record of Jesus's execution. The Christian character's attribution of the crucifixion nails to "the Jews" likewise simplifies the actors in the Gospel narrative: Mark 15:15–24 distinguishes Pilate's decision from the soldiers' actions, while John 19:23 expressly names the soldiers as those who crucified Jesus. [E1744 ; S134 ; S138 ; S139]

The reading of the hands and feet

The accusation against Jerome requires historical correction. The Septuagint already has Greek ōryxan, "they dug / pierced", in Psalm 21:17: that reading therefore did not originate with Jerome. Moreover, his Psalter translated from Hebrew gives vinxerunt, "they bound", rather than the foderunt of the familiar Latin psalter descending from the Greek tradition. The narrative's polemic thus simplifies an older and more complex translation history. Hebrew ka'ari, "like a lion", and the verbal versions must be compared as different textual forms. The commentary establishes their existence; it does not turn a character's accusation into a conclusion about a translator's intentions. [S134 ; S135 ; H1928]

Talmudic stories and their reuse

The frog as large as sixty houses, the serpent and the raven do occur in Bava Batra 73b. The same narrative collection mentions the carpenter's implement falling into water; the great waves belong to 73a. Ibn Verga therefore alludes to specific passages, followed by a philosophical interpretation which is not simply the text of those stories. The play on gever, man or cockerel, has lexical support in Yoma 20b. The parodied verses come from Lamentations 3:1–8. Finally, the copyist's closing sentence explains the material reason for the piece's interruption: the writing of the exemplar he used had faded. No ending has been supplied through conjectural reconstruction. [S136 ; S137 ; E1744 ; H1928]

The movement of Psalm 22 and its use in the Passion

The discussion selects several images from a single poem: abandonment, bulls, dogs, hands and feet, and finally the proclamation to future generations. Psalm 22 nevertheless moves from an appeal for rescue in verses 2–22 to public praise and the transmission of the ac-

count to descendants in verses 23–32. This progression explains why the speakers can dispute both suffering and deliverance. The connection with the Gospels is more precise than a shared theme: Mark 15:34 repeats the psalm's opening cry, while Mark 15:24 describes the division of clothes by casting lots, corresponding to Psalm 22:19. These points establish textual reuse in the Passion narrative; they do not by themselves demonstrate every identification proposed in the dialogue, particularly the equation of animals with categories of opponents. Verse references here follow the Hebrew numbering of the psalm. [S140 ; S138]

From Temple practice to the parody of the rooster

The wordplay on gever (a man; in certain usages, a rooster) draws on a technical discussion of the timing of Temple service. In Yoma 20b, Rav understands the expression as the call of a man appointed to announce the service; Rabbi Sheila understands it as the rooster's crow. The page preserves traditions supporting both readings. That debate is not about Lamentations 3. Verga's character transfers this lexical possibility to the opening of the lament and then associates its images—darkness, skin, bones, and confinement—with the preparation of a meal. The biblical material and the Talmudic support for the wordplay can therefore be identified precisely without attributing the parody itself to the Talmud. [S137 ; S141]

The marvellous tale before its philosophical interpretation

Bava Batra 73b attributes the frog episode to Rabbah bar bar Hana: its size is compared to the fortress of Hagronia, reckoned at sixty houses; the snake, raven, and tree strong enough to carry them follow. The page continues with other marvellous journeys. It does not explicitly present this sequence as the three sciences of nature, mathematics, and divine matters. The dialogue develops its interpretation by connecting other texts to it: the sixty queens of Song of Songs 6:8, hair black as a raven in Song of Songs 5:11, and the tree of life in Proverbs 3:18. In their biblical setting, the first two images describe love and beauty, while the third denotes wisdom. Their combination in the account represents a further stage of allegorical reading. [S136 ; S142 ; S143]

Translation Choices

Life and Hebrew letters

In the quotation about voluntary death, nefesh (נפש) here means life; "he did not preserve his life" makes the argument clearer than "his soul did not live". Ka'ari (כארי) means "like a lion"; aleph (א), yod (י) and vav (ו) are letters, not additional words to translate. For Psalm 4 the Spanish gives the unintelligible "my liver and my heart": the Hebrew and Wiener recover the contrast between "my honour turned to shame" and "hard-hearted". This corrects the quotation, not the validity of its speaker's argument. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The passage on creation and incarnation omitted from the Spanish

After the story of the lion's circle, the Hebrew and Wiener preserve this development, absent from the Spanish: "The Christian said: 'Even if the psalm is inconclusive, why do you not believe in our Messiah, when you believe something stranger still, creation from nothing, although Aristotle provided proofs of the world's eternity?' The Jew answered: 'This question was already put before King Don Juan of Aragon. A great scholar of ours answered that Aristotle's proofs are not decisive. Moreover, a strange thing should be believed if it manifests God's power; creation from nothing manifests his absolute power. But saying that God clothed himself in flesh would seem to introduce an imperfection into him, for we would make the one who is God into a being who is not God. Furthermore, if he clothed himself in flesh to suffer an infinite punishment for Adam's sin against the Infinite, who suffered that punishment? The divine part? That is impossible, since it cannot die. The fleshly part? But flesh is finite: how could it have suffered an infinite punishment?' The king said: 'Objections can be raised to these arguments; I shall present them at the end of our discussion. I say only that, since you customarily speak false and empty things, you are considered liars in every matter.'" The king then turns to the Talmudic stories preserved in the Spanish. [H1928 ; G1856 ; E1744]

Music and two shortened lists

Hebrew nevel (נבל, a stringed instrument, usually a harp) and Wiener's Harfe support "harp" rather than the "bagpipe" of Spanish gayta. This retains a stringed instrument consistent with the musical image in the following psalm, without establishing the exact form of the ancient instrument. In the underground list, Spanish reduces iron and copper to metal; Hebrew and Wiener distinguish them, restoring the announced eleven items. In the plant list, Spanish announces five categories but omits two. The complete reading restored in the body is: "seed-bearing plants, plants without seed, fruit trees, trees without fruit, and a tree of composite nature". The transmitted totals have not been silently recalculated. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Animals, stones and the science of the stars

Timsah is the Arabic name for the crocodile, which the account classes with frogs. Spanish gives "upper jaw" for the jaw moved by other animals; Hebrew's alternative "lower", supported by Wiener, is retained. The account has not thereby become a modern zoological description. Onyx follows Hebrew shoham (שהם, a stone usually rendered "onyx") and Wiener's Onyx against Spanish "crystal": the first two identify the same stone, without converting the list into modern mineralogy. Mathematical science follows Hebrew limudit (לימודית, "mathematical"); Wiener renders the science here by its application to astronomy, while Spanish calls it astrology. Hebrew's broader meaning is retained: the serpent coils like the heavens and represents this science between the study of nature and divine science. Finally, the promised further explanation concerns the previously mentioned special properties, which Hebrew and German make clearer than Spanish. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Other additional formulations

The Hebrew has the king say: "You cunning Jew, how have you avoided answering the essential point?" The Spanish retains the question without the address. After the three hundred parasangs between the waves, the Hebrew and Wiener add: "That is false, for this entire sea does not measure three hundred parasangs." The last oath is also fuller: "If the waters of the sea were ink, the heavens paper and the forest's trees pens..." The Spanish omits the heavenly paper. Parasangs are old units of distance; the Spanish renders them as leguas, "leagues", without supplying a certain measurable equivalent. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 128–135 ; H1928, section 32b ; G1856, p. 120–127.

Account XXXIII

A Disaster at Fez Left Unnarrated

The thirty-third persecution took place in the great city of Fez. A great calamity occurred there. Having found no sufficiently reliable account, I do not relate it here: I have seen widely differing versions. Recording them all would exhaust the narrator, while the facts remain unestablished.

A Qur'anic Leaf from the Maghreb

Qur'anic leaf from North Africa, c. 1250–1300. Ink, colours and gold on parchment; Metropolitan Museum of Art, no. 37.21. A page from the Maghreb's manuscript culture, placed alongside the account of Fez; it does not depict the catastrophe mentioned. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

An early memory of Fez, without an identified event

Abraham ibn Ezra's lament Ahah yarad expressly names the Jewish community of Fez among those struck by violence in the Maghreb. It therefore supplies an early, independent Jewish source for the memory of a catastrophe in that city. It does not automatically date Ibn Verga's account, which gives no ruler, year or distinctive circumstance. Identifying its disaster with the Almohad period, or with a later crisis, would exceed the transmitted clues. The account also contains a definite statement about documentation: the compiler reports incompatible accounts and declines to construct a secure narrative from them. This is not a missing page to be filled in; it is an explicit reservation. External comparison recovers a context of persecution at Fez, but not the precise episode whose details he withheld. [S144 ; E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

What the lament actually documents

Abraham ibn Ezra's poem places Fez alongside Sijilmasa, Marrakesh, Tlemcen, Ceuta, Meknes and the Draa. Its geography embraces a network of Maghrebi communities connected, within the same poem, to centres in the Iberian Peninsula. The line on Fez speaks of the community being given over to plunder; neighbouring lines mourn the loss of scholars and places of study. It thus records a memory of rupture in communal and intellectual life, rather than merely an unspecified reference to a mourning city. The document helps restore Fez to the cultural networks that Jewish compilers sought to preserve in writing. It does not, however, supply the particular circumstances that Verga says he decided not to recount. The lament's opening reuses Lamentations 1:16, where personified Jerusalem weeps for her children and the absence of a comforter. The poet applies this language of Jerusalem's loss to named medieval cities. This is an explicit literary and liturgical reuse; neither Fez nor its catastrophe is narrated in that biblical verse. [S144 ; S145]

Translation Choices

A sufficiently reliable account

Taken alone, Spanish and Hebrew say “I did not find it written” before mentioning several written accounts. Wiener clarifies this as “nothing certain recorded”. That clarification is retained, supported by the conclusion about verification: what is lacking is an established account, not all written material. The last sentence follows Hebrew in linking the narrator’s exhaustion with uncertainty among the many versions. Spanish turns this into a general maxim: “Anyone who writes without establishing the facts labours in vain.” Hebrew is preferred because it directly continues the documentary difficulty described in the preceding sentence. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

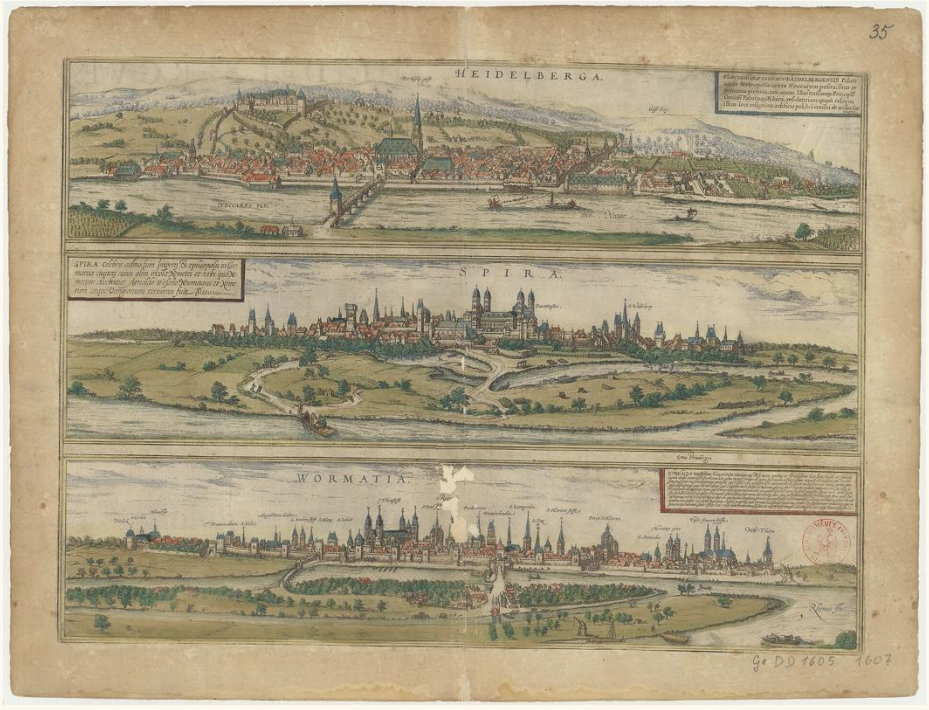
Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 135–135 ; H1928, section 33 ; G1856, p. 127–128.

Account XXXIV

An Ultimatum and a Town in Flames

In the thirty-fourth, in a city in Germany, the Christians rose up and assembled the Jews. They told them to receive the Christian Law within three days; failing that, they were to know beyond doubt that they would all be put to the sword, without anyone escaping. The Jews gathered and clothed themselves in sackcloth and ashes; they fasted and cried out to God. After three days, seeing that no help had come from heaven, they all agreed to die. The young men said, "We shall avenge ourselves on our enemies, then die to sanctify God's Name (qiddush ha-Shem, קידוש השם)."

In the morning all the Christians assembled where the judges sat, waiting for the Jews to come and receive baptism. Each was to take one of them home and teach him their Law and its foundations. The young men of Israel arose, their swords hidden beneath their clothes, and went to the door of the appointed place: they left none of the Christians alive. Before setting out they had ordered their wives to set fire to four places in the city. There was nobody to put it out, since the Christians were in the building where they awaited them. The whole city was burnt, and the Jews with them. I heard this from the lips of a learned German who had come as an emissary.



Three Cities of the Rhine

Heidelberg, Speyer and Worms, a plate from an edition of 1645 reproducing Braun and Hogenberg's views. Worms appears in the lower register. The commentary compares this account with traditions concerning the violence of 1096; the print shows a much later urban landscape. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

A specific parallel in the narratives of 1096

Eliezer bar Nathan's account of the persecutions of 1096 tells of Simḥa at Worms, taken into a church to be baptised. He draws a knife and kills a relative of the bishop before being killed himself. This provides a specific early parallel for the concealed weapon and the violent response at the moment of forced conversion. It does not describe the killing of an entire assembly of judges or a coordinated fire at four points in a town. Similar actions therefore do not justify inserting Worms into the translation. Ibn Verga transmits another account, or another form of the tradition, received, as he says, from a German scholar. [S146 ; E1744 ; H1928]

What the transmission allows us to locate

All three versions place the event in an unnamed German town. No king, magistrate or emissary is identified by name. German renders the meeting place as Rathaus, "town hall"; Hebrew says only the place where the judges assemble. The scene can thus be placed in an urban, judicial setting, but not in a building identified from archival records. The three-day deadline, the women's part in setting the fire and the final absence of survivors are features transmitted by this account; the parallel from 1096 does not verify them. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S146]

The Worms scene in its own sequence

Eliezer's chronicle distinguishes two attacks at Worms in May 1096. The first victims are those who remained at home; others took refuge in the bishop's buildings and were attacked in turn a week later. The edition places these events on 18 and 25 May. Simḥa's episode occurs within this second group: led to the church, he conceals his intention until entering, then strikes a relative of the bishop with a knife hidden on his person. He is immediately cut to pieces. The comparison with Verga therefore concerns a complete sequence—expected conversion, an apparently compliant approach, a concealed weapon, an attack and the assailant's death—already transmitted in a medieval chronicle. The burning city and the coordinated action of young men, however, do not occur in this Worms scene. A precise narrative precedent can be identified without transferring Simḥa's name to Verga's anonymous group. [S146]

The three-day fast and the book of Esther

The gathering, the fast and the three-day wait may be compared with Esther 4:16: before appearing before the king, Esther asks the Jews of Susa to abstain from food and drink for three days. The duration and collective preparation correspond. The outcomes differ: in Esther an appeal to the king initiates deliverance; in Verga the absence of relief precedes an armed attack. This is a comparable biblical pattern of supplication, not the same event or a source corroborating the fire. [S147]

Translation Choices

The meeting place and the emissary

"Where the judges sat" preserves the precision shared by Spanish and Hebrew; Wiener's "town hall" is a narrower interpretation. At the end, shaliaḥ (שליח, messenger or emissary) does not establish whether the scholar was a diplomatic ambassador or a communal representative. "Emissary" leaves that question open. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 135–136 ; H1928, section 34 ; G1856, p. 128–128.

Account XXXV

The Torch and the Governor

For the thirty-fifth, I also heard from a kabbalist (a scholar of Jewish mystical tradition) who came from France that in a city called Bodon a decree was issued: a wax torch was lit and placed in the city square. It was proclaimed that any Jew who came and became a Christian before the torch was consumed would be accepted, but anyone who came afterwards would be burnt. All remained steadfast in the Law and were burnt with their children. Among them was a man of great strength and learning, beloved of the city's governor. The governor summoned him and asked him to become a Christian: he would honour him and give him the highest office possible. The Jew replied, "What honour can you give me that compares with what the Lord of souls will give me if I do not become a Christian?" The governor grew angry with him and began to insult his Law.

After this, the Jew said, "I have no intention of becoming a Christian. But perhaps, on seeing the great fire in which they are to burn me, I shall take fright and change my mind. Order a great fire to be made in the square, my lord, and come with me close to it. Perhaps at that moment God will put in my heart what you desire." The governor said, "You speak well." He ordered it to be done and went with him. When the Jew found himself beside the pyre, being a strong man, he seized the governor and dragged him into the fire; both died there.

Historical Commentary

Bodon remains unidentified

Spanish has Bodon, Hebrew בודון and Wiener Beaudun. These spellings are not three independent identifications: they transmit the same uncertain place-name. The informant's arrival from France does not prove that the town was in France. No dated act or other narrative consulted combines the scene's three distinctive features: a deadline measured by a burning torch, the offer of high office, and the governor's death after being dragged into the fire. The transmitted name is therefore kept instead of being replaced by a conjectural modern location. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

A documented but distinct comparison: Blois

The Hebrew narratives of the executions at Blois in 1171 likewise describe refusal of conversion and Jewish prisoners being put to the fire. The account printed by Neubauer and Stern gives 20 Sivan 4931, names victims including Judah bar Aaron, and reports information received from people present. It helps place the Bodon account among medieval traditions of execution and resistance to baptism. Its sequence is different, however: it attests neither the torch serving as a clock nor the governor's death. Blois is thus a historical parallel, not an established identification of Bodon. [S146 ; E1744]

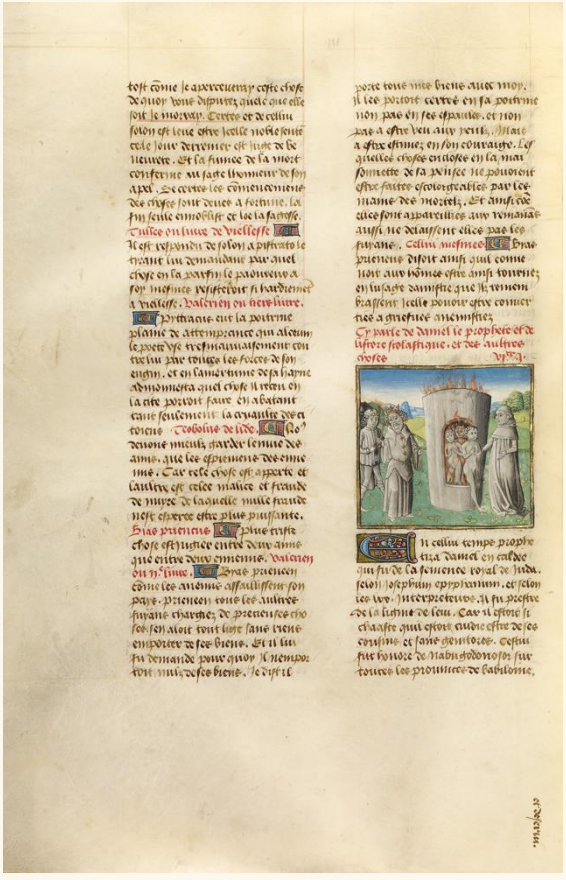
The people and actions preserved in the Blois dossier

The Blois relation is transmitted as a letter from the community of Orléans, written at the request of Master Jacob. It gives the execution a dated setting: 20 Sivan 4931, or 26 May 1171 according to the edition. It describes communal singing and then three men whose bonds are loosened: Judah bar Aaron and the two priests Jeḥiel bar David and Yequtiel bar Judah. After emerging from the fire, they are beaten to death and their bodies thrown back into it. The count is Theobald V of Blois. These details distinguish the ruler responsible for the execution, the servants carrying it out and the named prisoners. In this relation no governor is dragged to his death by a condemned man. The Bodon story therefore preserves a different ending, even though both texts depict refusal of baptism before a pyre. [S146]

Dying together with an opponent: the parallel of Samson

Verga's character's final action recalls a specific biblical episode: in Judges 16:23–30, Samson, displayed before the Philistines, recovers his strength and brings the building down upon himself and the gathering. Physical strength, deliberately sought proximity and the decision to take an opponent into death provide points of correspondence. The means and

participants differ: fire and a governor in Verga, the pillars of Dagon's temple and a crowd in Judges. This is a comparison of narrative form; Verga's text does not mention Samson and does not establish direct borrowing. [S148]



The Three Hebrews in the Fiery Furnace

The three Hebrew youths in the furnace of Daniel 3. Miroir historial, Ghent, c. 1475; Getty, Ms. Ludwig XIII 5, vol. 1, fol. 144v. A medieval image of faithfulness under threat illuminates the religious language of Accounts 34–36. [provenance]

Translation Choices

Physical strength and the final action

"Valiant" could suggest courage alone. Hebrew, the explicit return to physical strength, and German Körper und Geist support "great strength and learning". Spanish says the two men went into the fire; Hebrew specifies that the Jew threw the governor in and himself upon him. "Dragged him into the fire" conveys the action shared by the versions without imposing a more exact sequence of movements than Spanish supplies. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The honours promised

Spanish promises the highest possible office; Hebrew and German speak of unprecedented honour and authority. The Spanish wording is retained because it clearly expresses the offer of a position, though no act verifies this institutional detail. The other two versions read: "I shall grant you honour and authority such as have never been heard of." [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

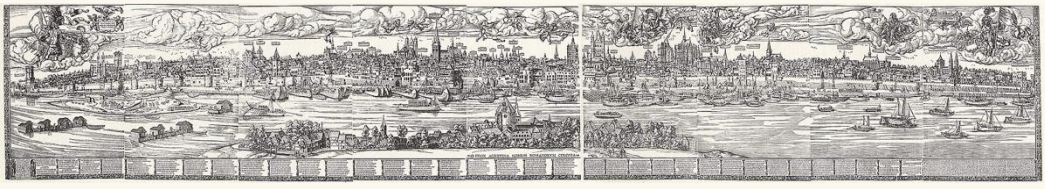
Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 136–137 ; H1928, section 35 ; G1856, p. 128–129.

Account XXXVI

The Community Denied a Burial

The thirty-sixth occurred in a city in Germany, where it was decreed that all Jews should change their Law within three days; if they refused, they would all be burnt. The unfortunate people gathered and fasted for three days.

They agreed that if they had received no divine help by the third day, they would come to the congregation's house and cut one another's throats, rather than die at their enemies' hands. Anyone lacking the resolve to do so would ask the synagogue attendant (shammash, שמש, communal attendant) to kill him. So it was done: first they killed their wives and children. The attendant was left alone; he drew the knife across his own throat and died. On the morning of the fourth day the Christians came to the Jews' doors to learn their intention. They found neither man nor woman in the houses. They went to the synagogue and found them all slain. They reported the matter to the king, who ordered that they should not be buried, but thrown to the dogs in the fields. Some Germans hold a tradition that a mountain fell upon them and they remained buried beneath it. May the merit of these and others like them abide for the descendants of Israel in every place. Amen.



Cologne on the Rhine

Anton Woensam, view of Cologne, 1531. The panorama locates the Rhineland milieu of the persecution traditions examined in the commentary. It depicts neither the massacre nor the precise, still uncertain place where the account locates the refusal of burial. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

The synagogue attendant in an earlier tradition

A particularly close parallel occurs in Eliezer bar Nathan's account of refugees from Cologne in 1096. At Wevelinghofen, Samuel bar Yeḥiel asks the attendant Menaḥem to kill him after his son's death; Menaḥem then takes his own life. The same chronicle also describes a group shut inside a building at Altenahr and a last man who dies after killing his companions. These passages provide specific antecedents for the roles of the attendant and the final survivor. They do not establish that the episodes are identical: the places, people and circumstances of those chronicles are not supplied by Ibn Verga. [S146 ; H1928]

Denial of burial and the mountain tradition

Ibn Verga himself distinguishes the deaths in the synagogue from burial beneath a mountain, which he attributes to "some Germans". He supplies neither a king's name nor a written order denying burial. The chronicle of 1096 consulted instead says of several groups that the dead were buried. The distinctiveness of Ibn Verga's account must therefore be preserved: the miraculous burial is neither confirmed by that source nor replaceable with its account. It remains a reported tradition whose location and date have not been established. [S146 ; E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The refugees from Cologne and the identifiable participants

Eliezer places these deaths within the removal of Jews from Cologne to several settlements where the bishop hoped to protect them. At Wevelinghofen, in late June 1096, the account distinguishes Samuel bar Yeḥiel, his son and Menaḥem, the synagogue attendant. The father kills his son, asks Menaḥem to kill him in turn, and the attendant then falls on his own sword. At Altenahr another scene names five men entrusted with killing the confined group; the last, Peter, kills his four companions and then throws himself from a tower. Wounded survivors are also mentioned. These details show that the roles of the final executioner and the communal attendant already existed in several localized traditions. Verga brings them together in a shorter synagogue scene, followed by a separate burial episode. [S146]

The binding of Isaac and the unburied dead

The sacrificial language of Eliezer's chronicle, with father, son and knife, permits comparison with Genesis 22:1–19, the binding of Isaac. An essential difference must remain: in Genesis 22:11–13, the divine command stops Abraham and a ram is offered instead of his son; the medieval scenes instead describe deaths actually carried out. For the second half of Verga's account, Psalm 79:1–4 offers a closer verbal parallel: devastated Jerusalem, bodies left to animals, and no one to bury them. This psalm expresses collective mourning and does not describe a falling mountain. Two biblical registers in the memory of disaster can thus be identified without treating these texts as corroboration of the medieval actions or miracle. [S149 ; S150 ; S146]

Translation Choices

Two or three days of fasting

Spanish gives two days of fasting followed by waiting until the third day; Hebrew and Wiener give three days. Hebrew's three days, supported by German, are retained: the fast thus fills the stated period before the Christians arrive on the fourth day. This remains a textual choice, since no external source determines the duration of this anonymous episode. The Spanish alternative reads: "They gathered and fasted for two days. They agreed that, if they had received no divine help by the third day..." [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The fourth day or Wednesday

Yom revi'i (יום רביעי) can mean either "the fourth day" or "Wednesday". Spanish chooses the fourth day, linking it to the deadline; Wiener specifies Wednesday. With no established date or week, "the fourth day" is retained as the reading requiring the least information absent from the account. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 137–138 ; H1928, section 36 ; G1856, p. 129–130.

Account XXXVII

The Royal Physician's Perilous Prestige

The thirty-seventh occurred in Granada. I heard the affair told as follows. At that time there was a physician to the king, called Rabbi Isaac Hamon, who went to the palace every day. One day he saw some Moors quarrelling. He wished to turn back, but could not. As he was about to pass, one of them said to those quarrelling, "By the life of Muhammad, leave your companion alone and do not pursue him!" But the man refused. The other spoke again: "By the life of the king's physician, leave him alone!" He immediately did so.

The Moors gathered and said, "Our religion is ruined! It has fallen into unspeakable disrepute: an oath was sworn by the life of our prophet, and it was not heeded; an oath was sworn by the life of a Jew, and it was obeyed. These people have raised their heads: let us rise and show our strength!" They rose up, took their swords, and left no Jew alive except a few notables who took refuge in the palace and were saved there. From that day onwards, all the Jewish physicians of that place undertook not to ride horses, wear silk, or display power when they went to the city square, either so that the Moors would not envy them or as a sign of mourning for their brethren who had died there.

Historical Commentary

A Muslim court at Granada, without an identified reign

Isaac Hamon is the only named person. The account supplies neither a year nor the ruler's name. It should not therefore be confused with the Granada massacre in Account V, which concerns Joseph ibn Nagrela. Here the text describes a court physician, his personal influence, and refuge in the palace. Biographies repeating Ibn Verga's anecdote do not constitute a second attestation of its sequence. The research undertaken has not identified a court chronicle or independent act confirming the quarrel, the words exchanged and the riot as one dated event. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Authority and visible status: a documentary context

The capitulations of Granada of 1491, in the text reported by Mármol, expressly distinguish Jews from Muslims over identifying clothing and prohibit Jews from exercising authority over Muslims or collecting revenues. These provisions show that public status and the exercise of authority were politically sensitive at the kingdom's end. They are nevertheless neither regulations for physicians nor the ordinance underlying this narrative. In Ibn Verga, giving up horses and silk is an undertaking made by the physicians themselves, with two proposed explanations: avoiding envy or observing mourning. This distinction prevents a remembered practice from being turned into a supposedly recovered royal measure. [S151 ; E1744 ; H1928]

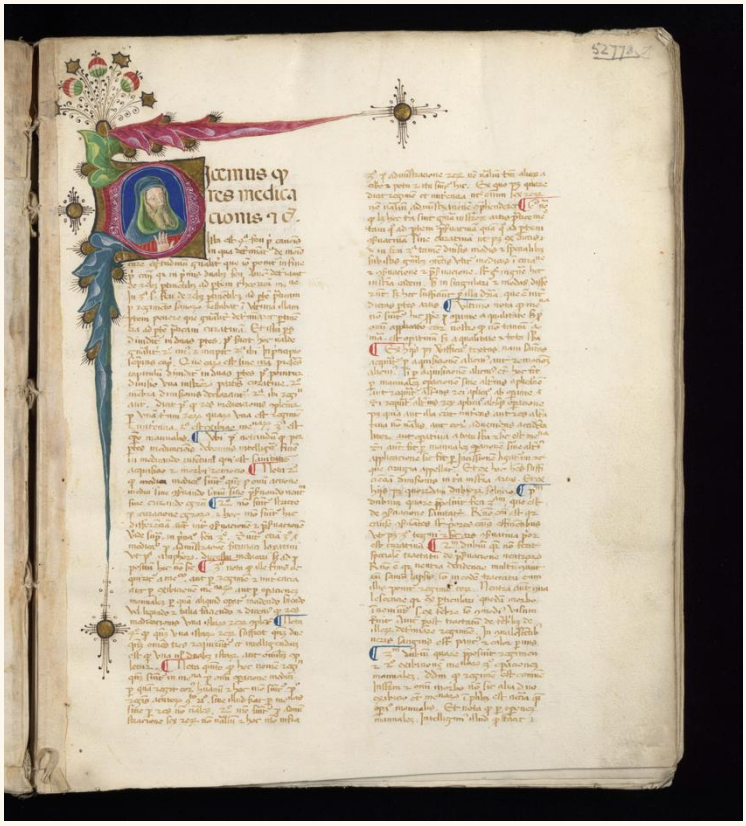
The court physician: an early, localized comparison

Benjamin of Tudela describes another Jewish physician in Constantinople, Solomon the Egyptian, the only member of his community permitted to ride a horse. He adds that the physician's access to the ruler secures relief for the community of Pera. This description supplies a precise parallel to Isaac Hamon's social position: a privilege attached to medical service, visible in public, and an ability to intercede with the ruler. The two men and cities must remain distinct. Benjamin does not recount the Granada quarrel, and Verga's anecdote cannot be dated by the traveller's visit. The comparison illuminates a function—the physician mediating between a court and his community—through a named example. [S113]

Reading the capitulations in their proper chronological direction

The clauses of 1491 regulate the conditions of Granada's transfer of sovereignty. They promise Muslims the preservation of their worship, judges, property and horses, and state that they will not wear the Jews' identifying marks. The provision excluding Jews from command over Muslims is therefore a negotiated guarantee for the political order to follow the

surrender. It cannot be presented as a Muslim king's decision after the riot involving Isaac Hamon. The document explains the stakes of rank, dress and authority in the city, while keeping a dated treaty distinct from an orally transmitted custom of physicians. [S151]



Avicenna in a Latin Medical Manuscript

Avicenna's portrait in the initial of a Latin commentary on the Canon of Medicine, attributed to Jacobus de Sanatis de Padua. C. 1475 (?); Wellcome Collection, MS.376, p. 1. This witness to medical transmission accompanies the account of the physician Isaac Hamon. [provenance]

Translation Choices

Which physicians, and what the crowd says

"The Jewish physicians" makes the group explicit: they speak of their slain brethren, and the undertaking seeks to avoid the hostility described against Jews. In Spanish, the crowd says "let us show our strength"; Hebrew and Wiener have the more direct threat "let us rise and destroy them". This difference is preserved here. The opening "I heard" belongs to Spanish; Hebrew and German say "I found". [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 138–139 ; H1928, section 37 ; G1856, p. 130–131.

Account XXXVIII

The Moved Corpse and the Parchment

I heard the thirty-eighth account from a learned man called Abraham Aben Arama. It concerns a miracle performed by Rabbi Judah ibn Verga, of Seville; this is how it happened. In the city of Jerez de la Frontera, two friars came to the house of a Jew who was among the wealthy men of the country and asked him for alms. He refused to give them any. A quarrel arose between them, and the Jew wounded one of the friars. Their anger turned against the whole community: the friars conferred about fabricating an accusation that would destroy it.

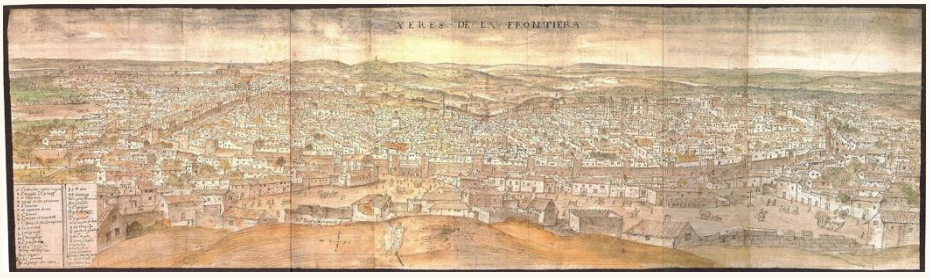
That day they learnt that a Jew converted to Christianity had died and been buried in their cemetery. The friars removed him and carried him to the Jews' burial ground. In the morning they raised a great outcry, saying that they had found the grave without the dead man. This could only be because he had formerly been a Jew: the Jews had removed him from that grave so that he would not go to hell with the Christians. They all went to the duke and told him the affair. He answered, "Go at once, before the Jews hear of it, and ask them whether it is long since they buried a Jew." They went; the Jews answered that for some days they had buried nobody. They returned to the duke, who said, "Go back to the graves." They went and found a new grave. They dug and found the Christian. They informed the duke, saying that there was a newly made grave and that, having wished to know who the dead man was, they had recognised him as the man who had become a Christian. On hearing this the duke was filled with anger. He nevertheless said that the king must be informed of such an event, and that all the Jews should remain prisoners until a letter came from him.

When they heard this, they sent to Seville for Rabbi Judah ibn Verga, asking him to come at once to help the people in their distress. They remained in hiding and did not venture out, so greatly were they persecuted. As soon as he heard, he came there. When he tried to enter the duke's house, the members of the household, being so ill disposed, would not let him speak. He pushed them aside forcefully and said to the duke, "My lord, I have not come to save the Jews from punishment: if they have committed such an act, they deserve to be burnt. I have come to tell you who did it, so that innocent blood may not be shed."

The duke said, “I know that you are learned and will do what you promise. You will greatly please me, and I shall bless you all my life.” He said to him, “Let a blank sheet be brought here. Take it in your hand, my lord; I shall not touch it.” This was done and it was brought. He said, “Fold it in four.” He did so. Then he said, “Slip it inside your clothing against your breast, on the right.” He did so. It is said that Rabbi Judah pronounced the name of God, for he was a kabbalist (versed in Jewish mystical tradition). The duke took out the sheet and found four groups of friars drawn on it. On one side, three were digging in their own cemetery and taking out the corpse. On the second fold of the sheet three friars were shown carrying the body. Since it was very heavy, one had passed his cord beneath it and handed the end to another. This detail appeared there to display the precision of divine providence. Three stood at the entrance to the street, watching for anyone who might pass and see them; three were depicted on the fourth fold digging in the Jews' cemetery. Each friar had his name written above his head.

Seeing so marvellous a thing, the duke was greatly astonished; he fell to the ground and prostrated himself. He sent the illustrated parchment to the king and summoned the friars, who denied it. He then produced the sheet; they were dismayed and confessed. The duke questioned them about the cord; they said that this was indeed how it had happened. When he asked why they had done it, they replied that it was to avenge themselves on the Jew who had insulted them. He said, “What wrong had the others done?” They answered that it was to avenge the Saviour's blood.

The duke ordered a red-hot helmet to be put on each man's head. All the people rose to save them because of their clerical status, marked by the tonsure, since those who bore it could not be put to death. Two died by burning; the duke banished the others for ever.



Jerez de la Frontera

Anton van den Wyngaerde, view of Jerez de la Frontera, 1560s. This is the town in which the account places Judah ibn Verga's intervention. The drawing records its later appearance; it does not corroborate the miraculous removal of the corpse. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

The cemetery of Jerez in municipal records

The acts published by Fidel Fita provide a precise external anchor for the setting. On 2 July 1459, Jerez's council grants land beside the old Jewish cemetery to Bartolomé Fernández de la Catalana. On 4 July, Yucef de Paredes and Samuel Corcós, representatives of the aljama (the organised Jewish community), protest by producing Henry IV's letter of 28 May 1455 protecting synagogues, burial grounds and property. The grant is revoked on 6 July. In March 1460, a new grant to Juan Buñuelo receives the Jewish representatives' limited agreement, on condition that no further plots be granted. These records locate the cemetery outside the walls, between the Real and Seville gates, and name its defenders. They attest disputes over land and legal protection, not the clandestine transfer of a corpse. [S152]

The people and the scope of the comparison

The narrative names Abraham Aben Arama as an intermediary in its transmission and Judah ibn Verga as the man who intervenes. It does not name the duke. The cited acts do not identify him or date the affair to 1459 or 1460: their related subject matter does not date the miracle. Nor do they mention the illustrated sheet, confessions or heated helmets. Agreement between Hebrew, Spanish and Wiener confirms that these features belong to the book's tradition; it does not turn related versions into three independent judicial dossiers. The tonsure explains the clerical status invoked by the crowd; the account's assertion of absolute immunity is not a complete description of criminal proceedings against clerics. [S152 ; E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The appeal to the crown behind the local dispute

Henry IV's letter, produced in Jerez, allows us to go beyond merely locating the cemetery. It had been requested by Santó Alpullate of Alcalá, representative of the Jewish communities in the king's realms. Its preamble accuses prelates, powerful men, religious persons and town councils of seeking to take synagogues, places of prayer and burial grounds, sometimes invoking bulls or other authorizations. The king orders their protection and the reversal of improperly introduced changes. In the municipal record of 4 July 1459, the Jerez representatives have the letter read aloud, request a notarized record of their protest and announce an appeal to the king if the city maintains its decision. We can thus recover the participants and instruments of an actual defence: communal representatives, the town council, a notary and royal justice. Verga's account likewise makes the prisoners' situation depend on a royal letter, before assigning the decisive role to the miraculous parchment. The comparison explains the importance of writing and appeal to higher authority in the story. It also measures what the archives add—a real procedure and named participants—while preserving the account's distinctive resolution. [S152]

Translation Choices

The conditional argument

The former “since they have done such a thing” made Judah admit the guilt he has come to contest. Hebrew and German also use this compressed wording, whose meaning is revealed by the next clause: he accepts the penalty for those responsible, then proposes to identify the actual perpetrators. “If they have committed such an act” makes the concession conditional without altering the accusation or the outcome. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Two clerics, twelve figures

Spanish specifies two clerics at the outset; Hebrew and Wiener give only a plural. The vision subsequently shows four groups of three. The initial two is retained: the versions do not require the original visitors to be the only participants in the fraud. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Parchment, paper and the divine Name

Spanish has “blank parchment”; Hebrew niyar (נִיר, paper) and Wiener’s Papier specify paper. “Blank sheet” retains the common description without prejudging the material; the reader is given the alternatives of paper and parchment here. No surviving object has been identified to decide between them. For the invocation, Hebrew says that he pronounced a Name; Wiener specifies the tetragrammaton, the four-letter divine name. “The name of God” avoids treating that German specification as certain. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Names and punishment

Judah ibn Verga preserves the family name instead of suggesting that his father’s personal name was Verga. For the punishment, Spanish capacete denotes a helmet or metal cap; Wiener’s glühende Kappe confirms that it is heated red-hot, rather than a hat set on fire. Mention of the tonsure restores the Hebrew detail explaining the crowd’s intervention. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 139–142 ; H1928, section 38 ; G1856, p. 131–133.

Account XXXIX

Baptisms Under Threat in Rome

The thirty-ninth occurred in the city of Rome, whose inhabitants suddenly rose up with swords in their hands. There was then a large and very distinguished Jewish congregation there. They were told, “If you become Christians, you will be like us; we shall honour you, you will live peacefully among us, and we shall be together in heaven. Otherwise, know that we shall kill you all with these swords, without anyone escaping.” The Jews fell to the ground and begged for mercy, promising all their property if they would leave them in their Law. It was of no avail. Within three days, in Rome and its surroundings, fifteen thousand souls abandoned the Law. Only a few Jews escaped by fleeing far away: while in the countryside around Rome they had heard what had happened in the city. Others escaped through heavy bribes, remained in hiding, and fled to Naples, where they found safety from their enemies. Soon afterwards, suffering overtook them there too.

Rome in the Nuremberg Chronicle

Rome, woodcut published in 1493 in the Nuremberg Chronicle. The image accompanies the Roman setting of Account XXXIX. Like many old views, it combines recognisable monuments with conventional composition; it does not establish a date for the reported riot. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

A Roman community described by an independent source

In the twelfth century, Benjamin of Tudela describes an honoured Jewish community at Rome, numbering about two hundred according to his wording, and scholars including Jeḥiel, admitted to Pope Alexander's household. This supplies a datable account of Jewish presence and relations with papal authority. It does not justify correcting Ibn Verga's fifteen thousand: his narrative includes the area around Rome and supplies no year. Directly comparing the two figures would assume, without evidence, the same period and population. No document consulted confirms together the fifteen thousand conversions, the three-day deadline and the flight to Naples. [S153 ; E1744 ; H1928]

A papal rule that does not attest the episode

Clement III's Sicut Iudeis, issued at the Lateran on 10 May 1188, prohibits forcing Jews to baptism and killing or robbing them without judgement by the competent authority. Its Latin text belongs to a documentary tradition distinct from Shevet Yehudah. It illuminates the legal framework in which forced conversions could be challenged. But Ibn Verga names no pope: his account cannot therefore be labelled a dated violation of this bull, nor can the bull prove that the Roman event never occurred. Comparison establishes an attested rule while leaving the narrative's date unresolved. [S154 ; E1744]

Naples: communal presence and a complaint addressed to Rome

The fugitives' destination also has sources of its own. In the early seventh century, Gregory the Great writes to Paschasius, bishop of Naples, following a complaint from the city's Jews: certain people are preventing festivals which, they say, have been observed since their ancestors' time. The pope orders that the celebrations be allowed and favours persuasion in seeking conversions. The document shows a community able to take a local complaint to Rome; it mentions neither refugees from Rome nor a general conversion there. Much later, Benjamin of Tudela describes Naples as a fortified maritime city with approximately five hundred Jews and names several of its scholars. Two distinct points of reference thus establish an ancient and medieval communal presence, without assuming that its population remained unchanged between those periods. [S155 ; S113]

Protection for festivals and burial grounds

Clement III's bull extends beyond baptism. It also forbids disrupting festivals with sticks or stones, compelling services beyond customary obligations, and damaging cemeteries or removing bodies in search of money. These clauses place violence surrounding conversion within a wider set of risks and protections. They supplement Verga's picture with a written record of what communities could ask of the authorities; they do not date the journey from Rome to Naples described here. [S154]

Translation Choices

The number and the ending

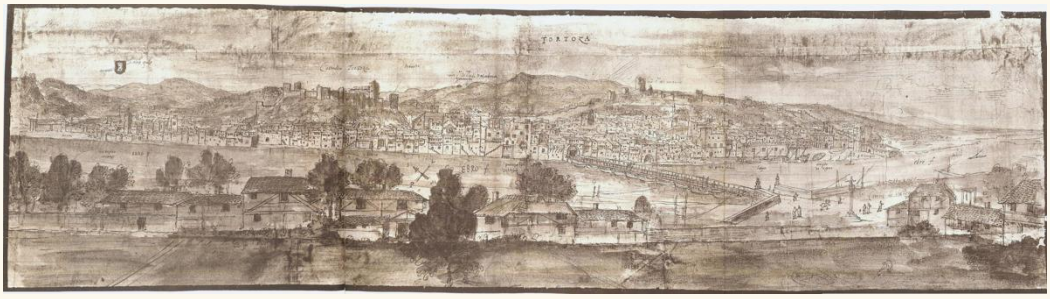
The fifteen thousand and the three days occur in all three versions and are retained despite the lack of independent confirmation. The final Hebrew sentence literally says that “the cup passed over them too”, an image of suffering that Wiener expands as the “cup of sorrows”. The revised French and English render that meaning idiomatically. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 142–142 ; H1928, section 39 ; G1856, p. 133–134.

Account XL

The Messianic Debates at Tortosa

The fortieth account reproduces the letter which the great scholar Abonastroc sent to the congregation of Girona in the year 5173. The leaders of Israel were in anguish and distress before the pope, at the instigation of Joshua ha-Lorqui. After becoming a Christian, he called himself Master Jerome of Santa Fe. He asked the pope to have the Jewish scholars come before him: he would show them that the Messiah had already come, that he was Jesus, and this from their own Talmud. These are the terms of the letter:



Tortosa in 1563

Anthonis van den Wyngaerde, 1563. A view of Tortosa about a century and a half after the controversy of 1413–1414; a topographical document, not a picture of a session. [provenance]

Lords among the children of Israel, nobles of Judah, you shall know, as you have always known, that our Saviour neither sleeps nor slumbers in delivering us from those who seek our harm. A branch sprung from us planned to destroy us and cast down the Law of truth: Joshua ha-Lorqui. He sought to turn us away from this Law, to show that he had truly become a Christian and observed his new faith. He asked the pope to summon the leading Jewish scholars before him, for he wished to demonstrate from our Talmud that the Messiah had already come. He told the pope that once he had proved this, it would be right to compel the Jews to become Christians, and that he would present true proofs before him.

I now come to inform you of the whole affair; you will learn its particulars so as to answer this heretic (apikoros, אפיקורוס). Know that we found ourselves in great danger before so many cardinals and lords, many of whom sought our defeat. Envoys

from the congregations arrived here today, the first of January, particularly those from Aragon, whom ha-Lorqui had asked to come at all costs. From Zaragoza came Rabbi Zerahiah the Levite, Don Vidal, son of Benveniste, and Rabbi Mattathias ha-Yizhari; from Calatayud, the nasi (נשיא, communal dignitary) Don Samuel the Levite and Rabbi Moses ben Musa; from the city of Huesca, Don Todros Alcostantin; and from Alcañiz, Don Joseph beni Ardot and Don Meir Galigua; from Daroca, Don Astruc the Levite; from Monreal, Rabbi Joseph Albo; from Monzón, Don Joseph Levi and Rabbi Yom Tov Carcoxa; from Montalbán, Abogandá; from Belchite, Don Joseph Albalag and the scholar Bongoa; and finally Rabbi Todros ben Yahya (son of Yahya), of Girona, a greatly respected man.

The envoys assembled and discussed who would speak before the pope and who would begin the address. They chose Don Vidal, son of Benveniste, who was learned in many sciences and knew Latin. They agreed not to interrupt one another, as was their custom in disputations, nor to insult a colleague when contradicting his words, so as not to disgrace themselves before the pope. They were to behave properly towards ha-Lorqui and the cardinals, with restraint and courtesy; not to grow angry even if insulted; and each was calmly to strengthen his companion's heart so that he would not falter.

All of us envoys then went before the pope, trusting in the divine favour which delivers the poor from one mightier than himself. The pope received us kindly, asked where we came from and each man's name, and ordered it to be written down. We were greatly afraid and asked the secretary what this meant. He answered that we need fear no harm: popes and kings were accustomed to have the events of their time recorded in their books. Then the pope spoke to us as follows: “Honoured Jews, people chosen by the One who has existed for all eternity, though rejected on account of their sins, do not fear this disputation: you will suffer no injury or injustice in my presence. Let your minds be at rest; speak boldly and do not be afraid. Master Jerome says he wishes to show you that the Messiah has already come, and this through your Talmud. We shall see whether he speaks the truth or has dreamt it. Do not fear him, for in disputation the conditions are equal. Go now and rest in your lodgings, and come back here tomorrow.” He immediately ordered suitable lodgings to be given us and, from his table, what we could eat according to our Law. Some of us rejoiced at the pope's words; others were saddened, as is the Jews' custom.

The next day we appeared before the pope. We found the whole palace hung with embroidery at the place where the disputation was to take place. There were seventy seats for cardinals, archbishops and bishops, and all the lords of Rome and the cit-

izens: nearly a thousand men were present. It was the same on the other days of the disputation. Our hearts trembled; nevertheless we said, "Blessed be he who has granted mortals a share of his glory!" The pope then began: "Understand, learned men, that I have not come here or summoned you to debate which of the two Laws is better. I know that mine is true and that yours was true, but has ceased. I have called you because Jerome says that he will show, from the Talmud of your rabbis, who knew more than you, that the Messiah has already come. You shall therefore speak before me of this alone." Then he turned towards Jerome and said, "Begin your argument, and they will answer." Jerome began, "Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord. If you refuse and rebel, you shall be consumed by the sword."

Don Vidal began his address in Latin, and the pope was greatly pleased by his learning and language. Among other things he rebuked Jerome, saying that anyone who comes to dispute should not begin with threats, as he had done in saying, "If you refuse, you shall be consumed by the sword." He had not yet argued his case and was already making himself a judge. The pope replied, "You are right; but do not be surprised by this bad disposition, since he is one of yours." Don Vidal began, "Behold, we come to you, for you are our lord." Don Samuel the Levite said, "Show us, Lord, your mercy, and you shall give us your salvation."

Finally, they asked the pope to excuse them from these debates: the Jews were not accustomed to inferential reasoning or logic, yet Jerome was already engaging them in these, while Jewish knowledge was handed down through received tradition. The pope answered, "If you ask this out of fear, I have already given you my promise, and I shall keep what I once said to you. If it is because you do not know the terms of logic, when Jerome treats of it, give him no answer. If he presents proofs from received tradition (qabbalah, קבלה), answer him from it." After this, as the discussion had taken a long time, the pope ordered them to go and eat and return the next morning, which was done. He commanded the great men to accompany us. We said among ourselves, "May God grant that the end be like the beginning!"

That day we went to the synagogue, where many people were present. With tears and supplications we prayed to the Mighty One of our salvation to guide us towards good and let nothing come from our mouths that would harm us before those lions standing against us. Then, in the midst of that great crowd, with a humble soul and downcast spirit, Rabbi Zerahiah the Levite began his sermon: "Like is healed by like, and contrary by contrary." He gave a wonderful explanation of this, which can be understood only by word of mouth, and ended with prayer and supplication.

On the third day the disputation began. Jerome said, "It is written in your Talmud: 'The world shall last six thousand years: two thousand of chaos (tohu, תוהו), two thousand of Law, and two thousand of the days of the Messiah.' This clearly shows that the Messiah came during the last two thousand years. Who is he, if not our Saviour?" He expanded upon this and explained it as he pleased, until the pope said, "I know, Jerome, that you are a great preacher; but that is not why we have come. We are here to debate what you promised. Take care not to launch into sermons." He turned to the envoys: "Answer what he has said." Don Vidal replied, "My lord, let us establish the characteristics of the Messiah, and we shall know whether he has come: if we find them in him, we shall acknowledge him." The pope replied, "That does not answer what you are asked. The discussion is not about the Messiah's characteristics, but about the fact that this saying shows that he has already come. You are already falling back into the Jews' custom: they are asked one thing and answer another."

Don Vidal said, "My lord, this is the learned way to begin: one should first speak of a thing's nature, then of its particular circumstances; so the Philosopher (Aristotle) writes. But if this path does not seem good, let us not follow it. I shall answer the proposition. I say that the learned Jerome has taken from it what mattered to him and could support him, and has left out what contradicts him. For at the end it says, 'And because our sins have multiplied, some of those years have already passed.' This clearly shows that he has not come."

Jerome answered, "From this it appears that you either have not understood it or act as though you have not. The words 'And two thousand, the days of the Messiah' are those of the prophet Elijah. He spoke them to his disciples, who reported them in his name, as the formula shows: 'It is taught in Elijah's school (tanna de-vei Eliyahu, תנא דבי אליהו).' This is clear to the Talmudists. It was they, or the men who wrote this in their books, who said, 'And because of our sins, etc.' They say this according to their opinion that the one who came is not the Messiah. But the prophet Elijah, knowing the truth, said, 'Two thousand years, the days of the Messiah', according to what had been revealed to him in prophecy." Rabbi Zerahiah answered, "My lord, anyone seeking to demonstrate a proposition cannot base it on words admitting several interpretations: can that be called a demonstrative proof? Jerome says that the end of the passage comes from the Talmudists, explaining it according to his opinion. His opponent will say that the end and the beginning are all Elijah's, to establish his own case against his adversary. If neither has proof or demonstration for his interpretation, the matter at least remains doubtful. How, then, can Jerome derive from it the

proof he desires? His opponent will say, 'If you seek to demonstrate your interpretation there, I shall offer another, and you will not have proved it. If you ask me where I got it, I shall answer: And where did you get yours?'

"Furthermore, since he comes against us with our Talmud, he knows very well that when an interpretation is not conclusive, its practice is to challenge it and say, 'Might it be otherwise?' (ve-dilma, ודלמא). If no answer is given, the matter remains undecided until the interpreter seeks another explanation. It is also more reasonable to say that a saying was spoken by one man than by two. In such cases the Talmud commonly says, 'Rav Ashi said', or 'So-and-so said: Because our sins have multiplied, some of those years have already passed.' This is also why we said at the beginning that we should examine whether the one who came possesses the required qualities of the Messiah. If they are found in the person in question, we shall interpret this saying according to Jerome's explanation; if they are not, our explanation will be true." The pope said, "There is no doubt about what you say: anyone who seeks to prove something must do so through an agreed and conclusive argument which cannot bear another interpretation." Jerome replied, "My lord, my case does not depend on this saying alone: I have many others." The pope said, "You have already left the rules of Christian disputation and returned to the Jewish kind, which turns elsewhere when its first position grows weak. You must answer the Jews' words on this point."

Jerome replied, "How long before the Jews were taken into captivity did Elijah come? It necessarily follows that the words 'And because of our sins' were spoken by someone else who was in captivity. If we say that his disciples spoke them, they were his contemporaries. It was therefore the Talmudists who said them, and this is their opinion." Don Vidal answered, "My lord, let it be so: the Talmudists said it. Let us return to Elijah's words: 'And two thousand, the days of the Messiah.' If the Messiah has already come, he should have said, 'He will come at the end of the four thousand years', or 'He will come at their beginning', meaning at the beginning of the fifth millennium, or else, 'He will come at such a time.' Since that is so, he may come at the end."

Jerome replied, "He meant that the entire two thousand years would be the Messiah's time, and afterwards, in the seventh millennium, the world would be destroyed." Rabbi Joseph Albo said, "This too corresponds to what has already been said and acknowledged by the pope: we shall give another interpretation, and yours will not be conclusive. Moreover, the Talmudists whose words you seek to use against us placed this in the Talmud; they would not have included something contrary to their understanding. They said that there are two appointed ends for the Messiah: either the time

sworn by God, or the time when Israel returns in repentance. That is why this saying did not fix a precise date for the days of the Messiah. It says, 'And two thousand, the days of the Messiah', meaning years prepared for his coming. If the Jews were worthy, he would come at the beginning; if they were not worthy at the beginning but became so in the middle, he would come in the middle; if they were not worthy in the middle but became so at the end, he would come at the end. Yet those two thousand years would not pass without his coming."

The pope said, "Why would you not say that if the Christians were worthy he would come at once, and otherwise delay until the end of the two thousand years?" The envoys said, "We say that a redeemer will come only for one who is captive. Someone living at ease has no need of a redeemer: the Messiah is needed by the people living in captivity and servitude." Jerome said, "Why do you not speak according to my interpretation?" The envoys answered, "And why do you not speak according to ours? We have already said that an interpretation which is not conclusive cannot provide a proof. The pope has already acknowledged this and will not contradict it. You also know how great are the standing and reputation of our Rabbi Solomon ben Isaac, Rashi (רש"י, an acronym of "Rabbi Solomon ben Isaac"): he explained it as we do."

Jerome said, "I stand by my position and my faith: the Messiah has already come. You must bring the proofs that he has not come." The envoys said, "Let the lord cardinals, who understand the truth, say who must bring the proof: I, who received the Law of Moses long ago, or the man who comes to dispossess me?" They answered, "It is as you say. We are astonished at Jerome, who speaks neither truthfully nor in accordance with his original promise, since he said that he would bring the proofs. We have come at the pope's command to uphold the truth."

The envoys said, "The lord pope has already shown us what we asked of him: 'Show us, Lord, your mercy.' And to you, lord cardinals: 'And you shall give us your salvation.' This is unlike Jerome's opening: 'You shall be consumed by the sword.' Does he imagine that we persist in our Law for the sake of the prosperity and kingdom we obtained when we followed it? Dominion and honour are yours, as we see today. Since the day we arrived, we have seen the height of your greatness and have not followed your Law, but our own, which was given to us in the presence of six hundred thousand souls, with great wonders and the revelation of God's glory. We understand that we have no permission to abandon it unless the One who gave it

comes and says, 'Believe in so-and-so.' It is not enough for Jerome to come and tell us, 'Abandon it.' Perhaps his intention is to aspire to your rank. He who knows hearts knows what lies in his."

Jerome answered, "What I have in my heart is what I have said: the Messiah has already come. This is not the saying on which I based my demonstration; let each proof support the others." The pope said, "I have already told you that this is not a sound argument. As for your words, 'Let a man help his companion', woe to anyone who needs others because he has no strength in himself! The vine, through its weakness, needs pillars to support it; the cedar has no such need, but supports others instead." After this the pope dismissed us, and we went happily to our meal, for that day Jerome found no one to help him.

On the fourth day Jerome began with another saying, adjacent to the first: "Elijah said to Rabbi Judah, 'The world shall last no less than eighty-five jubilees, and in the last he will come.' He asked him, 'Will this be at its beginning or its end?' He answered, 'I do not know.'" Rabbi Mattathias said, "This in no way demonstrates that Jesus is the Messiah, since he did not come at that time, which does not correspond to the reckoning of the jubilees."

Jerome said, "I did not say at the outset that Jesus was the Messiah, but that the Messiah had already come. Whether this was ten years or ten days ago makes no difference." The envoys said, "Let the lord pope consider and judge: if it is not Jesus, in whom some greatness and wisdom appear, who can it be?" The pope said, "You have not understood Jerome, although he is one of yours. He is speaking craftily: if you say that he has already come, as the proposition appears to show, the disputation is over. If you say that it is possible that he came, but that it was not Jesus, he will then put to you the objection you made against him: who else could it have been?" The envoys said, "My lord, you have observed this very well; we did not realise what devices hatred could invent." After this Rabbi Mattathias said to Jerome, "Since you bring us proofs from the Talmud that the Messiah has come, why do you not bring contrary proofs from the same Talmud? It says, 'May the spirit of those who calculate the time of the end fail!'" The pope said, "I have heard this before and wish to know its interpretation."

Rabbi Mattathias said, "We have no interpretation other than the literal meaning: it curses those who make calculations and say when the Messiah will come. This brings great harm upon the people: when the appointed time arrives and he has not

come, those awaiting salvation despair, their hearts fail them, bound as they are to that hope. Moreover, there is sin in this: God has hidden this matter from all peoples and all prophets, and this man thinks he can uncover it."

The pope became angry at this and said, "O foolish, hateful, senseless Talmudists! Since Daniel calculated the end, would it be right to say of him, 'May his spirit fail'? It truly seems that you and they are sinners and rebels." Don Todros answered, "My lord, if the Talmudists are so foolish in your eyes, why do you draw from them a proof that the Messiah has come? One does not take proofs from fools." The pope grew still angrier. Then Don Vidal spoke again: "It is not reasonable, my lord, to become angry about this, for these are disputations, and we were given permission for exchanges of this kind. It is true that we have another sin and stumble in our words; it was for such things that we said, 'Show us, Lord, your mercy.'" The pope answered, "Do not think to divert us with words. What do you answer to the saying, 'May the spirit fail'?" Don Vidal said, "This expression, 'those who calculate', denotes in the Hebrew language someone who thinks and someone who derives something through calculation. But a prophet, or one who speaks through the spirit of holiness, is not called a thinker or calculator, but a seer. Thus the prophet says, 'Where is the seer's house (ro'eh, רואה)?', because through his prophecy he saw true things."

The pope was appeased and said that we spoke truly, that our explanation seemed right to him and would satisfy a reasonable mind. We left that day, and returned to the disputation the next morning. But in our lodgings we had a great quarrel with Rabbi Mattathias and Rabbi Todros, who had not restrained their tongues. On our return we said to Jerome, "Since you bring us proofs from the Talmudists who say that the Messiah has come, why not take them from the last and foremost among them, Rav Ashi (רב אשי, "Master Ashi", a Talmudic teacher), who said, 'Until now, await him; thereafter, do not await him'? For this appears to show that he had not come at that time." Jerome answered, "I have already told you: no proof can be drawn from someone who does not believe that the Messiah has come, for he speaks according to his own opinion and faith. But the first saying is that of the prophet Elijah, and he uttered it as a prophet who knew the truth." The envoys rose and said to him, "My lord, answer us: was Rav Ashi intelligent or foolish, wicked or righteous?" Jerome answered, "There can be no question of that, for he was a great scholar and a pious man, as his sayings show." They said, "If so, how did he contradict the words of the prophet Elijah? We are therefore compelled to say one of two things: either that Elijah was not the prophet and erred in that opinion, or he was Elijah, and Rav Ashi

understood the intention of his saying and explained it as he did. For if he had been in doubt, he would have inclined towards upholding the prophet's words. Why should we claim to know more?"

Jerome answered, "Even if I grant you that this is the intention of that saying, what will you say about the second, concerning the reckoning of the jubilees, which has no interpretation other than the one I gave?" Joseph Albo answered, "Its intention is that the duration of the world will not be less than this, but may be longer. Someone who says, 'I will not give this for less than twenty' does not bind himself not to give it for forty or fifty. It may therefore be more, much more, and in the last jubilee the Messiah will come."

The cardinals said, "According to this, there is no appointed time for the Messiah?" Rabbi Mattathias answered, "That is no cause for surprise on our side, for according to your interpretation there is none either, since it says, 'And two thousand of the Messiah.'" During the discussions we saw that our words were being written down, and felt great fear. We thought that the intention was for the secretaries to falsify them; afterwards the pope would say, "This is what you said." We would be caught in our words and could not say that the secretary had falsified them, since he was very well known to the pope. We agreed henceforth to weigh our words and remain silent as far as possible. Yet we could not do so: the pope ordered us to answer Jerome on every point, and if we failed to answer we would be in great danger. We therefore decided that only one of us should speak. If the pope approved of his words, well and good; otherwise, we would say that we did not agree with him, that it was a mistake, and that our opinion was not his. That day the disputation ended.

Returning the next morning in fear and trembling, we heard Jerome begin by quoting Rabbi Yudan: "A verse says, 'Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one, and a shoot shall come out of the stock of Jesse.' This clearly shows what you cannot deny: the Messiah was born on the day of the destruction." The scholar Astruc answered, "Great men have already discussed this in a disputation between the master of Girona (Moses ben Nahman, known as Nahmanides) and Friar Paul. At the beginning Paul sought to argue that the Jews should be called Canaanites, because they had done the same deeds as those people and dwelt in their land; and that the Christians should be called Israelites, because they had taken their place." The pope said, "And what did the master answer?" He replied, "Whoever takes his brother's place should inherit his possessions. If the Christians have taken our place, why have they not inherited the true possessions: prophecy, fire from heaven, the Urim and Thummim (אורים ותומים, sacred objects used to consult God), and the like? Since we lost these

things, we have never found them in other hands. It therefore seems that the intention of the One who gave them was to keep them, to see whether we would return in repentance; then he will restore them to us as before."

The pope said, "Before whom was the disputation held?" They answered, "Before King Don Peter the Elder." He asked further, "And what did Friar Paul answer the master?" They said, "He was silent." The pope said, "That king was pious but not learned, and Friar Paul, by failing to answer, did not show that he knew. He could have said that we have no need of those things since our Saviour came, promised us the salvation of souls, and became man to redeem the souls of our forefathers. Be that as it may, this does not answer the proposed saying, that the Messiah has already been born."

Don Vidal said, "The master explained that the intention was not that he had actually been born; and even if one granted that he was actually born, there is no contradiction: he may have been born that day and be living in paradise. Rabbi Moses of Egypt, Maimonides, wrote that the Messiah was not born on the day of the destruction; rather, the meaning was that from that day onwards, in every generation, a man fit to be Messiah is born, if Israel is worthy. I say that all this was intended to awaken hearts to repentance, and to explain that the coming of the Messiah does not depend on a fixed time, as was the case in the Babylonian captivity. Don Hasdai explained it in the same way." The pope answered angrily, "When you come before me, you should not tell me what your interpreters said, but what you yourselves say. What concern have I with the explanations of the ancients? It is idle to say that he was born and has not come. If the matter depends upon the Jews' merit, why was he born? It could have been delayed, and he could have been born on the day they became worthy."

The envoys said, "If they were worthy and the Messiah were born today, could a day-old infant govern them? At eighty years old Moses needed divine help, his brother, and seventy elders." The pope said, "But they numbered more than six hundred thousand." They answered, "Where there is understanding, there is no need of a judge: a man's understanding is his judge. According to the Talmudists, the people of that generation were wise, and we are gnats beside them. Each of us needs ten judges, so weak is our understanding." The pope said, "I grant you that: each of you needs a king and a judge. But let us return to the matter."

A Roman then rose and said, "Lord pope, there are ambiguous terms; Jews and Christians agree on this. To say 'he was born' is ambiguous, as in the verse, 'Before the mountains were created, or born.' The word can denote something conceived in thought. Moreover, when it says, 'It shall fall by a mighty one', followed by 'A shoot shall come out', this need not be immediate: it may happen after a long time. Scripture intended to console them for the destruction of the holy house and tell them that they would return to their former condition. If this is the interpretation of the verse, who authorised the assertion that he would come at once? Rather, it seems that, in view of the Messiah's dignity, his coming was conceived in thought. The Talmudists likewise said that seven things preceded the world, one of them being the name of the Messiah. They spoke of creation when the world did not yet exist: it means that he had been conceived in thought, because the purpose of Creation required the whole world to come to believe in one God. It is thus said that on the day of the destruction the creation of the Messiah was conceived in the divine mind; but the Jews were not worthy of his coming at once. Captivity was still needed on account of earlier sins, and to put an end to rebellion and sin."

That day the disputation ended. We returned the next morning and said to Jerome, "The Aramaic text says, 'He was born' (itlid, אתיליד). Yet in the verse we find nolad (נולד), meaning 'he will be born', as in the verse, 'Behold, a son shall be born to the son of David.' This happened more than five hundred years later." Jerome said, "The word nolad does not by itself indicate the time: it means either 'he will be born' or 'he was born'." We all answered, "That supports what we said: he will be born. Your interpretation therefore has no force, and everything you built is undone." Jerome tried again to rearrange his earlier arguments, but could not, and was greatly ashamed. He dwelt at length on other proofs; everyone understood that he was trying to give colour to his error. Seeing ourselves victorious, we said, "It would be good to withdraw with honour." We bribed certain lords to speak to the pope, and many cardinals to persuade Jerome to abandon the disputations. We failed: the pope said that even against his will Jerome must demonstrate what he had promised.

The next morning the pope said, "You Jews say unreasonable things. Can an intelligent man say that the Messiah was born and has lived in paradise for many years? How can he have been alive for fourteen hundred years?" They said to him, "Friar Paul already raised this objection. The master answered him that Adam lived a thousand years. If it is possible to live a thousand years, it is possible to live much longer; one cannot deny it on the grounds that one has not seen it. According to received tradition, Enoch and Elijah are still alive in paradise." The pope said, "That is answering

one difficulty with another, for this too is difficult." Rabbi Astruc said, "Lord pope, since you believe so many extraordinary things about your Messiah, allow us to believe one about ours." The pope was greatly stirred by this, and we were distressed, fearing his anger. We said, "My lord, our companion has not spoken well, and we do not agree with him. He said it in jest, not because it was fitting." We returned to our opening words: "Show us, Lord, your mercy." We went home and cried out against Rabbi Astruc: "You will be responsible for all our troubles: you have put a sword into our enemies' hands. This is not what we agreed, when we decided not to speak in this way. Our affairs were going well with the pope, and he helped us more than Jerome. Now that he is angry, who will protect us except divine mercy? We must not rely on miracles when our merit is so doubtful."

That day we left the place humiliated and ashamed. The next morning we returned in great fear. God showed mercy: we found the pope in good spirits. Jerome resumed, "If you believe that the Messiah was actually born, I shall show you that he has already been revealed." The envoys said, "We do not believe that he was actually born; we merely say that the author of that saying may have understood it in this way." The pope answered, "Jerome, from where do you derive the proof that he has already been born and revealed?" He said, "My lord, from what they say in their Talmud. Samuel said, 'How is it proved that the Messiah was born on the day the holy house was destroyed? From the verse, Before she was in labour, she gave birth.' The Targum (תרגום, Aramaic translation) explains, 'Before distress comes you shall be redeemed; before the upheaval of destruction comes, the Messiah shall be revealed.'" The envoys answered, "Jonathan's translation is not part of that saying: Samuel's statement and the Targum are two separate texts. He meant that when the Messiah comes, he will come suddenly, like a woman giving birth suddenly, as the verse says, 'Before she was in labour, she gave birth.' Jonathan did not intend to say what Samuel said; he intended to show that when the Messiah comes, he will come suddenly. Our sages already disclosed this when they said, 'Three things come unexpectedly.'" The pope said, "It is enough for me that you say the Messiah has already been born."

We replied, "God forbid! We say that Samuel, who uttered this, erred in that opinion and understood it in this way. The Targum, written through the spirit of holiness, does not say what Samuel said; it explains the verse by saying, 'When the Messiah comes, he will come suddenly.' Our belief, and that of every Jew, is that if a man comes to gather Israel's dispersed people and build the holy house, and all peoples assemble around him and all call upon the name of God, then we shall say: this is our

Messiah. Any saying that appears to show the contrary has its interpretation. Moreover, the one quoted by Jerome says that at his coming the Sanctuary will be built. What holy house was built in Jesus's time?"

Jerome could not answer this. He spoke of other things and dwelt upon them. The disputation ceased for some days, until the fifteenth of February, when the pope sent for us. When we appeared before him, he returned to Samuel's saying, repeated by Jerome, that "the Messiah was born". He declared, "Tonight I thought about the way you lead us astray with words. You say that nolad is an ambiguous term and that its interpretation is 'he will be born' or 'he was born'. Be that as it may, the fact is that Jesus was born before the destruction: he was born in the year 3671 of the world, and the destruction of the Temple took place in 3828. He was therefore born a hundred and fifty-seven years before the destruction."

Don Vidal said, "My lord, we take it as established in the Talmud that, even if several interpretations are given of a verse, none may contradict its plain meaning. If a Talmudic scholar turns it from that meaning, we say that this is by way of allegory and has a secret sense. We do not give credence to such an interpretation if it contradicts the plain meaning. Jerome, who understands the Talmud, cannot deny it. Therefore, my lord, take the Bible before you, and you will see that these verses do not speak of your Messiah at all. The words 'Before she was in labour, she gave birth' concern Jerusalem, as the following words show: 'Shall the earth be in labour in one day?', and then, 'Rejoice with Jerusalem.'

"If this concerned your Messiah, what would be astonishing about it? It says, 'Who has seen such a thing?' Is it a marvel that one man should be born in one day? Still less one whom you say is part of God or his son? Especially since it goes on to say, 'Shall a nation be born all at once? For as soon as Zion was in labour, she gave birth to her children.' What has the birth of a nation to do with that of the Messiah? The text speaks of the future, of the time when our exiles will suddenly be gathered by divine power. Then we shall say, 'Who has heard such a thing?' How can it also say, 'In Jerusalem you shall be comforted', when it was destroyed after his birth?" Jerome said at this, "Since you deny what the Talmud says, I shall argue against you from Scripture, which you cannot deny. It is written in the Law, 'The sceptre shall not be taken from Judah, nor the scribe from between his feet, until Shiloh comes.' The Aramaic interpretation says, 'Until the Messiah comes.' Now you have neither sceptre nor scribe: how can it say that it shall not be taken away?"

Rabbi Astruc answered, "We said at the outset that a verse admitting different interpretations cannot establish an opinion or a belief. You, Jerome, know Ibn Ezra's interpretations and those of the ancients. We too, if you wish, will give two. The first is that the intention was: the sceptre shall not be taken from Judah for ever; sometimes it will belong to Judah, and sometimes it will cease to belong to Judah. This alternation will continue until the Messiah comes: when the one we await comes, the sceptre will no longer be taken from Judah. The second is that we find upon the word 'until' an accent, the yetiv (יתיב, a cantillation accent marking a separation). Its interpretation is that the sceptre shall not be taken from Judah for ever, because Shiloh, who is the Messiah, will restore the sceptre to Judah."

Jerome answered, "We are not bound to believe in the accents, since the Law was not given with them." Don Vidal said, "You believe what serves your intention, and do not believe what does not suit you. I shall give yet another interpretation. This word 'until' is like the expression, 'I shall not abandon you until I have done.' The intention is not that he will abandon him after doing what he says; it is a manner of speaking, as when a king says to one of his servants: 'I shall not abandon you until I have raised you to a great position.' His intention is not to abandon him afterwards. Thus the text says: no authority or dominion belonging to the Jews shall be taken away until Shiloh comes, towards whom the peoples shall gather." Jerome said, "Why should I believe your interpretations rather than the one given by Moses the Darshan (darshan, דרשן, preacher), whom Rashi, a great interpreter who learnt from him, quotes? He says, 'The sceptre shall not be taken from Judah', meaning the sanhedrins (judicial councils) that existed then." The envoys said, "We still do not see what proof follows from this interpretation. Moreover, Rabbi Moses the Darshan was a preacher, not a Talmudist; and the saying is not worded that way; Jacob spoke to his sons as follows..."

This is as far as I found the account written; I did not find its ending in writing. I heard by tradition that the envoys emerged with great honour, although they and the congregations awaiting their deliverance suffered afflictions.

Historical Commentary

The controversy is directly documented

The notarial acts place the opening at Tortosa on 7 February 1413, under Benedict XIII and in the first year of Ferdinand of Aragon's reign. They identify Jerome of Santa Fe as the pope's physician and the man appointed to present the case to the rabbis. The old Hispano-Aragonese version preserves his opening based on Isaiah 1:18–20, as does Ibn Verga. In Session VII it names Bonastruch Desmestre, a Jew of Girona, who refuses to answer a rabbinic authority until Jerome produces its text. Thus the setting, participants and several arguments have specific independent confirmation. The acts nevertheless present replies and silences from their own standpoint; they do not establish that Ibn Verga's letter is a verbatim transcript. The last documented sessions take place at Sant Mateu: on 12 and 13 November 1414 the court publishes a sentence and provisions against the Talmud and the Jews. Ibn Verga's short ending, received orally, therefore does not describe the whole outcome. [S156 ; S157]

Dates and dialogues do not coincide exactly

The first of January is the arrival date in the letter as Ibn Verga transmits it; it must not replace the documented 7 February opening. Likewise, the liturgical reference to Zakhor in Hebrew, followed later by a return to 15 February, does not provide an easily verifiable continuous chronology. The account condenses and arranges the exchanges in its own narrative order. One comparison is especially useful: Acts VII.2–3 do discuss birth "in potential" as distinct from actual birth, followed by Judah's sceptre, but attribute these replies to Rabbi Ferrer. This correspondence confirms the subjects debated; it does not automatically verify their allocation to Vidal, Astruc and the other speakers in the letter. [S157 ; E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Barcelona and the actual source passages

Nahmanides' account places his debate with Friar Paul at Barcelona. It already discusses Genesis 49:10, the distinction between being born and having come, and the story of the ploughman told by an Arab that the Messiah has been born. These correspondences identify the 1263 debate under James I: "Peter the Elder" in the present account is a historical discrepancy retained in translation. Jerusalem Talmud, Berakhot 2:4, contains the ploughman's story and links Isaiah 10:34 with 11:1. Sanhedrin 97a–97b supplies the six thousand years, eighty-five jubilees, calculations of the end and three unexpected events. This check recovers the texts debated without assuming that every quotation is accurate: Ibn Verga reverses the

statement attributed to Rav Ashi. The remarks attributed to Maimonides and Hasdai have not here been traced to a sufficiently precise original passage to certify their attribution. [S158 ; S159 ; S160 ; S161]

Bonastruc of Girona and the communities summoned

The critical edition's apparatus places the narrator within a documentary network. It records Bonastruc dez Maestre and his father Isaac on the council of the aljama (organised Jewish community) of Girona in 1391, and a summons expressly requesting his presence because of his learning. The representatives of Girona receive from their bishop an invitation for 15 January 1413. That date of convocation differs from the actual opening on 7 February. Verga's list then brings representatives from Zaragoza, Calatayud, Huesca, Alcañiz, Daroca, and other communities: the debate therefore involves several delegations and their spokesmen, rather than a single academy. Jerome's position as papal physician and his appointment to conduct the demonstration are expressly stated in the acts. These documents clarify how the participants were assembled and under whose authority their discussion took place. [S156 ; S157 ; S161]

Isaiah: the prophetic text and its rabbinic interpretation

Several passages from Isaiah function in different ways. Isaiah 1:18–20, used in the official opening, offers discussion and forgiveness, and the alternatives of obedience and the sword; it supplies the framework for the speaker's exhortation. The juxtaposition of Isaiah 10:34 and 11:1 is different. The first passage concludes a description of the Assyrian advance and the felling of great trees; the second announces a shoot from Jesse's stump. In Berakhot 2:4, these successive verses connect the destruction of the Temple with the Messiah's birth as announced to the ploughman. A specific rabbinic episode constructed by joining verses can thus be identified, without mistaking the ploughman for a character in Isaiah. Finally, Isaiah 66:7–13 names Zion, her children, and Jerusalem: the childbirth imagery accompanies the restoration of a population and its city. This collective setting must be considered when the debate applies the passage to an individual birth. [S163 ; S157 ; S159]

Judah's sceptre and the authority of the exilarchs

Genesis 49:10 belongs to Jacob's words to his sons, specifically those concerning Judah. Rashi's commentary already connects the sceptre with the heads of the Exile in Babylonia and the lawgiver's function with teachers of the Law in the land of Israel; it also interprets Shiloh as a messianic designation. Verga's discussion of continuing Jewish authority after the end of kingship therefore has an identifiable exegetical antecedent. Account 42 supplements this dossier with a description of exilarchal ceremonial. Another example in the present debate is more explicit in the Bible than in its summary: 1 Kings 13:1–3 names Josi-

ah and the house of David in an announcement made before the altar at Bethel under Jeroboam. It is this particular episode that is used to discuss the wording of a future birth, rather than an allusion without an identifiable character. [S164 ; S165 ; S162]

Eleazar ben Azariah in the Haggadah

Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah holding an open book, Rylands Sephardi Haggadah, Catalonia, 1335–1340, fol. 22v. The image witnesses the place of rabbinic sayings in a medieval ritual book, alongside the debate over their interpretation in Account 40. [provenance]

Translation Choices

Girona, the year 5173, and the delegates' names

Spanish has "Verona, 5113"; Hebrew 1928 gives Girona and 173 in the abbreviated reckoning, hence 5173, and Wiener prints 1413. The acts actually name Bonastruch Desmestre of Girona: the correction therefore rests on both comparison and an independent source. Calatayud replaces Cataluña, Monreal replaces Mondiel, and Alcañiz replaces Málaga, following Hebrew, Wiener and the critical edition's geographical identification. Belchite is the identification proposed in 2021 for a place variously given as Illescas, Vileisit or Viljazot; it remains less certain. Nasi (נשיא, communal dignitary) is Samuel's title, not another delegate. Todros's patronymic ben Yahya, absent in Spanish, is retained from Hebrew and German. "Rabbi Astruc" replaces Spanish "David Astroc": the other versions have a title, and no separate David is introduced in the scene. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S157 ; S161]

The salutation and the name-play omitted in Spanish

Hebrew and Wiener add after Jerome's name: "Its initials form megaddef (מגדף, 'blasphemer' or 'defamer')." This is polemical wordplay on Maestre Gerónimo de [santa] Fe, not another civil name. The longer address reads: "Noble children of Israel, men of Judah, who possess within your houses and walls a name and a place; there the Lord's gracious deeds are proclaimed, there stand the seats of Torah and testimony, the seat of the Talmud, where men have dwelt since ancient times: may your hearts live for ever! What you have always known, know again today..." The running translation retains the shorter Spanish address; this note supplies the full additional passage. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The papal welcome and the blessing

The earlier revision necessarily placed election in the past. The grammatical attachment is less certain: Spanish describes the One who chooses as "who has always been"; Wiener likewise attaches ancient times to the Chooser. The translation follows that construction; another possible reading is "a people formerly chosen, though now rejected". For the delegates' protection, Hebrew and Wiener have "no injury or injustice", more precise than the Spanish "punishment". In the hall they add that the prelates are "all clothed in garments of gold"; Spanish omits this detail. The blessing is supplied in full from the two longer versions, replacing Spanish "etc.": "Blessed be he who has granted mortals a share of his glory!" These are the chronicler's reported words, without outside liturgical correction. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Making the debate's terminology intelligible

Apikoros (אפיקורוס) means "heretic" here, without identifying the philosophical school of Epicurus. Qabbalah (קבלה) means "received tradition", not necessarily mysticism. The "Philosopher" is Aristotle; his "accidents" are the circumstances or attributes distinct from a

thing's nature. "Some of those years have already passed" clarifies the elliptical Hebrew formula which Spanish reproduces literally; Wiener also makes its antecedent explicit but adds "a large part", which Hebrew does not require. The "two ends" are two possible appointed times, not two destructions of the world. The language of thought concerns the prior conception of the Messiah's coming, not his already completed physical creation. In Jerome's argument, Hebrew and Wiener have Elijah's disciples transmit his statement; Spanish shortens this chain of transmission to the Talmudists. The disciples are restored because the next reply specifically discusses the time in which they lived. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S158]

Two millennia and the sequence of proofs

Spanish abbreviates the intermediate condition; Hebrew and Wiener give it fully: "If they are not worthy at the beginning but become worthy in the middle, he will come in the middle." That condition is restored. "In the seventh millennium" follows Hebrew and German, where Spanish has "in the year seven thousand". Later, Spanish and Hebrew make Jerome say: "This is not the saying on which I based my proof." Wiener softens the denial to "not the only saying". We retain the denial found in the other two versions; it differs from Jerome's earlier reply, which expressly said "not only". These stages of the exchange must not be conflated. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The jesting names and fear of death

After "who could it be?", Hebrew continues: "Mateo the fool, or Maresti the simpleton?" The pope later repeats: "Was it Mato, or Pico?" Wiener gives related forms, Matthäus, Maresti and Pico. Spanish omits these names; no particular historical person can safely be identified from the examples. Another difference concerns refusing to answer: where Spanish says the delegates would face great danger, Hebrew and German expressly say, "If we did not answer, we would have to die." This expresses the narrators' fear, rather than quoting a death sentence recovered in the acts. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S157]

A saying of Rav Ashi reversed in the account

Spanish, Hebrew and Wiener agree: "Until now, await him; thereafter, do not await him." The Aramaic text of Sanhedrin 97b says the reverse: "Until that point, do not await him; from then onwards, await him" (מכאן ואילך איסתכי ליה, עד הכא לא תיסתכי ליה). The translation preserves the account's quotation, because correcting it would give its speakers a different argument. The discrepancy is therefore explicitly identified and must not be attributed to the French or English translation. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S158]

Yudan's quotation and examples of birth

Spanish could suggest that Jerome addressed a Rabbi Yodan present in the room. Hebrew and Wiener introduce an ancient quotation: "It happened to a man..., as far as the words: the Messiah was born. Rabbi Yudan said: A verse states..." The ellipsis is already in the quoted text, so the complete underlying tale has not been inserted into the narrative. Later

the Roman cites two additional examples omitted in Spanish: “what a day may bring forth” (Proverbs 27:1) and “he conceives trouble and gives birth to evil” (Job 15:35). Linking these expressions is part of his argument. Hebrew and German also describe exile as a “purifying ordeal”, where Spanish merely says it remained necessary. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S159]

Five hundred, one thousand and fourteen hundred years

The verse quoted over nolad (נולד, “is born” or, according to context, “is to be born”) has “son of David” in Spanish, but “son of Jesse” in Hebrew and Wiener; 1 Kings 13:2 has “house of David”. The Spanish wording remains as the character’s quotation. The interval is “more than five hundred years” in Spanish, “five hundred” in Wiener, and “five hundred (four hundred)” in Hebrew 1928. For the Messiah’s longevity, Spanish has “four thousand years”, against fourteen hundred in Hebrew and German. The latter reading is adopted because it fits the medieval setting. By contrast, the thousand years attributed to Adam are shared by Spanish and Hebrew; Wiener qualifies this as “nearly a thousand”. Genesis 5:5 gives nine hundred and thirty years. The account’s rounded figure remains visible. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S162]

The Zakhor session and Astruc’s apology

Spanish simply begins “the next morning”. The more detailed version reads: “On the morning of the reading of Zakhor (זכור, ‘remember’, the reading of Deuteronomy 25:17–19), the pope said…” This is recorded here without imposing a civil date on an already difficult chronology. After Astruc’s reply, Hebrew and Wiener add to the apology: “for the pope is not one of our own number, with whom we speak familiarly”. Spanish omits this explanation and has acaso; “in jest” is adopted from the other two versions because it explains the apology being offered. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Targum, manifestation and the chronology of Jesus

The “upheaval of destruction” follows Aramaic זווע חרבנא, closer to agitation or terror than to a material instrument; Wiener renders it as a destructive storm. Birth, coming and manifestation remain distinct because the argument depends on their differences. The final belief is “our belief” in Spanish; Hebrew אמונתו can be read as “his belief”, which Wiener attaches to the translator Jonathan. Both readings then associate that belief with every Jew’s. Finally, the years 3671 and 3828 and their difference of 157 years are retained from Spanish and Hebrew. Wiener shortens the result to “over a hundred and fifty years”. This is the chronology attributed to the speaker, not a historical dating endorsed by this edition. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Plain meaning and the Sanhedrin: the longer passages

Before the interpretation of Isaiah 66, Hebrew and Wiener add this rule, abbreviated in Spanish: “A verse never departs from its plain meaning.” At the end, the argument omitted in Spanish reads: “‘The sceptre shall not depart from Judah’ denotes the Hall of Hewn Stone, situated in Judah’s allotted portion. The ‘sceptre’ denotes the Sanhedrin; when the Sanhedrin disappeared, Judah’s sceptre therefore disappeared, that is, the Sanhedrin which sat there.” The final reply introduces “Thus Jacob spoke to his sons…”, but the continuation is not transmitted. Hebrew 1928 expressly says: “This is as far as I found written; I did not find its ending in writing.” Wiener and Spanish have only “this is as far as I found written”. The explicit indication of a gap is retained: it belongs to the transmitter and does not identify a passage left untranslated by us. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 142–166 ; H1928, section 40 ; G1856, p. 134–158.

Account XLI

Accusations Examined Before the Pope

The forty-first account takes place in the time of Pope Mark the Florentine. Friar Peter came before him and said, "My lord, I wish to ask a question: does one who is hated by God and who hates God deserve to be loved by an intelligent man, still less a holy man?" The pope said, "For either reason he deserves to be hated; all the more for both." Friar Peter said, "How then, my lord, do you love the Jews?" He answered, "Where is the proof that I love them?" He said, "They live in the land, eat its fruits, trade in it and benefit from it." The pope said, "And where is it proved that they hate God? How can this be, since they endure so long and bitter a captivity to follow the Law he commanded them to keep? Have you ever seen a nation loving God that would not grow weary of such captivity and come to hate its Law after a thousand years and more? As for your claim that God hates them, I see that in their captivity he allows no one to harm them with the intention of exterminating them altogether. I have never seen such a design succeed. Many may rise like you to injure them and bring accusations against them before kings and counsellors, but it profits them nothing."

Friar Peter answered, "Such a design does not succeed because our Saviour commanded that they should not be touched. This has its interpretation, which is not what the common people imagine." The pope said, "What will you say of the time before our Saviour was born? And of places where knowledge of him has not spread? We find this people scattered through countless lands. I have read in the chronicles of kings that they were dispersed throughout various eastern kingdoms, Spain, Germany, France and Africa, Ethiopia, certain regions of Asia and Persia. All rose against them to exterminate them and put an end to their Law, without succeeding. In Media a certain mighty man called Haman arose; he was shrewd and sought to harm them. All he gained was to be hanged with his sons."

Friar Peter answered, "That Haman of whom you speak, my lord, was not hanged for what he did to the Jews, but because he desired the queen." The pope said, "Can you still not leave behind these lies in which you were brought up when you were a Jew? Is it possible that a man against whom the king and queen were angry could have such a thought at midday, before the king's servants? If you wish to speak with

me, you must refrain from idle things." He answered, "It is true, my lord, that we have no power to destroy them, and I acknowledge it; but we may certainly chastise them, since they are hated. The anguish they suffer every day bears witness to this."

The pope said, "No proof can be drawn from that. It is well known that we are composed of four elements, and that the nature of the simple elements is found in composite beings. We find that each element, when it prevails, seeks to destroy the other and turn it into its own nature: thus fire burns everything unless it is taken away; water prevails over earth and breaks it down; air absorbs water. Likewise, among animals, birds and fish, the strongest devours its fellow. So it is among peoples: the strongest seeks to assimilate the rest to itself. If it were in my power that there should be no king in the world but me, I would use all my power to achieve it. The evils the Jews suffer arise from the ascendancy we have over them."

Friar Peter said, "Why should we not say that they were caused by their sins?" The pope answered, "Both things caused them. Finally, I tell you not to envy someone who has never been afflicted: he has not paid for his sin, and it is quite possible that his end will be bad. Rather, envy the man who has experienced the evils and anguish that will bring him rest at the end, for a man's end is peace." Friar Peter said, "How can you, my lord, tolerate a people who defame us, say that it is right to kill us, insult our dead and say, 'The best among the gentiles must be killed' (tov she-ba-goyim har-og, טוב שבגוים הרוג)? And again: 'Your mother has been put to shame, she who bore you has been confounded; behold the end of the gentiles, etc.' There can be no greater insult."

The pope said, "As for what you quote, 'The best among the gentiles must be killed', I have already heard the Jews' interpretation. As for the words, 'Your mother has been put to shame', I have not. Since we have come to discuss it, it is good to know the truth. Two envoys came here yesterday to speak to me: let them be summoned, and we shall hear their answer." They were called. One was Don Samuel Abrabalia, the other Don Solomon the Levite. The pope said to them, "Is it possible that your Talmud contains the words, 'The best among the gentiles must be killed'?"

They answered, "It does, my lord. But we have received from our elders that everything that is a legal ruling or an interpretation of a verse comes from Ravina and Rav Ashi, who compiled the Talmud. The rest was written by certain classes of interpreters; to give them authority, their words were included in the Talmud. We, who have received what we have just explained, do not concern ourselves with those things." The pope said, "After all, it is in the Talmud. Anyone who says what you say

must produce an authority to confirm it or establish it by proof. Therefore give its interpretation: as it appears, these are harsh-sounding words for which the Jews of my kingdom deserve chastisement." Solomon the Levite answered, "The ancients explained that in this matter your judgements are contrary to ours. Some of our people say that if they had lived in the time of our judges, they would never have had anyone judicially put to death: perhaps the murder victim had a fatal injury (ṭerefah, טרפה). The murderer would then have killed someone regarded as already dead, and the Law does not command his execution in such a case. But the nations of the world, seeing that in the course of time murderers would multiply if such refinements were insisted upon, put people to death even on circumstantial grounds, to deter the people from committing crimes. The authors therefore meant: what is good among the gentiles is justice, namely the judgement of death. The text does not say, 'Kill the good man among the Christians', but 'to kill', which is an infinitive. Another interpretation is this: the best, the most distinguished among the gentiles cares so much about honour and justice that he immediately orders, 'Put so-and-so to death, for he has done this.'"

The pope said, "If the Talmudists' opinion is that a murderer should not be put to death because his victim may have had a fatal injury, they are surely all mistaken and not wise. Is there a worse opinion than letting a murderer escape on so slight an excuse?" Rabbi Solomon answered, "My lord, the verse says, 'You alone have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I shall punish you.' Anyone who escapes the justice below does not escape the justice above. We hold by tradition that every death imposed by earthly justice atones for sins. Someone who escapes earthly judgement does so to his own harm, since he does not escape divine punishment, which is more bitter than death." The pope answered, "You are right; but earthly judgement is always necessary to instil fear in the people."

Peter said, "My lord, how were you appeased by false arguments? It says further on, 'The best among slaughterers is Amalek's companion.' This appears to be said in blame, not praise; the same applies to the rest: 'The best among the nations, etc.'" The Levite answered, "The phrase 'The best among slaughterers is Amalek's companion' means that he is cruel as Amalek was towards the Jews: otherwise he would never kill an animal. And 'The best among physicians, to hell' means that hell should always lie open before them if they kill someone dependent upon their medicine; they should therefore study and do all they can. What makes them 'the best' is the thought that hell awaits them unless they give their reasoning and study all the care required."

The pope said, "What will you answer us about the words 'Your mother has been put to shame'?" Solomon answered, "My lord, we are surprised at Peter, who asks this although he was one of us and knows it. But he is certainly looking for ways to bring about our downfall, so that you, my lord, will understand that he believes what he professes to follow. 'Your mother has been put to shame' is a saying for all who are born, whether Jew or Christian. It is a rebuke: the mothers of the dead laboured to raise their children, and the end of their labour was wilderness and dryness. The intention is that, as regards the body, nothing is everlasting: all is vanity and dust. As for the soul, according to its deeds, no one denies that it has ascended to paradise. Thus our master Moses of Egypt, Maimonides, wrote that the righteous among the nations of the world have a share in the world to come ('olam ha-ba, עולם הבא). A sage debating with the king of the Khazars, of happy memory, said that we do not exclude any man or nation from the reward for their deeds when they are good. How could we have been commanded to say 'Your mother has been put to shame', except in the sense we have explained?"

The pope answered, "You say, 'Behold the end of the nations.' When you speak of the nations, you mean us." Samuel answered, "No, my lord: Isaiah says of Israel, 'O sinful nation.'" Friar Peter began speaking against the Jews again. The pope said, "There is no proof to be drawn from their being persecuted: God chose for offerings only the persecuted, such as turtledoves and young pigeons, not the hawk, raven or eagle." Peter answered, "He chose things that are always available, as he did with the four plants (of Sukkot, the Feast of Booths) found in the Jews' land." The pope said, "Would he not have chosen the hen, which is always found in houses? He did not, because it snatches its prey." The friar said, "Let us leave this for something more important: why do you not order, my lord, that the books containing the words 'Your mother has been put to shame' be burnt?" The pope then ordered his servants to close the courtyard windows. They were closed, and he told the friar to look from the doorway and see whether the sun was shining in the street. The servants said, "Everything is full of sunlight." The pope said, "If so, what use is it for me to burn the books in my kingdom, when the world is full of them?"

The friar left. The pope said to the envoys, "O foolish people, why do you not seek to win men's goodwill? Do you not see the reed bend when the wind grows stronger? Through its humility it is not broken and returns to its former state. Likewise, anyone who goes to sea lives if he bends before the waves; if he seeks to withstand them he drowns. This is what your Talmud says: 'Let a man always be supple as the reed, not hard as the cedar.' The explanation is that the reed, by bowing down, rises again,

while the cedar opposes its hardness to the wind, which breaks it. Moreover, the Talmudists say that the Jews are called human beings, but the nations of the world are not. I shall bow before you if you tell me what humanity you possess beyond ours."

Solomon the Levite answered, "This is not said of humanity, but of exile and servitude. We stand in Adam's place: as he sinned and was expelled from paradise, so we too are expelled from our own Garden of Eden: our land, Jerusalem, and the Temple that was our glory."

The pope said, "The men of Arabia say that no mountain is so high and lofty that a man cannot subdue it beneath his feet, nor any abyss into which a leaden sounding weight cannot be cast. But penetrating a man's heart is granted only to God, who knows them all. As I understand it, this arises from the Talmudists' arrogance: they flattered you by saying, 'You are human beings, and the nations of the world are not.'" The envoy answered, "No, my lord: the saying is the prophet's: 'And you, my sheep, the sheep of my pasture, you are human beings.'"

The pope said, "Fool! Do you not see that you are speaking with a learned man who will not be deceived? The verse says, 'Though I call you sheep, do not think that I judge your sins like those of animals; for in truth you are human beings endowed with understanding. I called you sheep with regard to pasturing and governing you.' But who can pasture you? I heard that a certain king commanded you not to make images of the sun in your houses. You made them on the backs of the two leaves of the door, half on each, so that when the door was closed the image was whole. Then you knelt before it and offered it incense. When people came to investigate and opened the door, they found half the image and disregarded it when considering punishment. Another example is that great man Zechariah, whom you killed in the Sanctuary. With us, if we see a murderer who flees to our churches, he is saved... I have heard that you say in your houses of prayer: 'Let the man of good reputation and high distinction come forward.' Would it not be better to say, 'Let the captive, despised more than any people, come forward'? Then your hearts would be humbled. I picture you as a weak old man whose eyesight has darkened, whose hands have slackened, whose feet tremble and whose teeth have fallen out. If the grave had a mouth, it would cry out to call him to it, yet he thinks himself in the vigour of his years. How can you say 'the man of good reputation' or 'the exalted', after losing that reputation in amassing ill-gotten wealth through fraud and usury? Take care: you

gather riches little by little; perhaps they will be taken from you in a single stroke. See: I am one pope; if ten thousand men of the common people rise with swords, they will be ten thousand popes."

At these words they began to weep. He said to them, "You weep because my tongue is unrestrained, but you do not weep for your deeds, which are far more unrestrained." They answered, "We weep because, for an unhappy man, tears are the joy that brings him rest. This friar is one of ours; he casts our affairs in an evil light and has no pity on us. We are like a bird that a beast has bitten with its teeth, trampled with its feet and torn with its claws."

As they were speaking, the friar returned and heard what they said. He told them, "Come over to our Law, and you will be among those who trample others." They answered, "Are you certain that you will go to paradise?" He said, "So I think." They replied, "If that is so, we wish to go to hell rather than be with you in paradise." The friar grew angry, and the pope told him, "That is the reward of giving advice to someone who has not asked for it. But let us leave this: I ask you about what we were discussing. The Jews say, 'You are called human beings, and the nations of the world are not.' Is their nature nobler than ours, or their strength greater?"

The friar answered, "Is that the Talmudists' only absurdity? All their interpretations are full of things that reason and nature cannot accept. Recently I saw that they write that a candle should be placed on the floor of a house where someone has died. They say it means that when the soul wishes to return to the house, its way is lit. Does the soul, which is light itself, need the material light of a candle? Moreover, once it has departed, it does not return to the body. I also saw that when they return from burials, they pull up grass and earth, scatter them over their heads, and say this is to drive away the angel of death. According to nature, what property connects the one thing to the other?

"They also say that the dead person hears everything said about him until he is buried; yet it is clear that when the senses cease there is neither sight nor hearing. They further say that when their scholar Jonathan occupied himself with the Law, every bird flying past was burnt. If the element of fire itself cannot burn without being close to what is burnt, how could the scholar's speech turn to fire and burn what is far away?" The pope asked the envoys to answer. They did so, saying, "As to the first point, the friar's statement that the Talmud says to put a candle on the floor of the dead person's house must be a dream. It is rather an ancient custom, intended to remove people's belief in enchantments. It was said that an enemy wishing to tor-

ment the dead should place a candle on the floor of the dead person's house; that is why no candle was placed in the dead person's house. We, to distance ourselves from such an opinion, which was a practice of the Amorites, place a candle on the floor.

"As to the second point, we pull up grass and, in some places, lift up dust to offer consolation to mourners. This signifies the time of resurrection, of which the verse says, 'Awake and sing, dwellers in the dust.' It also says, 'They shall blossom from the city like the grass of the earth.' The second reason is to awaken hearts and break human pride. Lifting the dust means, 'You are dust, and to dust you shall return.' The grass refers to what the ancients say: 'The children of men are like the grass of the field: these blossom, those wither.'

"As to the third point, we have received that the soul does not return to its heavenly dwelling until the body has returned to the earth. Thus Solomon says, 'The body shall return to the earth, the spirit shall return, etc.' Since the spirit departs first and the body is buried afterwards, he should have said, 'The spirit returns to God', and then, 'The body, etc.' But he implied that the spirit does not return to its place until the body returns to the earth as it was. That is why the soul still knows what happens in this world, like someone sleeping and dreaming. This is why we say of the righteous, 'When so-and-so fell asleep', indicating that the death of the righteous is like sleep. As to the fourth point, where it says that every flying bird was burnt, it means that every mistaken opinion flying in the understanding was burnt when this scholar worked at the Law: in other words, he attained truth and drove away falsehood."

The pope said, "You have answered well. You, friar, since it is a long time since you came to our faith, have forgotten these things." The friar said, "How can I have forgotten them, when I read them in their books three days ago?" The pope answered, "That is what I wanted to hear. Why are you occupied with reading Jewish books, unless their Law still remains in your heart? If you did not bear the tonsure marking your religious status, I would have you burnt. But do not appear before me again."

He then said to the envoys, "What do you ask?" They answered, "Know, my lord, that the judges where we live have ordered us to return the interest from many years. To do so we would have to sell our children." The pope said, "I have already told you my opinion; but since you have come, you shall gain something from it: half shall be deducted. If it is ten years, you shall pay five." They answered, "That is good, my lord, if it is left to our oath." The pope said, "No doubt you will swear that it was four years, so as to pay two. Tell me, then: if you do not keep what God made you swear,

how will you keep what a Christian makes you swear?" Seeing that there was no remedy on this point, they made a second request: "We have a synagogue beside a Christian church. They built theirs afterwards: our building is older. The queen passed by and joked about this proximity. One of her counsellors said, 'Our lady queen, they have stood together for many years, like two sisters, and neither has spoken ill of the other.' The queen answered, 'Since that is so, let them remain together into old age.' Yet the judge has now ordered us to pull down our house."

The pope said, "Justice is on his side, and not at all on the queen's: it is not right for you to be beside our Saviour's door. Therefore pull down the house at once." The envoys answered, "If the queen commands it, we shall do so." The pope grew angry and ordered the cardinals, on pain of excommunication, to have it demolished; he also ordered them to return the interest as the judges decided.

Solomon said, "Let the envoys of our people, sent to the kings of the earth, take instruction from this. Let them weigh well what comes out of their mouths, and not imagine that they stand before their own scholar, whom they support: even if the bread they give him is bread from heaven, it remains mingled with sorrow. Our ancients say that excessive familiarity between the scholar and the common man causes the latter to lose his respect. I say that our familiarity with our judges and scholars caused these envoys to become overbold. Don Solomon the Levite's learning did not suffice to defend them, nor did his companion's prudence. The sage says that a man should accustom himself at home to doing what he must do outside it: if he grows used to base behaviour at home, he will act in the same way elsewhere. That is why our sages said, 'In a place where there are no men, strive to be a man.' As though they had said: where there are no men to see him, a man should still strive to be honourable, and there learn what he should do in the street. Above all, we should say that sins sometimes cause error, as the prophet says, 'He turns wise men backwards and makes their understanding foolish.' When, on the contrary, those who send the envoys have some merit, God inspires the envoys with what they should say. We do not pray in vain on Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement), 'Be in the mouths of the envoys of your people, etc.'"

Historical Commentary

An unidentified papal audience

The account supplies a name, “Mark the Florentine”, but no year or place for the audience. The sometimes proposed identification with Martin V remains a hypothesis: Maurice Kriegel specifically cautions against it. No record of the audience, ruling on the synagogue, or dossier securely identifying the two envoys has been found in the sources checked here. Their names are therefore retained without identifying Solomon ha-Levi with a better-known historical figure merely because the names resemble each other. The text is first of all evidence for the literary presentation of debates between a pope, a convert, and Jewish representatives. [S166 ; E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Restitution of interest: a documented setting

Canon 67 of Lateran IV, promulgated in 1215, orders Christians to suspend commercial dealings with Jewish lenders who exact interest described as heavy and excessive until the injury has been redressed. This Latin text places the demand for restitution within a documented institutional setting. It mentions neither this audience nor a reduction by half nor the four or forty years that vary between the versions. It consequently supplies neither a date for this account nor a solution to its numerical difficulty. [S167 ; E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The disputed expressions and their sources

Makkot 7a identifies the reasoning concerning a victim already suffering from a fatal injury. The Mishnah’s own debate is more nuanced than the chronicle’s summary: Rabbi Tarfon and Rabbi Akiva restrict capital punishment, while Rabban Shimon ben Gamaliel objects that this would multiply murderers. The expressions about physicians and butchers occur in Kiddushin 82a. For the expression about “the best among the gentiles”, Rashi on Exodus 14:7 quotes a form referring to Egyptians in the setting of the army pursuing the Israelites. This parallel does not establish the dialogue’s ingenious explanations as the undisputed meaning of a general rule. Yevamot 61a places the expression “you are called adam” in a discussion of corpse impurity; its explanation through Adam’s exile belongs here to the envoy’s literary reply. [S094 ; S168 ; S169 ; S173]

Verifiable references: Jeremiah, Maimonides, and Judah ha-Levi

The words about the mother put to shame come from Jeremiah 50:12; the oracle concerns Babylon, named at 50:1. The dialogue reinterprets them as a funerary reflection applicable to every human being. The Maimonides reference corresponds to Mishneh Torah, Kings and Wars 8:11, which discusses the pious of the nations in the framework of the seven Noahide commandments. The statement attributed to the sage debating with the Khazar

king occurs in Kuzari I, § 111: this is the dialogue composed by Judah ha-Levi, rather than an independent report of a historical audience. These sources identify the borrowings and their contexts without proving that the speakers actually met. [S170 ; S171 ; S172]

Accounts and customs: what can be traced

The comparison of the reed and the cedar appears in Taʿanit 20b. Eikhah Rabbah, on Lamentations 1:18, associates Josiah with a story of idolatry concealed from visitors when doors are opened; Ibn Verga develops the motif by describing two halves of a solar image. It is the king conducting this search for idols, left unnamed by Verga, whom the parallel connects with Josiah. The other episode, the murder of Zechariah son of Jehoiada, is narrated in 2 Chronicles 24:20–22 under Joash: the two kings and the two scenes must be distinguished. Shabbat 152b discusses what the dead know until the grave is closed or the body decomposes; Bava Batra 134a describes a bird being burned when Jonathan ben Uzziel studies. The chronicle supplies its own allegorical interpretations. Its particular explanation of the candle as a rejection of a magical practice has not been traced here to a sufficiently precise independent source. [S174 ; S175 ; S176 ; S177]

Haman before Esther: the biblical account

The dispute over Haman's death refers to a specific scene, Esther 7:1–10. Esther denounces the plan directed against herself and her people; the king leaves, while Haman stays to beg the queen for his life. When the king returns, Haman's position on the couch where she reclines is interpreted as an attempted assault upon her. The biblical narrator thus distinguishes the reason for the supplication from the accusation voiced by the king: it is this distinction that the pope and the friar debate. The death of Haman's sons belongs to a later sequence, Esther 9:6–14: they are first counted among those killed at Susa, and their bodies are then publicly displayed on the king's orders at Esther's request. The summary phrase "with his sons" therefore brings together events which the Book of Esther narrates separately. [S179]

Pharaoh's horses: a reading of two Exodus episodes

Understanding the formula quoted by Rashi requires following his textual argument. Exodus 14:5–9 describes the Egyptian chariots pursuing Israel. Rashi asks where their teams of animals came from after the plagues had struck the livestock. He links them to the Egyptians who, in Exodus 9:20, had taken the warning seriously and sheltered their animals before the hail. It is concerning these presumed participants in the pursuit that he reports a saying of Rabbi Shimon transmitted by the Mekhilta. The precise combination of two biblical episodes behind the polemic can thus be identified. The judicial explanation proposed by Solomon in the dialogue, based on the punishment of homicide, follows a different line; it does not reproduce Rashi's commentary. [S168 ; S180]

Ezekiel's pastoral image and Adam's exile

The statement about sheep and human beings concludes Ezekiel 34. The chapter contrasts shepherds who neglect the flock with the care God promises to provide: seeking the scattered, gathering them, and bringing them to their own land. Verse 31 expressly identifies the members of the flock as human beings. This pastoral framework illuminates the quotation used by the pope and the envoys; the discussion of corpse impurity in Yevamot 61a is another use of these words. Likewise, the reply comparing collective exile with Adam's expulsion draws its image from Genesis 3:22–24, where the human being is removed from the garden of Eden. The comparison is made by Verga's character: Genesis is not at this point narrating the later dispersion of Jewish communities. [S181 ; S182 ; S173]

A Transaction in the Vidal Mayor

A Christian and a Jew at the sale of a golden goblet, initial in the Vidal Mayor, c. 1290–1310. Getty, Ms. Ludwig XIV 6, fol. 180r. This sale scene accompanies the discussion of economic relations and lending in Account 41. [provenance]

Translation Choices

An expression whose grammar is itself disputed

The Spanish has “el bueno de entre los gentios matarlo”; the Hebrew reads טוב שבגוים הרוג (tov she-ba-goyim harog, literally “the best among the nations: kill”), while Wiener uses an imperative formulation. In the accusation, “must be killed” clearly expresses the friar’s hostile reading. The envoy’s reply is then translated without smoothing away its difficulty: he argues that harog (הרוג, “to kill”) is an infinitive here and proposes two favourable readings, one about capital punishment and another about the best judge. The opening translation therefore does not settle the grammatical dispute on the speakers’ behalf. The external parallel in Rashi, which refers to Egyptians, is explained in the commentary; it does not silently replace Ibn Verga’s word “nations”. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S168 ; S094]

Fatal injury, physicians, and the logic of the argument

Ṭerefah (טרפה, a person suffering from an injury regarded as fatal) refers to the victim, not the murderer or forbidden meat in this passage. Hebrew, German, and Makkot 7a remove the ambiguity. The second interpretation of “the best among the nations” had become an unclear impersonal sentence in the earlier translation; Hebrew and German clearly make it a person ordering an execution. Likewise, the envoy explains “the best among physicians” as a physician made more careful by fear of hell. This remains his interpretation of the proverb, and is retained as such. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S094 ; S169]

The geographical list: a complete alternative

The Spanish geographical list, retained in the account, substantially reworks the Hebrew. The latter reads: “I saw in the books of the ancient kings that they were dispersed in the kingdom of Aleman, the kingdom of Almabartin, that of Misha, in al-Barbar, at Isfahan, in Barsan, in Africa, in the kingdom of the Kushites, in certain regions of Asia, in Helekh and, at the far end, in Persia.” Some forms remain obscure. Wiener interprets Barsan as Basra, Afriki as Iberica, the Kushites as Cuthaeans, and Helekh as Calachene. Since the geographical source has not been identified, these German identifications are not introduced as established places. The entire Hebrew list is supplied here so that the Spanish abbreviation and changes of location remain visible. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Haman and the promise: clarification and an omitted passage

The Spanish reference to casting his eyes on the queen becomes explicit in Hebrew: “he had wanted to sleep with the queen”; the German refers to indecent conduct. “He desired the queen” makes the accusation intelligible without adding a completed act. After the admission that the Jews cannot be exterminated, Hebrew and German preserve an explanation absent from Spanish: “Their God has already promised them this, saying, ‘I have not rejected

them so as to exterminate them.' Extermination is what is excluded; but he has indeed rejected them so as to chastise them through suffering and affliction. The troubles that continually befall them are the proof." This is the friar's reply paraphrasing Leviticus 26:44. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S178]

The envoys' names and their Garden of Eden

Samuel Abrabalia and Solomon the Levite are the names on which Spanish and Hebrew agree. The German occasionally introduces "Don Vidal" in the replies about the mother and Adam; this variation is not adopted because no third speaker has been introduced. The reply about Adam does retain the detail shared by Hebrew and German: "our own Garden of Eden: our land, Jerusalem, and the Temple that was our glory". It explains what Spanish abbreviates to "our glory". Adam (אדם, "human being", also the first man's name) is the hinge of the interpretation, rather than a biological distinction introduced by the translator. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S173]

Doors, images, and the candle

"The two leaves of the door" renders the physical arrangement described by all three versions: the image becomes complete only when the leaves meet. The Eikhah Rabbah parallel confirms the door motif without guaranteeing every detail added here. For the candle, Spanish and Wiener give an "ancient custom", whereas the 1928 Hebrew transcription reads "holy custom". "Ancient" is retained as the agreement of two versions consistent with the historical explanation that follows; "holy custom" remains an available variant. The house in which the enemy would place the candle is specified as the dead person's house, following the narrative sequence and German; this is not a candle placed without connection in another dwelling. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S175]

Ten, five; four, two—or forty, twenty

The first calculation agrees: ten years reduced to five. The difficulty comes afterwards. Spanish makes the pope say: "You will swear that it was four years, so as to pay two." Hebrew and German give, in a full translation of the passage: "Since you have come, you shall not go away empty-handed: half shall be paid to you; for example, if it is ten years, five shall be paid." The envoys ask that the matter be left to their oath. The pope replies: "That is good indeed: you will swear that it was forty years so that twenty may be paid to you. You have not kept what your God made you swear; how will you keep what a Christian makes you swear?" This version also reverses the direction of payment, although the initial request concerns interest to be returned. The Spanish calculation is therefore retained here because it fits restitution owed by the petitioners; the Hebrew and German reading is given in full without claiming to settle it through an unidentified archival document. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S167]

The synagogue: an additional accusation

In the reply about the synagogue, Hebrew and German add to the proximity of the sanctuaries: “How could you dwell beside the door of our Messiah while uttering blasphemies against him? Therefore destroy that house immediately.” Spanish omits the accusation of blasphemy; the two readings are thus kept distinct. The “ten thousand popes” mentioned earlier are a comparison expressing the power of an armed crowd; the text does not enumerate ten thousand historical holders of the papacy. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Final development absent from Spanish: complete translation

After the reflection on familiarity with leaders, Hebrew and German contain the following development: “When our true guide was removed from us, we remained without direction or discernment; still more did perplexity and exile leave no good disposition intact. The great author of Lamentations had already grieved over this: ‘He guided me, then made me walk in darkness and not in light.’ This means: at the beginning of my history God guided me; but at the end, when a person’s end should be peace, he made me walk, as one drives a horse or mule. What I possess today must therefore be called darkness. I will not even say that at the beginning I had light: since that light did not endure to the end, it may be said not to have been light. Had matters been reversed, had he first made me walk and then guided me, I could have said that at least at one time I had light. Of suffering he says, ‘Against me alone’—not against the nations of the world—‘he returns’ to strike; he renews his blows, and this is the meaning of ‘he turns’. The thought of this ‘has worn away my flesh and my skin’. He ought to have begun with the skin and moved inwards, or with the bones and moved outwards. But he meant that the affliction stands in the middle, in the flesh: sometimes it spreads outwards, expressed by ‘and my skin’, and sometimes it penetrates deeper, expressed by ‘he has broken my bones’. Let us return to the subject.” This exposition of Lamentations 3:2–4 belongs to the text transmitted by Ibn Verga; it is supplied as a variant of the work, without adding an editorial moral section. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The conclusion: those who send and those who are sent

At the end, the Hebrew transcription speaks of the merit of those who send the delegates, while Spanish and German attribute it to the envoys themselves. Hebrew is retained because the text specifically distinguishes the senders from the messengers whose words God inspires. Spanish and German place the prayer on Kippur; Hebrew says “on the solemn day”. The meaning of Kippur is supplied in the account. The exhortations introduced by “Solomon said” remain the author’s own and are part of the complete translation. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 166–180 ; H1928, section 41 ; G1856, p. 158–172.

Account XLII

The Dignity of the Head of Exile

In the forty-second account, Solomon said, "I wished to write here about the customs surrounding the princes' office in Babylonia and Persia, and why it ceased. This was one of the great afflictions that befell us. It will also reveal the honour of our nation, which still retained the splendour of its dominion. I found this account in the responsa of the early geonim (גאונים, heads of the great rabbinical academies). When the children of Israel wished to appoint over themselves a prince, called nasi (נשיא, prince) and head of the Exile, or exilarch (rosh ha-golah, ראש הגולה), all the heads of the academies, the leading men, elders and judges in the kingdom assembled and came to Babylon. There they set aside a large house adorned with fine linen and embroidery, placing seats in it for the heads of the academies, the scholars and the elders. In their midst the principal seat was for the prince. Two seats, to left and right, were reserved for the heads of the academies of Sura and Pumbedita. The head of Sura rose and admonished the prince not to let his heart rise above his brothers, for he was being given a service, not dominion. For the verse says, 'If today you become a servant to this people...'

"On Thursday they took him to the synagogue. The heads of the academies came, laid their hands upon him, sounded trumpets and shofars (ritual horns), and blessed him, saying aloud, 'May our lord the prince live for ever, our prince and head of our captivity, head of Israel's captivity!' They accompanied him to his house and sounded the trumpets again. They enjoined him to conduct himself with uprightness and justice, sound understanding, good government and patience, considering that he must govern a people difficult to lead. He was to accept the task of serving these people, for this was service to Heaven: if our leaders know how to bear difficulties, there is neither rupture nor defection. They withdrew from his presence and that same day sent him gifts of silver and gold, each according to his means. The prince then gave a banquet on the Sabbath. The heads of the academies ate with him, as did the city's elders and the great men of the kingdom who were there. On the eve of the Sabbath they prepared a platform for him in the synagogue, covered with silks and brocades. On the Sabbath morning, the heads of the academies and of the people went to his house and accompanied him to the synagogue. He walked before them, as was customary for kings and great men in that kingdom, his face covered with a silken

veil. On his arrival in the synagogue the cantor (ḥazzan, חזן) began, 'Blessed be he who spoke', and the heads of the academies answered, 'Blessed be he who speaks and does.' They continued thus as far as 'The soul of every living being'.

"The cantors and those who could sing well then gathered beside the platform and chanted the prayer until the Torah scroll (sefer Torah, ספר תורה) was brought out. They led the prince to the top of the platform, his face covered, together with the heads of the academies of Sura and Pumbedita. They seated the prince in his chair, took the scroll from the Holy Ark, the cabinet for the scrolls, and brought it to the platform for reading. He read first, and the heads of the academies after him. Then the prince preached with his eyes closed out of respect for the Law. If he wished, he gave leave to the head of Sura, who admonished the people and stirred their hearts to give alms for the young men studying. The prince began by pledging gifts, and great pledges were made there in honour of the Law and the prince.

"Then everyone rose, blessed the prince and recited the Qaddish (קדיש, prayer of sanctification). When they reached the words 'During your lives', they added, 'And the life of the prince our lord, head of Israel's captivity.' The prince then rose and prayed to God for each class separately: first for the heads of the academies, that they might progress in studying the Torah and Talmud; then for those who had made pledges, for those attending to communal affairs, and then for every province separately, saying, 'May God bless such-and-such a province and deliver it from war, pestilence and every evil; and in its days may Judah be saved.' When the prayer was over they took him home, happy and content; they laid the table and ate. In the grace after the meal they said a blessing appropriate to the prince.

"From that day onwards he no longer went out of his house. Private individuals came there and prayed with him every day. When he wished to speak to the king, he sent an ambassador to ask permission. The king told him to come and sent one of his ceremonial carriages to honour David's descendant, for all these princes descended from him. He did not ride in it, out of respect for the king; instead the carriage went before him. He himself walked in an embroidered robe, preceded by fifty men. Every Jew who saw him was obliged to accompany him. On reaching the courtyard he was met by the king's servants, who walked before him until he was brought into the sovereign's presence. A servant of the prince went ahead with a purse of gold coins and scattered them before him.

"When he came near the king, he knelt, then stood on one foot, according to the kingdom's custom, to show that he stood as a servant and humbled himself. The king signalled to the servants to give him a seat nearby, on his left. The king remained silent for a while to display his gravity, then turned his face towards the prince and said: 'Prince, are you in good health?' He answered, 'All is well, all is well, as long as our king lives and we may see his face.' Then the king said, 'Is your people well?' The prince then explained what he wished. Once his request was granted, he rose, pronounced a carefully composed blessing, and withdrew.

"Seeing the prince's greatness, the nobles and the people of Babylon grew envious and said, 'The children of Israel are becoming very powerful. Tomorrow they will rise with the help of David's descendants and make themselves our kings. Let us therefore find a remedy.' They agreed among themselves to kill the prince as he passed, and afterwards the leading Jews. When this was heard in the royal house, people came out to defend them, but the prince was already dead. They saved the rest of the people. Seeing this, the Jews said that there should be no more principality from that day onwards. The descendants of David retained a document attesting their lineage, but they no longer exercised authority over Israel, until God should have mercy."

Historical Commentary

A very close medieval parallel

The account attributed to Nathan ha-Kohen the Babylonian, edited in Hebrew by Neubauer, provides a detailed parallel: the gathering of the heads of Sura and Pumbedita, Thursday's homage, gifts, a decorated platform in the synagogue, chanted prayers, mention of the exilarch in the Qaddish, and blessings for communities supporting the academies. It also describes homage to the ruler and coins distributed to palace servants. This medieval source predates Ibn Verga and helps trace the ceremonial, although the "responsum of the early geonim" he invokes cannot be securely identified with a particular manuscript. [S183 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Differences in the sequence of the ceremony

In Nathan, a priest and then a Levite precede the exilarch in reading the Torah, and the heads of the two academies do not read that day. Ibn Verga has the prince read first, followed by the academy heads. Nathan also places the sermon and Qaddish before the scroll is brought out, whereas the chronicle reverses that order. The resemblance therefore requires the two descriptions to be distinguished. Nathan further specifies that before the king the exilarch stands on one foot while supporting himself on the other; this clarifies an unusual gesture without inserting it as though it occurred in all versions of Ibn Verga. [S183 ; E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The end of the institution cannot be established from this account alone

In the twelfth century, Benjamin of Tudela describes Daniel son of Hisdai as Head of the Exile at Baghdad; he mentions his Davidic genealogy, visits to the caliph, seat of honour, and the second royal equipage used at his investiture. This evidence shows that the institution continued at that time. Ibn Verga supplies neither the murdered prince's name nor the ruler's name nor a date for the abolition he reports. The absolute end of all Davidic authority therefore cannot be treated as an established chronology. Nathan and Benjamin illuminate the customs and titles; they do not corroborate the final murder or its circumstances. [S153 ; S183 ; E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

What the authority of the head of the Exile involved

Benjamin of Tudela supplements the ceremony with a description of the exilarch's resources and functions. He attributes to him authority to appoint rabbis and communal ministers, together with properties, gardens, weekly revenues from markets and merchants, and gifts received from distant regions. He also describes the installation of academy heads by the laying of a hand upon their heads. In his account, the institution thus combines representation

before the government, communal recognition, and the funding of learned activity. The Thursday procession includes both Jewish and non-Jewish horsemen, and a public proclamation announces him as a son of David. These details clarify the political significance of the insignia and acts of homage described by Verga. The very extensive geographical scope of authority listed by Benjamin nevertheless remains what the traveller attributes to his subject, rather than a verified register of surviving appointments. [S153]

The advice given to Rehoboam, reused at an investiture

The statement about serving the people refers to 1 Kings 12:6–16. After Solomon's death, the elders advise Rehoboam to respond favourably to the request for lighter burdens: if he serves the people at that moment, they will remain attached to him. Rehoboam then consults his young companions, adopts their harsher reply, and brings about the rupture described in verse 16. The academy heads' admonition thus reuses advice given in a particular royal episode. Its presence in the ceremonial supplies the exilarchal office with language drawn from the history of the house of David; it does not make the exilarch a participant in Rehoboam's story or mean that his investiture reproduces that entire scene. [S185 ; S183]

Solomon Teaches Royal Wisdom

Solomon teaching Rehoboam, with scenes of his justice, Bible historiale, Paris, c. 1360–1370. Getty, Ms. 1, vol. 2, fol. 1r. Rehoboam appears at upper left. The advice addressed to him in 1 Kings 12:7 is reused in the exhortation to the exilarch in Account 42. [provenance]

Translation Choices

The title, materials, and authorities cited

Hebrew and German specify "the early geonim" where Spanish simply says "our sages": their designation is restored and explained. Nasi (נשיא, "prince") is the title of the Head of the Exile here, not a president in the modern sense. For the house, Spanish reads "of marble", Hebrew "adorned with shesh and embroidery", and German silken fabrics and coloured carpets. Since shesh (שש) can mean fine linen or marble according to context, the embroidery and German's agreement on textiles lead to "fine linen and embroidery". "A richly decorated marble house" remains the Spanish alternative. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Thursday and service to the people

Spanish says "that day"; Hebrew and Wiener give "Thursday", supported by Nathan's parallel. That detail is retained. The statement about leaders is in the present tense in Hebrew and German, while Spanish turns it into regret about past princes. The present is retained because the words address the man being installed. The fuller wording is: "If our leaders can bear burdens—that is, endure difficulties—there is neither rupture nor defection." The passage plays on Psalm 144:14: allufeinu mesubbalim (אלופינו מסובלים, interpreted here as "our leaders bear burdens"). Its meaning is explained; it should not be read as a vague claim that past princes could have prevented every misfortune. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S183 ; S184]

Two liturgical developments omitted in Spanish

After "Blessed be he who speaks and does", Hebrew and German add: "The cantor resumes: 'Blessed be he who decrees and fulfils.' They reply: 'Blessed be he who created in the beginning.'" After the wish for Judah's deliverance, they further state: "He spoke this last sentence quietly, so that the outsiders would not hear it and say that they were asking for the kingdom's abasement, since the one side could rise only through the abasement of the other." These passages are translated in full here. For those benefiting from the prayers, "those attending to communal affairs" and "every province" follow Hebrew and German, which are more precise than the Spanish "officers" and "cities". [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Leaving the house, the carriage, and the order of procession

The statement that the exilarch no longer leaves his house is immediately followed by a procedure for visiting the king. Nathan presents the same restriction and then describes escorted outings: the ceremonial arrangement should be preserved without turning it into house arrest. Hebrew and German specify that prayers at his house take place "on weekdays as on the Sabbath". The Spanish "carriage" is rendered "ceremonial carriage"; Hebrew evokes the second royal chariot. This vocabulary does not establish the vehicle's technical form. In the

procession, Spanish and Hebrew put the vehicle before the prince; a German sentence may seem to put the prince before the vehicle. The agreement of the first two texts determines the sequence here. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S183 ; S153]

The reply to the king and the end of the audience

The Spanish reply, "peace, peace in the king's life, or in seeing his face", was difficult to understand. Hebrew and Wiener connect its two parts: all is well while the king lives and his face may be seen. This court formula is rendered as a natural sentence. At the end of the audience Spanish has the people go to eat; Hebrew says that the prince withdraws and Wiener that he takes his leave. Nathan's earlier account likewise ends with departure after the request is granted. This combination supports "and withdrew". The agreement of all three versions on standing on one foot is nevertheless retained; Nathan's explanatory addition remains in the commentary. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S183]

The genealogy after the office disappears

The final clause does not mean that an already dead prince obtains a certificate after his murder. Hebrew and German speak of David's lineage retaining its genealogy while losing its authority: the translation makes this collective subject explicit. The abolition of the office remains a statement in an undated account, whose historical limitations are explained above; agreement between the three versions does not turn it into an established fact. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S153]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 180–184 ; H1928, section 42 ; G1856, p. 172–176.

Account XLIII

The Poisoning Charge and the Lepers

The forty-third account takes place in the year 5081, in the month of Tammuz. This was the persecution connected with the lepers; the crisis weighed heavily on the whole kingdom. The Christians claimed to have discovered Jews conspiring with lepers living outside the city. The lepers, they said, hated the inhabitants because they were not given enough food: the Jews would bring the poison, and the lepers would throw it into the river. On hearing this, the king ordered all the Jews in the city to be arrested, without investigation or questioning. They remained imprisoned for nine months. The king then learnt that the whole matter was a false accusation; ashamed of having imprisoned them, he claimed to have confined them for a different purpose: to bring them to Christianity. They were tortured but remained faithful. Fifteen thousand Jews were burnt without bringing any accusation against God.

Historical Commentary

The connection with the crisis of 1321

The year 5081 corresponds to 1320–1321, and the month of Tammuz places the account in the summer of 1321. Under that year, the continuator of William of Nangis describes rumours that lepers had poisoned wells and springs in Aquitaine, accusations against Jews, and Philip V's measures. He places the spread of the reports around the feast of Saint John the Baptist. Agreement in date and motif securely identifies the general crisis, without proving every scene in the account. The Latin chronicle itself transmits rumours and alleged confessions: its existence establishes the circulation of the accusation, not an actual conspiracy. [S016 ; E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

What the Latin chronicle allows us to check

The continuator mentions 160 people burnt at Chinon, followed by executions, expulsions, and confiscations in Paris; he also relates a separate episode concerning some forty prisoners at Vitry. These details show different treatment in different places. They confirm neither a single city where fifteen thousand people were burnt, nor nine months' imprisonment for the whole group, nor the king's alleged change of pretext. Fifteen thousand is retained as Ibn Verga's figure, shared by the three versions compared, rather than presented as an archival total. [S016 ; E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The transmission of the accusation and the effects of the inquiry

The Saint-Denis text preserves several levels of transmission: a public rumour, a letter attributed to the lord of Parthenay and addressed to the king, and accounts of confessions and meetings. It already introduces the resentment attributed to people with leprosy because of the contempt and exclusion they face. This detail resembles the motive described by Verga, although the organisation and outcome of the story differ. The editor Géraud also identifies passages shared with Jean de Saint-Victor, particularly in the account of the letter: a tradition is circulating between chronicles, so the existence of several texts need not mean several independent confirmations. As an administrative consequence, the continuator explains that certain wealthy prisoners in Paris are kept alive until their outstanding loans can be identified for the benefit of the royal treasury. This adds a specific financial operation to the account, distinct from sums of money or numbers of victims alleged elsewhere. [S016]

The conclusion reuses a formula from the Book of Job

The closing statement about those who make no accusation against God refers directly to Job 1:22. In the biblical episode, Job has just learned in succession of the loss of his property, the deaths of his servants, and the deaths of his children when their house collapses during a

meal. He tears his robe and prostrates himself; the narrator concludes that he commits no offence against God. Verga applies this formula to a group put to death. The connection is therefore a quotation from the conclusion of Job's episode, transferred to different victims; the biblical book does not recount the French persecution of 1321. [S186 ; S187]

Philip V, the Shepherds and the Lepers
Jean Fouquet, *Grandes Chroniques de France*, c. 1455–1460. The miniature associates the violence of 1320 and 1321 with Philip V's reign; the depiction does not establish the poisoning accusations. [provenance]

Translation Choices

A crisis rather than merely a “sentence”

Gezerah (גזרה, a decree or persecution in this context) is better rendered here as “persecution connected with the lepers” than “a decree concerning the lepers”. Spanish describes a grievous affair; Wiener interprets the next clause as a severe epidemic. The unvocalized Hebrew permits hesitation between “affair” and “plague”. “The crisis weighed heavily on the whole kingdom” retains the shared meaning without introducing the Black Death, which belongs to a different period. The alleged discovery of conspirators, omitted in Spanish but present in Hebrew and German, is restored as a reported accusation rather than an established fact. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S016]

The number and the final sentence

Fifteen thousand is shared by Spanish, Hebrew, and German; no document consulted warrants replacing it with a figure thought more plausible. The conclusion, however, differs: Spanish says “acknowledging the justice of divine punishment”, while Hebrew says that they attributed no fault to God, echoing Job 1:22. Wiener preserves the absence of an offence against God. “Without bringing any accusation against God” is therefore retained, without adding a positive declaration that the victims approved their torment. The Spanish alternative remains visible here. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S186 ; S016]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 184–185 ; H1928, section 43 ; G1856, p. 176–177.

Account XLIV

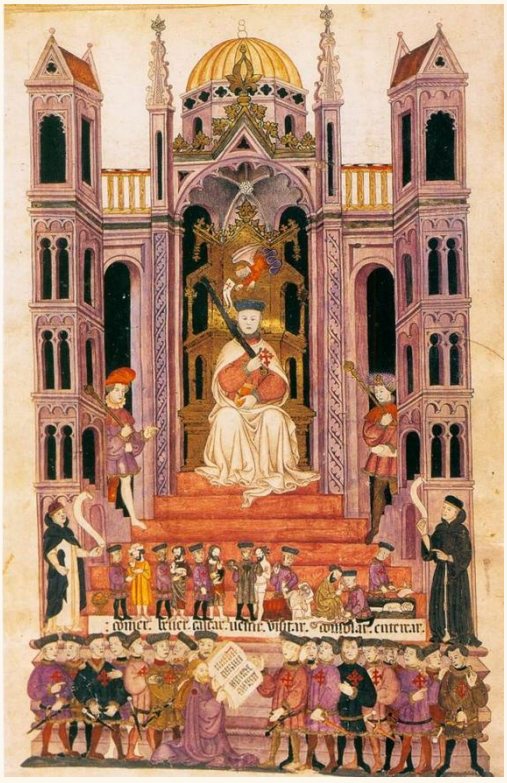
The Queen, the Confessor and the Decree

The forty-fourth account takes place in Spain. A friar there deeply hated the Jews; anyone who persecuted them rose in honour. As the queen's confessor, he persuaded her to force the Jews to change their religion and to have them put to the sword if they refused. The queen presented this request to the king. A few days later, following his wife's advice, the king decreed that they must abandon their Law or leave his kingdom. The order was put in writing.

On hearing this, the Jews approached a royal minister who was very favourably disposed towards them. In Spain, kings, nobles, and scholars greatly loved and honoured them. Expulsions had been brought about by certain common people who claimed that the Jews' arrival in the kingdom had made food dearer and who resented their practising the same trades. They had also been brought about by friars: to display holiness and persuade the people that they sought to honour and exalt the Christian religion, they preached hostile words against the Jews every day. Other groups of Christians, by contrast, respected and loved them as though they lived in their own country, as the elders of Spain knew. The minister said to the Jews, "The queen is very fond of gold and silver. Quickly gather fifty thousand gold coins and deposit them in a house near hers, which I shall show you. I shall arrange for her to pass by and tell her whatever seems likely to improve your situation." The Jews did so. The minister led the queen past the house and said, "My lady, should a vine that bears such fruit be uprooted?"

That same day a great scholar descended from our people passed by, called Master Martin of Lucena. He told the Jews, "The queen's order will not be carried out, for tomorrow the friar will be hanged. Kings customarily annul a decree when they put to death the man responsible for having it issued." That night, royal servants testified that they had heard the friar addressing amorous words to the queen. She was summoned and acknowledged that it was true. The king ordered the friar to be hanged. He had the decrees brought in, and they were torn up, for he knew that the

friar had prompted the queen to make this request and that he himself had consented only reluctantly. The money was returned to the Jews. Another oral version of this affair exists, but this is the one I found in writing.



The Bible Presented to Its Patron

Alba Bible, Castile, 1422–1430: Moses Arragel presents his translation to Luis de Guzmán. This image of patronage and religious supervision illuminates another aspect of relations between Jewish scholars and Christian power in the fifteenth century. It does not depict the queen of Account XLIV. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

A name attested in a manuscript

Martín de Lucena is a historically attested name: the rubrics of the manuscript now catalogued as BNE MSS/9556 identify him as doctor, master, and "the Maccabee", translator of the Gospels and Pauline Epistles for Íñigo López de Mendoza. Mario Schiff transcribed the rubrics on folios 1 and 68; that transcription was checked here, rather than the complete manuscript. Agreement in name and title makes a connection with Ibn Verga's character plausible. It proves neither his intervention on behalf of the Jews in this affair nor the hanging of a royal confessor. [S188 ; S189 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Limits of the identification

The king, queen, minister, and confessor are unnamed, and the account is undated. No expulsion decree annulled in these circumstances or corresponding record of execution has been identified in the sources consulted. The author himself distinguishes the written version he adopts from another oral version. His general statements about kings, common people, and friars should be read as his explanation of expulsions, rather than the conclusion of an independent investigation covering all Spanish communities. The fifty thousand gold coins likewise remain a figure reported by the account. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S188]

What Martín de Lucena's volume helps to establish

The commission recorded in the manuscript provides a more concrete point of reference for the biography of the man compared with Verga's character: Martín works for Íñigo López de Mendoza and translates Christian books into Castilian. The statement occurs in two different places, at the beginning of the Gospels and at the beginning of Paul's Epistles. The word romance in these rubrics means the vernacular language; it does not denote a fictional romance. The passages transcribed by Schiff also establish the volume's actual contents: a translation of the Gospels and epistles, rather than a complete Hebrew Bible. This activity places Lucena's name within a setting of religious translation and aristocratic patronage, without dating the conversation with the queen narrated by Ibn Verga. [S188 ; S189]

A material record identifiable by its current shelfmark

Schiff describes a fifteenth-century manuscript of ninety-seven vellum leaves, arranged in two columns, with rubrics and initials in gold and colours, or red and blue. He observes that large decorated letters have been cut out and that an initial leaf has disappeared. These observations explain why the book's physical state matters when studying its texts and dedication; they do not allow the missing material to be reconstructed. The current shelfmark MSS/9556, its former shelfmarks, and the two quoted rubrics give the reader a continuous route for verification, from the mention of a man in Verga to a manuscript work associated with the same name and epithet. [S188 ; S189]

Translation Choices

The rise of persecutors and the narrator's explanation

The earlier translation made persecutors "esteemed by him", as though the confessor alone rewarded them. Hebrew says that whoever afflicts Israel becomes a leader, while Wiener says that he rises higher: "rose in honour" restores the narrator's general observation. The lengthy explanation of expulsions is likewise the narrator's intervention in Hebrew and German. Spanish turns it into a reminder to be addressed to the king. The first two texts are followed here to distinguish this explanation from the practical request addressed to the minister. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Death proposed, exile decreed

All three versions distinguish two stages: the confessor proposes killing those who refuse to convert, while the royal decree orders their expulsion. There is no reason to make the two penalties identical. The "amorous words" are the content of the servants' accusation, subsequently acknowledged by the queen within the account. The versions do not describe a completed sexual relationship, and the translation does not add one. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Master Martin and the fifty thousand coins

Hebrew and German preserve the title maestre, "master", which Spanish omits: it is restored, especially since the manuscript rubrics of the biblical translation attest that title. "Descended from our people" renders Hebrew's reference to ancestry, also retained in German; it avoids inferring his religious practice at this unknown date from the account alone. Spanish's fifty thousand "escudos" are simply gold coins in Hebrew and German. The number and metal are therefore retained without imposing a coin denomination confirmed by no document. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S188]

Decrees torn up or read; an oral alternative

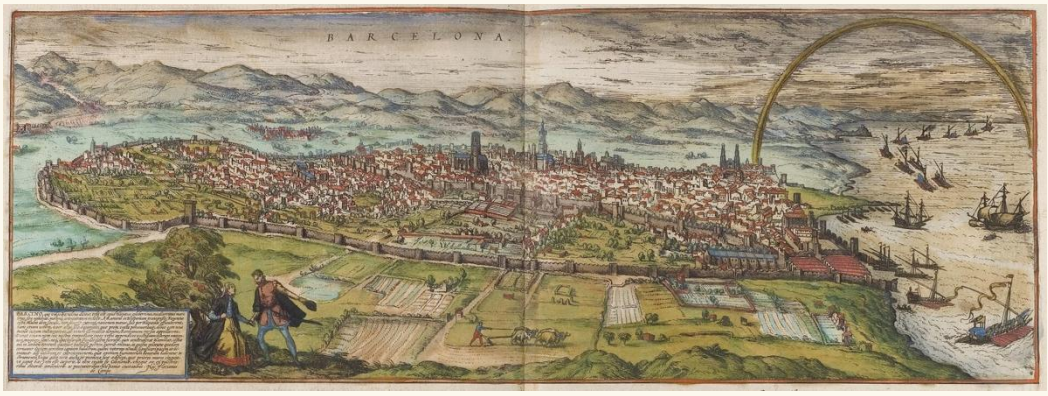
Spanish and Wiener say that the decrees are torn up; the 1928 Hebrew transcription has a verb meaning "were read". "Torn up" is retained as the agreement of two versions corresponding to the announced annulment. The available Hebrew reading would give: "He had the documents brought in, and they were read." The graphic resemblance between the Hebrew verbs may explain the variation, although its material cause has not been demonstrated here. Finally, Hebrew and German expressly say that "another oral version" exists: this is more precise than Spanish's "other things that are told" and has been adopted. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 185–186 ; H1928, section 44 ; G1856, p. 177–178.

Account XLV

Barcelona and the Communities of Catalonia

The forty-fifth account takes place in the year 5153. The community of Barcelona was ruined, as was most of the community of Girona and, later, most of the communities of Catalonia. The exact circumstances and causes of this persecution are not known.



Barcelona in the Civitates

Braun and Hogenberg, Civitates orbis terrarum, sixteenth century. The view locates the city whose community was attacked in 1391. It postdates the events and does not depict the violence. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

Barcelona: dated municipal records

The Barcelona council journal provides a precise date: on 5 August 1391 the Jewish quarter was pillaged; some Jews were killed and others became Christians. The entries for 7 and 8 August describe the attack on the Castell Nou, where Jews had taken refuge, followed by further conversions and deaths. The Racional chronicle likewise dates the destruction of the quarter to 5 August. These documents firmly connect the account with the crisis of 1391 but contradict its date of 5153, which corresponds to 1392–1393. They also distinguish the ruin of a community from deaths and conversions: those three outcomes are not interchangeable. [S109 ; E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The final sentence expresses the author's limitations

The same records mention guards mobilized in July to protect the Jews, followed by proceedings against attackers and executions in December. They therefore illuminate events beyond Ibn Verga's brief statement of uncertainty. That statement means that his own account offers no assured explanation; it does not mean that no historical sources exist. The Barcelona records alone, however, cannot establish the proportion of converts or victims in Girona and every other Catalan community. [S109 ; E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Barcelona: the sequence of events

The municipal register traces the development of an attack on the quarter into a crisis of urban authority. On 6 August, an armed guard is organised by day and night. On 7 August, the councillors assemble the city's defence units and decide to try certain Castilians arrested for initiating the attack. Sailors, fishermen, and other armed men then arrive, open the royal urban officer's prison, and release the detainees. They next attack the Castell Nou, setting fire to its gates and shooting crossbows from the terraces. The same account mentions the destruction of records in the offices of the baile, a local royal officer. These details document the participants, places of refuge, and spread of violence to the administration of justice. The eleven executions recorded on 14 December belong to the subsequent punishment of the attackers and must not be added to the deaths within the Jewish community. [S109]

Girona: a royal letter about the refugees in Gironella

The documentation for Girona is also precise. A short chronicle text reproduced by Villanueva dates the persecution to 10 August 1391, the feast of St Lawrence. More particularly, Feliu transcribes a letter from John I of Aragon dated 23 August, preserved in the Archives of the Crown of Aragon, register 1691, folios 81r–v. The king replies to officers reporting threats against the surviving Jews, their property, and the authorities themselves. He orders their protection, refers to their shelter in the Gironella tower, and requires that they be able to obtain necessary provisions with their own money. This document supplements Verga's general statement with a named refuge, survivors identifiable as a group, and a dated royal intervention. [S109]

Translation Choices

A ruined community or abandonment of the Law

Spanish reads: “The community of Barcelona abandoned the Law, as did most of those of Girona and Catalonia.” Hebrew uses ne’evad (נאבד, “was lost, was ruined”), and Wiener describes a community that “went to ruin”. This broader formulation is retained: it follows both texts and accommodates the distinct outcomes described in the municipal records. It does not imply that all the inhabitants were killed. “Later”, present in Hebrew and German but omitted in Spanish, is also restored. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S109]

A transmitted date at odds with the documents

All three versions give 153, an abbreviation of the year 5153. The error therefore does not arise from a French or English mistranslation of Spanish alone. The transmitted date is retained in the translation, while the commentary gives the documentary date of 1391. Silently replacing 5153 with 5151 would hide a textual difficulty instead of explaining it. The Hebrew and German conclusion expresses uncertainty about the facts and their cause; “exact circumstances and causes” conveys that reservation more precisely than Spanish’s simple statement that the cause is unknown. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S109]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 186–187 ; H1928, section 45 ; G1856, p. 178–178.

Account XLVI

A Queen Regent and a Pope

The forty-sixth account takes place in the year 5172. The eyes of all Israel grew dim and clouded over, for a pope had arisen in Rome and was doing everything in his power to make them change their religion. Very harsh decrees were issued against the Jews. The queen of Spain, who then governed the kingdom, allied herself with the pope. They were driven from their houses into ruined buildings and tormented so cruelly that sixteen thousand people abandoned the Law. Many remained faithful to God and were burnt; many others died under torture. Those who fled fell dead in the fields, with no one to bury them. Some were saved by giving all their possessions to travellers and country people.

Valladolid in the Civitates

Braun and Hogenberg, Civitates orbis terrarum, sixteenth century. The city is associated with the Castilian measures of 1412 examined in the commentary. This sixteenth-century view accompanies the identification of the political setting. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

The connection with the laws of 1412

The year 5172 corresponds to 1411–1412. In that setting, the queen regent can be connected with Catherine of Lancaster, mother of John II of Castile. The law issued at Valladolid in 1412 requires Jews and Muslims to live apart from Christians in a walled quarter with a single gate. It allows eight days to move after the quarter is assigned, on pain of forfeiture of property and corporal punishment at the royal authority's discretion. The law confirms a policy of compulsory residence and supplies a precise historical setting. It does not expressly prescribe ruined buildings, nor does it by itself prove the tortures, executions, and deaths in flight described here. [S190 ; S191 ; E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

An unnamed pope and an unverified total

The author does not name the pope and places him in Rome. Replacing the title without explanation with Benedict XIII would be unwarranted: the records of the 1413 controversy place him at Tortosa, and the account does not specify which pontiff it means in the setting of the schism. A connection with policies of this period therefore remains distinct from a certain identification of the scene. Sixteen thousand conversions is common to all three versions compared, without an accompanying register of names or administrative tally. The sources consulted help locate the coercive measures historically but cannot certify that total or the various categories of deaths listed. [S156 ; S190 ; E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Restrictions also affecting trades and movement

The full text of the laws of 1412 extends separation into economic life. Article 2 notably prohibits practising medicine, surgery, and pharmacy for Christians, as well as selling food to them; article 10 addresses visits to the sick and certain exchanges of food. Articles 16–17 prohibit changing one's place of residence and require lords to send back those they have received. Article 20 further restricts trades, including tailoring and carpentry, and the sale of shoes to Christian customers. These provisions help explain why compulsory residence could be accompanied by lost income and difficulty in finding refuge. The text distinguishes its penalties: for example, infringement of the clothing requirement concerning the red badge entails confiscation of the garments under article 13, rather than a death sentence. [S192]

A policy applied differently by different authorities

A law's promulgation must also be distinguished from its enforcement in each town. Drawing on documents published by Torres Fontes, Cantera Montenegro records an intervention by the regent Ferdinand on 25 January 1412 asking the authorities of Toledo to defer en-

forcement until he had examined the provisions. He then identifies an amended version issued at Cifuentes on 24 June for the part of Castile under Ferdinand's government. Verga's account can therefore be connected with a well-documented programme of restrictions while being supplemented by differences between regents and local administrations. This distinction is necessary when tracing particular episodes of displacement or conversion: a general clause cannot by itself date and quantify all of its local consequences. [S191]

Translation Choices

From houses to ruined buildings

Spanish merely says that the Jews were forced from their houses by torment. Hebrew specifies their destination, la-ḥoravot (לחרבות, “into ruined places”), which Wiener renders as “dilapidated buildings”. That detail is restored in the account, followed by the persecution causing conversions. The law of 1412 supports the setting of a forced relocation, but it does not turn Ibn Verga’s description into a quotation from that law. The Spanish alternative reads: “He drove them from their houses through torments so cruel that sixteen thousand souls abandoned the Law.” [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S190]

Images and expressions of faithfulness

Spanish changes Hebrew’s darkened eyes into Israel’s light turning to darkness. The image of the eyes is retained; Wiener also understands it as an expression of affliction. “Remained faithful to God” renders the Hebrew formula qedushat ha-shem (קדושת השם, “sanctification of the Name”, here faithfulness to God under persecution), without introducing an unexplained technical term into the sentence. Sixteen thousand and the year 5172 are retained because all three versions agree; textual agreement is not itself historical proof. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 187–187 ; H1928, section 46 ; G1856, p. 178–179.

Account XLVII

Castilian Communities in Turmoil

In the forty-seventh account, in the year 5151, the Christians brought false accusations against the communities of Toro, Logroño, and Carrión, all the surrounding towns, and the community of Burgos, renowned for its learning and wealth. These communities abandoned the Law. In other places, those who remained faithful to God were burnt. Thereafter most of Spain's communities lived in anguish and distress; each day brought more suffering than the day before. The people, or at least most of them, thought only of ways to destroy the remnant of Israel.

Burgos in the Civitates

Braun and Hogenberg, Civitates orbis terrarum, sixteenth century. Burgos is one of the communities explicitly named in the account. This later panorama situates the city within its landscape. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

Burgos: identifiable archival references

The year 5151 corresponds to 1390–1391 and fits the period of the violence of 1391. The Municipal Archives of Burgos publish extracts from three royal letters of Henry III under the references HI-2959, HI-2960, and HI-2961. The first mentions attacks and forced baptisms in Seville and Córdoba; the other two, dated 20 and 30 July 1392, concern the protection of Jews in Burgos after the attack on their quarter. They describe refugees received into Christian houses and the wish of some to return home. The inventory of the Gaibrois collection supplies the corresponding references and identifies available copies: published extracts and an inventory were checked here, rather than every original document. [S193 ; S194 ; E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

What the records correct and what remains open

These documents corroborate the crisis in Burgos but prevent "abandonment of the Law" from being understood as documented conversion of every individual: unconverted Jews remained and sought protection. The letter of 30 July prohibits coercing them into baptism, including coercion by certain recent converts. The records thus show distinct forms of conduct rather than a population acting with a single will. No document identified here, however, establishes the particular accusations in Toro, Logroño, and Carrión or the number of people burnt. For HI-2959, only the content of the published extract is used: the Gaibrois inventory dates the item 26 June 1392 and reports defective, incomplete copies; this reference should not be used without further examination to assign the event a more precise date. [S193 ; S194 ; E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Logroño in López de Ayala's chronicle

Pedro López de Ayala's chronicle of Henry III supplies an explicit parallel for one of the towns otherwise little documented here. In its account of the events of 1391, reproduced by Fita, it names Logroño alongside Seville, Córdoba, Burgos, and Toledo among the communities ruined by the uprising. Ayala also describes the Council's dispatch of messengers and royal letters: their arrival is said to have calmed the troubles at first, but only briefly. He finally describes the impoverishment of communities which escaped destruction but made large payments to lords to obtain protection. This narrative predating Ibn Verga therefore confirms Logroño's place in the written memory of the crisis and specifies attempts to contain it. It does not describe a particular accusation at Logroño or establish the conversion of every inhabitant. [S195]

Return to Burgos and financial reconstruction

The writ of 20 July 1392 concerns more than personal safety. The Gaibrois inventory specifies that it also orders settlements concerning debts contracted to pay the cabeza de pecho (collective tax) and the community's fiscal service. This detail supplements the picture of a deserted judería: returning requires outstanding financial obligations from its earlier operation to be addressed. The letter of 30 July continues the question of protecting refugees and the pressure exerted to make them attend sermons. Comparing the two dates thus reveals an administrative attempt to maintain or re-establish the community after the attack. [S193 ; S194]

Translation Choices

Each day, not each group of people

The earlier translation compared the misery of "some" with that of "others". Hebrew compares one day with the day before, and German confirms this: "each day brought more suffering than the day before". Spanish abbreviates the construction and makes the antecedent less clear. This is therefore a correction of a mistranslation, without changing the account's content. The opening also reads "false accusations", following the Hebrew verb and Wiener's "slanders"; their particular content has not been invented. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

An omitted qualification and different outcomes

Hebrew and German qualify the final generalization: "the people, or at least most of them". Spanish omits the qualification. It is restored in full, without turning the narrator's judgment into a statistical finding. The sentence about other places concerns those who remained faithful there and were burnt; it is not expanded into a claim that everyone in every other town perished. The names are identified through agreement between the Spanish and German forms. The Hebrew and German order, Toro, Logroño, Carrión, is followed; Spanish puts Carrión before Logroño. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S193]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 187–187 ; H1928, section 47 ; G1856, p. 179–179.

Account XLVIII

Testimony to Violence in Iberia

The forty-eighth account was copied from a writing in the hand of the learned and pious Rabbi Shem Tov ben Shem Tov. It reads as follows:

"In the year 5150, in Spain, under King Don Henry, while he was still young, great crowds rose to make the Israelites abandon their religion. They oppressed them and inflicted terrible blows, with violence unheard of since the Israelites had settled in the towns of other peoples. Under the weight of suffering and torment, large numbers of them in Spain abandoned the religion of Moses, our teacher. This happened particularly to the majority of the great community of Seville, who changed their religion, as well as the communities of Córdoba and Écija, all Andalusia, and other large towns; likewise in Madrid, Illescas, Ocaña, Huete, Castil-Manrim (a place not securely identified), Muños, and Torrijos. In Escalona, no one escaped. The other communities likewise endured sufferings that must not be put in writing, so deeply do they trouble the heart. Thereafter they passed from one calamity to another."

Madrid in a Drawing of 1562

Anton van den Wyngaerde, view of Madrid, 1562. This image of urban Castile accompanies the account attributed to Shem Tov ben Shem Tov. It belongs to a later period and cannot by itself locate the reported episodes. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

An attributed account with a chronology requiring correction

The opening attributes the text to a writing by Shem Tov ben Shem Tov but supplies neither an archival reference nor a place of preservation. No corresponding autograph has been identified here. The year 5150 corresponds to 1389–1390 and is out of step with the reign and violence to which the account refers. The inventory of Henry III's documents describes his letters of 10 and 13 October 1390 announcing John I's death and the new king's accession. Barcelona municipal records date the attacks to the summer of 1391. Together, these points connect the account with the violence of 1391 and its aftermath, while requiring the transmitted date's error to be disclosed rather than concealed. [S194 ; S109 ; E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Seville, Córdoba, and Madrid in the records

The royal letter preserved in Burgos as HI-2959 reports killings, plunder, and forced baptisms in Seville and Córdoba in connection with the preaching of the archdeacon of Écija. It supplies a specific documentary parallel to the violence and conversions described by Ibn Verga. For Madrid, the Archivo de Villa catalogue identifies a document dated 28 June 1392, SEC -2-390-67: the council informs Henry III of the destruction of the aljama (the organised Jewish community) and the perpetrators' resistance to justice. The catalogue locates the document but does not provide its full text here; its date belongs to the document and must not automatically be assigned to the attack itself. These connections establish neither the completeness of the geographical list nor the disappearance of every inhabitant of Escalona. [S193 ; S196 ; E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Madrid: a judicial account with named participants

An older edition provides access to a text much more detailed than the catalogue entry. Fita publishes the record of the appeal made at Segovia on 6 July 1392 by Lope Martínez, Madrid's representative, before the regents Gonzalo Ruiz de Guzmán and Juan Hurtado de Mendoza. The record incorporates a municipal letter dated 8 June. This names Ruy Sánchez, Vasco Mexía, Lope Fernández de Vargas, Diego de Vargas, and Ruy García de la Torre among those implicated by the investigation into the killings and plunder. Some are imprisoned; others have left the town and now threaten its officers and agricultural workers. The regents order that the former remain in custody and that the others be pursued, with seizure of their property. The text therefore recovers procedures and individuals omitted from Verga's brief geographical list. Its own dates, 8 June and 6 July, must remain distinct from the 28 June supplied by the catalogue entry: the physical identity of the documents has not been established here. [S195 ; S196]

A financial consequence preserved in a royal privilege

The same dossier publishes a privilege of Henry III dated 30 September 1401 confirming arrangements made in 1394. The nuns of Santo Domingo in Madrid received an annuity of three thousand maravedís assigned to a contribution paid by the aljama. They report that they have been unable to collect it regularly since 1391, and the instrument invokes the community's conversions to justify transferring the charge to another royal revenue. It does not provide a list of converts; it establishes a lasting and quantified consequence of the disruption of communal organisation. The three thousand maravedís are an annual payment, not a number of people. This comparison connects Ibn Verga's statement about Madrid with an administrative change pursued for several years after the violence. [S195]

Translation Choices

Full attribution and the retained date

Spanish shortens the name to "Rabbi Semtob". Hebrew and German give "the learned and pious Rabbi Shem Tov ben Shem Tov": the full name and both descriptions are restored. The formula means that the compiler presents a copy of a writing attributed to this man; it is not a modern verification of his handwriting. All three versions give 150 of the sixth millennium, or 5150. Their agreement is retained in the text, while the commentary explains why dated documents point to 1391 for the crisis described. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S194 ; S109]

Madrid rather than Cádiz; restored place names

The Spanish scan genuinely reads "Cadis"; this is not merely an optical character recognition error. Hebrew supplies a form corresponding to Madrid, and Wiener translates Madrid. That reading is adopted, supported by the Madrid document of 1392 recording the destruction of the aljama; this support does not prove that the compiler knew that particular document. "All Andalusia", omitted in Spanish but present in Hebrew and German, is restored. Huete, given by Hebrew and Wiener, is preferred to Spanish's "Suete". Agreement between the two texts thus restores a fuller list and more readily identifiable places. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S196]

An uncertain place without a forced identification

After Huete, Hebrew has a name transliterated here as "Castil-Manrim"; Wiener proposes "the castle of Montesa", while Spanish omits the place. No document consulted settles that identification. A transliteration with an indication of uncertainty is therefore retained, rather than substituting Montesa without proof. For the following name, Muños follows Spanish and is close to Hebrew; Wiener writes Munnioz. Here too, no precise modern location is imposed. The reader can distinguish the transmitted place name from the German translator's proposed interpretation. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Exile and a succession of calamities

Spanish measures the violence from the departure from Jerusalem; Hebrew and German say from Israel's settlement in the towns of other peoples. The latter formulation is retained without artificially fixing the starting point to a particular departure from Jerusalem. "The religion of Moses, our teacher", fuller in Hebrew and German than Spanish's "the Law", is restored. For Escalona, "no one escaped" follows the two comparison texts; it does not specify whether the lack of escape means death, conversion, or both. Finally, Hebrew, German, and the context show that the last sentence means "from one calamity to another": it does not say that the victims began committing increasingly evil deeds. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 187–188 ; H1928, section 48 ; G1856, p. 179–180.

Account XLIX

Forbidden Trades and the Law Preserved

"The forty-ninth persecution occurred in the time of King Don John, son of Henry. Their sufferings grew worse: they were deprived of their livelihood, and inhuman measures were imposed on those who had remained faithful to their Law. They were forbidden to trade in public or sell food to non-Jews, for they were accused of putting poison into confectionery and other foods. None of them was to practise bloodletting or medicine, except the king's physician. They could not buy landed property and had to wear a red badge as a distinguishing sign; anyone found without it was to be put to death. More and more decrees followed, and a hand was constantly raised against them.

"They would undoubtedly all have abandoned the Law but for the mercy of the One who said, 'It shall not depart from your mouth or from the mouth of your descendants, from now and for ever.' This alone is enough to show that he watches over us in the matter that counts above all: the preservation of the Law of Moses our master." Here end that man's words. In many other places the Jews abandoned the Law. We could not record all the disasters and exiles they endured, since we do not know every kingdom and city to which they were scattered. There are also things it is not fitting to write. Already the Lord's words have been fulfilled in us: "You shall perish among the nations."

Not one descendant in a thousand remains of the Jews who left Jerusalem and the cities of Israel to come to Spain. Those who went to France and Germany and remained steadfast in the Law were killed by the thousand. Of those who went there, as numerous as the people who came out of Egypt, not one in five thousand remains. The leading men of Germany recorded their sufferings in a substantial book. Since these events had already been written down, I refrained from recounting them; moreover, reliable information about them has not reached us, for those countries are so far away. The Lord is just, for we have rebelled against his word. When we have paid our debts, he will make his face shine upon us and bring back our captives.

The Celebration of Passover

Preparing the Passover meal and celebrating the seder, Rylands Sephardi Haggadah, Catalonia, 1335–1340, fol. 19v. The household scenes accompany Account 49's reflection on the endurance of religious life in dispersion. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

The Valladolid ordinance located

The passage concludes the quotation begun in the preceding account. Don John, son of Henry, is John II of Castile. A precise documentary parallel is the ordinance issued in his name during Catherine of Lancaster's regency at Valladolid on 2 January 1412. Document LXXVII edited by Fernández y González prohibits Jews from working as apothecaries, surgeons or physicians and from selling food to Christians (article 2), and from treating Christian patients or supplying remedies (article 10). Article 13 requires red badges. These correspondences connect the account with an identifiable body of legislation without making it a verbatim copy. [S192 ; E1744]

Significant differences

Article 13 prescribes forfeiture of clothing for failure to wear the badge, not death as in the chronicle. Article 22 requires a summons and lawful judgment before seizure or arrest by private persons. Article 2 prohibits food sales both publicly and in secret, a more specific provision than the alternative between public trading and interest-bearing loans in Ibn Verga's versions. These differences are recorded here while the narrative's wording is preserved. The 1866 edition cites copies held by the Real Academia de la Historia and in the Salva collection; those manuscripts themselves were not examined for this work. [S192]

The social measures behind the list of prohibitions

The 1412 act expressly addresses Jews and Muslims throughout the king's kingdoms and lordships. Article 1 requires them to live within an enclosed quarter with a single gate; articles 16–17 restrict changes of residence and forbid lords to receive those who leave. Control of movement therefore accompanies the occupational prohibitions. Articles 19–21 add restrictions on employing Christian workers, practising various trades for Christian customers and carrying food for sale. Article 19 nevertheless envisages land, vineyards and houses belonging to the people concerned: it does not establish the account's broader prohibition on purchasing property. Reading these provisions together recovers a regulation that simultaneously affected housing, work and everyday exchanges. [S192]

What the figures establish

The proportions of one survivor in a thousand and one in five thousand are the narrator's overall estimates. He supplies no census, starting date or genealogical calculation. They express his perception of the communities' collapse and are not verifiable population statistics. The German book he mentions has neither title nor named author, so it cannot be securely identified with a particular chronicle. The quotation about the transmission of the Law is

Isaiah 59:21; that about perishing among the nations is Leviticus 26:38. These references identify the passage's language without making its religious interpretation a historical conclusion. [H1928]

The three biblical borrowings

The passage combines phrases from different biblical books. Isaiah 59:21 promises that the divine words will pass to subsequent generations; Leviticus 26:38 supplies the phrase about perishing among the nations. The closing declaration, "The Lord is righteous, for we have rebelled against his word", adapts Lamentations 1:18, where Jerusalem speaks in the first person singular. Ibn Verga thus transfers the biblical city's voice to the community of exiles. These are identifiable textual borrowings, rather than three ancient accounts of the Castilian ordinance. [S197; S198; S199]

Translation Choices

Trade and lending

Spanish has contratos con usuras, “interest-bearing contracts”; Hebrew prohibits trading publicly (שלא ישאו ויתנו ברבים), and Wiener likewise retains public trade. The latter reading is adopted after comparison: it belongs to the sentence’s discussion of forbidden occupations and sales, and resembles article 2 of the 1412 ordinance, which prohibits shops and food stalls supplying Christians, whether public or concealed. The act does not reproduce the chronicle verbatim or independently establish a ban on all trade. The Spanish reading, “they were forbidden to make interest-bearing contracts”, remains a distinct variant rather than being absorbed into the other wording. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S192]

Clarifying the sentence about providence

The opaque phrase about “his providence … in the essential matter” has been recast from the Hebrew: God is the subject, the community receives his care, and the essential matter is the continued observance of the Law of Moses. At the end, “debts” is a religious metaphor for wrongdoing to be expiated, not financial borrowing. “Nations” means non-Jews in the sentence about selling food. The survival figures remain those of the source. [H1928 ; G1856]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 188–189 ; H1928, section 49 ; G1856, p. 180–181.

Account L

Dispossession on the Roads of Exile

For the fiftieth, Solomon said: "I too have heard and witnessed many such things concerning the expulsions from Castile and Portugal, Friar Vincent's decree and other forced conversions. I intended to recount them here, but I found that Don Judah Abrabanel had already related them all in his commentary on the section of the curses (parashah, a portion of the Torah). I therefore refrained, except for a few details he had given up trying to describe. When the Jews left Castile, they endured inconceivable disasters. At sea especially, they lacked provisions, while robbers beset them on every side. Sailors betrayed them and sold them on distant islands, claiming to have captured them in war. How many were thrown into the sea on the pretext that they were sick, so that their property could be seized! On land they faced similar sufferings. In them the verse was fulfilled: 'Every sickness and every plague that is not written.'

The Port of Modon in 1488

The port of Modon, now Methoni, with its ships. Bernhard von Breydenbach's La Peregrination en Terre Sainte, translated by Nicolas Le Huen, Lyon, 1488; Met, 28.86.2. A view nearly contemporary with the Iberian expulsions evokes the material setting of the sea passages in Account 50. [provenance]

"In Toledo there was great devastation in the time of the pious Don Samuel ben Shoshan, who gave oil every year to all the houses of study in Egypt and Jerusalem—may it be rebuilt in our days. The decree was annulled when a great lord, my kinsman, arrived: Don Samuel the nasi (prince or community leader), a descendant of David, as the document and its seal show. I described this affair in detail in a work of my own, The Rod of His Wrath (Shevet ʿEvrato, שבט עברתו); you may read it there."

Historical Commentary

The compiler's named sources

Solomon distinguishes what he heard, what he saw and what he chose to take from other writings. His reference to the section of the curses concerns Deuteronomy 28; the shortened quotation is verse 61. "Don Judah Abrabanel" is the name in both the Spanish and the Hebrew checked here. It should not silently be changed to Isaac Abrabanel, who is explicitly named in the following account. Shevet 'Evrato refers to another work claimed by the narrator; no copy of that work has been consulted for this edition. Wiener likewise retains Judah but adds a question mark: he signals a difficulty, not a secure identification with Isaac. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

From sea crossings to the Toledo episode

The anonymous Italian account of 1495 provides a contemporary comparison for journeys after the expulsion: it describes robbery, sales into slavery and drownings. It does not identify the sailors in this account. The Toledo episode is separate and has no date of its own. The supply of oil to houses of study, the intervention of a nasi and the proof of his Davidic ancestry are information transmitted by Ibn Verga. The genealogical document is not reproduced, leaving its contents and the precise identification of the two Samuels unresolved. [S200 ; H1928]

The Toledo family and the meaning of the title

The Ibn Shoshan family does belong to Toledo's tradition of communal leadership. The Jewish Encyclopedia, drawing on epigraphic and literary references, records Joseph ben Solomon, who died in 1205, and places a Samuel who supplied oil to the schools of Cairo and Jerusalem among the thirteenth-century members. This closely matches the name and activity in the account, although the survey does not reproduce the act of pardon or genealogy mentioned here. Above all, it explains why the passage should not automatically be dated to 1492: the compiler may have inserted a much older family memory within his collection of exile accounts. The title nasi (נשיא, prince or communal leader) belongs to this tradition of prominent families; it does not by itself establish royal sovereignty. [S201 ; H1928]

The quotation framing the calamities

Deuteronomy 28:61 extends the list of calamities to those not enumerated in the Law. The abbreviated quotation performs that particular function here: it introduces suffering which the narrator presents as almost beyond narration. The verse contains neither Toledo, the two Samuels, nor the voyages of 1492. [S202]

Translation Choices

Names, titles and terms

Nasi here means “prince” or “community leader”; it is not another given name. Ben means “son of” in Samuel ben Shoshan. The Spanish has Susim and the Hebrew שושין; Shoshan is retained as a readable name form without assigning an unproven identity. The Hebrew title The Rod of His Wrath, previously broken across a page boundary, has been reunited and restored to its correct reading order. [E1744 ; H1928]

Details in the Hebrew version

After the sale of the exiles as prisoners of war, Hebrew adds: “Has Israel no sons? Has he no heir?” (Jeremiah 49:1). Wiener reproduces this indirectly; Spanish omits it. The quotation is given here in full as a variant of the abbreviated passage. For the nasi’s genealogy, Hebrew gives ketav ve-ḥotam (כתב וחותם, “document and seal”), and Wiener a document bearing a seal; Spanish says “document and signature”. “Document and its seal” is adopted because it restores the instrument of authentication named in Hebrew and confirmed in German. No original of this genealogical document has been located to verify its contents. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 189–190 ; H1928, section 50 ; G1856, p. 181–182.

Account LI

The Expulsion from Spain According to Abrabanel

For the fifty-first, Joseph said: "Lord Don Isaac Abrabanel described the expulsion from Castile at the beginning of his commentary on the Book of Kings. I thought it fitting to reproduce it here in his eloquent language. These are his words:

'In the year 5252 (1491–1492), the king of Spain conquered all the kingdoms of Granada. Proud of his power, he considered how to thank his god for giving him such a kingdom. He thought he could do so only by bringing beneath his wings a people who walked in darkness and were scattered among the lands, or by driving them out of his kingdom. He therefore issued a decree whose proclamation declared: "All the families of Israel who are baptised and worship the god of the nations shall eat the best fruits of the land, as I do; they shall live in the country and trade in it. If they refuse, let them leave the lands of Spain, Sicily, Majorca and Sardinia that are under my rule; and within three months let no one wishing to follow the Law of Moses remain anywhere in my kingdom."

'At that time I was at court. I exhausted myself in effort and entreaty, speaking to the king two or three times as best I could: "Have pity on us, O king! Why are you doing this to your servants? Impose as many levies of silver and gold upon us as you please: each person will give you everything he possesses." I sought out my friends who had access to the king, asking them to intercede for me. They met to speak to him and turn him from a plan that could only bring ruin upon the Jews. But, like a deaf adder, he stopped his ears, and nothing could move him. The queen stood beside him to harden his heart and persuaded him to do what she desired. We wore ourselves out, finding no remedy, relief or rest.

'The people heard of this calamity and went into mourning. Wherever the decree was proclaimed, the Jews suffered great distress, such as had not been seen since the day Judah was carried captive from its own land into foreign countries. They said to one another: "Let us take courage for the sake of our people and the Law of our God. If we are to live, let us live; and if we are to die, let us die. Let us not profane our covenant, let our hearts not turn back, and let us go in the name of our God."

'Three hundred thousand people set out on foot, their strength exhausted, and I among them: young men, old people, children and women left all the king's provinces in a single day, going wherever they could find refuge. The Lord accompanied them. Some went to Portugal, others to neighbouring Navarre. They endured great suffering: plunder, distress, hunger and plague. Some boarded ships and suffered there too; many were sold as slaves and servants throughout the provinces of the nations. Many drowned at sea; others burned to death when their ships caught fire. Every calamity pursued them: those destined for the sword, to the sword. God brought the plague upon them, and they became an object of horror to all the kingdoms of the earth, until they were consumed and destroyed. Of the multitude they had been, very few remained. Blessed be the name of the Lord.'"

The Expulsion from Spain in History Painting

Emilio Sala, Expulsion of the Jews from Spain, 1889. The painting stages Torquemada before the Catholic Monarchs and belongs to nineteenth-century history painting. It accompanies Abrabanel's testimony as a later artistic interpretation, not as a document from 1492. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

An explicitly attributed extract from Abrabanel

“Joseph said” marks an intervention by Joseph ibn Verga. He announces an extract from Isaac Abrabanel’s introduction to his commentary on Kings. The first-person voice in the following paragraphs is therefore Abrabanel’s: he presents himself as an intercessor at court and then as an exile. The thoughts attributed to the ruler and the embedded speeches belong to this account; they are not a transcript of royal council proceedings. The conquest of Granada places the episode in early 1492. The independent transcription of Abrabanel’s introduction contains the same passage, from the year מזר”ה and the capture of Granada to the scattering of the exiles, and then describes his arrival in Naples in 5253. The page is marked unproofread and incomplete, however, and does not replace a facsimile check. [E1744 ; H1928 ; S205]

The archival document and the timetable

A copy of the decree dated at Granada on 31 March 1492 is preserved in the Archivo General de Simancas as PTR,LEG,28,DOC.6. The European Digital Treasures catalogue describes four leaves and distinguishes the grounds for the decision from the arrangements for departure and property. This document establishes the royal decision; it does not verify the chronicle’s rewritten proclamation word for word. “Three months” can refer to publication in early May, recorded in the Italian account of 1495, and should not automatically be changed to “four months”. The three hundred thousand people and departure “in a single day” remain the narrative’s statements, not census findings. [S203 ; S204 ; S200]

Names of territories

Spanish has Seville, and the 1928 Hebrew Sceptre of Judah has a related spelling. Wiener, p. 183, instead gives Sicilien, “Sicily”; the corresponding passage in Abrabanel’s introduction likewise reads סיצילייא, “Sicily”. The translation therefore adopts Sicily: German’s agreement with the text expressly quoted by the compiler supplies a criterion beyond geographical plausibility. The consulted Abrabanel transcription remains labelled unverified; the correction is not based on a newly examined manuscript. Similarly, the plural “kingdoms of Granada” belongs to Spanish; Hebrew speaks of the kingdom of Granada and its great city. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S205]

Biblical books within Abrabanel’s account

Three verbal connections reveal how the passage is composed. Publication of a decree followed by great mourning in every province echoes Esther 4:3. In Esther, this belongs to the story of Mordecai, Esther and Ahasuerus; here Abrabanel applies its wording to Ferdinand

and Isabella's decision. The deaf asp that closes its ears comes from Psalm 58:5 in Hebrew numbering, often 58:4 in English Bibles. Finally, the exiles' distribution between sword, famine and captivity echoes Jeremiah 15:2. These specific borrowings explain the account's register without replacing the royal document preserved at Simancas. They also distinguish Abrabanel's autobiographical voice, the words he attributes to the sovereigns and the scriptural language in which he narrates the consequences. The same historical event can therefore be documented by an administrative act and transmitted in a markedly different literary form, without either being a verbal facsimile of the other. [S206 ; S207 ; S208 ; S203 ; S205]

Translation Choices

Voices and quotation marks

The quotation levels have been restored: Joseph introduces Abrabanel, who in turn reports the royal proclamation and the exiles' words. "I was at court" therefore does not refer to Joseph. Hebrew year 5252 overlaps 1491 and 1492; the numerical value of מזר"ה is 252, with the millennium left implicit in this dating formula. [H1928 ; G1856]

Covenant and abridged wording

"Our covenant" translates the Hebrew בריתנו. The Spanish firmamento would produce "firmament", which makes no sense here; the earlier translation's correction is confirmed. The Hebrew contains more biblical echoes than the Spanish, including the city "full of people", the king at the head of the exiles and their final cry, "We are perishing, we are all lost!" The Spanish abridges these passages; they have not silently been inserted into the narrative. [E1744 ; H1928]

Seville or Sicily

The Spanish list would read "Spain, Seville, Majorca and Sardinia". "Sicily" replaces "Seville" here, following Wiener and the independent passage of Abrabanel's introduction to which the account expressly refers. The Hebrew Sceptre of Judah and Abrabanel's text are thus not simply treated as identical. This is an explicitly recorded correction of a place name; the three months, three hundred thousand people and departure in one day remain the chronicle's statements and are discussed separately. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S205]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 190–192 ; H1928, section 51 ; G1856, p. 182–185.

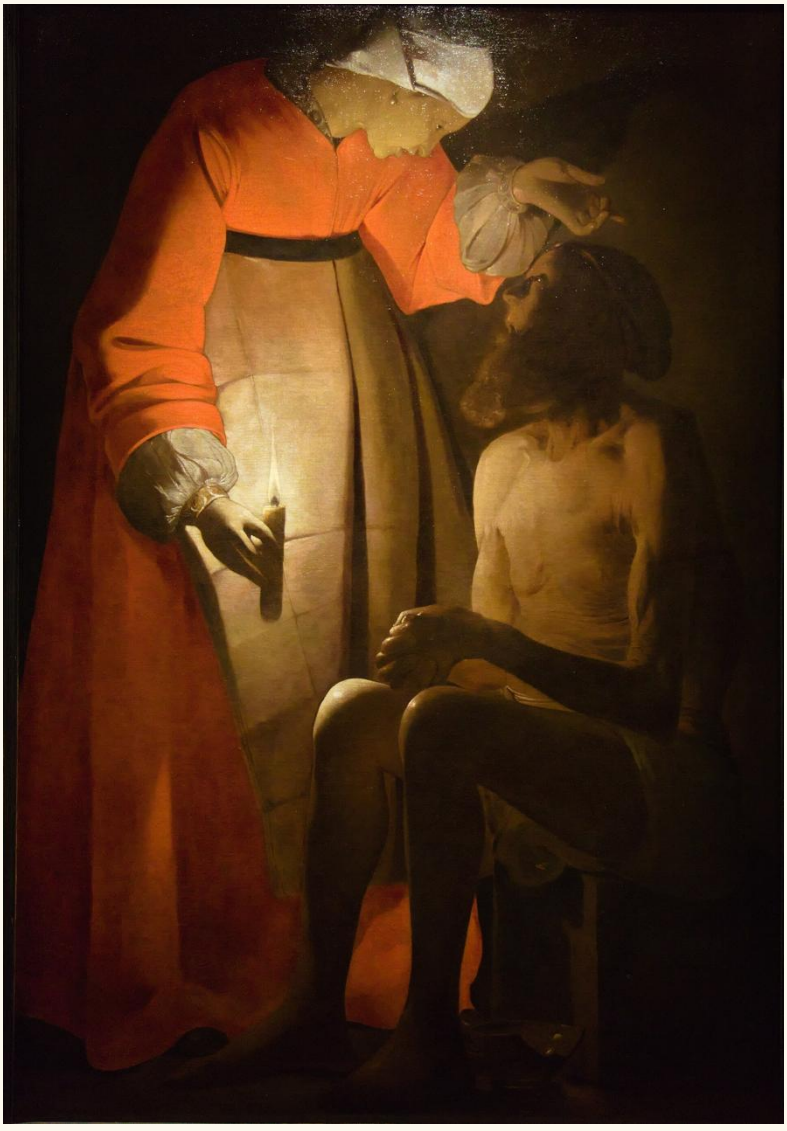
Account LII

A Bereaved Father's Fidelity

For the fifty-second account, I heard from old men who had left Spain that plague broke out aboard one of the ships. The shipmaster abandoned them on a deserted beach, where most died of hunger. A few struggled to continue on foot until they could find a settlement.

Among them was a Jew with his wife and two sons. They summoned their strength to walk, but his wife, unaccustomed to such journeys on foot, collapsed and died. Her husband carried the children; he too lost consciousness from hunger, as did his two sons. When he came round, he found them dead. He rose and said: "Master of the world, my sufferings and my sins drive me to abandon your Law. But know that, despite all this, I shall die a Jew; neither what has happened nor anything that may yet happen to me will make me change." He gathered earth and grass, covered his children with them and set off again in search of a settlement.

The other Jews in the group had not waited for him, for fear that they too would die. Each was absorbed in his own suffering and unable to ease that of his companions.



Job and His Wife

Georges de La Tour, Job Mocked by His Wife, seventeenth century. The painting accompanies the comparison with Job 1:18–22 and 2:9–10. The situations differ: in Account LII the father has already lost his wife, and no spouse urges him to abandon his fidelity. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

An oral account from exiles

The compiler identifies his source as old men who had left Spain. He gives neither their names nor that of the family, and supplies no landing place or date. The story belongs to the sequence about the exiles of 1492, but its position does not establish a more precise route. Travellers' hunger, abandonment of the sick and losses at sea also appear in the Italian account of 1495. That comparison establishes the broader setting of deadly journeys, not this family's identity or the father's exact words. [E1744 ; H1928 ; S200]

The transmission of the speech

The difference between the Spanish and Hebrew prayers is substantial: the Spanish stresses the father's sufferings and sins; the Hebrew addresses God directly as the author of his ordeal. This difference is evidence of the anecdote's transmission and prevents the speech from being treated as a word-for-word record. The account remains a source for the memory of departure and the stories told by exiles. No separate record identifying this individual case was found in the documents examined. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The connection with Job, and its differences

The closest biblical parallel is Job 1:18–22: a father learns that his children have died and responds to the loss with a declaration to God. Job 2:9–10 adds the question whether suffering will make him abandon his integrity. The circumstances remain different. Job's children die when a house collapses; the children in this account die during an exilic journey on foot. Job's wife is still alive when she speaks to him, whereas the mother in the account has already died. These differences prevent identification of the two stories. They nevertheless disclose a tradition of language and gestures in which a listener familiar with the Bible could recognise the figure of Job. The analogy supplies neither the Spanish father's name nor the geographical origin of the ship. [S209 ; S210]

Translation Choices

Two children

The Spanish first introduces “a son”, then refers to children in the plural. The Hebrew and Wiener expressly give two sons. The coherent reading “his two sons” is therefore retained, rather than a changing number of children. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

An alternative version of the prayer

Both speeches express a refusal to abandon Judaism, but do not give the father the same words. The Spanish form is selected in the narrative because it explicitly connects his suffering, self-examination and determination to die a Jew; choosing that version does not authenticate the speech. Hebrew and Wiener give this other wording, equally necessary for understanding the passage: “Master of the world! You do much to make me abandon my religion. Know for certain that, even against the will of heaven’s inhabitants, I am a Jew and shall remain one; everything you have inflicted on me and everything you may yet inflict will be of no avail!” No located historical document decides the exact words of this unnamed father. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 192–193 ; H1928, section 52 ; G1856, p. 185–185.

Account LIII

Hunger and Violence Near Fez

The fifty-third account concerns those who went to Fez and suffered divine punishments, particularly a terrible famine. The inhabitants would not allow them into the towns, for fear that they would drive up the price of provisions. They pitched tents in the countryside and fed on wild plants whenever they could find any: the severe drought had left only a few roots. Many died with no one to bury them, for the survivors were too weak from hunger. On the Sabbath (the weekly day of rest), they plucked the plants with their mouths, consoling themselves that they were not pulling them up with their hands.

An unheard-of thing happened there. An Arab came, saw a beautiful young Jewish woman, raped her before her father and mother, and went away. Half an hour later, he returned with a scimitar and thrust it into her belly. Her mother said to him: "You tyrant, why are you doing this?" He answered: "I feared that she might be pregnant and that the child would be a Jew." Look and listen: has anything like this ever happened in the world?

There too, a poor woman saw her son fainting and had nothing to feed him. Seeing that he could not escape death, she raised a stone and threw it onto his head; he died. She then struck herself so violently that she died after him.

The Kingdoms of Fez and Marrakesh

Jodocus Hondius, Fessae et Marocchi Regna, 1606. The map locates Fez and the regions of Morocco reached by exiles from Spain. It illuminates the account's geography; it is not evidence for the particular famine described. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

The Fez dossier

The sequence places these events in the exile following the expulsion from Spain. In his account of the Castilian Jews' admission to Portugal, Garcia de Resende discusses those who went to Fez, reporting robbery, sexual violence and killings. His chapter CLXIII thus independently supports the broader setting of violence faced by some refugees. It does not, however, tell the story of this murdered young woman or the mother who kills her child; the details of those cases come here from Ibn Verga. [S211 ; E1744]

Famine and the documentary limits

The narrator describes a camp outside the towns, fear of rising food prices, drought and inability to bury the dead. The anonymous Italian account of 1495 likewise connects refusal of admission to North African towns with deaths in the countryside. It covers several places and gives no exact date for the camp in this story. "Divine punishments" is the narrator's language, not a causal finding of historical research. The Sabbath gesture shows how the account presents observance under extreme distress; it is not a record of rulings by a religious court. [S200 ; H1928]

Fire, epidemics and shortage: distinct events

Bernáldez supplies a concrete addition. After describing people returning from Fez whom he encountered in Castile, he records a fire in the straw dwellings established at Fez, the destruction of Hebrew books, and subsequent deaths attributed to "pestilence" and diarrhoea. His chapter CXIII thus adds to the Fez context without identifying the people in Ibn Verga's two violent episodes. Rosenberger and Triki's examination of the Fez sources places the crises around 1492–1493; it particularly stresses that the relationship between famine and epidemic remains uncertain, and that shortage among the refugees cannot simply be extended uniformly to the entire kingdom. Camp conditions, disease, fire and acts of violence should therefore remain distinct even when they belong to the same exile dossier. [S212 ; S213]

The starving children in Lamentations

Lamentations 2:11–12 and 4:4 describe children fainting and asking their mothers for bread. Lamentations 4:10 goes as far as mothers eating their children during Jerusalem's catastrophe. These are parallels of situation and language, not the same story: the mother at Fez kills her child and then dies herself, with no cannibalism in the text. The distinction prevents a detail from another episode being added to this account. [S214 ; S215]

Translation Choices

The weapon and the violence described

The three versions differ: Spanish alfange names a scimitar; Hebrew romaḥ (רומח) a spear; Wiener has Schwert, "sword" (p.186). Scimitar is retained as the more precise description of a blade, compatible with German's broader category "sword"; "spear" remains a genuine alternative, not a synonym. No external historical account identifies the weapon in this unnamed episode, and the chosen preference does not claim to do so. "La viola" and "raped her" state the sexual violence explicitly, avoiding the involuntary attenuation possible in "lui fit violence" or "violated her". [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Who asks the question?

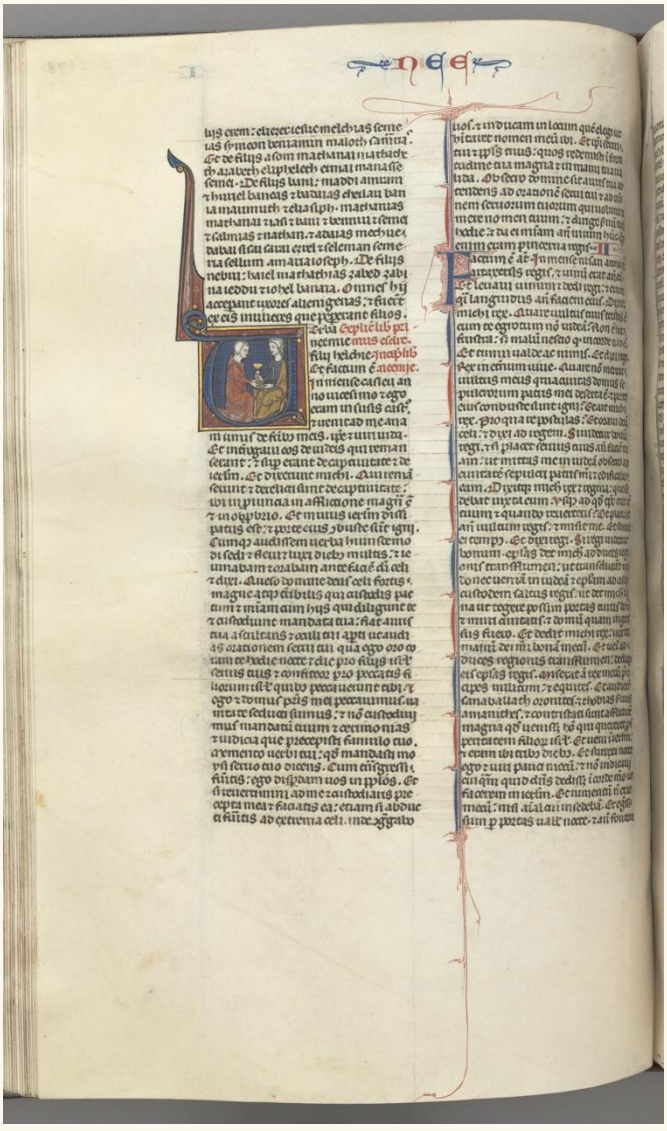
In Spanish the mother addresses the attacker; Hebrew has "they said to him", and German likewise reports the question collectively. The mother is retained as the person expressly named in the Spanish scene, where both parents are present. The full alternative is: "They said to him: 'Cruel man, why have you acted this way?'" No independent record identifies the exact speaker. The "herbs" are plants found in the fields, with no botanical species specified; the famine setting does not justify turning them into cultivated grain. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 193–194 ; H1928, section 53 ; G1856, p. 185–186.

Account LIV

The King Returns the Children

The fifty-fourth account. The Jews were in the countryside near Fez, for there was a severe famine in the land. They were reduced to taking their children into the town and selling them for a piece of bread. But the king of Fez, a pious man, proclaimed when the famine was over that anyone who had bought a Jewish child for bread must set the child free and return him to his parents.



The Book of Nehemiah in a Medieval Bible

Bible from southern France, about 1270, opening of Nehemiah. The initial shows Nehemiah presenting a cup to the king, an episode from Nehemiah 2. The same book contains the parallel examined in the commentary: children surrendered for debt and the governor's intervention, Nehemiah 5:1–13. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

A decree reported without a reproduced document

This account continues the Fez refugee dossier. It reports two successive events: children being sold during the famine, followed by a royal proclamation ordering their release. The ruler is unnamed, the decree is undated and no chancery text is reproduced. The tradition of royal intervention can therefore be recorded, but no unlocated archival reference or precise date should be supplied. Nor does the account name the children or their purchasers. [E1744 ; H1928]

What comparison adds

The surrounding accounts and Resende's chapter CLXIII document the precarious circumstances of exiles reaching Fez; they are not a second attestation of this liberation order. The Hebrew word rendered "pious" is חסיד (ḥasid, a pious person). Applied here to a king of Fez, it is the narrator's description, not membership of the modern Hasidic movement. The chronicle's reported event remains distinct from this contextual evidence. [S211 ; H1928]

Nehemiah's episode as a precise parallel

Nehemiah 5:1–13 provides a particularly close structural parallel. Families explain that they have mortgaged fields and houses to obtain grain and that their sons and daughters are being reduced to servitude (5:3–5). Nehemiah intervenes with the prominent men, recalls the redemption of compatriots sold abroad (5:8), and obtains a promise of restitution and abandonment of the exactions under discussion (5:11–13). This passage clarifies the sequence of food distress, loss of children and intervention by an authority. The persons and places nevertheless differ: Nehemiah acts as governor among his compatriots, whereas Ibn Verga attributes liberation to an unnamed king of Fez. The biblical text is therefore a precise ancient parallel, not an attestation of the Moroccan decree, and cannot date it. [S216]

Translation Choices

Sale and release

Hebrew specifies that the child is sold “as a slave” and must be returned “free to his father and mother”. “Restore his freedom and return him to his parents” preserves both acts rather than suggesting a mere family visit. Wiener makes the lack of payment explicit: “Return him to his parents without compensation.” Spanish does not separately formulate the absence of reimbursement; the other versions clarify the order’s scope. No located chancery act supplies a ruler’s name or an indemnification procedure. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

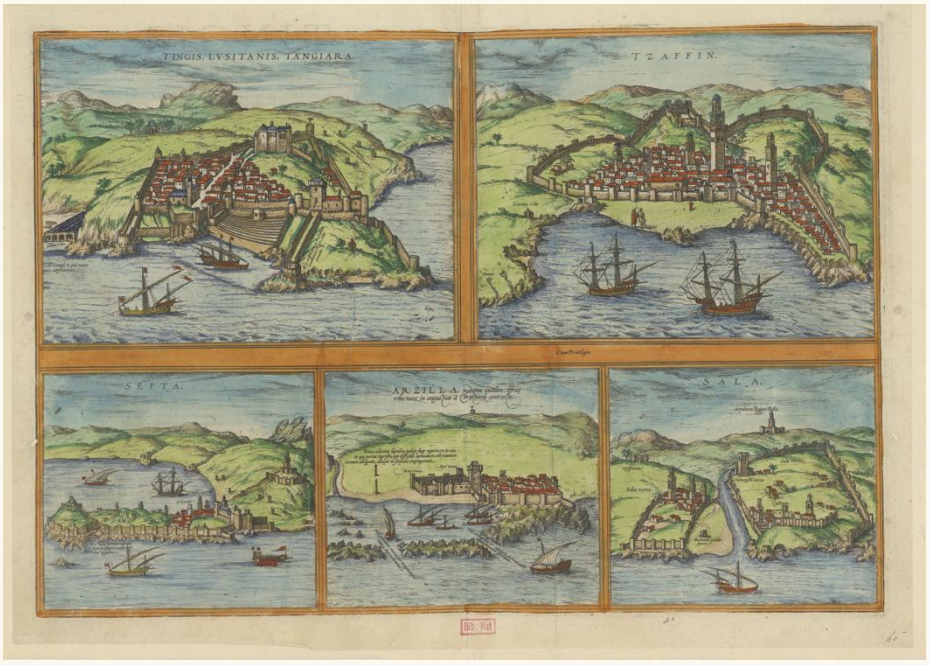
Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 194–194 ; H1928, section 54 ; G1856, p. 186–187.

Account LV

The Bread Trap at Salé

The fifty-fifth account. At another place near Fez there was a large ship. Jewish children went to the shore near that place, called Salé, to gather whatever they could find to eat. The shipmaster called them to the waterfront and gave each one a piece of bread. At the sight of it, the children were overjoyed and went to tell the others. The next day, drawn by the news, about a hundred and fifty children came to the shore. The master invited them aboard, promising enough food to satisfy their hunger. Once they were aboard, he raised the sail and carried them all away.

When they heard, the Jews, especially the mothers, rushed to the beach and cried out, to no avail. They raised a lament such as had never been heard. That accursed man selected the most alert and handsome of the children he had abducted and gave them as gifts to the princes of the country; he sold the others in foreign lands.



Five Moroccan Ports in 1572

Braun and Hogenberg, 1572: Tangier, Safi, Ceuta, Asilah and Salé. The view of Salé locates a port named in the account of abducted children; the abduction itself is not depicted. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

Place and participants

The account names Salé, a port on Morocco's Atlantic coast, while placing it within the sequence about Fez. That grouping does not make Fez a seaport. It describes a two-stage abduction using gifts of bread, followed by the presentation of some children to dignitaries and the sale of the others. It supplies no ship's name, captain, recipient or destination port. The approximate figure of a hundred and fifty is the narrative's figure and cannot be checked against a passenger list in the documents examined. [E1744 ; H1928]

The scope of the comparisons

Accounts of journeys after 1492, including the anonymous Italian account of 1495, describe refugees' vulnerability to seafarers and forced sales. They provide a comparable maritime setting, but do not identify this abduction at Salé. A general mention of trafficking in captives should therefore not be treated as independent proof of the two days recounted here. At present, the stratagem and the children's individual fate are recorded by the tradition collected in The Sceptre of Judah. [S200 ; E1744]

Family separation in the exile tradition

The 1495 Italian account provides a more specific comparison than maritime trade alone: it distinguishes families robbed during the crossings from children separated from their parents in Portugal. For the latter event it quotes Deuteronomy 28:32, about children given to another people before helpless parents. The verse also illuminates Ibn Verga's scene on the shore, although he does not explicitly quote it here. Above all, the episodes should not be merged: at Salé an unnamed captain employs a trick; in Portugal the sources describe a royal measure. Similar lamentations do not establish that the 150 children were the same group as those in Account LIX. [S202 ; S200 ; H1928]

Translation Choices

Gathering by the shore

The former phrase “gather from the sea whatever they could find” followed sacar de la mar too closely. The Hebrew specifies לקושש סמוך לים, “gather near the sea”, and Wiener also places the children at the water’s edge. This makes their action intelligible without inventing fishing, shellfish or a shipwreck. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Selecting the children

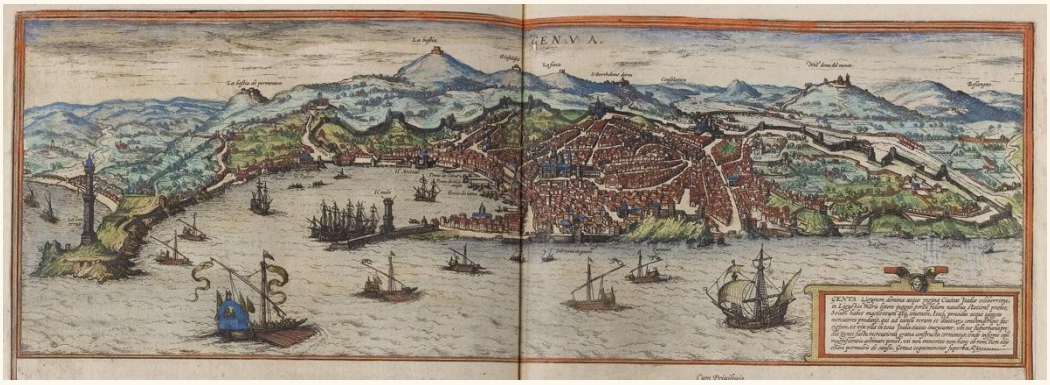
Spanish gives only “the handsome”. Hebrew adds the piqḥim (פקחים, “alert, discerning”) to the handsome children; Wiener retains two qualities, but his blühendsten (“most flourishing”) places greater emphasis on physical appearance. The translation adopts Hebrew’s alertness and beauty, restoring the twofold selection without inventing an intelligence test. The addition absent in Spanish is thus explicit: “the most alert and handsome children”. For the recipients, “princes” retains the Spanish designation; German speaks more broadly of the country’s leading men. The documents examined provide no names. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 194–195 ; H1928, section 55 ; G1856, p. 187–187.

Account LVI

Bread and the Cross

The fifty-sixth account. Ships from Spain reached the Italian coast, where there was a severe famine. Plague raged aboard, and the unfortunate passengers did not know what to do. At last they disembarked, but the townspeople refused to admit them. They then went to Genoa, where there was also a famine; there, however, they were allowed into the city. Unable to endure their hunger, young people went to the churches and changed their religion to obtain a little bread. Some inhabitants walked through the streets with a cross in one hand and a piece of bread in the other, saying to the young people: "If you worship this, you shall have bread." In this way many became Christians and were absorbed into the Christian population.



Genoa in the Civitates

Braun and Hogenberg, Civitates orbis terrarum, sixteenth century. The port of Genoa belongs to the refugees' itinerary examined in the commentary. The print is a later urban representation, not an image of their arrival. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

Genoa in Senarega's chronicle

Under the year 1492, the Genoese chronicler Bartolomeo Senarega describes the arrival of exiles from Spain. He reports starvation, exhausted mothers and infants, abuse by some seafarers and children sold to pay passage. He explains that an old rule normally limited Jewish stays to three days, but an exception allowed ships to be repaired and passengers to recover. Many died during the winter near the Mole, the area assigned to receive them. This is a direct comparison for the arrival and distress at Genoa. [S217]

Differences and uncorroborated details

In this passage Senarega does not describe inhabitants carrying a cross and bread together. That scene therefore remains information peculiar to the tradition transmitted by Ibn Verga. Senarega also distinguishes stages of the health crisis: he initially reports no fear of plague, then connects the appearance of sores in spring with the following year's epidemic. The Jewish chronicle compresses famine and plague into one account. The texts concern the same refugee arrival but do not agree on every detail or on the sequence of illness. [S217 ; E1744 ; H1928]

What the Genoese perspective adds

Senarega describes more than the travellers' condition on arrival. He places their displacement after the celebrations held in Genoa for the conquest of Granada and after the Spanish sovereigns' decisions. He then distinguishes passage costs, necessary repairs to the ships and waiting at the Molo. These details explain how a refuge initially permitted for a few days could extend through much of the winter. His perspective is that of a Christian Genoese author who can celebrate the victory at Granada while deploring the exiles' treatment. This different provenance makes the agreement about hunger and the crossings particularly valuable; it still supplies neither the young converts' names nor the date of the bread distributions described by Ibn Verga. [S217]

A parallel of language in Lamentations

Lamentations 1:11 links the search for bread with giving up possessions to stay alive. It illuminates the theme of obtaining food at the cost of loss, but contains neither Genoa, conversion, nor the scene with the cross: the connection is thematic, with no explicit quotation in this account. [S199]

Translation Choices

Arrival and assimilation

"The shores of Italy" makes the arrival by sea clear and preserves the Spanish territorial sense. At the end, "the nations" means the non-Jewish population into which the newly baptised people entered. "Were absorbed into the Christian population" identifies that referent; it is not a further journey to unnamed nations. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 195–195 ; H1928, section 56 ; G1856, p. 187–188.

Account LVII

Rome's Jews Refuse the Refugees

The fifty-seventh account concerns the Jews who came to Genoa. Because the famine there was severe, some left for Rome. The Jews already living there met to consider how to prevent newcomers from settling among them and, as they feared, taking away their livelihood. They collected a thousand gold coins to send as a gift to the pope, asking him to refuse the exiles admission. When he heard of it, he said: "This is something new to me. I have heard that the Jews are accustomed to showing compassion to one another, yet these men behave cruelly." He therefore decreed that they too should be expelled and no longer remain in his dominions. The residents then had to collect another two thousand gold coins so that he would let them stay and allow the exiles to come and enjoy the good things of the land.

Rome and Its Districts in the Sixteenth Century

Braun and Hogenberg, Roma, 1572. The plan locates the urban setting in which the account places the conflict between Jewish residents and newcomers. Its depiction postdates 1492 and does not prove that the reported deliberation took place. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

From Genoa to Rome

The account expressly follows the departure from Genoa described immediately before it. Senarega supplies a dated setting for arrivals at Genoa after the expulsion of 1492 and the difficult winter stay. He does not record the Roman negotiation described here. The pope and the community's representatives remain unnamed in The Sceptre of Judah, with no audience date or payment document. Its place in the sequence points towards the period beginning in 1492, but cannot securely identify the pontiff or the day of his intervention. [E1744 ; S217]

The payment narrative

The thousand and then two thousand pieces form a two-stage negotiation: first a gift intended to exclude newcomers, then a larger sum to let the residents remain while also admitting the exiles. No receipt or papal decision confirming the amounts was located in the documents examined. The account is preserved as the compiler's transmitted story of a dispute over reception. The views attributed to the residents concern this episode's participants; they do not establish a uniform attitude among Roman communities across time. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The possible pontiff and the conflict's setting

If the departure from Genoa belongs to the sequence following the 1492 arrival and the subsequent winter, the reigning pontiff would be Alexander VI, Rodrigo de Borja, whose pontificate began in August 1492. This identification is chronologically possible; the account does not name him, and no corresponding payment has been located in the sources consulted. The attribution should therefore remain conditional rather than his name being inserted as though it appeared in the narrative. The anecdote also describes two levels of authority: the residents deliberate and collect money, but the pope can refuse or permit residence in his states. This distinction explains how an economic conflict between two groups becomes a matter referred to the sovereign. [S218 ; S217 ; H1928]

An earlier Talmudic debate about livelihood

Bava Batra 21b discusses the precise objection that a new competitor is taking away an artisan's livelihood. It transmits several opinions; Rav Huna son of Rav Joshua distinguishes in particular between an outsider from another town and someone who contributes to local taxation. Competition, residence and fiscal contribution thus had a long-established legal vocabulary. None of Ibn Verga's speakers cites this text, however: it cannot be treated as the rule applied in Rome or as the proven basis of the approach to the pope. [S219]

Translation Choices

Crowns, florins and gold pieces

Spanish names escudos, “crowns”. Hebrew first uses peraḥim (פרחים, a coin name often rendered “florins”), then zehuvim (זהובים, “gold coins”). Wiener gives Goldstücke, “gold coins”, at both points. That term is adopted for both sums: it retains their shared material and amounts without assigning the pope a precise currency that no located receipt or account identifies. The Spanish alternative is “a thousand crowns”, followed by “two thousand additional crowns”. No conversion into modern currency is proposed. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Strangers and livelihood

“Strangers” means exiles outside the established community, not necessarily a distinct nationality. “Newcomers” makes the relationship clear. Taking away their livelihood means competing for the means of making a living. [H1928]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 195–196 ; H1928, section 57 ; G1856, p. 188–188.

Account LVIII

Abandoned and Rescued at Sea

The fifty-eighth account. The master of a ship carrying exiles from Spain planned to kill them and seize their possessions. A merchant aboard, a good man, told him that shedding innocent blood was a great wickedness. The accursed man replied: "I have come only to avenge the blood of Christ, which they shed." The merchant answered: "He forgave those who shed his blood so that the human race might receive forgiveness, and will you refuse to forgive? My advice is to put them ashore on an island. If they are to die, let them die; at least you will not have laid hands on them."

The cruel man stripped them of their clothes and abandoned them beside a rock on the shore, in a place where no one passed. The unfortunate people dared not leave the spot, so ashamed were they of their nakedness. They walked only at night. Beside the sea they found fresh water in crevices and drank it. They remained there for three days. At the end of the third day they said: "Let us climb to the top of that rock; from there we may see a settlement."

They climbed the rock with difficulty. At the top they found lions' dens. The beasts sprang upon them and killed one of them; others threw themselves from the rock and were dashed to pieces below. Having hoped to find safety by climbing there, they now had to go into the sea to escape the lions; when the beasts returned to their dens, they came back to land. They lived like this for five days. Then they saw a ship approaching. Those aboard were astonished to see people in the distance, knowing that the place had neither a settlement nor anywhere to make a landing and stay. The captain sent to find out what had happened. The Jews told their story. Taking pity on them, he had them brought aboard. He took an old sail, tore it up and gave each a piece to cover themselves; he gave the women whole shirts. He fed them and, on passing a place where Jews lived, put them ashore.

The survivors sent a messenger to the local Jews, fearing that the captain meant to sell them. The Jewish leaders came to the ship, and the captain said: "I did not capture these poor people in war to demand a ransom. If you reimburse what I have

spent on them, I shall be satisfied.” They immediately paid him that amount and added gifts. The Jews left the ship and were fed. For the rest of their lives, the survivors prayed that the captain might live long.

An Armed Four-Master Puts to Sea

Frans Huys after Pieter Bruegel the Elder, about 1555–1556. The engraving shows sixteenth-century rigging and maritime activity. It accompanies the dangers of the crossing related here, without claiming to depict the exiles’ vessel or their rescue. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

Two captains, no named route

The story contrasts a first shipmaster who strips and abandons the passengers with a second who rescues them and accepts reimbursement of his expenses. Neither is named; nor are the island, departure port or receiving community. The presence of lions alone cannot justify assigning the rock to a particular Mediterranean island. The duration is given in stages: three days before the climb, followed by five days spent avoiding the beasts. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

A documented maritime setting

Writing about the exiles of 1492, Senarega reports transporters' cruelty and greed, drownings caused by some sailors, and children sold to pay passage. These independent statements document the kind of abuse described at the beginning of the narrative. They do not reproduce the dialogue about Christ's death or the rescue at the rock. The captain's final statement distinguishes prisoners of war from people given assistance: the narrator reports a request for expenses, not a ransom. No receipt or contract identifying this transaction was located. [S217 ; E1744]

The Gospel passage behind the merchant's reply

The merchant's reply has a precise point of reference in Luke 23:34: during the crucifixion Jesus asks the Father to forgive those acting against him. The merchant in the account invokes that forgiveness to challenge the captain's plan. He does not quote the whole verse literally and develops the argument in his own terms. This connection identifies the religious tradition behind his speech; it does not make the voyage a Gospel episode. The ancient source thus presents, through a Jewish compiler's voice, a disagreement between two Christian speakers about the meaning they give to Jesus' death. Neither man is identified by Luke or by the Genoese chronicle. Their dialogue and the rescue sequence belong to Ibn Verga's particular transmission. [S220 ; H1928 ; S217]

Translation Choices

Forgiveness for blood shed

The former phrase “forgave the shedding of his blood in order to forgive the human race” was an opaque calque. Hebrew מחל על דמו and Wiener’s wording, that he “forgave them for his blood”, permit the people forgiven to be made explicit: those who shed it. The sentence remains the merchant’s speech within the chronicle. His advice to abandon the passengers has not been softened. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Victims and the repeated landing

Spanish speaks of several people killed by the lions; Hebrew and Wiener give one. “One of them” is adopted as the precise Hebrew reading also attested in Wiener; that agreement documents the number’s transmission, not two independent counts. “They killed some of them” remains the Spanish variant. The repeated disembarkation, before and after the negotiation, exists in the sources rather than originating in the PDF. It may distinguish arrival from completed disembarkation, but the intermediate movements are not explicit; the translation does not invent an itinerary. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 196–197 ; H1928, section 58 ; G1856, p. 188–190.

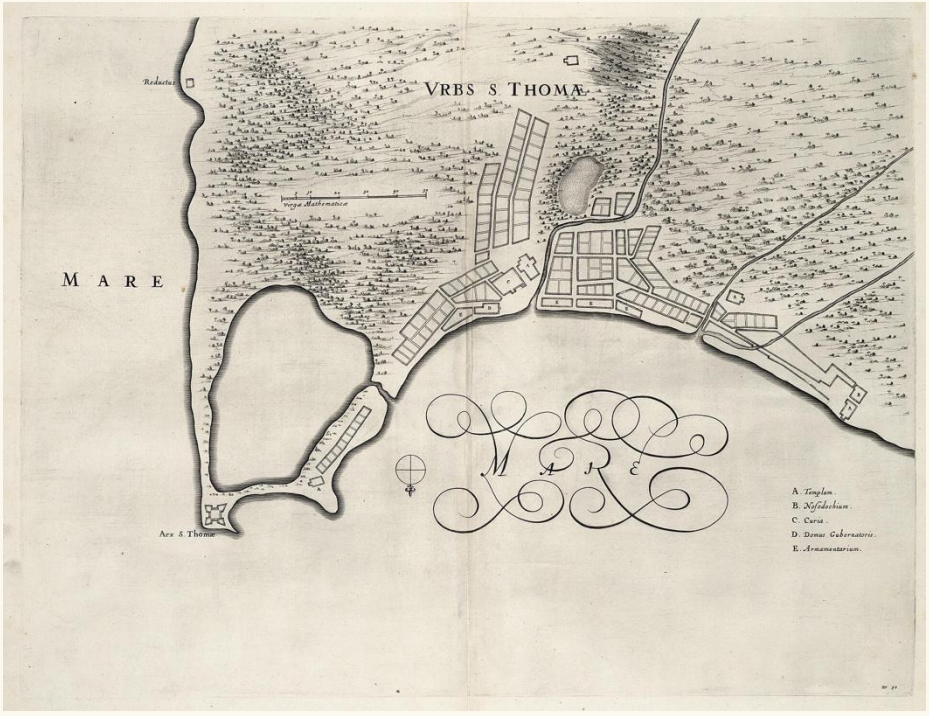
Account LIX

Children Deported from Portugal

The fifty-ninth account. What shall we say of the decree issued in Lisbon and the seizure of children sent to the so-called "lost" islands, where no one lived? When they were taken by the king's order and led to the ships, what weeping and cries rose from the women, with no one to show compassion or speak on their behalf!

There was a woman from whom seven children had been taken. Hearing that the king was leaving for church, she threw herself at his horse's feet and begged him to leave her one little child. He refused to hear her and told his servants: "Remove her from my sight." She renewed her plea with louder cries while they rebuked her. The king said: "Let her be: she is like a bitch whose puppies have been taken away." May the Lord see and judge the wrongs inflicted on his people!

Some said that the decree had been issued because the exiles from Spain had promised the king a certain sum to admit them to his kingdom, but many had ultimately failed to pay. This, they said, had brought about the calamity. Many children died aboard ship because of the change in food and climate; many, on reaching the islands, were devoured by tanninim (תנינים, large reptiles or aquatic creatures) along the shore.



The Town of São Tomé

Urbs S. Thomae, map published in 1647. It locates São Tomé in the Gulf of Guinea, the destination of the children's deportation examined in the commentary. The map shows a developed town more than a century later; it does not depict the removal of the children. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

Children sent to São Tomé

The historical core of this account can be connected with the sending of children to São Tomé under John II of Portugal. In chapter CLXXIX, Garcia de Resende dates the grant of the captaincy to Álvaro de Caminha to 1493 at Torres Vedras. He adds that the king entrusted him with the young children of Castilian Jews enslaved for remaining beyond the permitted term. He expressly says that the children were baptised and sent to populate the island, separated from their parents. This concerns the same deportation policy, not merely a remote analogy. [S211]

Legal grounds and the mother's story

In chapter CLXIII, Resende describes admission to Portugal for eight months, with payment and an entry certificate; irregular entry could also result in royal enslavement. Chapter CLXXIX explains enslavement by overstaying. Ibn Verga introduces, with "some said", an explanation based on promised sums left unpaid. These are not fully interchangeable: the accounts preserve differing memories of admission conditions. Resende does not recount the mother of six, her exchange with the king or deaths from reptiles. Those details are therefore not confirmed by his text. "Lost islands" is the chronicle's description, not the captaincy's administrative name. [S211 ; E1744 ; H1928]

The captaincy and the settlement project

Drawing on the Portuguese documentation, Arlindo Caldeira dates the donation charter to 29 July 1493. Caminha was São Tomé's third captain and held the office until 1499. The crown's organised settlement included convicts sent into exile and children taken from Jewish families. This places the operation within a specific colonial undertaking. The figure of two thousand children attributed to Valentim Fernandes in the study remains a source's estimate: the historian states that the actual number is unknown. [S221 ; S211]

A biblical quotation already linked to this deportation

The connection with Deuteronomy 28:32 is more than a present-day thematic analogy. The Italian account of 1495 quotes that verse when describing children removed from their parents in Portugal. This is therefore a scriptural association attested in another early source for the same general event. It does not corroborate the mother with seven children or her conversation with John II. The distinction traces both the deportation and the way early Jewish exile accounts related it to the words of the Torah. [S202 ; S200]

Translation Choices

Six or seven children; snakes or reptiles

Hebrew and Wiener give seven children; Spanish gives six. Seven is adopted as the concordant reading in the Hebrew and German transmission, with six expressly retained as a variant. The figure does not come from identifying the family: Resende neither names this mother nor recounts her dialogue. For the animals, Spanish serpientes means “serpents”, Wiener’s Seethiere “sea creatures”. Hebrew tanninim (תנינים) allows large reptiles or aquatic creatures. The original term, with its meaning, is retained to expose the uncertainty; these expressions alone justify neither “crocodiles” nor any other precise species. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S211]

The Hebrew’s final addition, absent from the Spanish

The Hebrew adds: “As time passed, a young man was found to have married his sister. Some did not know, and others knew: a man left them, returned to his country and married his mother.” The attachment of “some did not know” is abrupt; Wiener connects it with the second marriage, without removing every ambiguity. This addition is reproduced as a variant within the chronicle. It is absent from the Resende passage checked here and should not be presented as an established fact about São Tomé families. [H1928 ; G1856 ; S211]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 197–198 ; H1928, section 59 ; G1856, p. 190–191.

Account LX

The Lisbon Massacre

The sixtieth account concerns the Lisbon massacre. I was outside the city and, when I returned a few days later, people gave me differing accounts of what had happened. All agreed, however, on the terrible extent of the calamity. This is what happened. On the night of Pesaḥ (the Jewish Passover), some Christians found forcibly converted Jews (anoussim, אנוסים) eating unleavened bread and bitter herbs. They brought them before the king, who ordered them imprisoned until justice had been done.

At that time famine gripped the country, and people blamed the Jews for the disaster. Hearing this, the preachers worked to support that belief. One of them stood in his church and spoke against the Jews. A hollow statue had been made, with a door at the back and a glass panel in its chest. A candle was hidden inside, and people said that fire issued from the statue. Everyone knelt and said: "See what a great miracle! This shows that God judges all Jews by fire."

One of the forcibly converted men arrived without having heard these words and said innocently: "Would that it were a miracle of water rather than fire: in this drought we have greater need of water!" The Christians rose, saying: "This man has mocked us!" They immediately dragged him outside and killed him. One of his brothers arrived, saw him and said: "Alas, my brother! Who has killed you?" They drew their swords, cut off his head and threw it beside the dead man's body.

Two friars then rose, carrying crosses. They went to the square and proclaimed: "Whoever kills a Jew shall gain a hundred days of pardon in the next world." The crowd rose up. Sword in hand, they killed three thousand people in three days. They dragged the bodies to the square and burned them. They threw pregnant women from windows and caught them on spears below; the children they carried were hurled several cubits away. They committed further cruelties unworthy of being recounted.

People said that all this arose from hatred of a Jew named Mascareñas, a tax farmer who imposed levies upon them. As proof they pointed to the massacre's ending as soon as he was found. The judges of Lisbon bore no responsibility, nor did the nobles

or governors: the crowd acted without them. They tried to save the victims, but could do nothing against the crowd's fury, which threatened to turn against them; they had to flee for their lives.

The king, a pious man, was outside the city at the time. When he heard of this lamentable event, he returned and held an inquiry. Finding that the friars had caused it, he wished to destroy the church from which the evil had arisen. The nobles opposed him.

He wanted all the murderers put to death. His councillors showed him an imperial law according to which, when a crime was committed by a crowd of fifty men or more, only the leaders of the riot were to receive a death sentence. The king therefore had the friars arrested and condemned to be burned. As for Lisbon, which had previously borne the title "loyal", he ordered it to be called "the rebellious province" for three years.

Lisbon in 1572

Braun and Hogenberg, *Civitates orbis terrarum*, 1572. The city sixty-six years after the massacre of 1506, before the changes following the earthquake of 1755. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

The same massacre in Góis's chronicle

Damião de Góis gives a precise date: Sunday 19 April 1506, the Sunday after Easter. His account is in the first part of the Chronica d'el-rei D. Manuel, chapters CII and CIII. He places the first killing in the church of São Domingos monastery after a New Christian attributed a supposedly miraculous light to a candle. He confirms two friars carrying a crucifix, bodies burned in the Rossio and near the river, attacks on houses, and violence continuing until Tuesday. This is a direct comparison for the massacre. Góis wrote several decades later, but complements his narrative with a royal judgment reproduced in the following chapter. [S222]

Deaths, participants and the king's movements

Góis counts more than nineteen hundred dead, against Ibn Verga's three thousand. He mentions foreign sailors and local residents among the attackers, as well as inhabitants who sheltered victims. In the passage checked, he does not connect the end of the massacre with finding Mascareñas. Manuel I receives the news at Avis and sends agents, including the prior of Crato and Diogo Lobo. He passes through Beja and Évora, then establishes himself at Setúbal to address the affair, Lisbon being plague-stricken. The immediate return to the city in Ibn Verga is therefore not confirmed; it has not silently been repaired in the translation. [S222 ; E1744]

The judgment of 22 May 1506

In chapter CIII Góis transcribes a decision dated at Setúbal on 22 May 1506. It confiscates the property of perpetrators and accomplices, and one fifth of the property of residents present who failed to assist the authorities in resisting the violence. It also suspends the trades' representation in municipal government and alters the residents' billeting privilege. Góis reports the king's rebuke to Aires da Silva, Álvaro de Castro and the city councillors for negligence. This document substantially qualifies the account's claim that the authorities bore no responsibility. Góis confirms the execution of the two friars after degradation, but gives neither the rule about fifty people nor a renaming as "the rebellious province" for three years. [S222]

The officials named by Góis

The Portuguese chronicle makes the officials' functions more precise. Aires da Silva is regedor of the Casa da Suplicação, and Álvaro de Castro governor of Lisbon's Casa do Cível: Góis thus names officers of royal courts as well as municipal councillors. In chapter CII he records their late arrival with the men they could gather; in chapter CIII he gives the

king's criticism of their negligence. The comparison therefore concerns identifiable offices and a sequence of intervention, rather than a general opposition between a crowd and "the judges". [S222]

Who speaks in The Sceptre of Judah?

The compiler states that he was absent and gathered differing reports on his return: he presents himself as collecting evidence afterwards, not witnessing the massacre. The Hebrew and Wiener add that he follows an old man's account. The victims are New Christians descended from or subjected to forced conversion. The narrator's label "Jews" cannot determine the individual religious practice of everyone killed. The arrest over a Pesaḥ meal belongs to the story's prelude; it must not automatically be assigned to Sunday 19 April. [H1928 ; G1856 ; S222]

The Passover meal in Exodus

The two foods in the opening episode have an exact reference: Exodus 12:8 associates unleavened bread and bitter herbs with the Passover meal. Exodus 12:14–18 then prescribes its commemoration and the period of unleavened bread. This source explains the ritual significance attributed to the meal discovered among the converts; it identifies neither those arrested nor the arrest's date as the Sunday of the massacre. The biblical passage concerns the departure from Egypt, which the meal commemorates here. The reported practice, its scriptural reference and the particular chronology of the 1506 violence should therefore remain distinct. [S223 ; H1928 ; S222]

Translation Choices

Language corrections, not a rewriting of events

The brother's question is put in the past tense, following Hebrew מי הרגך, "who killed you?", and Wiener: he is looking at someone already dead. Anoussim means "people subjected to compulsion", here forcibly converted people; Pesaḥ is the Jewish Passover. The Hebrew characters have been restored to their proper order. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Cubits and unborn children

Spanish criaturas saltaban de muchas madres is corrupt or heavily compressed. The Hebrew says that the children carried by the pregnant women were thrown several אמות (ammot, cubits), and Wiener likewise gives a distance. The Hebrew spelling can resemble the word for "mothers", which explains the confusion. The connection with the pregnancies has been made explicit. The "hundred days of pardon" is the inciters' reported promise; the source provides no ecclesiastical document authorising it. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Two friars or the clergy

E1744 specifies two friars, where the Hebrew and German subsequently use a broader collective plural. Two is retained, with independent support from Góis on this point. The Hebrew addition about the informant reads: "What an old man told me is what I am about to write." It is absent from the Spanish passage. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S222]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 198–200 ; H1928, section 60 ; G1856, p. 191–193.

Account LXI

The Dead Child Names the Accusers

The sixty-first account. I heard that in Spain some people made the following accusation: a dead boy had supposedly been found in a Jew's house, his chest opened and his heart removed for use in celebrating Passover. Don Solomon the Levite, a learned man and a Kabbalist, came and placed a divine name (shem, שם, "name") beneath the boy's tongue. The boy awoke and named the person who had killed him and the person who had removed his heart to lay the blame on the Jews. I have not found this story in writing, but have heard it told.

Elijah Restores the Widow's Son to Life

Simon Bening, about 1525–1530: in the border, Elijah restores the widow of Zarephath's son to life. The parallel with 1 Kings 17:17–24 concerns a child's return to life. That biblical passage does not relate the exposure of accusers or the use of the Name beneath the tongue. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

What the compiler knows about his source

The opening and closing expressly frame the account as a story heard from others. It names no town, year, accuser or judicial authority; Solomon the Levite is its only named participant. "In Spain" alone cannot connect it with a particular trial. The passage first reports an accusation and then reverses it through words attributed to the dead boy. Translating the accusation as the narrator's own finding would destroy that structure. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

A transmission lead, not an identification

Isidore Loeb reproduces the anecdote in his 1892 study, pp.22–23, and later considers a connection with the Solomon Hallévi of another episode in the chronicle. He presents this as a possibility. His study supplies neither a trial record nor an earlier account naming the victim. This check leaves the Kabbalist's exact identity and the location open, rather than conflating the story with a Spanish trial known from elsewhere. The revival and the action of the divine name remain events as narrated by the ancient text. [S224 ; H1928]

Elijah, Elisha and a child restored to life

Two biblical episodes illuminate the form of the transmitted marvel. In 1 Kings 17:17–24, Elijah carries the widow's son into the upper room, prays and stretches himself over him; the child revives and is returned to his mother. In 2 Kings 4:32–37, Elisha prays beside the Shunammite's son and makes contact with his body before the child opens his eyes. These texts provide an ancient tradition of children restored to life through a man of God's intervention. Neither describes a name placed under the tongue, a removed heart, or a child naming his murderers. They are therefore precise religious parallels for certain elements, rather than records of the Spanish case. The child's particular function in Ibn Verga also differs: his words reverse an accusation and expose a crime, rather than simply completing his return to his mother. [S225 ; S226]

Translation Choices

The divine name

Shem literally means “name”; here it is a divine name used in a Kabbalistic practice. The source gives neither its letters, its material support nor a recited formula. No tetragrammaton, parchment or detailed ritual should be added. “The Levite” is part of the character’s designation, not a translation of Verga. [H1928 ; G1856]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 200–200 ; H1928, section 61 ; G1856, p. 193–193.

Account LXII

The Warning of the Turtledoves

The sixty-second account. Rabbi Judah ibn Verga lived in the great city of Seville (rabbi means "master"; ibn means "son of"). When the Inquisition arrived, the inhabitants said that, to discover which of the forcibly converted people still practised Judaism, he should be arrested, for the Jews did everything under his direction. Even before the Inquisition arrived, he had understood what was coming. He placed three pairs of turtledoves at his window. The first were plucked and slaughtered, with this inscription around their necks: "These are the forcibly converted who will leave last." The next were plucked but alive, representing those who would leave after the first group. The third pair still had their feathers and were alive, representing those who would leave first.

But they would not listen and disaster overtook them. Many forcibly converted people were burned, so that the divine decree might be fulfilled in them. Judah fled and reached Lisbon. There he was tortured to make him reveal the names of those who still practised Judaism. He disclosed nothing and died under torture. May his merit atone for the sins of Israel.

Seville in the Late Sixteenth Century

Joris Hoefnagel, view published in *Civitates orbis terrarum*, edition of 1598. A record of the city named in the account, later than the events it reports. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

Seville, then Lisbon

The account gives a two-stage route: the arrival of the Inquisition in Seville, followed by Judah ibn Verga's flight to Lisbon and death under torture. The opening belongs to the setting of the inquisitorial tribunal's establishment in late-fifteenth-century Seville; the narrative supplies neither a departure year nor a date of death. The institution named in Seville must not automatically be transferred to Lisbon: the text says that Judah was tortured there but does not identify the Portuguese tribunal responsible. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The beginning of the prosecutions in Seville

In chapter XLIV Bernáldez dates the first inquisitors' activity to the beginning of 1481. He names the Dominicans Friar Miguel and Friar Juan, together with Doctor de Medina, and describes the prisoners' transfer from San Pablo to Triana Castle, where the tribunal establishes its hearing chamber. He then records fear, departures and flight to seigneurial lands, Portugal and Muslim territories. This supplies a precise setting for the warning and flight narrated by Ibn Verga. Bernáldez does not name Judah in this passage or describe the turtledoves: he corroborates an institutional sequence and departures, without supplying the character's individual proceedings. [S212]

A tradition about a collector of accounts

Judah ibn Verga is one of the figures to whom the compilation connects its transmission. The three pairs of birds stage a graded warning: losing property and life, losing property but surviving, or leaving intact. The source cites no trial proceedings, interrogations or sentence allowing his death to be independently traced. The documents examined therefore do not turn the account into a fully dated biography. Its final words are the Spanish version's commemorative formula, preserved as part of the transmitted account. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

A warning displayed: a connection with Ezekiel

Ezekiel 5:1–4 offers an ancient parallel for a warning divided into three material groups: the prophet's hair is apportioned between fire, sword and scattering, with verse 12 explaining its significance. Ezekiel 12:3–7 likewise depicts departure into exile acted out publicly so that spectators may understand its meaning. These scenes illuminate the use of a visible action to announce different fates. They do not contain the three pairs of turtledoves or prove direct borrowing. In the tradition concerning Judah, the warning is organised around the chosen time of departure and the birds' condition. [S227 ; S228]

Translation Choices

The third pair of turtledoves

For the third pair E1744 repeats “without feathers and alive”, although the second pair is already plucked and unslaughtered. The Hebrew and Wiener explicitly say the final birds still have their feathers and are alive. That reading restores the three warnings’ progression and justifies the correction in the text. “Those in the middle” means those leaving after the first group; it concerns the timing of departure. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Disclosure and confession

Judah is not asked to confess his own belief but to denounce people who still practise Judaism. “He disclosed nothing” conveys that relationship more clearly than “he confessed nothing”. The Spanish ending, invoking Judah’s merit for the atonement of Israel’s sins, is retained as a conclusion directly attached to this account’s protagonist; it establishes neither the date nor the nature of a judgement. Hebrew and Wiener broaden the formula: “May the merit of all the martyrs sustain us!” The two commemorative prayers are therefore distinguished rather than representing all versions as invoking the same person. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 200–201 ; H1928, section 62 ; G1856, p. 193–194.

Account LXIII

Proposed Causes of Persecution

The sixty-third account. Solomon says: "When we think over these great calamities, we marvel and ask: 'Why this immense anger, this fury? God has not treated all nations in this way, although they are more burdened with sins than the Jews.' These questions, and all others like them, are answered by the verse: 'You alone have I known', and so forth.

There are also seven causes of what has happened to us. The first is our fathers' sin, as our sages taught us when commenting on the words: 'On the day of punishment, I shall punish.' No punishment comes without the sin of the golden calf also being punished. And the author of Lamentations says: 'Our fathers sinned and are no more', and so forth.

The second is that, without great merit to stand in their way, the sufferings of exile arise naturally from religious hatred and the ruler's ambition to subject people to his law and faith. Our sages say: 'Why is the mountain called Sinai? Because hatred (sin'ah, שנאה) descended from there.' This is all the more so because our Law forbids us to eat and drink with them, although sharing a meal brings hearts together. Our sages said: 'A shared meal has great power: it brings together those who were far apart.' This is also their explanation of the verse: 'Because you have done it.'

The third is their accusation that we killed their god. It was not without reason that Moses said: 'If we sacrifice before their eyes what the Egyptians venerate, will they not stone us?'

The fourth is that there are three great forms of jealousy: jealousy over religion, over women and over property. All three arise in relations between Israel and the other peoples. In Spain, some men, through increasing familiarity, are already beginning to cast their eyes on the daughters of the land. Some have allowed themselves this licence, saying that it incurs only a flogging. They do not know that the qanna'im (קנאים, "zealots for the Law") may kill them and that, according to the tradition, they incur karet (כרת, "cutting off", a divine penalty). Above all, another sin is added to these: if the woman becomes pregnant and bears a son, he will be an idolater.

Jealousy over property arises because Jews practise the same trades and commerce as their neighbours. Above all, when one of them is found stealing or robbing, the blame is laid upon everyone, as is customary. The divine name is thereby profaned, for people say that we have no law. Rabbi Moses of Coucy wrote that, even if this were the only offence among our people, it would suffice to prolong the exile. And the prophecy says: 'The remnant of Israel shall do no wrong and speak no falsehood.'

The fifth is the people's habit of swearing falsely. Ibn Ezra writes that this alone is enough to delay our deliverance.

The sixth is the pride of some of our people. In the year of the expulsion, it caused a quarrel over seats in the synagogue on the night of Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement). Each man seized a torch standing before the hekhal (היכל, here the ark containing the Torah scrolls) to strike his companion. Many similar things occur among us, and the Lord is just.

Since all this breaks the heart, I wish to set down something most worthy of praise: the splendour of the Sanctuary and its building, as I found it described by the great Versor at the request of King Alfonso the Good. I translated this text from Latin into the holy language."

Amos in a Thirteenth-Century Bible

Opening of Amos, Bible illuminated about 1270. The initial shows the prophet in prayer. The connection is textual: Amos 3:2 is expressly invoked in Account LXIII. This page identifies the biblical book cited, without depicting medieval persecutions. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

Earlier sources behind the quotations

The passage does not narrate an additional persecution: Solomon reconsiders the preceding sequence through older texts. Amos 3:2 supplies the opening quotation; Exodus 32:34 and Lamentations 5:7 appear in the first cause. The argument about the golden calf occurs in Sanhedrin 102a, where Rabbi Yitzḥaq says that later punishments include a portion of that earlier offence. The play on Sinai and sin'ah, "hatred", appears in Shabbat 89a. The saying about the power of a meal is found in Sanhedrin 103b; "Because you have done it" points to Lamentations 1:21, as Wiener specifies. These are identifiable textual sources, not archival records of a fifteenth-century event. [S230 ; S229 ; S231 ; G1856]

Two medieval borrowings located

Moses of Coucy's Sefer Mitzvot Gadol, positive commandment 74, contains an argument addressed in particular to the exiles in Spain. It connects fraudulent dealings with non-Jews to profanation of the divine name and quotes Zephaniah 3:13, just as this account does. In his commentary on Exodus 20:7, Ibn Ezra describes habitual swearing and says that this offence alone would suffice to prolong the exile. These comparisons verify the compiler's two attributions. They also show the reuse of older religious arguments; the paragraphs do not by themselves provide a register of offences in an identifiable Spanish community. [S232 ; S233]

Details that remain unlocated

The formula concerning qanna'im occurs in Mishnah Sanhedrin 9:6. It is a category of rabbinic law cited by the author, distinct from a Spanish judgment whose case papers he might have reproduced. The synagogue quarrel is assigned only to "the year of the expulsion", without a place, participants' names or proceedings. The compilation's context points towards 1492 but cannot date the incident more precisely. Versor and Alfonso introduce the following piece: their identification depends on examining that text and cannot be established from "the Good" alone. [S234 ; E1744 ; H1928]

The third cause and its Egyptian reference

Moses' warning about the danger of stoning occurs in Exodus 8:22 in Hebrew numbering, generally 8:26 in English Bibles. Pharaoh has proposed that the Hebrews sacrifice within the country; Moses regards such a sacrifice as unacceptable to the Egyptians and fears that they will stone him. The biblical exchange thus concerns the location and acceptability of sacrifice before the Exodus. Solomon applies it by analogy to the accusation about Christ's death: the persons, period and act differ. Identifying the verse recovers his reasoning without

suggesting that Exodus narrates a Christian accusation or corroborates a Spanish trial. Similarly, Amos 3:1–2, at the beginning of the account, addresses the family of Israel brought out of Egypt; the quotation provides the starting point for the compiler's religious explanation, rather than a date for the persecutions he has assembled. [S236 ; S235 ; H1928]

The cited authorities form a chain of transmission

The source list reveals successive layers: prophetic sayings, Talmudic discussions, the commentaries of Ibn Ezra and Moses of Coucy, and finally a synagogue incident assigned to the year of the expulsion. The argument about shared meals, for example, comes through Sanhedrin 103b, which illustrates it with scriptural episodes and traditions about hospitality. This chain explains why references from different centuries appear within a single explanation. It traces Solomon's borrowings while preserving the contemporary incident's different status as an account without a specified place. [S231 ; S232 ; S233 ; H1928]

Translation Choices

Seven causes announced, six listed

All three editions announce seven causes but number only six. This gap or inconsistency belongs to the transmission; no seventh cause has been invented. The sentence about exile follows its causal reasoning, confirmed by Wiener: the sufferings of exile arise from hatred and the desire to dominate. "Visit" in the Exodus quotation is an older judicial usage, rendered here as "punish". [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The accusation and the Hebrew addition

For the third cause, Spanish says "because they say that we killed their god", while Hebrew and Wiener give the shorter "the killing of Jesus of Nazareth". The Spanish wording is retained because it unambiguously identifies an accusation made by opponents, fitting the discussion of causes of persecution. It does not turn that accusation into a fact established by the editor. For the sixth cause, Hebrew and German add before the quarrel: "They sought to rule over the non-Jewish inhabitants of the country, although the latter were its masters." The addition absent in Spanish is given here in full; Wiener specifies "Christians" where Hebrew says "non-Jews" more broadly. No located historical record authenticates the reported incident. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Terms and voices

Sin'ah explains the rabbinic wordplay without purporting to give Sinai's historical etymology. Qanna'im and karet are glossed at first occurrence. Hekhal normally means "palace" or "sanctuary", but here denotes the synagogue ark, since that is the setting of the quarrel. The entire discussion, including its religious judgments, remains Solomon's speech rather than this edition's commentary. [H1928 ; G1856]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 201–203 ; H1928, section 63 ; G1856, p. 194–196.

Account LXIV

The Temple's Splendour and Service

The king wrote to Versor: 'Man of sound judgement and profound thought, admirable in counsel, when you came to my court, I called you my father, and all my people were guided by your word. Yet you went away, and your reason remains unknown to me. If you return, I shall honour you above all who came before you. I know that you are versed in the Law of the Jews and their institutions. I am told of so many wicked things concerning them that I have wished to punish and banish them. People say that they repeat each day: "May the reign of arrogance soon be brought down." It is therefore clear that they ask every day for the ruin of our kingdom. I am also told that they sound a horn on their feast day, and that this is a sign that our kingdom will fall as Jericho fell.

'I ask you something more fundamental. I have heard that a writing of Saint Titus has come into your hands, describing the plan of the Sanctuary in Jerusalem and the expenses required for its construction. The thought has come to me of building a temple in the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Where could I seek advice except in the writings of the ancients, who were men of wisdom? Especially when it is Solomon's Temple, for it was said of him: "He was wiser than any man." Explain this to me in writing, in language I can understand; ask me for whatever you wish, and I shall fulfil your desire.'

Versor's reply: 'Holy and mighty king, who overthrows kingdoms and humbles the proud, before whom kings kneel and whose enemies bite the dust, if I have left your court, it is because I found men younger than myself seeking dominion there. You saw it and said nothing.

'Concerning your question, my lord, about the Jews' prayer, this is what I have found in all the commentators: these words refer to Amalek. The Jews are commanded to uproot him from the world if they have the power to do so; when they are in servitude, they must at least not forget him, for the Bible says: "From beneath the heavens ... Do not forget." They call it the "reign of arrogance" because he came against them arrogantly when they left Egypt, refusing to acknowledge the wonders God had wrought. Pharaoh, despite his hard heart, had already acknowledged them,

saying: "The Lord is just." But Amalek came to deny what was manifest. God therefore became extraordinarily angry with him and said in the Bible: "The Lord's war against Amalek."

'Reason shows this too: how could they ask for the ruin of the kingdom when, three times a week, they bring out the scroll of the Law and pray for your life and the exaltation of your throne? On the night of Yom Kippur, they bring out all the scrolls they possess and offer supplications for the king's peace. And in their morning prayers they say: "Grant peace in the kingdom." How could they contradict themselves in their prayers? This is quite plain.

'As for sounding the shofar (שופר, ritual horn), their commentators write that it is a sign of the day of judgement: they sound it and say: "Awake, you sleepers." They also offer supplication in remembrance of the binding of Isaac ('aqedah, עקדה), recalled by the horn of the ram offered in his place. The fundamental reason is that on that day their servitude in Egypt ceased, and they became free. It is the Jews' custom to sound the shofar when they pass from slavery to freedom. Would that all their practices were like these!

'Therefore take heed, my lord: I have never seen anyone seek to destroy this people without bringing about his own downfall. This is not because they follow the truth, but because God hears the needy. I have learnt that you intend to force them to change their religion. It would be an admirable undertaking, if it could succeed. But know that those subjected to compulsion follow the Law they held before that violence with still greater zeal. I heard that one of them, when he went to our churches and the host was elevated, would strike his breast and say: "Alas for me, who see this! Alas for him who believes in it!"

'In Seville, an investigator said to the duke: "If you wish to know how the forcibly converted Jews keep the Sabbath, let us climb that tower." They climbed it, and he said: "Lift your eyes and look at the house of such-and-such a man, who is one of them, then at that other house and many more. You will see no smoke rise from any of them, despite the bitter cold. It is because they do not light a fire on the Sabbath." We have also learnt that, among them, there was a man in Spain who ate unleavened bread throughout the year, so that he could eat it at his Passover without arousing suspicion. He said that his stomach could not tolerate leavened bread. On the feast when they sound the shofar, they go into the countryside and sound it among the mountains and valleys, so that no one nearby will hear it. They have men who know how to perform ritual slaughter and remove the forbidden parts, including certain

fats (ḥelev, חלב), and who bring the meat to their houses. Some are circumcised in secret; some circumcise themselves, trusting no one for fear of being discovered. Some carry the scroll of the Law of Moses in a sack of pepper. The same is true of their other ceremonies.

'If this is so, what is the use of baptising them and calling them Peter and Paul, when they observe the Law like Akiva and Tarfon? There is no advantage in their becoming Christians; on the contrary, they become more confident and look down on Christians by conviction, and have no fear, since they are already regarded as Christians in outward appearance. Moreover, they no longer pay the levies they paid when they were Jews. Know, my lord, that Judaism is a disease without a remedy.

'On your second question, this is my advice: do not think of equalling or imitating what Solomon did in the Temple, or even the second Temple. For Solomon, who surpassed all the peoples of the East in wisdom and wealth, could not have built it without divine help. So that you may not say I am trying to evade your request, I am ready to do whatever lies within my power. As for Titus's writing, I sought it in Rome, for I take a great interest in antiquity. I found only this report by Marcus, a Roman consul appointed to judge the Jews in Jerusalem. It was composed at the request of the Romans, who wished to erect a building on that model. These are his words:

"People prosperous from ancient times, people whose dominion extends to the ends of the earth, sages and counsellors of the great city of Rome, Your Greatness asks something beyond my power. A man can faithfully depict only what his eyes have seen. The Jews do not permit entry into the interior of the Sanctuary, for it is against their Law; they allow access only to a courtyard where Christians enter. Beyond that limit, I therefore know it only from what the priests serving there have told me, and from what I have seen outside, as far as my sight reached.

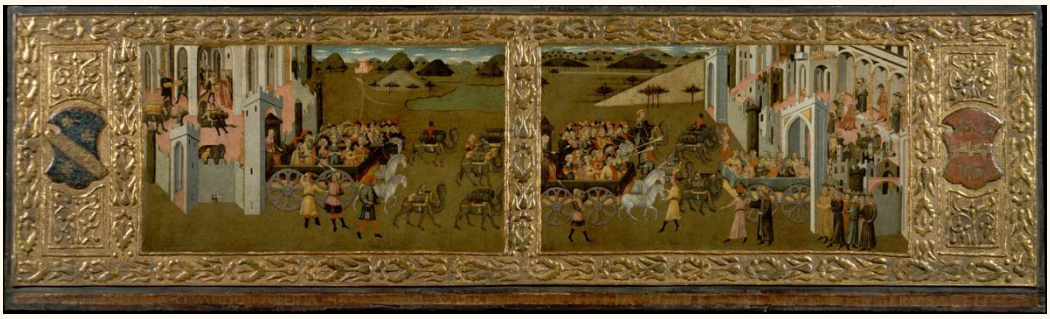
"To set out these matters, I shall arrange them under ten headings: first, the Temple's materials; second, its site; third, its builders; fourth, the expenses; fifth, the dimensions; sixth, the Temple buildings; seventh, the gates; eighth, the vessels; ninth, the personnel of the sacred service; tenth, the holiness of the service.

"First, the Temple's materials. There were ten: stone, cedar, cypress (beroshim, ברושים, the name of a coniferous timber), almogim (אלמוגים, understood here as coral trees), gold, silver, precious stones, iron, copper and tin. In Rome I had heard that almogim was a red wood the colour of coral. People offered this explanation because they had never seen a coral tree, only fragments as large as a finger or, at most, a hand.

Yet the priests told me that they were truly corals. I asked what they made from them, and was told: beams for the Temple and the Holy of Holies. I was greatly astonished that corals of such dimensions could be found. They replied that this came from the wisdom of Solomon, who knew the order of the world's creation and its nature. In the sea there was a Lebanon of trees — that is, coral trees — just as on land there is a Lebanon of cedars. Using his knowledge, he had devised a way to bring them out of the sea.

"They told me how they were extracted. A large ship was brought, filled with sand, a very heavy substance. A man who could swim well went down to the bottom, tied a rope to the coral tree, and fastened the other end to the ship's mast. The sand was then thrown out: as the ship rose higher, the tree was uprooted. I asked why no coral of this size was found in our day. They replied that this sea lay very far from any inhabited place and that only a few branches could be brought from it: those were the pieces we see.

"They added that musical instruments were made from this coral, and were valued more highly than if they had been made of gold, for its colour was a deeper red than that of the corals brought to us: its hue changes with the climate and air. We shall explain the use of the precious stones. Copper and tin served for certain less important vessels, and iron for nails. They told me that the stones of Solomon's building were eight cubits long, and many were ten. The Temple standing today is Herod's. Those who returned from Babylon with Cyrus's permission were poor and did not build it as beautifully or lavishly. Then Herod came, pulled down that building and erected another. In some respects, it surpassed Solomon's in beauty and wealth. Since Herod was very rich, he sent to the islands for marble. They brought him stones of extreme whiteness and astonishing dimensions: he found stones twenty-five cubits long, twelve wide and eight high. All were of the same size, from the foundations to the summit. It is astonishing that such heavy stones were raised more than a hundred cubits high. He also found in the sea coloured stones, different from one another, veined like waves: something never before seen.



Solomon and the Queen of Sheba
Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, Master of Lecceto, third quarter of the fifteenth century. Painting on a Sienese marriage chest. This vision of Solomon's court accompanies the discourse on his wisdom and wealth. [provenance]

"Second, the Temple's site. It stood on a mountain with steep slopes. It was not built on level ground, because this mountain had been holy from ancient times. The Jews say that at its summit stood the foundation stone (even ha-shetiyah, אבן השתיה), from which the world was founded, and that it is its centre. They say that this is where Adam was created, where he erected an altar and offered a sacrifice; there too his son Abel sacrificed. It is where Noah left the ark and thanked God for saving him from the Flood and from the fierce beasts that were with him in the ark. It is where the great patriarch Abraham went up to sacrifice his son Isaac. The Jews therefore called it Mount Moriah, meaning that God showed him this place, which was consecrated by the divine word. The priests added that this mountain was full of fragrant herbs, like incense and myrrh, as the word Moriah also indicates. When these Jews gather to go to the Sanctuary, they do not say, 'Let us go to the Sanctuary', but, 'Let us go to Mount Moriah.' It is the place where Jacob saw the angels descending and ascending. Our commentators in Rome explain that he saw the descendants of Esau, our father, ascending without coming down again.

The Clemency of Cyrus

Cyrus receives Jewish captives. Master of the Munich Boccaccio, in Fouquet's workshop, c. 1465–1475, BnF, Français 247, f. 230v. The adjoining passage recalls the return from Babylonia and the rebuilding before Herod. [provenance]

"It is where prophecy comes and divine influence descends upon the prophets. It is the mountain by which worthy and pure souls ascend to their rest, and where the prayer of every mouth is heard. The Jews have received this tradition: any stranger coming from the islands, even if he has no religion, will be heard and answered by God if he cries to him in this place. And we Christians hold, from the mouth of the prophet David, that our Messiah was born there, as it is said: 'The Lord shall send the sceptre of your strength out of Zion … From the womb of dawn', and so forth. There the Father seated him at his right hand, saying: 'The Lord said to my Lord: sit at my right hand.' And because he came to atone for the sin of Adam, who had been created in that place, the one who was to make atonement was born there too.

"Third, the builders of the Temple. The priests said that five nations had assembled for Solomon's construction: the Tyrians, the Sidonians, the Giblites (people of Gebal), the converts (gerim, גרים) and the Jews. The Tyrians and Sidonians were experts in cutting stone and timber, and knew where the quarries of large stones lay. The Giblites knew how to carve figures in wood and stone as delicately as a goldsmith works gold and silver. In this kingdom of the Hebrews, and also in Persia and Media, there are still craftsmen who make things of wood and stone for kings' windows as fine as anything that could be fashioned in gold and silver.

The Building of the Temple

The building of Solomon's Temple, imagined as a great Gothic construction site. Workshop of Jean Fouquet, c. 1465–1475, BnF, Français 247, f. 163r. The miniature accompanies the description of builders and materials. [provenance]

"The converts were responsible for carrying the stone and timber wherever they were wanted and for every kind of transport. They also felled trees in the forests of Lebanon, near Jerusalem. Their exact number was a hundred and fifty thousand. They did not, however, touch the actual building, because they were suspected of secretly retaining their former faith. The builders were Israelites, thirty thousand in number. Their overseers, who continually supervised the work, numbered three thousand three hundred. Thus a hundred and eighty thousand three hundred men were engaged on this building. Nothing comparable has ever been heard of in any building in the world, as you have read in the accounts of Rome and its antiquities.

"Fourth, the Temple's expenditure. Throughout the work Solomon fed all the craftsmen and labourers. He also maintained the household and servants of the king of Tyre, at immense expense, because they cut the timber and brought it by sea to the territory of Israel. Trustworthy men also told me, and showed me written in their books, that King David, thinking he would build the Temple, had prepared a hundred thousand talents of gold (kikkarim, ככרים, an ancient unit of weight) and a million talents of silver, and copper and iron beyond reckoning. Besides this, he assembled three thousand talents of gold from Ophir and seven thousand of fine silver. The Jewish leaders and dignitaries donated five thousand talents of gold and ten thousand of silver. The chief priests said that all the gold used for the holy house had been melted in a crucible, and that out of a hundred talents no more than one purified talent emerged. Nothing is without some share of the four elements; they sought to remove all the earthy matter from the gold until only fire and water remained in it, leaving it to shine like the Sun and Moon.

"They also told me that a million gold coins had gone into the Temple and the Sanctuary. There were precious stones in abundance: the wall separating the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies was covered with gold to a height of twenty cubits, while the ten cubits above consisted of a golden lattice. Each opening contained precious stones, such as sapphires and rubies, whose value was beyond estimation. This part was made into a lattice so that the incense could enter the place of the Ark.

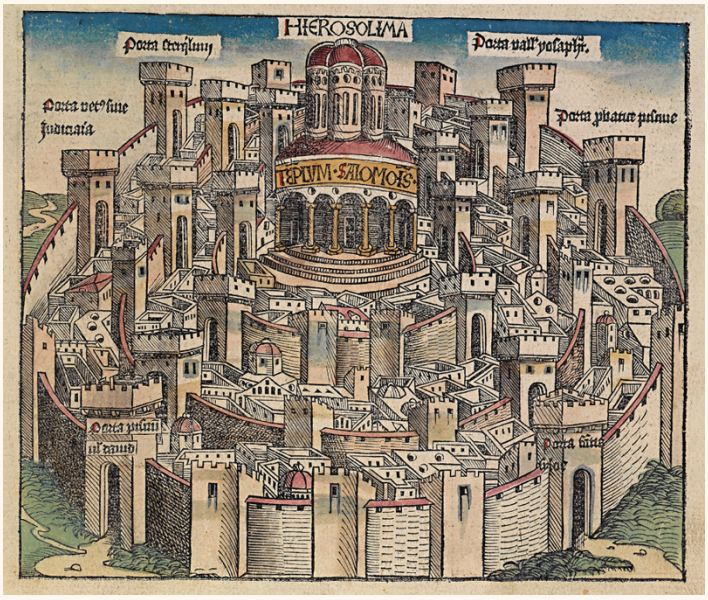
"They also showed me in writing that Solomon used none of the gifts David had pledged, because God had told David: 'You shall not build the house.' Solomon said: 'If I build it with his property, it will be as though he had built it himself.' He therefore placed everything his father had pledged in the Sanctuary's treasuries and built

with his own wealth. There is no need to wonder where this wealth came from: every year they brought him six hundred and sixty talents of gold, apart from the tribute paid to him.

"Fifth, the dimensions of the Temple. The mountain we have mentioned, Mount Moriah, measured five hundred cubits on each side and was enclosed by a great wall, as it still is today. The whole area is hollow underneath and built over vaults, because a corpse makes it impure. The Jews have received this tradition: a covered space above a corpse prevents its impurity from reaching those who stand higher up. This is one of the Jews' subtleties.

"Inside this wall is a small fence ten handbreadths high (tefaḥim, טפחים, units measuring the breadth of a hand), made of interwoven wood like a lattice. Within it is a place called the ḥeil (חיל, the passage area before the courts), ten cubits high; inside that lies the women's court, reached by twelve steps. This court measures a hundred and thirty-five cubits on each side. From it one enters the great court of Israel and the priests, a hundred and eighty-seven cubits long and a hundred and thirty-five wide. Four walls surrounded the Sanctuary before one reached the Holy of Holies. Between them were open spaces surrounding the entire sacred place on three sides, north, south and west, and turning back towards the east. All these open spaces were called a court, for they all served the holy house.

"The Holy of Holies measured twenty cubits long and twenty wide. The Hekhal (היכל), the sanctuary hall before it to the east, was twenty cubits wide and forty long. The Ulam (אולם), the porch, measured twenty cubits in length across the breadth of the house, and twenty in width. The length of the Sanctuary, the Hekhal and the Ulam thus amounts to seventy cubits. They told me that the Hekhal, the Sanctuary and the Holy of Holies built by Solomon and Herod were a hundred and twenty cubits high; the one built by those returning from Babylon, however, was no more than a hundred. The Hekhal and the Sanctuary themselves were only thirty cubits high, but above them were two storeys, corresponding to the world of the spheres and the angelic world. They told me that all the Temple's forms corresponded to the higher worlds.



Jerusalem and the Temple in the Chronicle of 1493
Ideal view of Jerusalem and Solomon's Temple, Nuremberg Chronicle, 1493, f. 15r. The woodcut expresses a late medieval conception of the holy city; it does not supply the account's measurements. [provenance]

"From the court of Israel one ascended fifteen steps to the priests' court. There was a place there called the dukhan (דוכן, platform), where the Levites sang and played instruments at the time of sacrifice. At the end of the priests' court, before the Ulam, stood the altar. Beyond the altar, twelve steps led up to the Hekhal. The Sanctuary and its Ulam stood on level ground at the summit of the mountain, on the same plane.

"Sixth, the Temple's buildings. There were four buildings in the women's court, all used for the service of the Sanctuary. Beside this court stood another large house which the Talmudists called the House of the Hearth (Beit ha-moqed, בית המוקד). This name has the following explanation: a great fire continually burned there, serving two purposes. The first was to supply fire for the altar. When they told me this, I replied to the priests: 'If that is so, your assertion that the fire descended from heaven must be false.' They answered: 'Although fire descended from heaven, our Creator commands us to bring some of our own, so that we have our part to perform in every act of worship.' I told them that these were Jewish notions and that I did not believe them. They answered: 'Then do not believe it, today or ever!' I would have risen against them had I not feared doing something contrary to your wishes.

"The second use of this house was to warm the priests: they walked barefoot on the marble slabs, so that some died from the cold. In the corners were four chambers, likewise used for the service of the Sanctuary. In the floor was a cavity and a marble slab fitted with a chain. The keys of the Sanctuary lay in that cavity, and a priest slept on the slab to guard them. In the morning the appointed officer came to open the doors, and the priest handed him the keys.

"In the court of Israel there were eight buildings, all devoted to the ministry of the Sanctuary and its many services. One chamber was called the Chamber of Hewn Stone (lishkat ha-gazit, לשכת הגזית); it was said that whoever had not seen it had never seen a beautiful building. It was built there to judge the priests. They say that any priest whom the Sanhedrin (the judicial council) declared unqualified dressed in black. He was excluded from the company of priests, returned home and mourned. If no disqualification was found, he held a feast for his friends and said: 'Blessed be He who chose the descendants of Aaron to serve in the Holy of Holies.'

"In this place stood a house for the high priest. He remained there during the seven days preceding the fearful day called the Day of Atonement, the day appointed for the high priest. There he learned all the rules of that day's service as his predecessors had practised them. This was done in the Second Temple, when the office of high priest could be bought. In addition, he remained there apart from his wife during those days.

"There was a building from which water was drawn from a great well for all the courts and every place where water was needed for purification. Another house was assigned to the priest who clothed all the others at the time of service. He gave each the four prescribed garments, as the Law commanded, taking them from wall compartments. Above each compartment in the wall was written the name of the garment, so that he should not make a mistake or confuse them when they were needed.

"There were many other buildings in the open spaces, all intended for the service of the Sanctuary. At the top of all the stairways were storerooms extending underground, called the storerooms of the house of God. In the open spaces we have mentioned there were thirty-eight chambers arranged all around in three storeys, one above another: fifteen to the north, fifteen to the south and fifteen to the west. This cypress building was exceptionally beautiful. It did not rest against the Sanctuary walls, so that it could not be used to look inside. Even the Sanctuary's windows were higher than these chambers to prevent anyone from looking in, and were inclined obliquely downwards.

"On the outer walls were twenty-one posts guarded by the Levites at night, to express the dignity of the place, rather than because protection was needed. Three inner posts were guarded by the priests. These watches served to prevent the priests from committing any sin within and defiling the house. Christians could take from this a lesson, since their young men commit so many wrongs in churches on the night set apart to commemorate our Messiah's death.

"Herod added a beautiful building by constructing four porticoes on the four sides of the Temple, each two hundred and fifty cubits long, a hundred wide and a hundred and twenty high, matching the Temple's height. He built a vault over the stream called the Kidron; above the vaults were eagles and lions, and above them the porticoes. He gave the portico extending to the Kidron three roofs. Anyone standing at the top of the roof could not see the stream because of its height. These porticoes surrounded the Sanctuary on all four sides. He built them for some of the people who came for the three festivals, so that they could rest and take their ease there.

"The buildings in the courts were first constructed of stone; above the stones were boards interlocking with one another, and above the wood silver plates, for which seven thousand talents were used. The silver bore images of every kind of tree and flower in the world, and great numbers of clean animals and birds. Three thousand talents of gold were used in the Hekhal and the Sanctuary. In the Sanctuary and the Holy of Holies there was first a stone wall, then a covering of cedar. The roof and floor were likewise lined with cypress, a stronger wood and less liable to decay. Over this was gold, and on the gold images of angels, with palm trees between them. All the figures were incised into the gold because they could not, according to their Law, make figures in relief, except for the cherubim alone. Around the angels and palms were flowers and leaves as though springing from the fields.

"Seventh, the Temple's gates. There were five for the Temple Mount and seven in the wall of the court: three on the north towards the western corner, three to the south and one to the east, opposite the Holy of Holies. Each gate was ten cubits wide and twenty high. All were of cypress covered with gold, bearing admirable, delicate figures; this I saw myself. Only the eastern gate was covered with shining copper, valued more highly than gold because of its brilliance.

"The Jews told me that this was called the Gate of Nicanor, after a Jew of that name who had made these doors in Alexandria in Egypt. On his return a great storm overtook him at sea. He threw one door overboard to lighten the ship, but the sea did not grow calm. They wished to throw over the other. Nicanor, who had laboured on

the doors, rose and bound himself to it, saying: 'If you throw it overboard, throw me over as well.' The sea immediately subsided. He remained deeply troubled about the one he had lost; but on reaching the harbour he found it on the seashore, through a miracle performed for him. This is why it was called the Gate of Nicanor. Such are the stories the Jews tell!

"The entrance to the portico was forty cubits high. The entrance to the Hekhal had a small wicket that was never opened. They say that the God of heaven entered through it. I said to them: 'You fools! You turn away from our Saviour because he is a body, yet attribute a body to your God, since this house contains him!' They replied that it was his divine presence (shekhinah, שכינה) that entered, like the Sun entering a house: we say that it enters, although it is only its light.

"They also told me that there were many other small gates, because they wished to honour each service separately, with each entering through its own gate. Where the offerings were brought in, they did not bring in the water for the libation, and likewise for the other services. There was a gate reserved for the excommunicated person and the mourner. Many priests sat there and comforted him, saying: 'May He who has caused His name to dwell in this great and holy house comfort you.' Its doors were of black jasper. Another gate was for bridegrooms, with doors of white glass. When a bridegroom entered, the priests prayed there that God would give him sons to serve Him.

"They also told me that Susa, the capital, was depicted on the eastern gate. When the Jews left it to build the Sanctuary, the king commanded that a picture of his capital be painted on one of the gates, so that they should remember the place where they had lived, fear the king and not rebel against him.

"Eighth, the Temple's vessels. In the women's court there were only the great golden lamps hung up during their festivals. At the foot of each lamp was a large golden basin into which the priests threw their old girdles to kindle the fire. Great blazes were made, so that all Jerusalem looked like one great blaze. In the priests' court stood the altar with ten marble tables around it. These could perfectly well have been made of gold; they told me this was not done because gold warms the meat and makes it spoil, whereas marble keeps it cool. The entrails and sacrificial fats (ḥalavim, חלבים) were placed on these tables.

"In that court stood the Sea of Solomon (a great basin), five cubits high and thirty cubits in circumference. It rested on twelve oxen: three towards the north, three towards the south, three towards the east and three towards the west. The whole was

adorned with flowers and leaves. Water passed beneath the oxen's feet, from the spring to the Sea, then emerged from their mouths. The priests washed their hands there, and also washed the things needed for the service. There stood the basin for ablutions made by Moses. Solomon made ten golden basins surrounding it in its honour.

"In the portico, near the entrance to the Hekhal, King Herod made something remarkable: a vine supported on jasper columns with silver bases. The vine weighed a thousand talents of gold; its grape pips and skins were of sapphires and rubies. This displayed the greatness of the Jewish nation, since what lay inside was greater than what was outside, contrary to the usual practice. Any Jew who pledged a golden berry or bunch hung it there.

"At the entrance to the Hekhal he hung a golden sword inscribed: 'The stranger who approaches shall be put to death.' Near this entrance stood two copper columns made by Solomon. One was named Boaz in memory of his ancestor; the other was called Jachin in memory of David, who had made preparations for the Temple without building it himself. They told me that he made the columns of a copper unlike ours: he had found a deposit whose colour tended towards red and was very beautiful. Each column was thirty cubits high. At the top of each were two crowns, each three cubits high, with a kind of exceedingly delicate net over each. A hundred pomegranates hung from each crown. From the crowns rose palm-like branches reaching the beams. I saw none of this. They said that these crowns were extraordinary in form and delicacy. The two crowns indicated that each of the men commemorated was accomplished both in his actions and in his understanding. All the Jews who stood at Sinai received these two crowns. I, for one, have not seen them!

"At the entrance to the Hekhal were two tables, one of marble and one of gold. The marble table served to cool the bread when it was brought in to be placed on the table of our teacher Moses in the Hekhal. The marble table was thus used when the bread was brought in, and the golden one when it was taken out. Once the bread had been placed on the golden table made by Moses and had thus acquired that degree of holiness, it was not fitting to put it on the marble table, which would lower its holiness.

"Inside the Hekhal stood the incense altar, the table made by Moses, and ten tables made by Solomon to honour Moses's table. There were also ten lamps to the right and left of the one made by Moses, to honour it, but they were not lit. In the Holy of Holies were the Ark, Aaron's rod perpetually in blossom, the anointing oil,

the jar of manna, and the cherubim above the Ark. Their bodies stood out in relief, facing the Temple hall; their wings sprang from a common point and reached the Temple walls. Solomon made cherubim above those of Moses.

"Thirteen curtains (parokhot, פרכות) were needed at the entrances to the gates. Each was twenty cubits high and ten wide, matching the doorway's opening. There were also curtains in the upper storeys of the Sanctuary, each made of fine linen, embroidery and blue thread. In the Second Temple there was no wall between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies, but two curtains with a cubit between them. Each curtain was woven by girls who had not yet menstruated, using eighty heddles (nirim, נירין, devices that guide the warp threads). To maintain the splendour and dignity of the place, these curtains were used for only one year, then stored in the treasuries. Two were made each year, and during the festivals they covered the walls of the courts with them for the rejoicing at the water-drawing (simḥat beit ha-shoevah, שמחת בית השואבה).

"Ninth, the Temple's servants. There were twenty-four thousand singers and instrumentalists, as the priests told me was written in Chronicles, four thousand gatekeepers divided into watches, and a hundred and twenty men sounding trumpets.

"Tenth, the Temple service. The Jews would say nothing about this, declaring that it was against their Law to show other peoples how they performed their service. They told me only two things; I also saw some of them and rejoiced greatly. The first was the offering made at their festival called Passover, the foremost of them all. The second was the high priest's entrance on the day they regard as greater than every other day of the year in holiness, purity and the dignity of the soul.

"The Passover offering is performed as follows. As soon as the month they call Nisan begins, couriers and messengers are sent by command of the king and judges throughout the country around Jerusalem, to everyone with flocks of sheep and some cattle. They are ordered to hurry and bring their livestock, so that all who come for Passover may find enough for sacrifice and food, for the people are very numerous. Anyone failing to come at the appointed time had all his property confiscated for the Temple's sacred purposes.

"Then all the owners of livestock hastened to come. The flocks were driven through a stream near Jerusalem to wash them and remove every impurity. They told me that this is why Solomon said in the Song: 'Which came up from the washing.' As they reached the mountains near Jerusalem, their numbers were so great that no plant could be seen: everything was white with the whiteness of their wool.

"On the tenth day — for they made the offering on the fourteenth of the month — they all went out to buy the sacrifice called Passover. The Jews had an established rule that when coming for this service no one should say to another: 'Step aside,' or 'Let me pass,' even if the person behind were Solomon or David. I told the priests that this was discourteous. They answered that this showed there is no superiority before God when preparing His service, still less during the service itself: at that hour they all stood on an equal footing.

"On the fourteenth day of the month, they ascended a tower in the Sanctuary called Lul (לול), reached by an ascent like those in our bell towers. Holding three silver trumpets, they sounded them. Then they proclaimed: 'People of the Lord, hear! The time has come to slaughter the Passover offering in the name of Him who has caused His name to dwell in this great and holy house.' On hearing the proclamation, the people put on their festival clothes. From midday it was a festival for all the Jews, since this was the time of the offering.

"At the entrance to the great court stood twelve Levites outside with silver staves in their hands, and twelve inside with golden staves. Those outside warned the arrivals not to harm one another in their haste, not to enter in confusion and not to quarrel over it. At one Passover the pressure of the crowd had already crushed an old man together with the offering he carried. Those inside restrained the people going out so that they should not push one another. They also closed the court's gates when they saw that enough people had entered for a single group.

"At the place of slaughter were rows of priests holding silver and golden bowls. Each row had either silver bowls throughout or gold bowls throughout. All this was done to honour the service. The priest at the head of the row collected the blood of the slaughtered animal in a bowl and passed it to his companion, who passed it to another, and so on as far as the altar. The priest at the altar returned the empty bowl to his companion, and it passed from one to another until the last. Thus each priest received a full bowl and returned an empty one. This caused no delay: they were so swift in this service that the bowls sped like arrows. For thirty days beforehand they practised the service and identified possible errors or accidents.

"There were two great, tall columns with two priests above them holding silver trumpets. They sounded them at the beginning of each group's offering, so that the priests on the platform might hear and recite the Hallel (הלל, the psalms of praise),

with song and thanksgiving, accompanied by all the instruments they possessed and brought out that day. The person bringing the offering also recited the Hallel. If the slaughter was not yet finished, they began and read it again.

"After the slaughter they went out into the courts. All the walls had iron spikes and hooks for hanging up the offerings and skinning them. There were also poles: when no free hook could be found, two men rested a pole on their shoulders, skinned the animal and gave the altar what belonged to it. They departed joyfully and gladly, like someone going to war and returning victorious. For they considered it a disgrace and humiliation not to present their offering at the festival of Passover. The priests, during this service, wore red, so that any blood falling on their clothing would not show. The garment was short, reaching the knees. They were barefoot, and their short sleeves left their forearms free, so as not to impede the service. On their heads was a small cap with three cubits of cloth wound around it. The high priest had a turban wrapped forty times around his head, and it was white.

"The ovens in which the offerings were roasted stood at the entrances to the houses. They said this was to proclaim their faith and to express the joy of Passover. Once the offering was roasted, they ate it with praise and song audible from afar. No gate in Jerusalem was shut on Passover night, out of respect for the many people coming and going. They told me that at one Passover the Jews present were twice as numerous as those who had left Egypt. This was known because their number was reported to the king.

"The second service was the high priest's coming to the Sanctuary. They described his arrival and departure, but not the rites he performed inside. I saw something of it myself and was greatly astonished. I then said: 'Blessed be He who has granted these people a share in His glory.'

"Seven days before Kippur, seats were prepared in the high priest's house for the president of the court (av beit din, אב בית דין), the nasi (נשיא, president of the council), the high priest, his deputy and the king. Besides these were seventy silver seats for the seventy members of the Sanhedrin. The oldest priest stood up and spoke words of admonition before him, saying: 'Consider before whom you enter. Know that if you lose your devout concentration (kavvanah, כונה), you will fall dead at once, and Israel's atonement will be jeopardised. See how the eyes of all Israel are fixed upon you. Examine your ways: perhaps you have committed some offence, however slight, for there is a sin that outweighs many good deeds. This rests solely in the hand of Him who knows intentions. Investigate your brother priests as well, and purify them.

Set this thought before you today: you are going before the King above all kings, who sits in judgement and sees every evil committed. How will you dare enter this place with the enemy still in your heart?'

"He replied that he had already examined everything and repented of whatever he thought sinful. He also summoned all his brother priests to the Sanctuary's court and adjured them, by Him who caused His name to dwell there, each to declare what he knew concerning his companion or himself. For each offence he had prescribed the appropriate penance. The king also said he would honour him if he emerged safely from the Sanctuary.

"Then it was proclaimed that the high priest was leaving for his chamber in the Sanctuary. All the people came to accompany him, walking before him in order. I saw those of the royal house go before him; whoever stood nearest the high priest was the noblest. After them came all the descendants of the kings of David's house, likewise in order. A herald went before them, saying: 'Honour the house of David.' Then came the Levites, and the herald said: 'Honour the house of Levi.' There were thirty-six thousand, and all their chiefs were then dressed in blue silk. The priests, twenty-four thousand in number, wore white silk. Next came the singers, then the instrumentalists, the trumpeters, the gatekeepers and the makers of incense. They were followed by the weavers of the curtains, the guards, the Temple administrators (amarkalim, אמרכלים), and a group called Cartopilos (possibly keepers of the archives), then everyone engaged in the Sanctuary's works. Next came the seventy members of the Sanhedrin, then a hundred priests with silver staves in their hands to clear the way. After them came the high priest, followed by all the elders of the priesthood, two by two.

"At the entrance to every street stood the heads of the academies, saying: 'My lord high priest, welcome in peace! Pray to our Creator to give us life to study His Law.' On reaching the entrance to the Temple Mount, he prayed for the continuance of the kingship of David's house, then for the priests and the Sanctuary. The crowd's answering "amen" was so loud that birds flying overhead fell to the ground. The high priest then bowed before all the people and withdrew in tears and fear. Two leading priests conducted him to his chamber, where he separated himself from all his brother priests.

"Thus it was at his entrance. At his departure, however, the honour was doubled: everyone in Jerusalem passed before him, most carrying burning torches of white wax, and all dressed in white. The windows were covered in embroidery and filled

with lights. The priests told me that in many years the high priest could not reach home before midnight because of the great crowd passing by. Although everyone was fasting, they did not return home until they had seen whether they could touch and kiss the high priest's hands.

"The following day he gave a banquet, inviting his friends and relatives. It was a festival because he had come out of the Sanctuary in peace. Then he commissioned a goldsmith to make a golden tablet and engrave on it: 'I, such-and-such a high priest, son of such-and-such a high priest, exercised the high priesthood in the great and holy house, in the service of Him who caused His name to dwell there. This took place in such-and-such a year of the world. May He who made me worthy of this service make my son after me worthy of serving before Him.'"'

This is what that man sent in writing to Rome, and what Versor sent to King Alfonso. Having read it, the king said: "The Jews deserve punishment for their sins, and honour for what they possessed."

As for me, Solomon son of Verga, the communities of Spain sent me to collect a ransom for the captives of Málaga. There at the royal court we were asked to enact the Passover offering. They set up an altar and rows of priests with silver vessels. The singers chanted the Hallel, and the princes and people were greatly astonished. The king said: "Men who have seen this and lost such a blessing would regard death as preferable to life."

Concerning this service, the Passover offerings and everything they involve, Rabbi Don Manuel wrote in excellent terms in his book on the reasons for the commandments (Taʿamei ha-mitsvot, טעמי המצוות). I incorporated its substance in my book entitled The Rod of His Wrath (Shevet ʿEvrato, שבט עברתו). May God make us worthy to see our holy and glorious Temple rebuilt and the service of our God restored, as in the ancient days and the years gone by. Amen.

Historical Commentary

The account's successive voices and the document attributed to Marcus

The text contains a letter from Alfonso, a reply from Versor and a report attributed to "Marcus, a Roman consul". It ends with Solomon ibn Verga's own intervention concerning Málaga. These voices must be distinguished. "Saint Titus", a narrator who calls himself Christian, Jesus' birth placed on Moriah and the royal ceremony do not supply consistent indications of a dated Roman document. The comparison undertaken here has not located an independent Latin original of this report or identified its consul. This limits its use as an archival record. Many individual elements, however, have precise textual parallels, described below. These allow its constituent traditions to be traced without attributing the entire text to a single ancient observer. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Seville: conversion and clandestine observance

In chapter XLIII, pp.125–127, Bernáldez accuses converts of retaining the Sabbath, eating unleavened bread and employing Jews to slaughter their animals. The parallel therefore concerns expressly named practices. The chronicler openly supports the Inquisition: his hostile language and generalisations must be distinguished from the historical existence of these accusations. In chapter XLIV he places the beginning of inquisitorial operations in Seville in 1481 and names the agents. The passages examined do not describe the scene on the tower with the duke or identify Ibn Verga's investigator. The conversation itself therefore remains undated. [S212]

The shofar and the two stages of liberation

The quotations about Amalek occur in Deuteronomy 25:19 and Exodus 17:16; Pharaoh's admission comes from Exodus 9:27. The call to awaken corresponds to Mishneh Torah, Laws of Repentance 3:4. Rosh Hashanah 11b distinguishes two stages: slavery ceased at the New Year, whereas the departure from Egypt took place in Nisan. Ibn Verga brings these moments together; the German even adds "later" to the departure. The translation retains the liberation described by the chronicle, while this reference prevents the Exodus from being dated to Kippur or the New Year. The discussion of Amalek and prayer for the ruler sets out Versor's interpretation; it does not by itself establish the date of a local liturgical practice or authenticate the exchange through a royal act. [S255 ; S245 ; S266 ; S267 ; S268 ; G1856]

Markers for distinguishing the successive buildings

A few chronological references help locate the descriptions that follow. According to 1 Kings 6:1 and 6:37–38, Solomon begins the building in the fourth year of his reign and completes it in the eleventh, after seven years of work. In 2 Kings 25:8–17, Nebuzaradan, an

officer of the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar, burns this sanctuary; its bronze furnishings are broken up and carried away. Ezra 6:15 subsequently places the completion of the rebuilt Temple on 3 Adar in Darius' sixth year. Finally, Josephus dates Herod's great undertaking to the eighteenth year of his reign in Antiquities XV.11, § 380. That project transforms the Second Temple; it is not an uninterrupted continuation of Solomon's own works. These are the chronological markers of the cited texts, rather than a new archaeological dating. They allow readers to relate each object or measurement to the building described by its source before comparing the accounts. [S269 ; S270 ; S271 ; S238]

Materials and Herod's rebuilding: two traditions located

The sand-laden ship and the diver who ties ropes to coral occur in Rosh Hashanah 23a. That passage also gives durations and workforces absent from Ibn Verga: it is a parallel tradition, not evidence for coral beams excavated from the Temple. Almogim used for construction and musical instruments appear in I Kings 10:11–12. For Herod, Josephus, Antiquities XV, §§385–395, recounts the rebuilding and gives the same blocks measuring 25 by 12 by 8 cubits. The porticoes and the dizzying view into the valley resemble §§411–416, where the royal portico has three aisles. This resemblance does not authorise converting Ibn Verga's three roofs into three storeys or verifying all his dimensions. [S246 ; S258 ; S238]

Moriah, the altar and overlapping traditions

Maimonides, Laws of the Temple 2:2, associates the altar's site with Adam, Cain and Abel, Noah and Abraham: a close parallel to Ibn Verga's sequence. He says, however, that Noah built an altar there after leaving the ark, not that the ark landed there. Genesis 8:4 names the mountains of Ararat. The foundation stone appears in Mishnah Yoma 5:2 after the Ark's removal. The verses applied by the Christian narrator to Jesus' birth combine Psalm 110:2–3 with 110:1. They do not name Jesus or state his birthplace. The scriptural text and the application made of it can thus be identified without conflating quotation, interpretation and historical location. [S256 ; S262 ; S240 ; S263]

Solomon's workforce, donations and accounts

Hiram of Tyre's supplies and the Giblites come from I Kings 5. The workforce appears in 5:27–32 in the Hebrew numbering, or 5:13–18 in many Bibles: 30,000 men, 70,000 carriers, 80,000 quarrymen and 3,300 overseers. Their sum is 183,300. Ibn Verga's text gives 180,300, an error shared by the editions compared. II Chronicles 2:16–17 instead speaks of resident foreigners and 3,600 overseers: the two lists should not be amalgamated. The donations occur in I Chronicles 22:14 and 29:3–7. The annual revenue in I Kings 10:14 is 666 talents, compared with 660 in Ibn Verga's Hebrew and German and 360 in the Spanish. Finally, Menachot 29a describes refining gold for the lampstands from a thousand talents to one; the chronicle has a hundred to one and adds an explanation based on the four elements. [S258 ; S259 ; S260 ; S250 ; E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Temple measurements: agreements and displaced features

Middot 2:1–6 supplies the 500-cubit square of the Mount, the Women's Court measuring 135 cubits on each side, the great court measuring 187 by 135 cubits, the ten-handbreadth barrier and the twelve steps. But its ḥeil is ten cubits wide, whereas the chronicle makes it ten cubits high. The fifteen steps lead from the Women's Court to the Court of Israel, not from Israel's court to the priests' court. Middot 3:6 places twelve steps between the altar and the porch. Ibn Verga's interior measurements, 20 + 40 + 20, do not yield his total of 70; I Kings 6:3 gives the porch a depth of ten cubits. Middot 4:6 describes a height of a hundred cubits, while II Chronicles 3:4 gives 120 for Solomon's porch. The account therefore combines descriptions and periods rather than supplying a single consistent scale plan. [S239 ; S258 ; S260]

Chambers, guards and the examination of priests

Middot 1:1 gives precisely three priestly guard posts and twenty-one Levite posts. The hearth chambers, marble slab, chain and keys occur in 1:6–9; the Chamber of Hewn Stone and the examination of priests, with black clothing upon disqualification, occur in 5:4. Middot 4:3 explains the thirty-eight chambers as 15 on the north, 15 on the south and 8 on the west, instead of the chronicle's three groups of fifteen. Wiener already notes the erroneous total of 45. Shekalim 5:1 names the official responsible for vestments, the physician for intestinal disorders, the incense makers and the curtain weaver. These parallels identify the functions, but do not prove Ibn Verga's assertion that some priests died from the cold. The requirement of human fire alongside heavenly fire occurs explicitly in Yoma 21b. [S239 ; S241 ; S247 ; G1856]

The gates and their associated stories

The Mount's five gates and the courtyard's seven match Middot 1:3–4. Nicanor's miracle appears in Yoma 38a, where the ship reaches Acre; the door reappears beneath the ship or, in another version, is cast ashore by a sea creature. Ibn Verga abbreviates the outcome to discovery on the shore without naming the port. The permanently closed gate comes from Middot 4:2, which quotes Ezekiel 44:2. The two gates for bridegrooms and mourners occur in Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer 17:15; Middot 2:2 instead describes mourners and excluded persons walking in the opposite direction. Black jasper and white glass do not occur in those two passages. Finally, Menachot 98a gives two reasons for the image of Susa: remembrance of the return and fear of Persian authority. The chronicle combines them. [S239 ; S248 ; S254 ; S251]

Furnishings, columns and the superimposed Temples

The Sea on twelve oxen and its dimensions come from I Kings 7:23–25. In that chapter the ten lavers are bronze, not gold, and the columns Jachin and Boaz are eighteen cubits high, not thirty. Shekalim 6:4 assigns thirteen tables to different uses, including eight marble

tables for the entrails; it does not put ten marble tables around the altar. The same passage precisely explains the marble and gold tables for the bread. The votive vine is described in Middot 3:8. Ten lampstands, five on each side, occur in II Chronicles 4:7 and Menachot 98b. For the Second Temple, Yoma 21b expressly records the absence of the Ark and its cherubim; Josephus, War V, 5:5, describes an empty Holy of Holies. The First Temple's furnishings therefore cannot all be assigned to Herod's Temple. [S258 ; S241 ; S239 ; S260 ; S252 ; S247 ; S003]

Curtains, lights and personnel numbers

Shekalim 8:4–5 describes displaying a new curtain to show its workmanship, making two annually, and dimensions of forty by twenty cubits. The chronicle's numbers and technical details do not reproduce that description exactly; the word nirim alone cannot establish a particular loom mechanism. Sukkah 5:2–4 closely links great lights, worn priestly garments used as wicks, music and the illumination of Jerusalem; this ceremony belongs to Sukkot. For personnel, I Chronicles 23:3–5 counts 38,000 Levites: 24,000 for Temple work, 6,000 officials and judges, 4,000 gatekeepers and 4,000 for praise. The 24,000 are therefore not all singers. The 120 trumpeters occur in II Chronicles 5:12. Ibn Verga's procession figures do not amount to an independent census. [S241 ; S242 ; S259 ; S260]

The Passover sacrifice: traceable actions and additions

Pesachim 5:5–10 describes three successive groups, closing the gates, rows of bowls arranged by metal, passing full and empty bowls, repeating Hallel when necessary, hooks and poles resting on the shoulders. These are the closest detailed parallels to the account. Pesachim 64b separately describes the old man crushed in Hillel's time and Agrippa's ordered census. The latter counts offerings by means of kidneys and then considers the diners; "twice those who left Egypt" does not directly provide a count of persons present. Pesachim 9:5 reserves taking the lamb on 10 Nisan to the Passover in Egypt. Ibn Verga extends this detail to the Temple ceremony. The thirty days of rehearsal and the procession with staves do not appear in these Mishnah passages. [S243 ; S244]

Red clothing and short sleeves

The red clothing of the Passover officiants occurs in all three editions of Ibn Verga; the translator did not introduce the colour. It must nevertheless be distinguished from the vestment prescriptions located. Exodus 28:39–43 includes a tunic, headgear, belt and linen drawers; Yoma 7:5 counts four garments for the ordinary priest and eight for the high priest. Maimonides, Laws of the Sanctuary Vessels 8:17, gives a tunic reaching just above the heel and sleeves reaching the wrist. This does not match the short garment and free forearms in this account. Correcting "gloves" to "sleeves" restores the Hebrew word; it does not historically validate this particular outfit. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S261 ; S240 ; S257]

The Kippur ritual in Leviticus

The biblical core of the service is set out in Leviticus 16. Verses 2–4 regulate Aaron's entry behind the veil and name the linen garments; verses 11–19 describe the incense and blood sprinklings; verses 29–34 establish the annual observance on the tenth day of the seventh month. These prescriptions precede the Mishnah's elaboration of the high priest's preparation. They illuminate the ritual's actions and date, whereas the urban procession and its numbers form another set of information within the chronicle. Ibn Verga's account can thus preserve biblical details, rabbinic elaborations and a ceremonial presentation within one description without every element having exactly the same source. [S272 ; S240]

Kippur: seclusion, oath and banquet

Yoma 1:1 places the high priest's seclusion seven days before Kippur; 1:3–5 describes his instruction, the oath and the tears. Yoma 8b explains the name of the Chamber of Parhedrin through the purchase of office and frequent replacement of incumbents. Yoma 7:4 mentions the escort home and the meal for loved ones after emerging safely from the Sanctuary. The parallel is therefore precise for the ceremony's framework. These passages do not supply Ibn Verga's complete order of procession, the 36,000 Levites and 24,000 priests, the birds falling at the cry of amen, or the golden plaque with its hereditary formula. Shekalim 5:2 attests amarkalim and treasurers, but does not identify the Cartopilos group. [S240 ; S249 ; S241]

Málaga: a collection linked to documentary records

The setting is the conquest of Málaga in 1487. Bernáldez, chapters LXXXVI–LXXXVII, pp.252–256, reports 450 Jewish captives, Abraham Senior's intervention on behalf of the Castilian communities, and their arrival near Seville on 1 October. López de Coca's study, pp.154–156, cites ransom accounts from September 1487 and February 1488 (Simancas, Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas, first series, leg.115), a safe-conduct of 9 January 1489 for collectors (Registro General del Sello, January 1489, fol.94), and permission for release on 6 June 1489 following Mayr Melamed's undertaking. The original acts have not been examined here; their shelfmarks come from the study. They illuminate Ibn Verga's collection without establishing his personal presence or the enactment of the sacrifice at court, neither of which appears in the compared Bernáldez passages. [S212 ; S237]

Don Manuel and the final book reference

The chronicle attributes to Don Manuel a treatise on the reasons for the commandments and states that its contents were reused in a book called Shevet ʻEvrato ("The Rod of His Wrath"). The name varies between Imanuel in Spanish and Manuel in Hebrew and Wiener. No copy of that treatise or the book in which it was reused has been checked for this revision. The attribution and title therefore remain those supplied by Ibn Verga; the author is not replaced with a better-known writer merely because the names resemble one another. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The Ark and the Capture of Jericho

The Ark of the Covenant before Jericho. Workshop of Jean Fouquet, c. 1465–1475, BnF, Français 247, f. 89r. Account LXIV relates the trumpets of Jericho to the religious blasts whose meaning the king suspects. [provenance]

Translation Choices

Versor's authority and the younger men

The Spanish has the king say: "My subjects loved you." The Hebrew says that the people were guided by Versor's word; Wiener gives the same sense. That reading is adopted because it more precisely explains his position as an adviser whose counsel the king still seeks. In the reply, "younger than myself" follows Hebrew tseʿirim (צעירים, "young") and German Jüngere. Spanish menores could also mean men of lower rank, but this passage does not justify adding social inferiority to the difference in age. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Saint Titus and the name of Jesus

Hebrew and Wiener give Titus the title "Saint"; Spanish omits it. Hebrew also names Jesus the Nazarene where Spanish says only "my god" and German Jesus. These names are restored in the royal request because they belong to the character's Christian voice and clarify the literary setting. "Saint Titus" does not establish an identification with the emperor Titus. Later, Spanish "our Messiah" is retained as a designation of the Jesus expressly named in Hebrew; the historical commentary distinguishes that application of Psalm 110 from the psalm's own wording. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S263]

The shofar, the ram and emancipation

The shofar is a horn, distinct from the metal silver trumpets described later. Hebrew and German add the ram to the remembrance of Isaac's binding; that fuller reading is restored as "recalled by the horn of the ram offered in his place". Genesis 22:13 supplies the reason for that clarification: the ram replaces Isaac in the sacrifice. For Egypt, German makes the sequence explicit: "Their work in Egypt ceased that day, and later they departed as free men." Hebrew and Spanish do not contain "later". "Became free" expresses the end of bondage without itself dating the physical departure from Egypt. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S264 ; S245]

The man observing the houses in Seville

Spanish calls him an astrologer, Wiener an inquisitor. Hebrew ḥoqer (חוקר, "one who investigates or examines") supports the less specialised "investigator". Since no independent document establishes the man's precise office or identity, neither astrology nor official membership of the Inquisition is built into the translation. Bernáldez illuminates the accusations of clandestine observance but does not identify this speaker. The absence of smoke is expressed as the observation the man predicts, rather than as a question whose answer remains uncertain. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S212]

Ritual slaughter and forbidden fats

Hebrew joins sheḥitah (שחיטה, "ritual slaughter") with niqqur (ניקור, "removal of forbidden parts"). The second procedure names neither an animal nor simply the removal of all fat. "Remove the forbidden parts, including certain fats" conveys its meaning, with ḥelev (חלב) immediately explained. Leviticus 7:23 names forbidden fat from oxen, sheep and goats. The Spanish and German must be understood through this food preparation practice, without making suet a separate species of meat or animal. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S265]

Christians in outward appearance

Spanish speaks of converts regarded as Christians "inwardly", whereas Hebrew expressly says le-mar'it ha-ʿayin (למראית העין, "in people's eyes, outwardly"). Wiener likewise understands their apparent status. That reading is adopted because it makes the speaker's reasoning coherent: the secret practices just described are concealed beneath a public Christian identity. The translation reports his accusation; the passage does not turn it into an established fact about every convert. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Solomon's wisdom and the repeatedly named timber

Hebrew and German have Solomon surpass the peoples of the East in both wisdom and wealth; Spanish reduces the statement to the wisdom of the ancients. The two qualities are retained because construction costs are precisely what is at issue. For the timber, Spanish first has "fir", then "boxwood", where Hebrew repeats beroshim (ברושים, a name for coniferous timber) and Wiener has Cypressen. "Cypress" keeps the same timber throughout the description while leaving the ancient word's precise botanical identification open. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S258]

Almogim: the account's two explanations

The first explanation, heard in Rome, describes red wood resembling coral. The second, attributed to the priests, asserts that real coral trees are brought out of the sea. The translation separates these positions instead of producing a confused statement about wood that is coral. Rosh Hashanah 23a parallels the ship-and-sand procedure; I Kings 10:11–12 uses almogim (אלמוגים) for a material employed in construction and musical instruments. These parallels explain the account but do not justify deleting its coral or silently replacing the word with an identified timber species. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S246 ; S258]

Myrrh and Moriah

Spanish gives musk, but Hebrew mor (מור, "myrrh"), confirmed by Wiener, explains the sound association with Moriah. "Myrrh" is therefore adopted. The first explanation of Moriah through God "showing" the place is also retained. These are word associations reported by the chronicle; the translation does not turn them into demonstrated historical etymologies. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The addition about Adam and Jesus' birth

After the quotation of Psalm 110, Hebrew and German continue where Spanish does not: "And because he came to atone for the sin of Adam, who had been created in that place, the one who was to make atonement was born there too." This addition is restored in full because it completes the Christian narrator's argument about the location. The preceding quotation is also completed with "sit at my right hand", present in Hebrew, German and the psalm. This restores what the character says; it does not alter the Gospel account of the birth to fit his location. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S263 ; S256]

Tyre, the Giblites and the gerim

The Hebrew list, followed by Wiener, includes Tyre, Sidon and Gebal; Spanish substitutes Alexandria among other forms, and gives the supplying king a designation pointing to Syria. The explicit parallel in I Kings 5 with Hiram of Tyre and the Giblites supports the adopted names. For gerim (גרים), German Agräer suggests a named people; Hebrew and Spanish allow "converts", supported within this account by the suspicion that they secretly retain their former religion. That narrative sense is adopted. II Chronicles, however, speaks of resident foreigners: its workers' status is not automatically identical to that assigned by Ibn Verga. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S258 ; S260]

180,300: a shared error that must remain visible

All three editions give a total of 180,300, although their figures of 150,000, 30,000 and 3,300 add up to 183,300. Wiener's page 204 has been checked visually: it reads 180,300, not the 180,800 produced by automatic text recognition. The same page's 3,000 talents from Ophir are likewise not the transcription's 8,000. The translated text retains 180,300 as the chronicle's shared figure; the arithmetically corrected total is 183,300, also compatible with I Kings 5. The author's error should not disappear through an unannounced alteration. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S258]

Talents, gold coins and refining

Hebrew kikkarim (ככרים, "talents", an ancient weight unit) and German Talente support setting aside Spanish quintales: these are not modern hundredweights. For the million spent, Spanish says "ducats", German Goldgulden and Hebrew peraḥim (פרחים, a designation for gold coins). "Gold coins" conveys their shared meaning without imposing a precise coinage on the ancient Temple or offering a modern conversion. Refining a hundred talents into one remains the reading of all three editions; Menachot 29a has a thousand talents, but that traditional difference is explained historically rather than substituted for the chronicle's figure. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S250]

360, 660 or 666 talents a year

Spanish gives 360 talents. Hebrew and Wiener give 660, adopted as the better-supported reading within the book's transmission. The biblical parallel, however, gives 666 in I Kings 10:14. That third number does not silently become Ibn Verga's figure; it is the historical correction offered to the reader. A disagreement between editions of the chronicle, resolved here in favour of 660, is thus distinguished from a disagreement between the chronicle and its biblical parallel. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S258]

Steps and measurements that do not add up

For the approach to the Women's Court, the twelve steps in Hebrew and Wiener are preferred to Spanish ten: Middot 2:3 confirms twelve. Hebrew and German also clarify the sentence after the altar: the ascent is beyond the altar, not up the altar itself; Middot 3:6 confirms their position. Conversely, a ten-cubit height for the ḥeil and a total of 70 after 20 + 40 + 20 are shared by the editions. They remain in the narrative, with the corrections of width and arithmetic explained historically. The same principle applies to the fifteen steps misplaced between the courts. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S239 ; S258]

The reply about heavenly fire

Hebrew gives an elliptical reply: "Neither today nor ever." Wiener punctuates it as a question, meaning: "You believe it neither today nor ever?" Spanish understands a defiant answer: "Then do not believe it, today or ever!" The latter interpretation is adopted because it directly explains the narrator's anger; the alternative remains possible. The priests' preceding statement that human beings must also bring fire has a precise parallel in Yoma 21b. That parallel confirms their explanation's meaning without deciding the punctuation of the literary reply. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S247]

Wall compartments for vestments and the Sanctuary's windows

For storing clothes, Hebrew ḥallonot (חלונות, "openings, windows") and German Fenster could suggest glazed windows. The garment names written above them, together with Spanish almarios, favour "wall compartments". Later, actual Sanctuary windows stand above the adjoining chambers in Hebrew and German. The Spanish syntax could attach those windows to the adjoining chambers themselves. The translation distinguishes the two objects and clarifies the position from which looking inside is to be prevented. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S241]

Thirty-eight chambers or three groups of fifteen

In all three editions, thirty-eight chambers are followed by three groups of fifteen; the translation did not create the contradiction. Wiener already notes it. Middot 4:3 provides the correct distribution in the rabbinic source: fifteen on the north, fifteen on the south and

eight on the west, making thirty-eight. The narrative retains the chronicle's three fifteens while the reader is given the documented correction here; no compared edition is represented as already reading "eight" at this point. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S239]

Eagles, not bridges

Above the vaults, Spanish gives eagles and lions, as does German. The 1928 Hebrew transcription has gesharim (גשרים, "bridges"), but the image of the 1855 Hebrew edition, p.102, has nesharim (נשרים, "eagles"). This check supports eagles through evidence beyond a preferred translation: the words differ in their first letter. It does not historically prove that those architectural figures existed. Likewise, the chronicle's "three roofs" remain three roofs; Josephus's three aisles do not become three storeys in the narrative. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; H1855 ; S238]

Nicanor's sea and the narrator's reservation

After the first door is thrown overboard, Spanish says that the ship was not lightened; Hebrew and German say that the sea did not become calm. The latter reading is adopted because Nicanor's response and the storm's subsequent subsiding form an intelligible sequence, also found in Yoma 38a. At the end, Hebrew adds: "Such are the stories the Jews tell!" That sentence, absent in Spanish, is restored to preserve the character's reservation. Wiener strengthens it to "Jewish inventions". The translation here follows Hebrew, whose words convey distance without asserting fabrication quite so explicitly. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S248]

The house contains God: the objection's meaning

Spanish rodea essa casa leaves room for uncertainty about the verb's subject; Wiener understands God as surrounding the Temple. Hebrew, also checked in the 1855 edition, p.103, makes the building what surrounds or contains God. The argument is then clear: if the house can contain him, the narrator claims to infer that he is bodily. The answer distinguishes God from his shekhinah (שכינה, "divine presence"), like the Sun from its light entering a house. "Since this house contains him" is adopted on the basis of both syntax and reply, replacing the incoherent former sense of God going around the building. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; H1855]

Water poured as a libation and the senses of "gate"

The water is not brought for "contemplation", a formulation arising from a misunderstanding of Spanish. Hebrew nissukh (ניסוך, "libation, ritual pouring"), German Spende and the parallel in Middot 2:6 require "water for the libation". The translation also distinguishes an architectural opening, the gate as a named location, and its doors: Nicanor makes and transports the doors, not a masonry entrance. The small opening in the Hekhal entrance is a wicket, not an additional principal gate. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S239]

The entrails, fats and twelve oxen

On the tables, Spanish gives ofrendas ("offerings"), but Hebrew and Wiener specify entrails. Shekalim 6:4 confirms that use, so "entrails and sacrificial fats" is adopted. The term ḥalavim (חלבים, "fats") must not be mistaken for an animal. For the supports of Solomon's Sea, Spanish "cows" becomes "oxen": Hebrew baqar (בקר, "cattle"), Wiener's Rinder and I Kings 7:25 support it. The ten "golden" basins, however, retain that description because the difference from the bronze basins in I Kings 7 belongs to the chronicle itself. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S241 ; S258]

The vine and the two crowns

The Hebrew vine terms name grape pips and skins; Wiener gives the same parts. They replace the confused wording derived from Spanish granos and granujos. For the columns, Spanish begins with one crown on each, then describes two. Hebrew and German give two crowns from the outset; that reading reconciles the object with its explanation. The two crowns represent the two qualities of each man commemorated, conduct and understanding, not one crown assigned to each man. The final reservation, absent in Spanish, is restored in full: "I, for one, have not seen them!" This time it concerns the Sinai crowns. Shabbat 88a supplies the two-crown tradition without establishing them as an observed object. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S239 ; S253]

The bread tables, ten lamps and cherubim

For the bread, table names replace pronouns so that the reader can distinguish the marble table on entry, the golden one on departure and Moses's table inside. "Our teacher Moses", found in Hebrew and Wiener, restores a mark of the Jewish tradition incorporated into the speech. For the lamps, German gives ten on each side; Hebrew and Spanish give ten distributed to the right and left. The latter total is adopted, also supported by II Chronicles 4:7 and Menachot 98b. Finally, the cherubim facing "the Temple hall" follow Hebrew and German rather than Spanish "the faces of the Ark"; II Chronicles 3:13 confirms that orientation without resolving all the account's dimensions or superimposed objects. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S241 ; S260 ; S252]

Curtains and eighty nirim

Parokhot (פרכות, "curtains, hangings") replaces Spanish antiparas; these are doorway curtains, not protective clothing. For nirim (נירין), Spanish speaks of combs and Wiener of weavers' spools. "Heddles", explained as devices guiding the warp threads, conveys the Hebrew technical sense without inventing a complete loom design. Eighty is shared by the editions and is retained. Shekalim 8:5 gives another sequence of weaving numbers; its 72 elements are not merged with the book's 80. All statements concerning the weavers, the period of use and the two curtains made annually remain translated. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S241]

No demand for precedence

The prohibition does not mean that one must never ask anyone to move forward: it forbids "step aside" or "let me pass" as a claim to precedence, even for a king. Hebrew and German resolve the ambiguity of Spanish pasa adelante. The literal conclusion "all equal for the good", which Wiener expands into a common inclination towards goodness, is rendered "all on an equal footing". This conveys the concrete rule about access and rank explained in the exchange without adding a judgement about the participants' inward dispositions. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The Lul tower and the Levites' staves

The tower is called Lul in Hebrew; its approach is compared with that of bell towers. Spanish has puente ("bridge"), Hebrew kevesh (כבש, "ramp, sloping approach"), and Wiener a stairway. "An ascent" preserves the comparison without imposing architecture that cannot be reconstructed from the text. The lulin of Middot 4:5 are openings through which workmen are lowered: the lexical parallel does not automatically identify the tower. The Levites' staves follow Hebrew gezarim (גזרים, here "pieces of wood, staves") and German Stäbe. The ambiguity of Spanish achas should not introduce axes or torches into a scene where they regulate access. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S239]

Red clothing, knees and sleeves

Red occurs in all three editions despite the difference from priestly prescriptions. For length, Spanish specifies the knees, Hebrew gives shoq (שוק, "leg"), and Wiener the thighs. "Reaching the knees" is retained as an explicit interpretation of the short garment described, but the precise part of the leg remains difficult: "reaching the leg" would leave it open, while "reaching the thighs" would follow Wiener. Hebrew batei ha-yad (בתי היד, "sleeves") and German confirm that Spanish guantes must not produce gloves. The reference to the arm supports "short sleeves leaving the forearms free". Maimonides' prescribed wrist-length sleeves are explained in the historical commentary without silently replacing this different description. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S257]

Ovens at the entrances to houses

Spanish sobre las puertas could suggest ovens above doorways. Hebrew ʿal piṯḥeihem (על פתחיהם, "at their entrances") allows a position at the threshold, and Wiener translates in front of the doors. "At the entrances to the houses" is adopted because the passage explains a public display of the festival, not a suspended cooking arrangement. No more precise location is added. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Presidents, administrators and Cartopilos

Av beit din (אב בית דין, "president of the court"), nasi (נשיא, here "president of the council") and the high priest's deputy are distinguished in the seating list. The amarkalim (אמרכלים) are Temple administrators, not marquesses. For Cartopilos, Hebrew preserves a borrowed name; Wiener interprets it as Chartophylax, "keeper of the archives". That identification is offered with "possibly", since the rabbinic passages compared attest administrators and treasurers but do not establish this precise group in the procession. The original name remains visible without turning an etymological interpretation into a demonstrated historical office. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S241]

The penance prescribed after examining the offences

Hebrew and German complete the high priest's response: "For each offence he had prescribed the appropriate penance." Spanish omits the sentence. It is restored because it completes his intervention among the priests: he does more than collect confessions. Hebrew teshuvah (תשובה, "return, repentance") is rendered "penance" in this context; the statement specifies neither judicial punishments nor a scale of penalties. "The King above all kings" also makes intelligible a Hebrew formula of divine sovereignty whose literal "king of the kings of kings" obscured its meaning. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The amen and the high priest's plaque

Two fuller readings in Hebrew and Wiener, absent or abbreviated in Spanish, are restored. The first is complete: "The crowd's answering 'amen' was so loud that birds flying overhead fell to the ground." This is a narrative amplification asserted by the account, not a verified acoustic effect. The second specifies parentage in the inscription: "I, such-and-such a high priest, son of such-and-such a high priest, exercised the high priesthood..." That detail remains a statement of the reported inscription; it does not establish that every appointment was hereditary. Finally, "bowed" follows Hebrew and German where Spanish made the high priest kneel before the people. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S240]

The court scene: enactment or an actual offering

The Spanish sentence can literally be translated: "There at the king's court, the people wanted us to perform a Passover offering." Hebrew likewise speaks of presenting an offering, then arranging an altar and rows of officiants; German retains the request. "Enact the Passover offering" interprets the whole as a demonstration of the described ceremony because this episode mentions neither an animal nor slaughter. A literal reading involving an actual offering remains possible and is given here so that the choice is visible. The Málaga ransom records illuminate the collection but do not decide the nature of the court scene. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S212 ; S237]

Don Manuel, the book title and the Iberian expressions

Manuel follows Hebrew and Wiener, against Imanuel in Spanish; no secure biographical identification resolves the difference. Taʿamei ha-mitsvot (טעמי המצוות) means “reasons for the commandments”, and Shevet ʿEvrato (שבט עברתו) “The Rod of His Wrath”; their meanings accompany the titles. Hebrew and Wiener also insert the Iberian expression sacerdote mayor, “high priest”, twice, where Spanish simply translates it. The narrative of this version uses English “high priest”, but the Hebrew text’s feature is recorded here because it helps situate the language of the document attributed to a Roman. It is not evidence for a recovered Latin original. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 203–230 ; H1928, section 64 ; G1856, p. 196–221.

Supplementary Piece 64a

Miracles, Disputations and Communal Annals

King Alfonso of Portugal asked Don Joseph ibn Yahya: "Since we find in our Saviour things that belong particularly to God, we ought to believe that he is God, or part of Him. One of these things is raising the dead and giving life. A man of your nation who became a Christian said that among your prayers is one praising our Saviour. These are its words: 'You are mighty for ever, Lord, who gives life to the dead; You are great to save.' It says, 'You are mighty': this is the Father, who gives life to the dead. It then praises the Son, saying, 'Great to save', for the prophet likewise says: 'Who speaks in righteousness, great to save.' It says that he brings down the dew, sustains the living and gives life to the dead.

"We hold it established that our Saviour restored a dead man to life. We also find that he went into the wilderness with a hundred men. They needed water, and he made it rain upon them. They needed bread, and he caused a hundred loaves to fall from heaven, one loaf for each man. Since this is so, you are bound to believe in him."

The sage replied: "Our lord the king, we do not concede that whoever raises the dead is God: Elijah and Elisha raised the dead. Christians, who believe in the Trinity, ought on this reasoning to believe in a fourth and a fifth, since, according to their view, Elijah and Elisha would have been gods. As for bringing rain, our Talmud records many righteous men who did so. The same was true of the Jews who lived in Toledo: the Christians asked them to bring down rain, and they obtained it through their prayers. There was also a man who wished to feed his labourers and had nothing. He said to one of his fig trees: 'Fig tree, fig tree, bring forth your fruit.' It did so, and they ate their fill."

The king replied: "Even if he is not God, you should at least believe him to be a prophet because of the wonders he performed." The sage said: "Despite all the miracles Moses performed, the Israelites did not believe in him until he opened the sea for them. Let your Saviour come, open the sea for us and deliver us from our enemies, and we shall believe in him." The king said: "Considering how you treated him, if he ever comes, he will open the sea to drown you, not to deliver you. And what do you say about the blessing?"

The sage replied: "There is no need to discuss it: the blessing speaks of God. According to this Christian's explanation, it would give the Son more power than the Father, since of the Son it says, 'He brings down the dew and sustains the living', and of the Father, 'He gives life to the dead.' Moreover, we do not say in our prayers what we do not believe. Isaac pronounced this prayer when he escaped alive from the altar where he was about to be slaughtered. The first is indeed Abraham's blessing, and the third, which says, 'You are holy', is Jacob's, for the verse says, 'They shall sanctify the God of Jacob.' This leaves the middle blessing, which is Isaac's."

Second question: "On what rational grounds do you claim that your Law is eternal and that no other could be given after it?"

Answer: "Necessarily, either the first Law is more beneficial to the perfection of the soul, or the last is, or both are equally so. If the first is more perfect, why did God wrong the later generations by giving them the imperfect one? If the reverse is true, why did he wrong the earlier generations? And if both are true, the second is superfluous."

The king replied: "We shall say that both are equal. Yet their particular provisions must change according to the time and the people. Had he commanded us to wear tefillin (תפילין, boxes containing biblical passages, fastened to the arm and forehead during prayer), and build a sukkah (סוכה), a ritual booth, it would have been pointless, since we were not in Egypt. It was therefore necessary to give us other commandments in their place."

The sage said: "If that is so, you ought to observe all the commandments that do not depend on Egypt, and others in place of those that do. Yet you say that our whole Law has ceased to apply. Moreover, remedies for the body are like remedies for the soul: just as those for the body do not change, neither do those for the soul."

The king replied: "I grant the first argument, which is well founded, but the second is false. If remedies do not change, it is because the substances they contain are natural remedies. We do not find heat opening and cold closing at one time, then producing the opposite effect at another. But laws rest on acts of will."

Third question: "Is a Christian's prayer heard in the same way as a Jew's, or not?" Answer: "There is no doubt that it is heard, for we say, 'You who hear the prayer of every mouth.' And it is said, 'And the foreigner also.'"

Fourth question: "There are contradictory things in Scripture. One passage says, 'Can his hosts be numbered?', and another, 'A thousand thousands ministered to him', which seems to indicate that they can be numbered. Your rabbis say that the angels have diminished since the Israelites went into captivity. What fools! If they are eternal, and there is neither corruption, change nor deficiency in them, how can they diminish? Moreover, compared with those holy forms that are the angels, the whole world is like a mustard seed in the sea, and how much more so are the children of Israel. It is as though one said that the king's dignitaries had diminished because a flea had been taken captive."

Answer: "This diminution does not affect their essence, God forbid! It is in our understanding. Before we went into captivity, we attained to things without number; captivity brought the loss of our sages' wisdom and our discerning men's understanding. We now grasp only a limited range of things." The king said: "Your answer is excellent, and you deserve honour."

Fifth question: "If sorcery and enchantment are things with no real efficacy, why has your Law forbidden them under threat of punishment? Those who practise them do not obtain what they desire and pursue vanities." Answer: "Those who practise such things hold them to be true; they waste their time and forsake God. That is why they deserve severe punishment."

In a letter from Fez, I found it written that many of the exiles who had left Spain could not bear what befell them on the road and returned to Spain. Along the roads, some men went into villages and never came back. When these exiles reached the kingdom of Fez, there were two hundred women: some did not know whether they were married or widowed—agunot (עגונות, women still bound to husbands whose fate is unknown)—while others remained subject to a levirate bond (binding them to a deceased husband's brother when that husband had died childless). They all gathered in a town called Salé, built a large house and settled there. They worked, keeping only enough of their earnings for bread and water; all the rest they gave to students for their support. May the merit of these righteous women endure for ever.

Joseph said: "I wished to record here what happened in our own time in the great city of Cairo and in the town of Mazia (probably Amasya, in Anatolia). But I considered that if I related in detail what happened there, who brought it about and what became of him, people might say that we rejoice, and so forth. I shall therefore state what is publicly known in general and veiled terms.

"The "Amalekites" (the biblical name applied here to the accusers) brought the following accusation: a Christian had entered a Jew's house and never come out again, just as in other accusations recorded in this work by my father, Solomon, son of Verga. Righteous men were subjected to terrible torture; they could not bear it and said that they had killed this Christian. They were hanged. An eminent physician, known as the sage Rabbi Jacob Abiub, son of Rabbi Joseph Abiub, was burnt.

"A few days later, this Christian returned to the town. He was known to all the people. He was brought before the judges and recognised, and the wickedness was exposed. The valiant king, Sultan Suleiman, ordered an investigation into what had been fabricated and the appropriate punishment of the guilty. Rabbi Moses Hamon risked his life for his people. He stood at the king's gate against every adversary and obtained strict decrees concerning accusations that we mix blood into unleavened bread, and other similar matters. He secured a ruling that such cases should be heard by no judge except at the king's court. In Tokat too, reckless accusations were invented, and their falsehood was exposed before everyone. Such is the confidence of the Lord's poor people: every tongue that rises against them shall be condemned."

A scroll was composed about the miracle in Egypt; I have drawn this brief account from it, for I did not find the strength to print the whole. It happened in the days of the powerful king, Sultan Suleiman, who ruled all Turkey, Uz, Media, Greece, Meshech and Tiras, the land beyond the River, Edom, Moab, Canaan, Palestine, the kingdoms of Arabia dwelling in the wilderness of Sinai, Egypt, Lydia and Ethiopia, as far as the uttermost southern lands.

In the first year of his reign, he exercised justice and mercy. He restored to the merchants thousands in gold and silver beyond counting which his father the king had exacted from them in fines. In the second year, he marched against the city of Belgrade and captured it. At the end of the year, he advanced upon Rhodes and captured it. His viceroy Ahmet the Agagite (an epithet linking him to Haman in the Book of Esther) performed great feats of valour. The king raised him up and gave him dominion over all the land of Egypt. Ahmet departed in royal robes and reached Egypt in the third year of the king's reign. He gave himself over to greed and made the Egyptians' yoke heavier. He then rebelled against the king and killed three of his chief officers. The others fled to a tower in the city. Wretched men gathered about him, and he gave them gifts. For three days he fought the king's servants and killed a hundred men.

Then wicked men went out against the camp of the Hebrews to plunder them. Ahmet had a counsellor named Maani, who said to him: "The Jews are exceedingly rich. Let their gold and silver be yours, not the plunderers'." He immediately proclaimed that anyone who plundered would be hanged. That evening, five Jews went out; Circassian troops fell upon them and killed them. There was a great outcry in Egypt.

On the third day, Ahmet assembled the whole Circassian army and the judges of the land, ordering them to proclaim him king; and he became king. He appointed Ahmet Bey viceroy; the latter advised him to gather all the silver in Egypt. He imposed a heavy tribute on the merchants. In the month of Adar in the year 5284, he summoned twelve leading Jews and said to them: "This is what you shall tell your people: if you wish to live, bring two hundred talents of silver (kikkarim, ככרים, an ancient unit of weight) into the royal treasuries."

The people heard and mourned; the day of Purim turned into mourning. They cried out, asking to be given time to raise the sum. He told them: "You are very idle, and I have sworn to destroy and kill you." They then proclaimed a fast, gathered the children and raised a great cry that ascended to heaven. They came to the tower, bringing fifteen talents of silver. Sada the scribe told them: "Remain prisoners until the king comes out of the bath; then you will see your slaughter and destruction." Just then, a messenger arrived and told Sada that Mehmet Bey and his servants had risen against the king while he was in the bath. They had tried to break down the door. Ahmet had escaped through the bath's small door and taken refuge in the tower; feeling unsafe there, he had fled with ten men and a small troop of Circassians. They remained all night at the foot of the mountain.

Mehmet Bey came and released the imprisoned Jews. Afterwards, he gathered three thousand men from the Circassian army and pursued Ahmet for three days. He overtook him and cut off his head on the twenty-seventh of Adar. He placed it on his standard and returned to Egypt in great honour. The Jews felt great joy and celebrated. They then undertook, for themselves and their descendants, to hold a feast and rejoice on that day, which they called the Day of Miracles, on the twenty-seventh of Adar.

After this little book had been printed, I found in the possession of a sage, Rabbi Shem Tov Shantsolo, a booklet relating events concerning the kings of Edom, together with some things that had happened to our fathers there. I collected them, choos-

ing what seemed most fitting for the remembrance of the children of Israel. I also found an account in another book and translated it into Hebrew, seeing that it contained examples worth remembering.

In the year 4647, the Ishmaelites took Acre, Tiberias and most of the land of Israel within seven months. Then an army drawn from the nations of the whole world assembled, came as far as Acre and laid siege to it. Saladin, king of the Ishmaelites, likewise gathered a great army and besieged those nations for many days. In the end, the Ishmaelites conquered the whole land.

The Cairo Purim Scroll

Opening of a scroll recounting Ahmet Pasha's rebellion and the deliverance of Cairo's Jews in 1524. Sixteenth-century manuscript in Hebrew and Judeo-Arabic, with a title in coloured letters. Penn Libraries, Halper 328, digitised page 3. [provenance]

In the year 748, Almanzor, Saladin's son, took Jerusalem and carried away many captives. He stayed there for four days.

In the year 128, an accusation was brought at Badras (Béziers). The ruler was killed, and the men of the community were taken captive.

In the year 130, the accusers were hanged. Rabbi Meshullam died, as did the great prince Don Jacob Propag.

In the year 132, Elizir had Rabbi Abraham, son of David, arrested.

In the year 133, the prince was arrested and taken captive to Carcassonne, before the rabbi. In the year 139, the pope assembled all the cardinals and religious of France and Spain. All the communities were overcome with great fear and fasted for three days in succession. God showed them mercy: the matter turned to their benefit.

In the year 146, Rabbi Zerahiah, of blessed memory, died.

In the year 152, a large ship was lost, with many sages aboard. May they rest in blessedness.

In the year 135, the lord of Rimon died, and many people in the community of Balquedi were killed.

In the year 127, the king of the Ishmaelites, the amīr al-mu'minīn (Commander of the Faithful), came. He had the land of Castile plundered and conquered Calatrava and other large cities. He ravaged the whole territory of Toledo. The Jews in the city went out to meet him, fought and killed many of their enemies. In the battle, they killed the son of Ali, one of the great lords.

In the year 158, the governor of the city plundered the entire community and seized its houses and treasures.

In the year 159, the king of England returned after the capture of Acre. The Commander of the Faithful died. The great Abraham, son of David, died on the eve of the Sabbath. The kohanim (כהנים, men of priestly descent) dug his grave.

In the year 165, the Acronites rose against the people of Sastion and killed eighty Jews.

That same year, on the eve of their Nativity, a Sabbath day, the king of Aragon returned from Rome. A scroll of the Law was brought out before him, and everyone fasted, so great was their fear. It was a day of sorrow, but it turned into joy. That year Moses (Maimonides), the servant of the Lord, died in Egypt. The Jews and the Egyptians mourned him for three days. It was the year of "lamentation". On the seventh day, the news reached Alexandria; on the eighth, they mourned him and proclaimed a

fast. The hazzan (חזן, prayer leader) read from the middle of the portion 'If you follow my statutes' to the end of the admonitions. For the haftarah (הפטרה, reading from the Prophets), they read 'And the word of Samuel came...' as far as 'The Ark of God was taken'.

Some years later, he was taken to the land of Israel. They encountered robbers who wished to throw the coffin into the sea. Despite all their strength, they could not move it, although there were more than thirty of them. Seeing this, they said: "This is a man of God." These wicked men accompanied him as well, and the body was laid beside the burial place of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. I heard this related as an established truth.

In the year 169, which was a very evil year, wicked men set out from France to gather an army. On the nineteenth of Av, there was a great massacre: twenty thousand of them died, together with two hundred Jews, and many were taken captive.

In the year 170, Rabbi Aaron, son of Meshullam, died.

In the year 171, God stirred the rabbis of France and England to go to Jerusalem. There were more than three hundred of them. The king paid them great honour, and they built synagogues and houses of study there. Our Rabbi Jonathan the Kohen (הכהן, the priest) went there too. A miracle was performed at his request: they asked for water and were answered, and God's name was sanctified through him.

In the year 172, in the month of Tishri, the Ishmaelites took Salvatierra. The survivors of our people who had been there reached Toledo on the eve of Kippur. That year, the emir's armies set out towards the land of Edom. Its kings gathered and fought them, army against army. Israel was in great distress.

In the year 175, in the month of Shevat, all the cardinals and archbishops, nearly two hundred of them, together with all the great men of the land, assembled at Montpellier before the cardinal. Prince Don Isaac Benveniste was there, with two other men from each community. That same year, in the month of Sivan, Louis, king of France, came to Béziers and ordered the demolition of the walls. The community was in great danger, until the count of Montfort and his brother swore to protect their lives. That year, Jews from all the communities between Narbonne and Marseille gathered in the suburb of Jaeli, at the command of Rabbi Isaac Benveniste, before Rabbi Levi. They were to decide who would go to Rome to prevent the implementation of the pope's plan at the assembly of cardinals.

In the year 176, a decree was passed against our people requiring those aged twelve and over to wear a distinguishing mark: men on their hats, women on their veils. They were also required to have every head of household give the town's cleric six coins each year at the time of their festival. That year, the pope who had ordered this died.

In the year 177, the governing lady, wife of the count of Montfort, had all the Jews in Toulouse arrested, together with their wives and children. She ordered them to change their religion, the men apart and the women apart. She handed children aged six or under to the religious to be baptised against their will. The children cried out to their parents, who could not help them. Despite all this, they refused to eat their food. Fifty-seven abandoned their religion; the others remained steadfast in it and were handed over to death for seeking to sanctify God's name.

At the beginning of the month of Av, a decree arrived from the count ordering their release and the return of their property, except for the children who had been baptised, for the cardinal had so commanded. That year, he decreed that they should wear a particular distinguishing mark on their outer garment. A few days later, the decree was annulled.

In the year 179, the wicked men living in Anjou, Poitiers and Brittany conspired against our people to make them change their religion. They refused and remained steadfast; more than three thousand were killed. Some slaughtered their children; others killed themselves. More than five hundred also became Christians. Woe to us, for we have sinned! A man who had belonged to our own people sought to draw all the others after him. He came and proclaimed throughout the communities that they were to abandon the Law by force. When he failed to achieve this, he obtained deeply scandalous provisions from the pope. He ordered them to wear a large mark of red or yellow felt, and that anyone who did not wear it should be killed.

Jews from the communities then gathered to choose whom to send. They elected the excellent Rabbi Mordecai, son of Joseph of Avignon, and Rabbi Solomon of Seli, from the tower of Tarascon, to go to the king and beg for mercy concerning the distinguishing marks. They obtained it and returned in joy, the decree having been annulled.

A few days later, the inquisitors regained strength against our people and conducted inquiries throughout Provence. They extracted a great sum of money. Many of the leading men of the country also appeared with unusual distinguishing marks in Marseille and in the city of Avignon, where matters went so far that Rabbi Mordecai

and Rabbi Israel were confined in their homes. After this, they appeared with unusual distinguishing marks. Then a great miracle occurred, and they were freed. Many others wore a distinguishing mark. Its shape was as follows: a ring of yellow felt one span across, with a band four fingers wide; black cloth at its centre formed the likeness of an eclipsed moon.

At Belavides, our people were accused of killing a maidservant who had drowned in mud and died without anyone seeing her. They were arrested and put in chains throughout most of Provence. They were afflicted with various torments and condemned because of our sins. In the year when the king of France was taken prisoner by the Ishmaelites, after he had been released and returned to his country, he expelled all the Jews from it.

In the year five thousand, there was a great multitude of Shepherds in Spain. Their leader was called Rugier. They drew the nations after them and killed many of our people. They passed a sentence against the town of Bonillas. That year, a decree was issued against the community of Asmara: the inhabitants of the country rose, gathered vagabonds and killed the entire people, men, women and children, on the day of the Easter festival of Adjou, in Provence. The storehouses and all the keys were seized, and great wealth was extracted from the Jews at will.

Historical Commentary

The royal controversy and its textual sources

The Hebrew heading names Alfonso of Portugal and Joseph ibn Yahya; the account gives neither a date nor a court document authenticating the dialogue word for word. Several of its materials can nevertheless be identified. The fig tree comes from Taʿanit 24a: in the Talmud, Rabbi Yosei of Yokrat's son requests the miracle to feed his father's labourers; Ibn Verga shortens the episode and assigns the initiative to the man responsible for feeding them. Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer 31 relates that Isaac, saved from sacrifice, pronounced the blessing of resurrection. The hundred loaves descending for Jesus's companions do not match the Kings passage about Elisha, who feeds a hundred people with twenty loaves; the resemblance does not make them the same story. These parallels identify traditions used in the dialogue without establishing the historical circumstances of the meeting. [H1928 ; S273 ; S276 ; S281]

Isaac: Genesis and the midrashic development

Genesis 22:9–13 supplies the underlying biblical episode: Abraham binds Isaac and takes the knife, then receives the command not to lay a hand on him; a ram is offered in his place. The passage does not describe death followed by the soul's return. That particular development appears in Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer 31: Isaac's soul departs at the touch of the blade and returns when he hears the divine prohibition; he then pronounces a blessing on resurrection. The comparison distinguishes the Torah text from its midrashic expansion, already identified in the dialogue. It traces part of the religious account without reducing all its details to Genesis alone. [S293 ; S276]

The feeding miracles in the Gospels

For the bread attributed to Jesus, the closest canonical episodes are Mark 6:35–44 and 8:1–9. The first gives five loaves and two fish for five thousand men; the second, seven loaves and a few small fish for about four thousand people. The disciples distribute the food after Jesus' action. Neither passage gives a hundred loaves descending from heaven. The same person and the motif of a miraculously fed crowd can therefore be traced, but with different numbers and a different sequence. These references extend the comparison with Elisha without permitting Ibn Verga's figures to be corrected simply by identifying them with one of these scenes. [S294 ; S295 ; S281]

Prayer by outsiders, angels and magic

The answer concerning a foreigner's prayer points specifically to 1 Kings 8:41–43. In the fuller Hebrew and German exchange, the king cites Taʿanit 16a and Rashi. The Talmud distinguishes two reasons for visiting a cemetery during a fast: recalling human mortality or seeking intercession from the dead. Commenting on this passage, Rashi denies that second function to gentile graves, saying that they cannot intercede even for themselves. The discussion concerns the dead; by itself it does not make a general statement about prayers offered by living Christians. The fourth question draws on Ḥagigah 13b, which compares Daniel 7:10 with Job 25:3 and distinguishes the period when the Temple stands from the period after its destruction. The fifth is compatible with Maimonides' treatment of magical practices as deceptions in Mishneh Torah 11:16; exclusive direct borrowing has not been demonstrated. [S280 ; S274 ; S275 ; S277 ; S278]

The women of Salé

The author attributes this passage to a letter from Fez concerning the exiles from Spain. It distinguishes two obstacles to remarriage: a missing husband whose death has not been proved, and the bond to the brother of a husband who died childless. The latter is the levirate obligation described in Deuteronomy 25:5–10; its ritual release is ḥaliṣah (חליצה, removal of the shoe). This legal distinction explains the women's gathering without turning their house into a convent or a community of voluntary celibates. The original letter, a foundation deed for the house and a list of its two hundred residents have not been located in the documents consulted. Their number and arrangements therefore remain particulars of the account transmitted by Ibn Verga. [H1928 ; S279]

Disappearances at sea and evidence of death

Yevamot 16:4 shows concretely why disappearance did not always suffice to permit remarriage. The Mishnah examines a man's fall into water and records different cases discussed by Rabbi Meir and Rabbi Yose, according to the circumstances in which death could be regarded as established. This text illuminates the legal issue in the Salé letter; it is neither the ruling issued for those women nor evidence that they all lost their husbands in the same shipwreck. Uncertainty about death must also remain distinct from the levirate bond described in Deuteronomy. [S297 ; S279]

Amasya, Tokat and Moses Hamon's intervention

A substantial parallel appears in Joseph ha-Kohen's Valley of Tears, pp. 125–126 of Sée's translation. Placed after the events of 1545, it relates a Christian's secret removal, confessions extracted under torture, executions, the man's return alive, and physician Moses Hamon's appeal to Suleiman to reserve such cases to the Porte. Tokat is also mentioned. Two differences prevent this agreement from counting as complete administrative verification: ha-Kohen locates the affair in 'Greece' without naming Amasya, and calls the physician

who was burnt Joseph Abiob, whereas Ibn Verga gives Jacob, son of Joseph Abiub. The chroniclers may depend on related information. The parallel traces the narrative tradition precisely; it does not replace an Ottoman judgment or the original decree, neither of which has been examined here. [S126 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Cairo in 1524: one event and two commemorative accounts

The Scroll of Egypt traces the same episode: Ahmet's extortions, his threat against Cairo's Jews, the attack by Suleiman's loyalists while he bathes, his flight and his beheading. Ibn Verga expressly says he is abridging a scroll, so the two accounts must not automatically be counted as independent evidence. Their differences are documentary: the Scroll's surviving extract gives a demand for 150,000 large gold coins, against two hundred talents of silver here. They involve different metals, with no demonstrated conversion between them. Its ending places the fast on Adar 27 and both beheading and feast on Adar 28. Ibn Verga has the beheading on the 27th, and his Hebrew and German texts place the feast on that day too. The year 5284 situates the episode in 1524. The calendrical disagreement is retained in the translation choices below. [S282 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The form of a local commemoration: Esther's precedent

The Cairo episode has its own rebel, its year 1524 and its dates in Adar. Its recording in a scroll and the institution of an annual celebration have a formal precedent in Esther 9:20–22 and 9:27–28: Mordecai writes to the communities so that they will commemorate the passage from distress to joy. The connection concerns the form and organisation of remembrance. Ahmet is not Haman, Cairo is not Susa and the days given are not Esther's 14 and 15 Adar. This distinction explains a local commemoration alongside a biblical model while preserving the Egyptian uprising's own chronology. [S296 ; S282]

The annals of Saladin and Acre

Under 1187, Roger of Howden describes Saladin's conquests of Tiberias, Acre and Jerusalem; that setting makes the complete date 4647 as printed here impossible. Those conquests must, however, be distinguished from the crusaders' recapture of Acre in July 1191, related by Rigord in §§ 79–82. Ibn Verga's compressed sequence therefore does not accurately reproduce the siege's outcome. The abbreviated dates that follow and the figure called 'Almanzor, son of Saladin' cannot be assigned a uniform calendar conversion and secure identity merely from similarities of names. The translation retains the transmitted particulars, while the commentary separates the events that the Latin chronicles allow us to date. [S283 ; S284 ; E1744 ; H1928]

Béziers and Montpellier: specific correspondences

In chapter XVI, Pierre des Vaux-de-Cernay describes the sack of Béziers on Mary Magdalene's feast in 1209, or July 22. He also recalls the earlier killing of Béziers' lord; this geography supports identifying Badras as Béziers. His account confirms massacre and fire, but does not verify Ibn Verga's figures of twenty thousand non-Jews and two hundred Jews: Pierre gives, in particular, seven thousand victims inside a church. Chapter LXXXI places the council summoned by Peter of Benevento at Montpellier in the fortnight following Christmas 1214, hence early 1215. In chapter LXXXII, Louis, still the French king's son, does visit Béziers; the walls ordered demolished belong to Narbonne, Toulouse and certain castles. This corrects the assumption that the order necessarily concerned Béziers' walls. These passages do not reproduce the Montfort brothers' particular oath to protect the Jews. [S285 ; G1856 ; H1928]

Maimonides and travellers to the Holy Land

Wiener identifies Moses, who dies in Egypt, as Maimonides. Ibn Verga's funeral tradition then places his body near the Cave of the Patriarchs. A travel source offers a different location: Rabbi Jacob's Description of the Sacred Tombs, published by Carmoly and dated by him to about 1258, lists the tomb of 'Moses, son of Maimon' at Tiberias (p. 185). This attests a tradition about the burial's location, rather than archaeologically proving the transfer or the miracle of the coffin. For the rabbis' journey, Samuel ben Samson describes arriving in Jerusalem with the 'great Kohen of Lunel' (pp. 127–128). The parallel helps locate Jonathan of Lunel's milieu, but that passage confirms neither a group of precisely more than three hundred people nor the rain miracle. The conflicting dates of Moses' death are set out in the choices. [S286 ; G1856]

Distinguishing dress and the limits of comparison

Canon 68 of the Fourth Lateran Council, in 1215, requires Jews and Muslims of both sexes to be distinguished by their clothing. It supplies neither the age of twelve, the six annual coins, nor the colour and dimensions of the ring-shaped badge described here. Canon 3 of the Narbonne council of 1227, reproduced in the source's documentary notes, prescribes a breast badge one finger wide and half a palm high: a comparable local regulation, but with different measurements. These texts establish the legislative setting and its variation; they do not authenticate every arrest, embassy and revocation brought together in the final pages. The pope's identity must be established for each distinct act, rather than assigning the whole sequence to one pontificate. [S287 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The regulations attributed to Augustus in the preamble

The longer preamble, translated in the choices, attributes to Augustus bans on silk and jewellery linked to marriage. Suetonius, Augustus 34, attests legislation on luxury and marriage, but does not give these time limits or this combination of penalties. Tacitus, Annals II.33,

describes under Tiberius a debate against luxury and a ban on men wearing silk. These parallels illuminate the anecdote's ancient background; they do not establish the preamble's particular rule as an exact quotation of a law of Augustus. [S288 ; S289 ; H1928]

The French king's captivity and the Shepherds

William of Nangis distinguishes Louis IX's release, followed by several years in the Holy Land (p. 207), from his return to France in 1254 (p. 211). Ibn Verga's sentence compresses these stages; the parallel does not by itself verify the general expulsion it alleges. Under 1251, Nangis describes the Shepherds in France, their leader called the 'Master of Hungary', and the destruction of Jewish books and plundering of Jewish property at Bourges. This gives a specific parallel for a Shepherd movement attacking Jews, but neither Rugier, the Hebrew year 5000, nor the Spanish setting of Ibn Verga's main reading appears there. The variant 'France' is consequently relevant to the historical comparison without resolving every discrepancy. Bonillas, Asmara and Adjou remain uncertain names. [S290 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Translation Choices

The king and the preamble

Hebrew names King Don Alfonso, as does Wiener; the name is accordingly specified in the text. Spanish omits the long preamble, a difference of extent rather than proof that its accusations were historically spoken. A complete translation of that Hebrew opening is supplied separately below so that both forms can be read. The dialogue remains undated, and no regnal number has been added to Alfonso. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Rain and the addressee

For Toledo, Spanish has rocio, ‘dew’, whereas Hebrew מטר and Wiener give ‘rain’. The context of prayers against drought supports ‘rain’. The king’s Spanish ‘we shall believe’ has likewise been corrected from Hebrew and German to ‘you should believe’: the king is exhorting his Jewish interlocutor, not discovering Christian belief himself. Hebrew ככרות (kikkarot, loaves) and German Laibe also clarify the Spanish ‘pieces’: a hundred loaves are retained, one per person. Comparison with 2 Kings 4 does not authorize reducing the number or replacing Jesus with Elisha. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S281]

The discussion of cemeteries

Hebrew, followed by Wiener, continues with this exchange absent from Spanish: “The king said: How, then, can you contradict yourselves? Your Talmud says that in a drought people should go to pray in cemeteries, but not at gentile graves: if they have not saved themselves, how could they save others? Answer: God forbid! The reason is rather that, through hatred, the gentiles would not plead for mercy on our behalf. The king said: Bring the Talmud! Rashi was found to say what the king had said, and the king became very angry. The sage tried to repair his answer: Perhaps this concerns rain, for which we possess a special property, since it is written, ‘I shall give your rains’, not ‘I shall give rain’. The king said: To repair one lie, you have to tell many others.” Taʿanit 16a and Rashi discuss the intercession of the dead during a fast for rain; they do not directly address every prayer by a living Christian. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The five questions

The Spanish numbering repeats “third”, then returns to “second”. Fourth–fifth follows Hebrew and restores the sequence of five questions. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The women of Salé

Hebrew distinguishes עגונות (agunot, women whose marriage bond continues although the husband is missing) from זקוקות ליבם (zequqot le-yavam, women bound to a brother-in-law by the levirate obligation). Wiener preserves the distinction. The old Judaeo-Spanish verb

acuñadar concerns marriage to the deceased husband's brother; it does not mean a general permission to remarry. The levirate bond is now explained within the sentence; ḥalisah (חליצה, removal of the shoe) names its ritual release. The two hundred women remain a detail of the account, unverified by a population register. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S279]

Cairo and Mazia

Hebrew explicitly names Miṣr (מצרים, here Cairo), which Wiener transcribes Mesr. For מאציא, Spanish has Mazia and German Amasia; Amasya is marked as a probable identification. Ha-Kohen's parallel supplies Moses Hamon and Tokat, but does not name Amasya and says 'Greece'. It supports identifying the affair without settling this topographical uncertainty. 'Amalekites' is retained and immediately explained as the author's biblical epithet, not an ethnic identification of the accusers. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S126]

Abiub: the physician's name

The name ends in bet in the 1855 Hebrew facsimile as in the 1928 transcription; Wiener reads Abiub. We therefore correct Abiud without proposing a further biographical identification. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The scroll of the miracle in Egypt

The Hebrew of 1855 and 1928 introduces a new document: a scroll recounting the miracle in Egypt. Spanish obscures the transition, and our first translation wrongly attached the sentence to the preceding accusations. What follows concerns the deliverance of the Cairo community under Ahmet. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The empire's biblical geography

Tiras and Arabia are the readings of both Hebrew witnesses consulted. The list combines biblical names with a portrayal of Suleiman's empire; it is not an exact political map. The remaining names are retained rather than replaced by Wiener's conjectural geographical identifications. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The Agagite

The Agagite (ha-Agagi, האגגי) is a biblical and polemical epithet, applied to Haman in Esther 3:1. It is not an established surname here or evidence of Agagite ancestry. Wiener substitutes a Dalmatian origin, which we do not adopt in place of the Hebrew. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The Circassians

Girques represents the name of the Circassians, as Wiener makes explicit ("Tscherkessen"). The "camp of the Hebrews" is the account's biblical expression for the targeted community; it does not establish the existence of a Jewish army. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Ahmet Bey and Mehmet Bey

Both Hebrew witnesses name a deputy, Ahmet Bey, and make him the author of the advice; they do not mention a son. Wiener gives Mehmed Beg here, assimilating his name to that of the subsequent liberator. The 1855 Hebrew nevertheless distinguishes Ahmet Bey here from Mehmet Bey later. We retain that difference without asserting that they were two distinct men. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The talents of silver

Hebrew uses kikkarim, rendered here as “talents”, as in the Temple descriptions. “Quintals” is the Spanish adaptation; no conversion into metric weight is assumed. The same unit recurs in the fifteen talents subsequently brought. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The chains and Adar 15

Between these sentences Hebrew adds: “The leading Jews were put in chains; on the fifteenth of Adar, they went to plead with the rebel for time to raise the sum.” Spanish omits the chains at this point and the date of the fifteenth of Adar. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Adar 27 or 28

Spanish dates the beheading to Adar 27 but the feast to Adar 23. Both Hebrew editions and Wiener have the 27th in both places; this agreement and the continuity of the commemoration support the adopted 27th. The Scroll of Egypt instead distinguishes a fast on the 27th and a feast on the 28th. That other tradition is recorded without silently changing Ibn Verga’s dates. The Hebrew and German ending omitted in Spanish reads: ‘They called it the Day of Miracles, for he had fled to escape and they had placed him on a standard. So may all the Lord’s enemies perish! Amen.’ The wordplay links nes (נס, miracle or standard) with nas (נס, he fled). It explains the festival’s name but does not determine its date. Spanish ‘a second messenger’ is also rendered ‘a messenger’, following Hebrew and Wiener: no first messenger is mentioned. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S282]

The year 4647 and Shem Tov’s booklet

Spanish prints 3647; both Hebrew editions and Wiener have 4647. The latter is adopted from the comparison, but Saladin’s story remains impossible under that complete date. An emendation to 4947 would correspond to 1186–1187, without being the printed reading of the compared texts; it therefore remains a historical proposal rather than a concealed replacement. The fuller Hebrew opening, followed by Wiener, reads: ‘Joseph, poor and persecuted, said: some time after this little work was printed, I found with the eminent sage Rabbi Shem Tov Shantsolo a booklet recounting the events of the kings of Edom and certain things that happened to our fathers there. I abridged and gathered what seemed suitable for the remembrance of the children of Israel. I also found an account in a book written in a Christian language and translated it into the holy language, for its teachings and rules of conduct de-

served remembrance.' Wiener specifies Latin, whereas Hebrew says only 'a Christian language'. Shantsolo's full name is restored; the source language is not identified without qualification. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S283]

Numbers and names in the annals

The years 133, 139 and 146 follow both Hebrew editions and Wiener against Spanish 132, 138 and 147. Conversely, 127 and 158 remain, supported by Spanish, Hebrew 1855 and German, against 126 and 155 in the 1928 transcription. No edition is therefore preferred for every number. Wiener identifies Badras as Béziers; Pierre des Vaux-de-Cernay confirms Béziers as the setting of the lord's killing, permitting the parenthetical identification. His proposals of Perpignan for Propag and Beaucaire for Balquedi remain in the apparatus. For year 130, Hebrew and German add: 'The accusers were hanged in the week when "These are the laws" is read.' This is the biblical portion Mishpatim (משפטים, laws; Exodus 21–24). The text says the lord of Rimon; Wiener renders Granada. The name is left open rather than turning it without evidence into a person named Rimon. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S285]

The king of Aragon at Christmas

The kingdom's name, Aragon, is explicit in both Hebrew witnesses and Wiener. The "seventh day" means the Sabbath, and Hebrew places the return on Christmas Eve. These details replace an opaque name and a misunderstood date in the first French version. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The date of Moses' death

The passage begins under year 165. Spanish subsequently prints 61; Hebrew 1855 and the 1928 transcription contain a formula around נהי"ה, while Wiener renders 'the year of lamentation', explains nehi (נהי, lamentation), and computes 65 from those three letters (50 + 5 + 10). Including the final ה of the transmitted Hebrew form would give 70. The new translation therefore preserves the formula's literary meaning, 'the year of lamentation', while displaying the competing calculations here; it does not present the Spanish 61 as a secure date. Hebrew and Wiener also supply the detail omitted in Spanish: 'On the twenty-fifth day he was buried in his house.' No month is specified. Maimonides is Wiener's explicit identification, adopted in parentheses. The differing Tiberias burial tradition is documented in the commentary without replacing the Cave of the Patriarchs in Ibn Verga's account. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S286]

The funeral reading

The Spanish wording is defective. The Hebrew witnesses of 1855 and 1928 refer to the middle of the biblical portion, not to noon. The funeral reading combines the portion of Leviticus 26 and the account of the capture of the Ark in 1 Samuel 4. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Aaron, son of Meshullam

The patronymic Meshullam is clearly transmitted by both Hebrew witnesses and Wiener; Sulan is the defective Spanish form. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Salvatierra and the battle's outcome

Hebrew שרידי עמנו, 'the survivors of our people', and Wiener show that Spanish 'governors' is a misreading. The ending omitted in Spanish should also be available: 'The kings of Edom gathered, faced them in pitched battle and defeated them; but the Israelites were in very great distress.' This victory is not deduced from modern context: it is expressly preserved in Hebrew and German. Imir is understood as the title emir; it does not automatically designate a different person. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Béziers and Montpellier

For Louis's visit, Hebrew and Wiener give Béziers against Spanish Bordeaux. For the council, Spanish Gaaz comes from Hebrew Har Ga'ash (הר געש, literally trembling mountain), which Wiener identifies as Montpellier. Pierre des Vaux-de-Cernay's description of the Montpellier council supplies the decisive external check here: Montpellier is adopted in the translation. For Jaeli, Wiener's Saint-Gilles remains only a possible identification. German Montferrat is rejected: Hebrew, Spanish and Pierre des Vaux-de-Cernay name Montfort. Comparing German thus helps resolve certain forms while also allowing its errors to be rejected. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S285]

Protecting lives

Hebrew 1855 and 1928 literally says "guard their heads", meaning protect their lives; Wiener retains this protective sense. Spanish therefore reverses the action. The first French version faithfully reproduced that reversal without detecting it. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The yearly contribution

The Spanish 'plaques' are a monetary adaptation; Hebrew has peshutim (פשוטים, ordinary coins), and Wiener deniers. 'Six coins' avoids imposing a misleading French or English denomination or any conversion. The women's Spanish 'cloaks' become 'veils', following Hebrew צעיפים and Wiener's Schleier. 'Their festival' means that of the Christian authorities; the passage does not name the Jewish Passover. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Threat of death and release

Spanish 'they let themselves be killed' could suggest that all were executed, although their release is reported immediately afterwards. Hebrew says they were handed over to death for sanctifying the divine name; Wiener explicitly gives a death sentence. The translation retains

'were handed over to death', followed by the account of release: it conveys the threat and ordeal without inventing a death toll. The badge imposed next is specified as round in Hebrew and German, clarifying the ring described later. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The badge's colours

Both Hebrew witnesses and Wiener give alternative colours: red or saffron yellow. Spanish combines the two colours. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Avignon and Tarascon

Hebrew and Wiener allow Avignon and Tarascon, two Provençal places, to be recognised. The name Seli is retained: Wiener proposes Chelles only with a question mark. The indication of origin does not establish the rabbis' complete identities. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Confinement and imposed badges

They were subjected to confinement, not voluntarily withdrawing. Hebrew and Wiener resolve the ambiguity of the Spanish form. The "extraordinary signs" are imposed distinguishing badges, not prodigies. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Miracle, fine and condemnation

Spanish and both Hebrew editions say 'a great miracle'; Wiener substitutes a large fine. With no Hebrew reading establishing his interpretation here, 'miracle' remains the best-attested choice. In the maidservant affair, however, the revised text adopts 'condemned': Hebrew ונדונו and German verurtheilte do not explicitly state that executions followed. The stronger Spanish version would read: 'They were killed because of our sins.' It remains available as a variant. Hebrew טיט and German Schlamm support 'mud' instead of Spanish 'dung'. The badge's description is made readable: a yellow ring one span across, a band four fingers wide, and a black centre. Expressing its overall width does not propose a centimetre conversion. Wiener gives a waning moon, Hebrew an eclipsed moon; the latter is retained together with Spanish. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The Shepherds and uncertain names

Adjou is the Spanish form; Hebrew gives Anyov, while Wiener proposes Anjou with a question mark. The name is not turned into a secure identification. For the Shepherds, Spanish, the main Hebrew text of 1855 and Wiener have Spain; the 1855 edition records France as a variant, repeated parenthetically in 1928. Nangis's French events of 1251 make France historically plausible without resolving the year 5000 or the names. The fuller Hebrew and German opening, omitted in Spanish, reads: 'In the year five thousand, God put an evil spirit into the uncircumcised of Spain [variant: France]. The Shepherds arose by thousands and tens of thousands; they deceived themselves into thinking they could cross the sea without an oar. The greatest among them was called Rouyer.' At the end, Hebrew and German spe-

cify ‘men, women and children’ against Spanish ‘families’. Rugier, Bonillas and Asmara are not replaced by the German proposals Roviedo and Bagnolas without sufficiently secure external identification. As the person responsible for the final confiscation is unnamed, the impersonal construction avoids inventing a king. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S290]

Royal preamble preserved in Hebrew and German

The preamble absent from Spanish reads: ‘The king said: Learned Jew! I have profound questions to ask about your religion; I shall leave them until after the festival and for now ask only the easier ones. First I shall rebuke you: why do you not warn your people? I hear that they rob the nations, as your clothes and your wives’ jewels seem to show; yet theft is forbidden to you more strictly than to us. I have heard that, for your sacrifices, God commanded the beast’s entrails to be washed before being offered, but said of the bird: “Its crop shall be removed with its feathers.” A beast generally eats from its owner’s trough and does not feed by robbery; a bird feeds by plunder, and its crop is therefore discarded. I asked why in that case the whole bird should not be discarded. They answered that in the bird’s body the stolen substance had changed and become part of a limb; Scripture says, “He shall return what he stole”, when it is still in the form in which he stole it. How far your conduct is from the decree of Augustus, emperor of Rome: no man should wear silk after marrying, nor a woman her jewellery after two years of marriage; any man publicly convicted of robbing his neighbour should be banished from Rome for three years. I do not want your answer: I know that death or plunder will make you reconsider your deeds, and then you will lament them. Now I come to the questions.’ The crop quotation is Leviticus 1:16. The restitution quotation is Leviticus 5:23 in Hebrew numbering, commonly 6:4 in English Bibles; the Hebrew transcription’s reference 1:23 is erroneous. These are the king’s words as represented in the account; the Roman sources checked do not authenticate his particular regulation. [H1928 ; G1856 ; S288 ; S289 ; S291 ; S292]

The ruler’s title and the sentences under year 159

Spanish Ymir Almanzor corresponds to a Hebrew form of amīr al-muʾminīn, ‘Commander of the Faithful’, which Wiener recognizes. It is primarily a title; automatically identifying it with a ruler named Almanzor would distort the historical identification. Under year 159, the syntax is divided into successive events, as in Wiener, rather than making Abraham’s death a consequence of Acre’s capture and the Muslim ruler’s death. Spanish renders the action against Acre as ‘destruction’; ‘capture’ conveys the military sense here without certifying the abbreviated date. The כהנים (kohanim, men of priestly descent) who dig the grave are not presented as Christian priests: that explanation resolves an ambiguity in both earlier translations. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S284]

Further details retained in the longer versions

Spanish abridges several particulars that should be distinguished from mistranslation. Of the convert demanding the badge, Hebrew says that he came ‘from the Mount’; Wiener specifies Montpellier, while Spanish supplies no place. Wiener also inserts ‘Franciscans’ in parentheses for the persecutors under year 179; that identification is not in Hebrew and has not been adopted in the main translation. In the badge passage, the fuller Hebrew reads: ‘Many leading men of the land were made to appear with distinguishing marks in Marseille, in the town of Ainsh and in Avignon. Further burdens were imposed on Avignon, and the two eminent men, Rabbi Mordecai, son of Joseph, and Rabbi Israel, were confined in their homes.’ Wiener identifies Ainsh as Agen; this third city, absent from Spanish, remains uncertain. Finally, the cardinal under year 177 prescribes in Hebrew and German ‘a kind of round badge on the outer garment’, whereas Spanish does not specify its shape. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 230–243 ; H1928, section 64a ; G1856, p. 221–236.

Supplementary Piece 64b

Alfonso's Dream and the Questions to the Craftsmen

In the third year of his reign, Alfonso, king of Spain, had a dream. He summoned his great men, his viceroy Don Pedro and the great sage Thomas. He told them his dream, saying: "It seems to me that I dreamt I was in a field, tending sheep. Before me stood a pack of wolves. They said to me: 'You are the shepherd. Know that these sheep have greatly rebelled against us. If you punish them as they deserve, we shall cease fighting; otherwise, know for certain that we shall destroy the sheep.' I answered them: 'Return to your dens. I shall destroy them, and not one will remain.' Then I assembled all the shepherds and asked their advice. All agreed that justice required the destruction of the sheep.

"Meanwhile, a young lion came out of the lions' den. He advanced arguments that I no longer remember, and through them he saved the sheep. A few days later, I saw the wolves carry off some sheep and climb a high mountain. You, then, my princes and the faithful men of my court, tell me what you understand the meaning of this dream to be."

They answered together: "Our lord the king, we do not possess the art of interpreting dreams. In such matters, only time reveals the truth." Thomas replied: "What time alone is enough to reveal hardly deserves to be called wisdom. Wisdom consists in discerning the truth of things before they happen." The great men said: "Speak, then, Thomas, for it falls to you to do so."

He replied: "I do not claim to explain every detail of the dream with certainty, but I shall give its general meaning. O king, you tend your people as a shepherd tends his sheep. In your time, wolves, who are the powerful, will rise against your people, who are like sheep. There will be a dispute between them, and they will come before you for judgement. You will rule that these great men are in the right. As for the dream in which you saw a young lion, son of lions, arise, this is a son of yours who will save the people. The wolves' return may mean that they will not be content with your son's judgement, will do some harm to the people and will flee into the mountain."

The king said: "Though your words satisfy me, Thomas, I remain troubled. Let us go to the garden, walk and enjoy ourselves; thus I shall turn my thoughts away from this." They all rose and went to the garden. There the king said to Thomas: "We observe that the sciences have grown more perfect with time: before Aristotle, we find no one who knew as much as he did, nor a physician like Avicenna. Why were there interpreters of dreams in the days of Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar, whereas there are none today?"

Thomas replied: "There are two answers. The first is that dreaming is a branch of prophecy: the people among whom one is found also possess the other. Now prophecy is found only among the Jews, at the request of Moses, their king, who obtained this privilege for his people. The second is that Solomon was the greatest of all sages. He knew human nature and the essence of humanity as no other did, and he transmitted to his people signs by which they could interpret dreams."

The king said: "Since this is so, let us seek out some learned Jew. Perhaps he will explain what this dream means." He then ordered Benveniste the Elder to be brought to him. When he arrived, the king said: "Can you interpret dreams as your ancient sages could?" He answered: "My lord, since the day we were carried captive from our land, we have lost all wisdom. How, then, could we know how to interpret dreams?"

The king said: "That is false. I heard Brother Paul, who came from Salamanca, say that he and his companions had secretly studied the science of the Talmud with a scholar from among the Jews forcibly converted to Christianity. He added that after studying it for days and years, he recognised it as the deepest of all sciences. If captivity destroys learning, they were captives in Babylon and yet possessed it."

The Jew replied: "Although they were captives, they still retained some fragrance of it, because they had been very close to those great sages who transmitted the received tradition, qabbalah (קבלה, 'received tradition'). We, however, are very far from that root. That is why our candle and the light of our Law have gone out; today, we grope like blind men."

The king said: "Was there ever such folly? You say that because you were taken captive from your land, you lost wisdom. Does it depend upon the land, or upon each person's understanding?" He replied: "My lord, it is not because of captivity away from our land, but because of the captivity of our understanding, which is subject to servitude, the need to earn a living, tribute and the ordinances of the kingdom. How could it remain free to study wisdom? The prophet says: 'Moab has been at ease

from his youth; he has rested on his lees (the wine's sediment) without being poured from vessel to vessel. Therefore his flavour has remained in him, and his scent has not changed.'"

The king said to Thomas: "See the Jew's evasions: all this is to excuse himself." Thomas replied: "In my opinion, these are not evasions, but the truth, according to what experience shows us of the greatness of their wisdom when they were free. Simon the Just surpassed Aristotle in many things; today, their learning has greatly diminished. I compare this to someone who lights a fire from another fire or from a flint. In ancient times, they lit it from a fire: this was prophetic inspiration and received tradition. Today, they labour much and obtain little; that little is almost nothing, like what comes from a flint. A few sparks fly out, sometimes rising into the air: they are lost precisely as they rise. At other times, they fall to the ground and immediately go out.

"Such is the state of Jewish learning today. I have seen it in their own houses of study: I asked what conclusion they had reached, and not one could answer me." The king said: "I have also heard that when they argue, they leap at one another like bulls when they fight." Thomas replied: "Perhaps they have the disease of rams: some naturalists say that these have a worm in the brain and that, to kill it, they strike one another with their foreheads. But in truth, this is merely a slanderous accusation brought against them, as it is in their enemies' nature to do."

The king said: "They give people cause to hate them by refusing to accept our religion." Thomas said: "The Jews are like a torch that burns and consumes itself while giving light to others. Whenever we have some doubt, they enlighten us, for they know the Hebrew language and its nature. But they consume themselves by refusing to listen. In any event, the affliction of captivity diminishes wisdom. We find in Arabic books that a man told his king that captivity shrank the captive's heart. The king wished to test this and ordered two lion cubs to be brought to him, because the lion has the strongest heart. He had a field enclosed and the two animals placed there, both taken when very young so that they would be equal. He ordered one to be tied up and the other allowed to roam freely about the field. They were given the same food. After some time, he ordered them to be slaughtered, and the heart of the one that had been tied up was found to be one tenth the size of the heart of the animal that had remained free."

The king then said: "I no longer wonder that Scripture says of the Jews: 'The sound of a leaf blown by the wind will put them to flight.' According to what you say, they have no heart (that is, no courage). Yet, on the other hand, I see that their heart is so steadfast that they let themselves be burnt rather than change their religion."

Thomas said: "All things naturally return to their root. A scholar's child, as soon as he can say 'father' and 'mother', makes gestures as though he were reading a book. If shown a sword, he runs away, because it is not something to which his nature is accustomed. A knight's son does the opposite: he seeks to gird on the sword and shuns books. A baker's son builds miniature ovens, and a carpenter's son seeks out the tools of that trade. Abraham stood firm in his faith, endured torments in Kutha for forty years and was thrown into a fiery furnace. Those who follow him, being of his lineage and faith, possess this strength."

The king said: "This gives them nobility and rank, just as a branch or fruit bears the likeness of its root. Though they grow old in captivity, they ought to resemble their stock: we see that a tree does not expose its root above the ground until it is old."

After this, the king turned to Benveniste and said: "I am greatly astonished at you. How has captivity, which made you lose your learning, not made you lose your pride? Why has your desire for power not diminished? You dress as though you were free, although you are servants. Yet you know that pride is found only among men of little worth."

Benveniste said: "That is precisely why a humiliated man seeks to regain his dignity by wearing respectable clothing, lest he fall completely. But, my lord, only the young men and the women wear costly clothes; who could find judgement in them? Do you not see me, your servant, who holds the affairs of Castile in my hands? I have never worn silk." The king replied: "That is because you fear I would say you had bought it with my property."

Thomas said: "When they wear precious clothing, it is an honour to the king. Those who came to Castile descend from the royal house. A lion, even with quartan fever (with attacks recurring every fourth day), remains a lion and roars like one. That is what the Bible says: 'He crouched; he lay down like a lion.'"

After this, a great crowd came to the garden gate, crying, "Help us, O king!" He ordered the gates to be opened. Many people entered, saying: "My lord, something has happened to us that has never happened before. We were going up a causeway in procession to pray for rain. The archbishop walked at the head, holding the chalice, and the Jews, who were at the windows, threw a jug of urine onto the chalice." The king said: "You say things that reason cannot accept." The people replied: "What does that matter, if a thousand men bear witness and saw it with their own eyes?" The king said: "I shall speak to my counsellors to find out whether I should kill them or exile them."

That night, he discussed the matter with them. They told him: "Expulsion is necessary to save them from a greater evil. The people will undoubtedly rise in arms for the honour of God, and no one will be able to stop them. Whoever tried to oppose them would be called a renegade." The viceroy said: "Although reason cannot accept such things, who knows whether God does not move their hearts to do them, to avenge what they committed against his Son? Perhaps this is the origin of the affair." The king said: "Let it be written and sealed that they shall leave my kingdom within three months." This was done.

Afterwards, the king said to Thomas: "And why are you silent?" He replied: "Once the matter is sealed, what remains to be done? Besides, this seems to me to be what you saw in your dream." The king said: "By God, so it seems! Let the decree remain unpublished until we have established what happened."

Then the king's son appeared, about eighteen years old, an intelligent, valiant and handsome young man. He said to the king: "My father, if you grant me leave, I shall say something." The king replied: "Speak, my son, and may you live many years." He said: "Who has ever heard of a decree being passed against a people because of the uproar of a crowd of fools, without any investigation of the affair? It is possible that a foreigner or one of their enemies did it and the deed is being blamed on the Jews. Or perhaps the Jew has small children who did it without his knowing. In the time of King Don Pedro, a Christian was already known to have placed the body of our Saviour (a consecrated host) in a Jew's privy in order to ruin them. Even if the Jew had done it, no shepherd has ever been known to destroy all his sheep because a few had strayed outside the enclosure. Rather, he brings them back to the flock, profits from their wool, drinks their milk, eats the kids and lambs, and the sheep remain."

The king then ordered the Jew to be brought and said: "O Jews, is it not enough for you to weary the people? Must you weary my God as well?" He replied: "If you find, my lord, the man who did this, let him not live. But how can anyone conceive of a man committing, before so many people, so vile an act, deserving every kind of punishment?"

The king's son said: "Have you any children?" He answered: "No, my lord." He asked him: "Who are your neighbours?" He replied: "On one side lives a Christian." The king sent for him. He came with his son and swore that he knew nothing of the affair. The king's son said to the boy: "If you tell me what you know, I swear to make you a knight."

The boy replied: "I am afraid of being responsible for someone's death. But to obey your wishes, my lord, I must tell you that I caused this incident. I did it neither deliberately nor with ill intent, for I am a Christian. But my father has a window overlooking a Jew's gallery. I went there because there was more room to watch, and I knocked against a jug of clean water. The water was clean, and whoever says otherwise sins against his own soul."

On hearing this, the king rose from his seat and said: "Blessed be the Lord, who has given me a son to inherit my kingdom, more worthy of it than I!" The Christians said: "Perhaps the Jews bribed the boy to say this." The king heard them and said: "That is why God, whose secrets are great, made all this known to me in a dream: a lion's son would save the sheep. The sheep lost among the wolves are none other than these poor people. Leave me at once, lest my fury break out against you like fire! All the princes are witnesses that this was revealed to me in a dream."

After this, the king said to the great men: "What is this hatred the Christians bear towards the Jews? If it is because they killed Christ, the Arabs hate them even more, though they did not kill their prophet. I have heard that they do not allow them to walk on a causeway, but only in the middle of the road like horses, and that they call them Zirbon (זירבון, a contemptuous name whose exact meaning remains uncertain)."

Thomas said: "As I understand it, this is because they do not mingle with any nation. Their troubles make them flee from everyone to preserve their Law. An example is the charcoal fire: when a charcoal burner wants a flame to leap from it, he throws water on it. The reason is that fire naturally gathers strength when it encounters opposition."

Three days later, two Jews arrived as envoys from Carrión. They reported that the Christians had risen against them over the chalice affair and had already killed two of them. All the Jews had taken refuge in the house of a lord who was away. It had a large courtyard entered through a main gate; the Jews also knew of a small door. The Christians pursued them and entered the courtyard. The Jews then slipped out through the small door, shut it, went around the courtyard and closed the main gate. The Christians were thus trapped inside. The king said: "Well done for your courage! You acted rightly." He immediately sent an investigator. Ten Christians, identified as the first ringleaders, were hanged; the others were sentenced to nine months in prison.

The king then said: "God be praised! Now my whole dream has come true. These are the wolves that returned and rose again." He immediately ordered the book of annals to be brought, so that the affair concerning the Jews might be recorded in it. At the beginning of the book was a passage that read:

"Things that have been chosen: first, Jacob among the patriarchs; second, David among kings; third, Joshua among conquerors; fourth, Arabia for the purity of its air; fifth, Jerusalem for holiness; sixth, the Jews for subtlety and obstinacy; seventh, the land of the Chaldeans for wealth; eighth, Egypt for commerce; ninth, Greece for the sciences; tenth, Rome for battles; eleventh, Naples for beauty; twelfth, Tuscany for rhetoric; thirteenth, Spain for courtesy and honour; fourteenth, Portugal for navigation; fifteenth, Venice for government and counsel; sixteenth, France for fidelity and affection; seventeenth, Germany for beauty and strength; eighteenth, our Saviour for mercy. Among women: Abigail for understanding, Esther for grace, Hannah for prayer, Mary our mother for chastity."

The king said: "How can he state that the Jews are chosen for obstinacy, when it is the most abject of all dispositions and the obstinate man is loved only by another like himself?" The viceroy replied: "It is necessary to religions: through this obstinacy they uphold the Law. Perhaps this is why they were chosen. Just as they resisted receiving the Law, they resist abandoning it. The sages of Spain say: 'He who is quick to love is quick to hate.'"

Thomas said: "The Philosopher said that he who easily accepts a friend easily loses him." The king said: "I have heard it differently: he who accepts a friend without testing him hates him without testing him. The historian also says that they were chosen because they are subtle. What is that claim based on?"

The viceroy replied: "Their subtlety is cunning. It comes from their root, their father Jacob." The king said: "Scripture says, 'Jacob was a sincere man.'" Thomas said: "He was so at the beginning and was cunning at the end. The naturalist also says that a young man who is sincere becomes cunning in the end, and conversely. Moreover, their cunning comes from their need, greater than that of all other nations. They must therefore devise means and stratagems to earn a living."

The king said: "We must first question the starting point: how can we tell that they are subtle?" Thomas said: "You can test it yourself, my lord. Summon three of them, even ignorant men, and you will see how apt their answers are." The king ordered the first three Jews found in the marketplace to be summoned. When they arrived, he asked their trades. One said, "I am a tailor"; another, "A weaver"; the third, "A shoemaker." The king said: "I shall ask you some questions. Do not be afraid: my only purpose is to test what Jews know. If your answers are not appropriate, your trade will be your excuse." They replied: "We have not studied, as is plain. How, then, could we answer?" The king said: "That is precisely what I want. Answer me, then, in whatever way you can.

"First, I say that all of us, and you all the more, are bound to know whom we serve, as the verse says: 'Know the Lord.' Tell me who he is." The first replied: "I shall answer, but first I ask this: when you sit on your seat, my lord, and when you rise, which bones must move and which must remain still? Which nerves must stretch? Likewise, among the organs of the human body, which digest the food, which distribute it and which carry it along?"

The king replied: "You fool! I do not even know my teeth, although they are partly uncovered. How could I know the inside of my body, covered with skin and flesh?" The Jew replied: "Listen, my lord, to what you have said. David said likewise: 'You know my sitting down and my rising up.' If you do not know this, how will you know him who is above ten heavens, when the verse says, 'Cloud and darkness surround him'?"

The second replied: "The Creator is an exalted king whose feet touch the earth." The king said: "How far this fool strays from reason! How can he imagine God as a being with a fully physical body? According to his words, we must also say that he walks barefoot: all the wool of the animals would not be enough to cover his legs, nor all their hides to make him shoes."

Just then, Don Joseph the nasi (נשיא, "prince" or leader of the community) arrived. The king said to him: "Look at this fool, who says that God's feet touch the earth." Prince Don Joseph replied: "Do not be surprised, my lord. He has never studied, and the poor man follows the literal sense of the verse, 'The earth is the footstool of his feet.'" The Jew said: "Everything depends on fortune. All Christians believe in God clothed in a body of flesh, and so forth."

The king said: "You ignorant man! We believe this because it was necessary for God to forgive Adam's sin. That is why he clothed himself in flesh, so that the flesh might receive the punishment and all sinners might then be forgiven. But the Creator is absolutely simple (indivisible, without parts)."

The Jew replied: "The Creator is living, but his life is not like ours; he is wise, but his wisdom is not like ours; he is powerful, but his power is not like ours." The king said: "You have said nothing very profound." The Jew replied: "How could I express what even the prophets could not? Moses said, 'What god in the heavens could perform works like yours?' And Jeremiah, 'Among all the sages of the nations, there is none like you.' They all spoke by negation, not affirmatively.

"If you ask me about your god as I have seen him depicted, I shall say that his piercing eyes show understanding; his delicate face, knowledge; his forked beard, thought and cunning." The viceroy said: "This man deserves to be burnt, for he says that my god is cunning and deceitful." The king replied: "Rather, he should be honoured, for he speaks the truth. The mother of our god was Jewish, and from her he inherited cunning. But the divine part within him prevailed over his bodily nature, and he became what he was.

"Second question. Your sages say that from the earth to the firmament is a journey of five hundred years. Where did they acquire this knowledge?" He replied: "I heard the sage Thomas say that among the twelve celestial bodies of the zodiac, there is one whose body is a hundred and seventy times as large as the earth's. Whoever measured that body with the span of his hand measured this other journey with his feet." The king ordered the second to answer. He said: "My wisdom does not lie in this, but only in the art of weaving." He asked the third, who replied: "I dare not open my mouth to answer, having already been mistaken once. I did not follow David's advice: 'I shall keep a bridle on my mouth.'" The viceroy said: "That is even worse than the first answer."

"Third question. How does the Sun produce such great heat when it has no heat? How can you give what you do not have?" He replied: "I have heard that the heat does not come from the Sun, but that it makes the sphere of fire revolve, and heat results from this. This heat is suited to living creatures and sustains their life." The king said: "And how do you know that it keeps you alive?" He replied: "I see that all sick people suffer less in the morning because the Sun rises, whereas their illness worsens in the evening." The king said: "You seem to be a physician." The viceroy replied: "I have heard that he is a disciple of Galen." The Jew said: "I am not. But my mother, spinning by the light of the moon, tells me such things, and I write down marvellous things in my book. My wife knows something too." The king said: "What understanding can a man have who leaves his mother's bosom to go to his wife's?

"Fourth question. Since the prohibited fat, ḥelev (חלב, certain animal fats), and blood were forbidden to you because they were the offering of your God, why do you not eat them today?" The first replied: "Because tomorrow the Temple will be rebuilt. If we had become accustomed to eating them, we should then fall into error." The king said: "Would that this might happen by the end of the year! This hope greatly confuses your thoughts, though the prophet says, 'She has fallen; she shall not rise again, the virgin of Israel.'"

He replied: "The meaning is that she would no longer be a virgin, because the peoples would subject her and kings have conquered us. That is what the prophet says: 'Other masters besides you have married us.'" The king said: "You ought to paint at Jerusalem's gate what the Neapolitans painted. Before they were conquered, they painted the image of a virgin on the gate; afterwards, they painted a packsaddle, meaning that they had been conquered like asses." The Jew replied: "They have already regained their independence."

"Fifth question. Why is sleep deeper at night?" He said: "Because the cold grows stronger: heat flees this cold, its contrary, takes refuge in the heart and causes sleep." Thomas said: "That is so. Hence, in summer, heat leaves the heart and joins the external heat; the heart is left without heat, and the person does not sleep. One of the torments used by the kings of Portugal was to place a rebel beside a blaze to prevent him from sleeping."

"Sixth question. Does the soul die or not?" Answer: "It does not die. It is not composed of elements of which one could overpower another and cause it to perish; but it can suffer severe punishment." The king said: "Everyone agrees that nothing is infinite except God. According to your opinion, the soul would be infinite too." He said: "It is finite as regards its origin, since it was created and had a beginning."

The king said: "Your sages say, 'Those who are born are destined to die.'" He replied: "They meant that they are capable of dying, if God wishes. For they do not say, 'Those who are born will die.'" The king said: "That is enough. My intention was only to test you. Blessed be he who chose these men! Yet I wonder how they have answered by making distinctions that show some learning, without having acquired it."

Thomas said: "They are very inclined to listen. They are like children, who remember things better because they marvel at what they hear, and that wonder impresses itself on their memory."

After this, the king asked: "Why was King David chosen as king, and not Saul? Yet we see an admirable virtue in Saul: he would not kill the little children of Amalek. We also see holiness in him: when Samuel told him that he and his sons would die the next day, he went to war nevertheless, as though going to a wedding." Thomas replied: "Had he asked God's forgiveness, God would have answered him. But David immediately wept, and God forgave him." The king said: "Now I know why the Jews are answered when they pray for rain." The viceroy said: "I do not think so. Rather, God hates them and grants their request so that they will not come before him again."

Historical Commentary

A Castilian court whose figures remain unidentified

The account places the dream in the third year of a King Alfonso's reign without specifying which Alfonso. It gives him a son of about eighteen and names Benveniste the Elder, the viceroy Don Pedro, Thomas and Don Joseph the nasi (leader of the community). These details suggest a precise setting but do not suffice to date the scene. Finding a Benveniste elsewhere does not identify this conversation. Chapter IV of the Crónica de Alfonso XI makes the king one year and twenty-six days old at his accession: he could not have had an eighteen-year-old son in his third year. This rules out automatically identifying him as Alfonso XI without establishing which other ruler is intended. No document of the investigation narrated here has been identified among the sources consulted. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S051]

Carrión: tracing an account is not yet corroborating it

The entry on Carrión de los Condes in the Jewish Encyclopedia, volume III, p. 593, repeats the sequence of two deaths, refuge in a lord's house, escape through a concealed door and the hanging of ten ringleaders. Its bibliography, however, refers back to Shevet Yehudah itself. The repetition traces the account's circulation; it does not independently attest the investigation. The entry proposes Alfonso the Wise only tentatively. The decree's three months, the two victims, ten hangings and nine months of imprisonment agree across the compared versions but remain this tradition's particulars. [S298 ; E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Royal dreams, prophecy and transmitted learning

The two named precedents are Genesis 41, where Joseph interprets Pharaoh's dream, and Daniel 2, where Daniel reveals Nebuchadnezzar's. Berakhot 57b relates dreams to prophecy by calling a dream one-sixtieth of prophecy. Berakhot 7a attributes to Moses the request that the divine presence rest upon Israel and not upon other nations, drawing on Exodus 33:16. The dialogue combines these traditions; it does not quote a single passage containing its whole argument. The image of Moab resting on his lees (the wine's sediment) comes directly from Jeremiah 48:11: in the speech, wine that has not been poured from vessel to vessel becomes an image of learning preserved from displacement. [S299 ; S300 ; S301 ; S302 ; S303]

The Jewish sage and the Greek philosopher

Josephus, Against Apion I, 22 (§§ 176–183), quotes Aristotle's pupil Clearchus concerning a Jew from Coele-Syria whom Aristotle met. In that passage the man communicates more learning to the philosophers than he receives from them. This is a relevant textual parallel to the Jewish sage's superior knowledge, but it names neither Simon the Just nor Plato. It helps

explain the choice of Aristotle, found in Wiener and as a variant in the consulted Hebrew text; it does not establish the identity of Ibn Verga's figure or direct dependence on Josephus. [S304 ; E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Abraham at Kutha: several traditions brought together

Guide for the Perplexed III, 29 attributes to Sabean books an account of Abraham's upbringing at Kutha, opposition to solar worship, imprisonment and expulsion. Genesis Rabbah 38:13 tells of Nimrod's furnace and Haran's fate. Bava Batra 91a gives ten years of imprisonment, divided between Kutha and Karddu, with competing allocations of three and seven years, or the reverse. None of these passages confirms the forty years at Kutha stated here. Comparison traces the account's component traditions without combining their numbers into a single chronology. [S035 ; S306 ; S305]

Abraham's itinerary in Genesis

The reader can place the Kutha traditions alongside the journey actually narrated in Genesis 11:27–32 and 12:1–5. Terah leaves Ur with Abram, Sarai and Lot, intending to travel to Canaan; the family then settles in Haran. Abram leaves there at seventy-five in response to the divine call. These passages introduce the people and their movements; they narrate neither the debate over sun worship nor imprisonment at Kutha. The brother Haran (הרן, the name of a son of Terah) and the town Haran (חרן, the place of residence) moreover have different Hebrew spellings, easily obscured in transliteration. The Guide for the Perplexed and rabbinic traditions cited above add other elements to the Abraham dossier: comparing them traces its transmission without making every detail a sentence from Genesis. [S321 ; S322 ; S035 ; S306 ; S305]

Saying what God is not

The craftsman's argument belongs to the tradition of negative attributes: describing God without assigning him the limited properties of human beings. Maimonides develops this method explicitly in Guide for the Perplexed I, 58. He distinguishes positive from negative attributes and examines such words as "living", "powerful", "knowing" and "one". The dialogue adopts this vocabulary and quotes Deuteronomy 3:24 and Jeremiah 10:7. The comparison identifies a philosophical setting; it does not attribute every retort or the ensuing Christian arguments to Maimonides. [S307 ; E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The five hundred years and the number one hundred and seventy

Ḥagigah 13a does state a walking distance of five hundred years between earth and firmament, adding the same measure for the firmament's thickness and the celestial intervals. For 170, the scientific parallel is especially precise: Ptolemy's Almagest V, 16 estimates the Sun's volume at about 170 times the Earth's. The number should therefore not simply be replaced

by a modern figure. Ptolemy, however, speaks of the Sun, while the dialogue mentions one of "twelve" celestial bodies or signs. That difference is preserved and explained; the Sun has not silently been substituted in the reply. [S308 ; S309 ; E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Solar heat in ancient natural philosophy

Aristotle's On the Heavens II, 7 distinguishes the stars, which are not themselves fire, from heat produced beneath their sphere by motion. The Sun is particularly associated with this heating. This explains the apparently contradictory question of a Sun that heats without containing heat. The dialogue offers its own formulation involving the "sphere of fire"; it does not reproduce Aristotle word for word. Its discussions of illness, sleep and scholars' children remain old physiological explanations attributed to the speakers. [S310 ; E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Fats, prophetic quotations and a play on words

Leviticus 7:23–27 specifies fats and blood forbidden as food; it does not restrict the prohibition to periods when the Temple operates. The king's question and the reply based on habit therefore do not summarise the whole prescription. The "virgin of Israel" belongs to Amos 5:2, not Amos 8:2, as the parenthetical reference in the 1928 Hebrew mistakenly states. Isaiah 26:13 uses beʿalunu (בעלונו, "they have ruled over / possessed us"), allowing the dialogue to play on domination and marriage. The rendering "married" serves its image of a virgin transformed into a conquered nation. [S020 ; S312 ; S313]

The restrained mouth and the soul's destiny

The viceroy's complaint that the answer is "worse than the first" becomes clear from the unquoted end of Psalm 39:2: the speaker restrains his mouth while a wicked person stands before him. Wiener already explains the implication in a note. "Those who are born are destined to die" comes from Avot 4:22, opening a sequence about death, resurrection and judgement. The craftsman's conditional interpretation is a reply within the dispute; it should not be mistaken for the full wording of the Mishnah. [S311 ; S314 ; G1856]

Saul and David: distinguishing Bible from rabbinic interpretation

Saul's compassion for Amalek's children has a direct parallel in Yoma 22b: he asks how the children have sinned if the adults are guilty. That passage also compares the treatment of Saul and David. In 1 Samuel 15:8–9, by contrast, the Bible names Agag and the best livestock among those spared. Saul's courage in going to war after learning he will die draws on 1 Samuel 28:19; Leviticus Rabbah 26:7 develops his conduct specifically by comparing it with going to a feast. Finally, the contrast between a Saul who supposedly fails to ask forgiveness and a David immediately answered simplifies the texts: Saul acknowledges his fault and

asks pardon in 1 Samuel 15:24–25, and he consults God without receiving an answer in 28:6. For David, 2 Samuel 12:13–23 distinguishes forgiveness of his fault from his unsuccessful supplications for the child's life. [S315 ; S316 ; S317 ; S318 ; S319]

The outcome of Saul's last battle

The biblical continuation of the announcement to Saul appears in 1 Samuel 31:1–6. Israel fights the Philistines on Mount Gilboa; Jonathan, Abinadab and Malchishua die, and Saul falls on his sword after his armour-bearer refuses to kill him. This passage specifies the persons and outcome of the episode discussed in the dialogue. The comparison of his courage with a man going to a feast belongs to the expansion in Leviticus Rabbah 26:7, already cited; it is not a feast described in the battle narrative. The biblical source and its later interpretation concern the same king while supplying different kinds of information. [S323 ; S316 ; S319]

References that remain open

The "Arabic books" about the two lions are unnamed. Israel Abrahams retells the episode in 1912, at the end of "The Fox's Heart", but attributes it to a medieval Jewish chronicle: this later retelling therefore does not recover the alleged Arabic work. The present investigation has likewise not securely identified the source of the Neapolitan maiden and packsaddle emblem, the maxims attributed to the Philosopher, or a Portuguese legal text prescribing torture beside a blaze. These remain separate leads to pursue; their present lack of identification is not treated as proof of invention. [S320 ; E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Joseph, the Pit and the Sale

Joseph leaves his father, is cast into the pit and is sold by his brothers. Master of the Josephus, 1415–1416, BnF, Français 247, f. 25r. These scenes from Joseph's youth precede his time in Egypt and his role as an interpreter of dreams, discussed in the historical commentary. [provenance]

Translation Choices

Do the wolves carry off or tear apart the sheep?

Spanish has the awkward expression "something, like sheep", whereas Hebrew says the wolves seize several sheep. German makes them tear lambs apart. The main text retains "carry off some sheep", following Spanish clarified by Hebrew; Wiener's more explicit violence remains a variant. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Sciences perfected or lost?

Spanish se acabaron and "after" Aristotle suggest that the sciences have died away and no comparable scholar has succeeded him. Hebrew instead speaks of their reaching perfection and of no such scholar before Aristotle; Wiener confirms this construction. It makes the question intelligible: if learning advances, why has the old art of interpreting dreams disappeared? This reading is adopted. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Received tradition and imposed conversion

Anus (אנוס, "one under compulsion") describes the Jewish scholar forced to convert with whom Brother Paul studies. Spanish confirms compulsion; German calls him a nominal Christian. Qabbalah (קבלה, "received tradition") and "men of tradition" need not designate mysticism alone here: the passage concerns the old transmission of learning. The translation therefore does not automatically turn these figures into specialists in mystical Kabbalah. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Simon, Plato and Aristotle

Spanish names Simon the Just and Plato. H1928 gives a name derived from Simon, followed by Plato with Aristotle in parentheses; Wiener translates Simon the Just and Aristotle. Josephus's parallel involving Aristotle, while still a parallel rather than an identification, strengthens the latter reading. Aristotle is adopted; Plato remains the Spanish variant and the first reading of the 1928 Hebrew text. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S304]

The rams' disease: a suggestion subsequently rejected

The initial "perhaps" is explicit in Hebrew and German. The ending then calls the charge an enemy's slander. Without those two connections, the translation could suggest that Thomas himself establishes a collective diagnosis. Both the animal comparison and its rejection are retained. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The child imitates reading; ambition persists

Hebrew describes the small child making gestures as if reading, and German confirms imitation. The child is not said actually to read as soon as he can speak. Later, the "heart" that does not shrink in relation to power refers to the desire to rule. "Why has your desire for

power not diminished?" conveys the question clearly instead of leaving an obscure anatomical expression. In the preceding episode about the lions, the account presents the heart as an organ that has become smaller; the king then uses the same word to mean courage. A brief parenthesis makes this shift of meaning clear. The baker's son builds miniature ovens: Spanish hornillos means small ovens, while Hebrew tanurim (תנורים, "ovens") and German Oefen refer to ovens; the French expression petits fours could misleadingly suggest pastries. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

An additional comparison concerning young men and women

Hebrew and German expand the reply abridged by Spanish to "who could find judgement in them?" Their sentence reads: "Seeking understanding in young men and women is like seeking foxes in the sea and fish on dry land." The comparison is spoken by Benveniste; the shorter Spanish formulation remains in the account. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The crowd's opponent, the suspended decree and the prince's age

Spanish can leave doubt between someone refusing to join the uprising and someone opposing it. Hebrew and German expressly mean someone preventing the crowd from acting; that reading is adopted. In the king's next reply, agreement with the dream's interpretation and suspension of the decree are clarified from the same versions. "About eighteen" retains their approximation, absent from Spanish. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The Saviour's body, the flock and the boy's fear

German names a host where Spanish and Hebrew speak of "the body of our Saviour": the parenthesis identifies the Eucharistic object and avoids suggesting a corpse. For the shepherd, "bring back to the flock" is confirmed by Hebrew and German despite an obscure Spanish reading. The boy's fear uses a Hebrew expression connected with bloodshed; Spanish speaks of causing great harm, while Wiener understands fear for the boy's own life. We retain fear of being responsible for a death; "I fear for my life" remains the German alternative. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The gallery and courtyard: restoring the movement

Mirpesset (מרפסת, "balcony or gallery") and Spanish corredor support "gallery", whereas Wiener has a stable. "Gallery" is retained. At Carrión, Hebrew and German expressly say that the pursuers enter the courtyard rather than merely stopping outside its gate. The Jews leave by the other exit, close it and go around to close the main gate. This connection, necessary to understand the trap, is restored. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Zirbon: not inventing an insult's meaning

Spanish Zirbon corresponds to Hebrew זירבון. Wiener reproduces the Hebrew word with a question mark. The context identifies a contemptuous name but does not establish a secure lexical equivalent. The word is therefore retained with an immediate explanation of the uncertainty. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The listed qualities and the trades

Hebrew and German add love or affection to the fidelity assigned to France, and that second term is restored. For the trades, Spanish gives a wool-carder and subsequently the act of carding; Hebrew gradi (גרדי, "weaver") and German Weber give a weaver. That trade is adopted in both places. Differences of vocabulary do not justify changing the sequence of the eighteen qualities or the four women. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Resistance to accepting and resistance to abandoning

Spanish can suggest firmness in accepting the Law. Hebrew instead parallels resistance to accepting it with resistance to losing it; Wiener retains the initial difficulty. The translation adopts: "Just as they resisted receiving the Law, they resist abandoning it." The alternative "they were firm in accepting it and in refusing to abandon it" remains possible from Spanish alone. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

A "simple" God and a "profound" statement

"Simple" has the philosophical sense of indivisible, without parts, rather than easy or naive. The reply about divine life and wisdom is expanded syntactically for clarity. The following Hebrew sentence can be read as the absence of a profound or allusive statement; Wiener instead understands an assertion not attested anywhere. Spanish makes the king say that these words require little to be believed. "You have said nothing very profound" is adopted because the craftsman immediately invokes the limits of the prophets themselves. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Bare feet, a forked beard and the title nasi

Hebrew and German say that God would walk barefoot; Spanish says without breeches. The main text adopts bare feet, consistent with the shoes mentioned immediately afterwards, and specifies that the wool would not cover his legs. A "forked beard" conveys a beard divided into two points. The title nasi (נשיא, "prince" or leader of the community) does not identify Don Joseph with a famous namesake from another period. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The twelve celestial bodies and the factor of one hundred and seventy

Mazal (מזל, "zodiacal sign", or celestial body according to usage) becomes planeta in Spanish and Sternbild in German. "Twelve celestial bodies of the zodiac" preserves both parts of the passage. None of the three versions says "the Sun" here. Comparison with Ptolemy explains 170 but does not authorise silently removing the problem of the twelve signs. The handspan is a measure taken from the spread hand, not a botanical palm. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S309]

The order of the craftsmen's replies

The text first names the second craftsman as the speaker of the bodily image of God, but in the next question the third apologises for an earlier error. All three versions preserve this uncertainty among replies attributed merely to "the Jew". An intervention by the third man may be implicit, but no compared reading establishes it. The numbering has therefore not been arbitrarily reassigned to particular trades. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The sphere of fire and the mother's stories

Spanish and Hebrew make the Sun set the sphere of fire in motion; Wiener says it moves around that sphere. The first reading is retained, with the alternative recorded. Hebrew has "my old mother" and Spanish "my mother", against Wiener's "my grandmother". The clause "I write down marvellous things in my book", omitted by German, is retained. The exchange does not establish that the craftsman really studied under Galen. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Ḥelev and the two quotations concerning Israel

Ḥelev (חלב) denotes certain prohibited animal fats, not an animal or every kind of fat indiscriminately. The old sentence was also artificially divided by a page break and is reunited. For Isaiah 26:13, "married" preserves the Spanish and Hebrew interpretative play, whereas German translates rule or domination directly. An alternative is therefore: "Other masters besides you have ruled over us", which makes the marital image less visible. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S313 ; S020]

A Portuguese torment rather than an identified statute

Spanish speaks of statutes and a traitor. Hebrew refers to torments inflicted by Portugal's kings on a rebel; German confirms that a form of torture is meant. The latter reading is adopted. It avoids suggesting that a specific legal provision has been recovered when none was identified in this research. The mechanism of heat and sleep remains the speakers' explanation. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

The soul, the elements and the possibility of dying

The sentence about the elements is restructured: the soul is not composed of elements of which one could overpower the others and destroy it. "Finite as regards its origin" means that it had a beginning; the speaker does not assign it a measurable size. The final contrast is between "destined to die" and "will die": this is the transmitted conditional argument, whose limits are explained by comparison with Avot 4:22. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S314]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 243–260 ; H1928, section 64b ; G1856, p. 236–252.

Supplementary Piece 64c

Education and Contradictions at Court

Instructions given by the king to the tutor entrusted with his son's education. He told him: "Know, tutor, that a small child is like a tender tree: if you take hold of one of its branches, it bends at once; when it has hardened, it breaks instead of bending." Nicholas said that this explains the verse, "Discipline your son while there is hope", that is, while he is young, for then there is hope that he will accept instruction.

"First, keep him away from lying. There is nothing worse. Although poverty gives rise to every kind of evil, the Sage still considers it preferable to lying: 'Better a poor man than a liar.'

"Second, forbid him mockery and ridicule. They are like a dog's bite: one does not feel it at first, and in the end it kills.

"Third, do not let him drink wine. In my judgement, I would more readily put a drunkard to death than an adulterer. To meet his needs, a man ought to increase his understanding, not diminish what God has given him.

"Fourth, keep him away from heavy, fatty foods. I need to warn you of this, for you are of Jewish descent. I marvel at a man who eats bull's flesh: why does his nature not lead him into the field to plough, since he is its brother? You shall also forbid him to eat garlic, for it is a food of your people. The natural philosopher says that heavy, fatty foods cause the humour to predominate which corresponds to the constitution of that food, and bring about putrid fever. A poet said: 'Who shall escape the diseases of old age, and who shall cure the diseases caused by fatty foods?'

"Fifth, accustom him to going early to the house of prayer. I praise the Jews, who have children rise early to pray; among Christians, only old women and the lame rise early. The Sage says, 'Prayer is the bridle of all desires.'"

The tutor said: "I fear that if I discipline him, he will have me killed, as a prince had his teacher Seneca killed for correcting him." The king said: "I stand surety for it." The tutor replied: "May you live many years! But if you go to Paradise, shall I go

and seek you there as my guarantor?" The king said: "When you chastise him, do not appear angry like a man taking revenge, but kindly, like someone seeking to improve his future behaviour."

The king said to Thomas: "I have given many instructions, and I think that character depends on the hour of birth." Thomas said: "The school of Pythagoras does not think so. They say that if a man knew the hour in which he was conceived, he would know all the events that could befall him in the womb; and if he knew the hour of his birth, he would know everything that would happen to him until his death. But they say that his dispositions arise from habit, while also allowing a part to the configuration of the stars and to nature."

The king said: "What does Pythagoras say about the heavens? Do they have a voice, as is claimed, and is it supremely sweet? This objection is raised against them: since their heat reaches us, why does their voice not reach us? That is an argument of reason."

In the second year of Don Henry's reign, a wild man was brought before him. This was his appearance: the hair on his head reached his knees, his beard reached his belly, and his eyebrows measured a span. For six days, he ate nothing but herbs. Afterwards, he became accustomed to bread and to uttering intelligible words.

The king asked his name. He answered: "Don Henry de Mendoza. I sat at your father's table. Because I advised him to expel the Jews, he exiled me." The king said: "Now I remember that my father questioned you on certain matters of learning." He said: "That is true, and I wrote a book about the creation of the world."

The king said: "I marvel that Christians, Jews and Moors agree that the world was created, although this is something for which no demonstration can be found, as Aristotle says." The wild man replied: "Aristotle has no demonstration of the world's eternity. These are his words: 'All the sages who preceded me agree on creation, except Plato.' If there were a demonstration, it would be no more certain because all the sages believed it, nor less certain because Aristotle refused to believe it."

The king said: "What is your view of providence towards animals?" He said: "The bachelor de la Torre (Alfonso de la Torre) has already written: 'We recognise providence at work in creation: God gave claws and fangs to animals that need flesh; water birds, square feet for swimming and a long beak to reach worms; land birds, long legs to pass through mud. He gave the bird a long tail to help it fly, like a ship's rudder.

He placed more compassion in females than in males to rear the young and stop their crying, except for the ounce (an old name for a feline) and the lioness, which have no compassion. The lion and the wild cat lay ambushes, like kings at war.'"

The king said: "Does he exercise providence towards the Jews after they have sinned?" He replied: "Providence is more marvellous still in their case, because they are at the lowest depth of abasement." The king replied: "The Jews do not speak as favourably of us as we do of them. I have heard that they remove the knife from the table because it represents Esau's blessing and they do not wish to mingle it with their own. Certainly they do not distance themselves from us as much as we are distant from them."

The wild man replied: "When I went as ambassador to Aragon, I found a scholar skilled in explaining difficult passages, called Bendana. He told me that the reason was to confirm what Esau had said: 'Let what is yours remain yours'—meaning grain and new wine —'and you shall leave me my blessing, which is the sword.' Thus, when they recite the blessing after the meal, they concede the sword to the one to whom it belongs, each taking what is his."

The king said: "Stay with me, and I shall honour you." He replied: "Even if you gave me this house full of silver, I would not stay. Where do people seek foods so rich that nature struggles to digest them, if not at kings' tables? Where are clothes sought to the ends of the earth, and animal skins, if not among you? Where is the desire for women and serving women, dressed in brocade, who dance before you while Satan dances within you? And where are the singers who celebrate not God's praises but women's breasts, singing of love? Why do they seek what is fitting for a horse or an ass and so ugly in a man?"

The king said: "In the Jews' books it is written that what is fitting for a king is delights, spices, wines, fine flours, buildings, orchards, gardens, embroidery, women singers, servants, dancers, singers, spies, watchmen, instruments of war, horses, silver and gold." He replied: "That is why those kings died after few years. The same will happen to you unless you change your ways." The king grew angry at his words and ordered his servants to cut off his head. At the hour of his death, he said: "As I did to two Jews on the road to Valencia, so they have done to me. Blessed be the Judge of truth. Amen."

Letter sent by the leader, the discerning Rabbi Meshullam of Rome, to the communities throughout the pope's dominions and Naples:

"Glorious communities, know that the great and faithful God, who was with you in ancient times, is the one who continually delivers you. On the first day of Christmas, two lords, ambassadors of the king of Spain, appeared before the pope. They were to explain that their king intended to expel the Jews from his kingdom, and ask him to expel his own first, as befitted the one who stood in Peter's place. The kings would follow him, for those people were wicked and sinned against God and his Son. The pope, who was pious and a lover of justice, replied to them: 'I marvel at the judgement of the kings of my time, who torment themselves because the Jews are wicked towards God. Are the kings his guardians? Do they stand in God's place? Let the one who created them punish them, as he did before there were kings. If they grieve because there are sinners among the Jews, I grieve because there are good men among them. For I see in the accounts of Rome's emperors that, when the Jews did not keep their law, they immediately fell; when they kept it, they had some power against the Romans.'

"The cardinal who ranked immediately after the pope replied: 'If the kings of Spain seek to expel them, it is not because they are sinners, but so that they will not make their neighbours as wicked as themselves. Thus we find that, when the Jews were in Egypt, the Egyptians, who were wicked, made them like themselves. Scripture says, "The Egyptians made us wicked", meaning that they taught them their ways. If it meant the evil they did to them, it immediately says, "They afflicted us." After that, there would have been no need to say the other thing, since every evil is included in it. The Bible also says, "They shall not dwell in your land, lest they make you sin."'

"The pope said: 'Since you have come to speak of the Egyptians, I have a doubt. Scripture says, "The Lord executed judgements upon their gods." Since he shows that idols displease him, how can we worship them?' The cardinal replied: 'Our images do not resemble theirs. Ours are likenesses of the saints who followed our Saviour, and they are comparable to the cherubim that stood in the Holy of Holies. But the Egyptians' images represented the stars of heaven; the power of those heavenly bodies could lead a person astray and make him believe that they were gods. That is why the Bible forbade them. Someone who bows before Paul's image does not do so because he is God: he knows well that he is a man like us. Besides, the Egyptians had another cult, that of the firstborn. Their histories tell us that father and son kissed the firstborn's hands; after his death, they painted his image on their chamber walls and worshipped it.'

"The pope said: 'That reason satisfies me. Let us return to the matter: I find no fault in the Jews that would justify expelling them. Those who wish to learn to be wicked will find enough Christians to teach them, if there are no Jews.'

"After this, some princes and cardinals tried to persuade the pope, but could not. At last, one of them consulted his servants about bringing a charge against the Jews: one of them was alleged to have stolen a silver image from their church. They found witnesses to suit their wishes and had him hanged. The cardinals came and told the pope what had happened. He replied: 'This man has committed a great wickedness. He exposed himself to such danger only because of his religion, out of contempt for our images, and to melt it in the fire.' That is why he ordered not only their expulsion, but also that the young people and children should become Christians immediately. As for the adults, if they did so, well and good; otherwise, they were to be put to the sword. Their property was to go to their heirs: on this point, the pope disagreed with the kings. He ordered that decree to be drawn up that night.

"While the chief cardinal was at table, he cried, 'My head! My head!', fell to the ground and died. The pope said to his advisers: 'I suspect that the cardinal was punished for what he said against the Jews.' He ordered his servants not to proclaim the sentence with trumpets until they received the order a second time.

"On the second night, all the lords, cardinals and ambassadors who had come over the matter of the expulsion were invited to a banquet at the house of the cardinal who had taken the dead man's place. That night, a great earthquake occurred in Rome, the greatest ever seen. No house fell and no one suffered harm: only the banqueting house collapsed upon all the cardinals and lords who were there. Not one remained alive.

"When the pope heard this, he reflected and said that it had happened only because of the charge they had brought against the Jews. He ordered the man who had invented the theft of the silver image to be arrested and put to torture. The man confessed that the cardinal had ordered him to say those things. The pope then said: 'I now think that what is said of the Jews—that they killed Jesus—is entirely false. I see that God comes to their aid. If they were not in the right, he would not act in this way, for he is a God of justice. Thus, I love God's friends, and those who seek him eagerly shall find me. May my soul die with the good among them.'

"He then ordered the sentence to be torn up and the man who had invented the accusation to be burnt. From then on, he honoured the Jews and did what they asked of him. Throughout his life, they lived in peace, with no one to trouble them. Praised be he who delivers the poor from one stronger than himself."

END.

Alexander Instructed by Aristotle

Alexander and Aristotle in the Secretum secretorum, an English manuscript of 1326–1327. This image of princely instruction accompanies the advice to the tutor in Piece 64c. It illustrates a tradition of royal education, without identifying the text's unnamed king or teacher. [provenance]

Historical Commentary

Princely education and ancient examples

The biblical sayings can be located in Proverbs 19:18 and 19:22. Wiener identifies the Nicholas named at the beginning as Nicholas of Lyra; no passage in his Postilla has been directly located to confirm that specific attribution. The murdered tutor most probably alludes to Seneca and Nero. Tacitus, Annals XV.60–64, places the order for Seneca's death within the repression of the Pisonian conspiracy in 65 CE. He does not explain it simply as a child's revenge for discipline: that causal account belongs to the educational example transmitted here. [S330 ; S326 ; G1856]

The passage on nature located

The description of providence in animals follows a specific sequence in Alfonso de la Torre's Visión deleytable I.34: swimming birds, waterside birds, wings and a tail compared with a rudder, maternal care, then animal stratagems. This sequence confirms that the Hebrew bachiller ("bachelor", a holder of an academic degree) is Alfonso de la Torre, rather than an author named Melchior. The source, however, describes closed feet suited to swimming, long necks and a she-wolf; Ibn Verga transmits square feet, a long beak and a different feline. The choices record these differences as evidence of how an earlier text was reused. This identifies the borrowing but does not establish the historicity of Don Henry de Mendoza's audience. [S324 ; H1855 ; H1928]

The arguments attributed to philosophers

Aristotle discusses the harmony of the heavenly bodies in On the Heavens II.9. He reports a theory according to which celestial movements produce harmonious sounds, then objects that we do not hear them. The dialogue shares this question, although its argument from heat is not a verbatim quotation from that chapter. On the world's origin, On the Heavens I.10 says that the thinkers under consideration agree on its generation but disagree about its destruction or duration. The exception here attributed to Plato does not match that formulation. The variant has not been resolved by manufacturing an Aristotelian quotation: both the attribution and the difficulty remain visible. The kings and courtiers in these two scenes have not been securely identified in an independent chronicle. [S325 ; S310 ; E1744 ; G1856]

The knife during grace

Shulchan Arukh, Orach Chayim 180:5 records the custom of covering the knife during grace after meals. The explanation through Jacob's and Esau's blessings reappears, with the name Ben Dinai, in Kaf ha-Chayim 180:15, citing Matteh Moshe §304. This later docu-

ment traces the explanation's circulation and permits comparison of Bendana, Ben Dina and Ben Dinai. It does not suffice to identify the participant in an embassy to Aragon. The dialogue combines allusions to Genesis 27:28, 27:40 and 33:9. [S327 ; S328 ; H1928]

Explanations of the knife already transmitted in the sixteenth century

Joseph Karo's Beit Yosef, Oraḥ Ḥayyim 180, takes the transmission back beyond the later compilation Kaf ha-Hayyim. Karo cites Rokeah § 332, which relates the covered knife to the prohibition on raising iron over the altar stones: the biblical wording is Deuteronomy 27:5. The commentary compares the table to the altar and contrasts life-shortening metal with what prolongs life. From Shibbolei ha-Leket Karo also transmits another explanation: a diner is said to have turned his knife against himself when remembering the Temple's destruction during grace. These two traditions attest an older circulation of the custom and of several explanatory accounts. They do not name the Aragonese ambassador and should remain distinct from Ibn Verga's particular explanation based on Jacob and Esau. [S332 ; S333]

Two moments in Jacob and Esau's lives

The dialogue's quotations come from two different scenes. Genesis 27:27–29 contains Isaac's blessing of Jacob, with dew, grain and wine; 27:39–40 gives the subsequent words to Esau, who will live by his sword. In Genesis 33:8–11 the brothers meet again and discuss Jacob's gifts; this is when Esau declares that he has enough. The knife account combines these passages to explain a table custom. The Bible therefore supplies the words and characters on which the explanation rests, without itself prescribing in these verses that a knife be covered during grace. [S334 ; S335]

Meshullam's letter and the search for a papal document

The letter names Meshullam of Rome but gives no year, pope's name or ambassadors' names. No papal register or independent account of the banquet and earthquake has been identified in the sources consulted. The statements about the stolen image, conversions and withdrawal of the decree therefore remain those of the letter transmitted in the compilation. A documented comparison is Gregory X's letter of 7 October 1272, which denounces false testimony and fabricated charges against Jews and renews their protection. It attests recourse to papal protection of this kind, but is not Meshullam's letter and cannot name its pope. Finally, "the Egyptians made us wicked" is the cardinal's interpretation of Deuteronomy 26:6; the verse can also mean "the Egyptians treated us badly". The character's interpretation remains distinct from the quotation's ordinary sense. [E1744 ; H1928 ; S329 ; S331]

Translation Choices

Garlic and the king's joke

Literally, "for it is of your seed". The king jokes about garlic associated with Jewish food, after comparing the eater of beef to the animal he consumes. Wiener understands "proper to your people". The translation explains the allusion without turning the character's hostile joke into a botanical proposition. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; H1855]

Foods and bodily humours

Calentura here means fever, confirmed by Hebrew qaddaḥat ʿippushit and Wiener's Faulfieber. The text reasons within an old humoral physiology: a food's constitution is its combination of qualities, not a psychological temperament. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; H1855]

A poet rather than the Psalmist

Both Hebrew witnesses and Wiener cite an unnamed poet, with two questions concerning the diseases of old age and those connected with fatty foods. Spanish turns the poet into the Psalmist and the questions into an equivalence between a longstanding illness and a food-related illness. We follow Hebrew without attributing these lines to a psalm. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; H1855]

Who must rise early?

The pupil to be trained is the prince, not the tutor. Hebrew and Wiener retain the third-person pronoun of the sequence of five instructions. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; H1855]

Six days rather than a whole lifetime

Hebrew 1855, Hebrew 1928 and Wiener describe long eyebrows and six days of eating only herbs after the man's arrival. Spanish has eyelashes and his whole life, making the account of a former courtier incoherent. The correction concerns the transmitted wording without authenticating the anecdote. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; H1855]

An uncertain philosophical quotation

The Hebrew witnesses of 1855 and 1928, followed by Wiener, differ from Spanish in two respects: they affirm the predecessors' agreement on creation, and name Aristotle rather than Plato in the last clause. We adopt this attested reading while noting that the exception attributed to Plato remains historically and philosophically problematic. The argument opposes demonstration to a philosopher's authority; the quotation attributed to Aristotle has not been located verbatim in his work and must not be treated as a secure critical quotation. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; H1855 ; S325]

Bachelor rather than Melchior

The 1855 Hebrew facsimile reads בגילי"ר דילה טורי, a transcription of the academic title bachiller de la Torre; Spanish and Wiener mistook the title for the personal name Melchior. The source is now identified by direct comparison: Alfonso de la Torre's Visión deleytable, Part I, Chapter 34, describes in the same order water birds' feet and necks, shore birds' legs, the tail as a rudder, female compassion and ambushes. We restore the title "bachelor de la Torre". Zoological differences are not silently removed: the Visión has "closed feet" (pies çerrados), suited to swimming, and "long necks" (çervizes luengas), while Ibn Verga's witnesses have "square feet" and a long beak for reaching worms. These formulations belong to the adaptation of the passage; they remain in the account, with the competing reading recorded here. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; H1855 ; S324]

Ounce, lioness and she-wolf

Hebrew distinguishes two sentences: an exception to maternal compassion, then ambushes by the lion and the cat. Spanish contracts them; "only" therefore does not limit the second statement. Wiener understands lioness in the first, which we follow in the context of females. Ounce, onza, is an old feline name; the 1855 edition glosses it as "small panther", which does not warrant imposing a precise modern zoological species. The earlier source, Visión deleytable I.34, however gives onça and loba, ounce and she-wolf, as females without compassion, then lion, fox and cat as ambushers. We record this difference in the source work without imposing "she-wolf" on Ibn Verga's witnesses, which transmit a different feline. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; H1855 ; S324]

Grace after the meal

Hebrew specifies birkat ha-mazon (ברכת המזון), grace after meals. The passage concerns the custom of removing or covering a knife during that blessing, not specifically the blessing over bread before eating. Bendana follows Spanish; Hebrew and Wiener give Ben Dina. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; H1855 ; S327 ; S328]

The two dances in the sentence

The image contrasts women dancing before the king with temptation dancing within him. Hebrew 1855 and 1928 and Wiener make explicit both the verb dance and the two locations, lost in Spanish. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; H1855]

Women singers, singers and spies

The first Hebrew word can suggest singers or princes; Wiener understands musical singers here. In the subsequent list, שרות denotes women singers and מרגלים spies. We follow these distinctions of function in Hebrew rather than the repeated "lords" and the "sentries" of Spanish. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; H1855]

Peter or Jesus?

Spanish names Peter; both Hebrew witnesses and Wiener name Jesus. The envoys there also accuse the Jews of killing the Son of God, a clause absent from this Spanish sentence. We retain Spanish here: neither the different name nor the additional accusation is silently inserted. These are the envoys' statements within the narrative. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; H1855]

The question about images

The question challenges Christian image worship: if God disapproves of idols, how can we bow before them? The first French version obscured the question about this practice. The cardinal's reply specifically distinguishes the two kinds of images. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; H1855]

Cherubim and heavenly bodies

Hebrew compares images of saints with the sanctuary's authorised cherubim: it does not say that the saints represent cherubim. It then names the stars in the plural and their power, which could make heavenly bodies seem divine. The first French pronoun obscured that relation. "Bows before" translates משתחוה and makes visible the cardinal's asserted distinction between a gesture before an image and believing the saint to be God. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; H1855]

The additional explanation about the firstborn

The Hebrew witnesses and Wiener explain this gesture with a clause absent from Spanish: "for they said that he resembled God, because he is the firstborn". We retain Spanish without inserting this development into the narrative. The cardinal attributes this account of Egyptian worship to Egyptian "histories"; its precise ancient source has not been identified. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; H1855]

The pain in the head

The Hebrew cry, confirmed in the 1855 facsimile and by Wiener, specifies pain in the head; Spanish reduces it to two exclamations. We retain the precise wording of the Hebrew witnesses. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; H1855]

The pope's qualification

Hebrew and Wiener insert a logical qualification after rejecting the accusation: "However that may be, I see that God acts on their behalf." Spanish ties the conclusion more directly to divine intervention. We retain its construction while recording the Hebrew qualification. No particular pope or papal document can be identified from this undated letter alone. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; H1855]

The reason known to God

The Spanish clause affirms that the Jews are in the right; we retain it. Hebrew, followed by Wiener, makes God the subject: "If he knew no reason for it, he would not act thus." This second reading affirms the justice of a divine reason without expressing exactly the same approval of the people. The difference is therefore substantive and must not be silently harmonised. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; H1855]

Poverty and lying

Spanish makes lying the thing that "contains every evil". Hebrew and German contrast two propositions: poverty can produce all kinds of evil, yet remains preferable to lying. This reading restores the argument's sequence and fits the comparison in Proverbs 19:22; it is adopted in the text. In the next instruction, Wiener's Spiele ("play" or "games") differs from Spanish mockery; ridicule also fits the Hebrew expression and has been retained. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S330]

What happened to Seneca; what depends on birth

Hebrew explicitly says that the prince had Seneca killed. Spanish leaves "he did as…" without stating what was done, making the former translation unclear. "He will have me killed" makes explicit the danger named by the tutor in Hebrew. In the following discussion, middot (מדות, "character traits") and Wiener's Charakter support "character" rather than "virtues": the argument concerns human dispositions, good or bad. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856 ; S326]

Crucifix or image?

Wiener specifies a "crucifix" when describing the silver object. Hebrew has tselem (צלם, "image" or "effigy"), and Spanish likewise remains general, so "silver image" is retained. The dignitaries are called "cardinals" following Spanish; Hebrew hegmonim (הגמונים, "prelates") and German Bischöfe ("bishops") are broader or different. These titles do not identify particular officeholders. [E1744 ; H1928 ; G1856]

Editions compared for this account: E1744, p. 260–268 ; H1928, section 64c ; G1856, p. 252–259.

Sources and Bibliography

The first five entries describe versions of the book. S references identify the other sources used. A modern translation or edition of an old text is identified as such in the commentary; it should not be confused with the original document.

E1744. La vara de Judá, Amsterdam, Mosseh d'Abraham Pretto Henriques, imprimerie de Jan de Wolf, 1744

Salomon ibn Verga; Spanish translation signed M. de L.

Supplied copy: Universidad Complutense de Madrid, BH FLL32870. Full comparison of the 64 accounts and 5 supplementary pieces. Printed pages 1–268; PDF views 11–278.

https://patrimoniodigital.ucm.es/s/patrimonio/item/740179

H1928. Shevet Yehudah, Varsovie, Traklin, 1928 ; transcription du Projet Ben-Yehuda

Salomon and Joseph ibn Verga

Hebrew text compared in full for the translated units. Located by account and section anchor.

https://benyehuda.org/read/48057

H1855. Liber Schevet Jehuda / Shevet Yehudah, édition hébraïque, Hanovre, 1855

Salomon ibn Verga; edition and critical apparatus by Meïr Wiener

Targeted checks of the Hebrew text and apparatus against page images. The digitised binding also includes the German instalment; references here use printed page numbers.

https://archive.org/details/liberschevetjeh00wiengoog

G1856. Das Buch Schevet Jehuda, Hanovre, Carl Rümpler, 1856

Salomon ibn Verga; translation and notes by Meïr Wiener

Full comparison of the corresponding accounts and supplementary pieces, pages 1–259. Agreement or disagreement with Hebrew and Spanish is considered in the translation choices.

https://archive.org/details/bub_gb__BJAAAAAYAAJ

L1651. Historia Judaica, Amsterdam, Petrus Niellius, 1651

Salomon ibn Verga; Latin version by Georg Gentius

Title, preliminaries and selected passages examined; no full collation is claimed for this version.

https://archive.org/details/bub_gb_3OQCjvtekD0C

S001. Plutarque, Vie d'Antoine

chapters 54–58, 61–68 and 81–87

Accounts and pieces: 1.

https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Antony*.html

S002. Flavius Josèphe, Guerre des Juifs, livre I

I, 7 and I, 17–18 · I.18.4 and 20.1–4: Cleopatra, Herod and Octavian

Accounts and pieces: 1.

https://penelope.uchicago.edu/josephus/war-1.html

S003. Flavius Josèphe, Guerre des Juifs, livre V

V, 12, 4 (§ 519) · V, 11.5, burning of the Roman siege engines · V, 9, 3–4, especially the example of Abraham and Sara; V, 13, 3, Josephus wounded · V, 5, §§ 1–7; especially §§ 2, 4, 5 and 7: access, layout, furnishings and clothing

Accounts and pieces: 1, 7, 32a, 64.

https://penelope.uchicago.edu/josephus/war-5.html

S004. Siracide / Wisdom of Ben Sira

Greek translator's prologue; 50:27

Accounts and pieces: 2.

https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Bible_(King_James)/Wisdom_of_Sirach

S005. USCCB, introduction au Siracide

introduction to the author, title and date

Accounts and pieces: 2.

https://bible.usccb.org/bible/sirach/0

S006. Jérôme, Préface aux livres de Salomon d'après les Septante

Latin text; Patrologia Latina 29, cols. 425–428

Accounts and pieces: 2.

https://epistolae.ctl.columbia.edu/letter/291.html

S007. Livre d'Aggée

1:1 and 1:12–15; editorial note on the year 520 BCE

Accounts and pieces: 2.

https://bible.usccb.org/bible/haggai/1

S008. Premier livre des Maccabées

1:41–64; King James Bible translation

Accounts and pieces: 2.

https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Bible_(King_James)/1_Maccabees

S009. Sherira Gaon, Épître

§ 110; Aramaic text compared with Landau's 1904 translation · §§ 108–113; Aramaic text and Landau's 1904 translation

Accounts and pieces: 3.

https://www.biblioj.fr/sherira-gaon-epitre-landau-traduction/

S010. Abraham ibn Daud, Sefer ha-Qabbalah (Livre de la tradition)

ed. Neubauer, Oxford, 1888, p. 61; Hebrew facsimile · ed. Neubauer, Oxford, 1888, p. 73; Hebrew facsimile

Accounts and pieces: 3, 5.

https://www.poeticmind.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Rabbi-Abraham-Ibn-Daud-Sefer-Hakabbalah.pdf

S011. ʿAbd al-Wāḥid al-Marrakushi, Al-Muʿjib / Histoire des Almohades

trans. Edmond Fagnan, Algiers, 1893, pp. 168–172 and 264–265; historical passages consulted in translation

Accounts and pieces: 4.

https://archive.org/details/histoiredesalmo00margoog

S012. Deuxième livre des Rois

6:26–27: an appeal to the king during the siege of Samaria

Accounts and pieces: 4.

https://bible.usccb.org/bible/2kings/6

S013. Deutéronome

32:6: the people described as foolish

Accounts and pieces: 4.

https://bible.usccb.org/bible/deuteronomy/32

S014. Joseph Caro, Shulḥan Arukh, Oraḥ Ḥayyim

580:2: 9 Tevet in the list of fast days; Hebrew and translation consulted

Accounts and pieces: 5.

https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Translation:Shulchan_Aruch/Orach_Chaim/580

S015. Livre d'Ézéchiel

24:1–2: date of the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem

Accounts and pieces: 5.

https://bible.usccb.org/bible/ezekiel/24

S016. Continuateur de Guillaume de Nangis, Chronique latine

ed. Hercule Géraud, Paris, 1843, vol. II, year 1320, pp. 25–28 · Chronique latine de Guillaume de Nangis, II, year 1321, pp. 31–36

Accounts and pieces: 6, 43.

https://archive.org/details/chroniquelatined02guiluoft

S017. Jacques II d'Aragon, actes après le massacre de Montclus

transcriptions in Joachim Miret y Sans, REJ 53, 1907, pp. 255–266; ACA reg. 218, fols. 102–103; reg. 219, fol. 310; reg. 220, fols. 55–56

Accounts and pieces: 6.

https://www.persee.fr/doc/rjuiv_0484-8616_1907_num_53_106_4813

S018. Frédéric II, privilège et jugement sur l'accusation de Fulda

1 July 1236; translation of the document reproduced by the CCJR, following Alexis Rubin, pp. 113–115 · 1 July 1236; translation of the document reproduced by the Council of Centers on Jewish-Christian Relations

Accounts and pieces: 7, 17.

https://www.ccjr.us/dialogika-resources/primary-texts-from-the-history-of-the-relationship/primary-texts-from-1000-to-modernity/frederick-ii

S019. Alphonse X, Siete Partidas

VII, title XXIV, laws II and XI; extracts from the old Spanish text

Accounts and pieces: 7.

https://opentext.ku.edu/palabraspropias/chapter/sietepartidas/

S020. Lévitique

7:23–27 · 7:23–27, fats and blood; dietary prescription

Accounts and pieces: 7, 64b.

https://www.sefaria.org/Leviticus.7.23-27

S021. Talmud de Babylone, Keritot

21b, discussion of human blood on bread and between the teeth

Accounts and pieces: 7.

https://www.sefaria.org/Keritot.21b

S022. Mishnah, Bava Qamma ; Talmud de Babylone, Bava Qamma

Mishnah 4:3; Talmud 113b, prohibition of theft and lost property

Accounts and pieces: 7.

https://www.sefaria.org/Mishnah_Bava_Kamma.4.3

S023. Mishnah, Avodah Zarah

2:3, wine of non-Jews

Accounts and pieces: 7.

https://www.sefaria.org/Mishnah_Avodah_Zarah.2.3

S024. Livres des Chroniques

1 Chronicles 21:5; 2 Chronicles 13:3 and 13:17

Accounts and pieces: 7.

https://www.sefaria.org/I_Chronicles.21.5

S025. Deuxième livre des Rois

15:19–20, Menahem and Poul

Accounts and pieces: 7.

https://www.sefaria.org/II_Kings.15.19

S026. Annales de Tiglath-Phalasar III

ANET excerpt, p. 283, tribute of Menahem of Samaria; translation by A. Leo Oppenheim

Accounts and pieces: 7.

https://www.livius.org/sources/content/anet/283-the-annals-of-tiglath-pileser/

S027. Flavius Josèphe, Antiquités judaïques, livre XI

XI, 7.2 and 8.1–4, Manassé, Nicaso and Sanballat · XI.3.2–7; historical translation by William Whiston

Accounts and pieces: 7, 8.

https://penelope.uchicago.edu/josephus/ant-11.html

S028. Talmud de Babylone, Menaḥot

109b, the two accounts of the foundation of Onias's sanctuary

Accounts and pieces: 7.

https://www.sefaria.org/Menachot.109b

S029. Talmud de Babylone, Taʿanit

25a, vinegar lamp and the goats of Ḥanina ben Dosa

Accounts and pieces: 7.

https://www.sefaria.org/Taanit.25a

S030. Talmud de Babylone, Bekhorot

57b, the egg of the bar yokhani

Accounts and pieces: 7.

https://www.sefaria.org/Bekhorot.57b

S031. Talmud de Babylone, Bava Batra

73b, seabird and the carpenter's axe

Accounts and pieces: 7.

https://www.sefaria.org/Bava_Batra.73b

S032. Flavius Josèphe, Antiquités judaïques, livre XIV

XIV, 3.1, Aristobule's offering and Strabon's testimony

Accounts and pieces: 7.

https://penelope.uchicago.edu/josephus/ant-14.html

S033. Premier livre des Maccabées

6:43–46, Éléazar's death beneath the elephant

Accounts and pieces: 7.

https://bible.usccb.org/bible/1maccabees/6

S034. Évangiles de Matthieu et de Luc

Matthew 1:6–16; Luke 3:23–31

Accounts and pieces: 7.

https://bible.usccb.org/bible/matthew/1

S035. Maïmonide, Guide des égarés

Maïmonide

III, 29, paragraph on the offerings of seven beetles, seven mice and seven bats · III, 29, traditions attributed to Sabean books about Abraham at Kouta; English translation by M. Friedländer, 1903

Accounts and pieces: 7, 64b.

https://www.sefaria.org/Guide_for_the_Perplexed%2C_Part_3.29

S036. Livre de Daniel, additions grecques

14:33–39: Habakkuk brings food to Daniel

Accounts and pieces: 7.

https://bible.usccb.org/bible/daniel/14

S037. Deuxième livre des Maccabées

1:18–22 and 1:31–36: the recovered fire and the liquid called naphthar

Accounts and pieces: 7.

https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Bible_(King_James)/2_Maccabees

S038. Siete Partidas, VII.24 et VII.30

Alphonse X and his jurists

VII.24, laws 2–6; VII.30, laws 1, 2 and 4; modernised Spanish transcription

Accounts and pieces: 8.

https://www.juzgando.com/las-siete-partidas-de-alfonso-x-el-sabio/

S039. Livre des Juges

8:20–21

Accounts and pieces: 8.

https://www.sefaria.org/Judges.8.20-21

S040. Livre de l'Exode

12:15–20

Accounts and pieces: 8.

https://www.sefaria.org/Exodus.12.15-20

S041. Livre de la Genèse

3:6 and 3:17: the first man and the forbidden fruit

Accounts and pieces: 8.

https://bible.usccb.org/bible/genesis/3

S042. Livre de la Genèse

9:20–21: Noah's drunkenness

Accounts and pieces: 8.

https://bible.usccb.org/bible/genesis/9

S043. Premier livre des Rois

11:1–4: Solomon's wives and his change of conduct · 18:36–37: Elijah's prayer on Carmel · 13:4–6: Jeroboam's hand paralysed and restored through intercession

Accounts and pieces: 8, 10, 17.

https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Bible_(King_James)/1_Kings

S044. Historia de regibus Gothorum, Vandalorum et Suevorum

Isidore de Séville

§§ 60–62; Latin text

Accounts and pieces: 9.

https://thelatinlibrary.com/isidore/historia.shtml

S045. Quatrième concile de Tolède

canon 57 of the council of 633; Latin text edited by José Vives, Concilios Visigóticos e Hispano-Romanos, 1963, p. 211

Accounts and pieces: 9.

https://telma.irht.cnrs.fr/outils/relmin/extrait1051/

S046. Mishneh Torah, Lois des rois et de leurs guerres

Maïmonide

6:1–5; Hebrew consulted

Accounts and pieces: 9.

https://www.sefaria.org/Mishneh_Torah,_Kings_and_Wars.6.1-5

S047. Mishneh Torah, Lois des rois et de leurs guerres

Maïmonide

9:1; Hebrew consulted

Accounts and pieces: 9.

https://www.sefaria.org/Mishneh_Torah,_Kings_and_Wars.9.1

S048. Livre des Nombres

14:22–23

Accounts and pieces: 9.

https://www.sefaria.org/Numbers.14.22-23

S049. Livre de la Genèse

17:9–14: circumcision as the sign of the covenant

Accounts and pieces: 9.

https://bible.usccb.org/bible/genesis/17

S050. Épître aux Romains

10:1–2; verbal parallel in Isidore, History of the Goths, §60

Accounts and pieces: 9.

https://bible.usccb.org/bible/romans/10

S051. Crónica de don Alfonso el Onceno, éd. Francisco Cerdá y Rico, Madrid, 1787

Medieval Castilian chronicle

prologue, pp. 1–2; chapter IV, p. 11; XVII–XVIII, pp. 38–43; XCVIII–XCIX, pp. 173–176; CCIII–CCVIII, pp. 373–386; facsimile and checked OCR transcription · chapter IV, p. 11, the king's age at his accession; marginal years at the beginning of this printed edition not adopted

Accounts and pieces: 10, 64b.

https://archive.org/details/anonimo.-cronica-de-don-alfonso-el-onceno-ocr-1787

S052. PARES : Gil Álvarez de Albornoz

Archbishop of Toledo, 1338–1350

Accounts and pieces: 10.

https://pares.cultura.gob.es/ParesBusquedas20/catalogo/autoridad/49635

S053. Premier livre des Rois

22:34–35

Accounts and pieces: 10.

https://www.sefaria.org/I_Kings.22.34-35

S054. Livre d'Esther

3:8–11 ; 6:1–2 ; 8:2, 8:7–8

Accounts and pieces: 10.

https://www.sefaria.org/Esther.3.8-11

S055. Livre de l'Exode

15:1–7; compare Isaiah 14:4–11

Accounts and pieces: 10.

https://www.sefaria.org/Exodus.15.1-7

S056. Manuel García Fernández, Jaime II y la minoría de Alfonso XI (1312–1325). Sus relaciones con la sociedad política castellana

Manuel García Fernández

Historia. Instituciones. Documentos, 18 (1991), pp. 143–181; pp. 144 and 146–150 consulted for the chronology and royal guardians; references to registers and letters in the Archivo de la Corona de Aragón

Accounts and pieces: 10.

https://dialnet.unirioja.es/descarga/articulo/58245.pdf

S057. Acte d'Ávila sur la garde d'Alphonse XI, 21 octobre 1312

Archivo de la Diputación Provincial de Zaragoza, ES/ADPZ 744/19; DARA catalogue description and date consulted; parchment not transcribed here

Accounts and pieces: 10.

https://dara.aragon.es/opac/app/item?i=550228

S058. Livre de Daniel

9:7–8: divine righteousness and the exiles' shame

Accounts and pieces: 10.

https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Bible_(King_James)/Daniel

S059. Livre de Josué

7:8–9: the danger of extermination and God's great name

Accounts and pieces: 10.

https://bible.usccb.org/bible/joshua/7

S060. Livre de Jérémie

14:8–9: the saviour present among the people

Accounts and pieces: 10.

https://bible.usccb.org/bible/jeremiah/14

S061. Isidore Loeb, Un épisode de l'histoire des Juifs de Savoie

Revue des études juives, 10, 1885, p. 33 and notes; study based on documents

Accounts and pieces: 11.

https://www.persee.fr/doc/rjuiv_0484-8616_1885_num_10_19_6533?pageId=T1_33

S062. Moses Hamon : dossier des Archives de la Bibliothèque nationale d'Israël

File entitled Hamon, Moses, Chief Jewish physician to Suleyman I; identification of the individual

Accounts and pieces: 11.

https://www.nli.org.il/en/archives/NNL_ARCHIVE_AL990036318000205171/NLI

S063. Deutéronome

28:65

Accounts and pieces: 11.

https://www.sefaria.org/Deuteronomy.28.65

S064. Danièle Iancu-Agou, Destinées juives et néophytes en Provence médiévale (1430–1530)

Danièle Iancu-Agou

Académie des sciences et lettres de Montpellier, 2014, pp. 421–426: expulsions and converts

Accounts and pieces: 11.

https://www.ac-sciences-lettres-montpellier.fr/academie_edition/fichiers_conf/IANCU-AGOU-2014.pdf

S065. Danièle Iancu-Agou, Encore les néophytes. Réflexions sur la tallia neofitorum (1503–1512)

Danièle Iancu-Agou

Revue des études juives 166/1–2, 2007, pp. 265–272; p. 265 consulted

Accounts and pieces: 11.

https://www.persee.fr/doc/rjuiv_0484-8616_2007_num_166_1_2926

S066. Antonio de Guevara, Reloj de Príncipes

Antonio de Guevara

Book III, chapter X; work published in 1529; complete Spanish transcription consulted in the online edition, based on Emilio Blanco, 1994

Accounts and pieces: 12.

https://www.filosofia.org/cla/gue/guerp310.htm

S067. Flavius Josèphe, Antiquités judaïques

Flavius Josèphe

XVIII.1.1 ; XVIII.2.2, §§ 29–35

Accounts and pieces: 12.

https://penelope.uchicago.edu/josephus/ant-18.html

S068. Genèse

18:32: the ten righteous people

Accounts and pieces: 12.

https://www.sefaria.org/Genesis.18.32

S069. Livre de Jérémie

6:14 and 8:11: peace proclaimed without real peace

Accounts and pieces: 12.

https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Bible_(King_James)/Jeremiah

S070. Nicolas III, lettre Vineam Sorec

Nicolas III

4 August 1278; Bullarium Franciscanum, III, no. L, pp. 332–333; IRHT Latin transcription consulted

Accounts and pieces: 13.

https://telma-chartes.irht.cnrs.fr/154042

S071. Zacharie

2:12 in Hebrew numbering; 2:8 in many Christian Bibles · 2:12, Hebrew numbering; often 2:8 in Christian Bibles

Accounts and pieces: 13, 14.

https://www.sefaria.org/Zechariah.2.12

S072. Lévitique

26:36

Accounts and pieces: 13.

https://www.sefaria.org/Leviticus.26.36

S073. Deutéronome

31:17–18; also 28:1

Accounts and pieces: 13.

https://www.sefaria.org/Deuteronomy.31.17-18

S074. Livre d'Isaïe

5:1–7: the song of the vineyard

Accounts and pieces: 13.

https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Bible_(King_James)/Isaiah

S075. Clément VI, Gratias agimus, 21 novembre 1342

Clément VI

Latin text, appendix 1, pp. 161–162, in Antonio Vázquez y López-Amor, Exámen histórico-legal del derecho de patronato de la Corona de España sobre los lugares píos de Tierra Santa, Madrid, 1881; scan images 173–174

Accounts and pieces: 14.

https://idus.us.es/bitstreams/211b767e-a98f-41ef-a5fc-fbe206cbc366/download

S076. Rebecca Rist, Papal Power and Protection in the Shebet Yehudah

Rebecca Rist

Journal of Religious History 40/4 (2016), pp. 490–507; section The Shebet Yehuda and John XXII, pp. 9–13 in the PDF's provisional pagination

Accounts and pieces: 14.

https://centaur.reading.ac.uk/48787/1/onlineLibraryTPS%20%281%29.pdf

S077. Valérie Theis, Jean XXII et l'expulsion des juifs du Comtat Venaissin

Valérie Theis

Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales 67/1 (2012), pp. 41–77; abstract and note 4 consulted; the note cites Clément VI, 18 December 1345, Simonsohn I, no. 368, pp. 389–390

Accounts and pieces: 14.

https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/annales-histoire-sciences-sociales/article/abs/jean-xxii-et-lexpulsion-des-juifs-du-comtat-venaissin/68301BC78111760DEC16E23C6D3EFBE2

S078. Épître aux Colossiens

2:11–12: spiritual circumcision and baptism

Accounts and pieces: 14.

https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Bible_(King_James)/Colossians

S079. Évangile selon Luc

2:21: Jesus circumcised on the eighth day · 15:7: joy over a repentant sinner; allusion in the preamble of 1315

Accounts and pieces: 14, 24.

https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Bible_(King_James)/Luke

S080. Registre fiscal de Monzón, 1397 : Archivo de la Corona de Aragón, Maestre Racional, reg. 2400, f. 6–8

entry of 1 March 1397; transcription reproduced by Francisco Andrés Lascorz Arcas, La vida judía en la Corona de Aragón entre los siglos XII y XV. La aljama judía de Monzón, thesis, Universitat Rovira i Virgili, 2021, pp. 248–250, following R. Pita Mercé, Lérida judía, 1983, pp. 301–303 · Lascorz Arcas, dissertation, 2021, pp. 302–305; AHP Huesca, Antón Calvo de Torla's register, 1451, ff. 40–42, transcription reproduced from Motis Dolader

Accounts and pieces: 15.

https://repositori.urv.cat/repositori/getDocument/TDX%3A3226?ds=Memoria&mime=application%2Fpdf

S081. Évangile selon Luc

22:63–65

Accounts and pieces: 15.

https://www.aelf.org/bible/Lc/22

S082. Psaume 121

verses 1, 4–5; Hebrew text consulted

Accounts and pieces: 16.

https://www.sefaria.org/Psalms.121.4

S083. David Qimḥi, commentaire du Psaume 121

David Qimḥi, known as Radak

121:4, commentary beginning with ינום ("will slumber"); Hebrew text consulted

Accounts and pieces: 16.

https://www.sefaria.org/Radak_on_Psalms.121.4

S084. Talmud de Babylone, Megillah

15b, discussion of Esther 6:1, beginning with בלילה ההוא ("that night"); Hebrew and Aramaic text consulted

Accounts and pieces: 16.

https://www.sefaria.org/Megillah.15b

S085. Livre d'Esther

6:1–3

Accounts and pieces: 16.

https://www.aelf.org/bible/Est/6

S086. Deutéronome

32:4

Accounts and pieces: 16.

https://www.aelf.org/bible/Dt/32

S087. Digeste de Justinien

Ulpien and the compilers of the Digest

48.18.1.23–27; Latin text

Accounts and pieces: 17.

https://droitromain.univ-grenoble-alpes.fr/Corpus/d-48.htm

S088. Deutéronome

17:7

Accounts and pieces: 17.

https://www.sefaria.org/Deuteronomy.17.7

S089. Livre du Deutéronome

19:15–19: multiple witnesses and investigation of false testimony

Accounts and pieces: 17.

https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Bible_(King_James)/Deuteronomy

S090. Iggeret ha-Shabbat — Lettre du sabbat

Abraham ibn Ezra

Author's preface, first paragraph; Hebrew text

Accounts and pieces: 18.

https://www.sefaria.org/The_Sabbath_Epistle%2C_Author%27s_Preface

S091. Ordres royaux relatifs au départ des Juifs d'Angleterre

Edward I

The National Archives, C 54/107, m. 5, 18 July 1290; m. 1, 5 November 1290; file, sources 3 and 4 · The National Archives, E 164/9, f. 31d; educational dossier, sources 1a–1c, pp. 9–14, and context p. 7

Accounts and pieces: 18.

https://cdn.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/education/jews-in-england-1290.pdf

S092. Affaire monétaire de l'Oxfordshire, terme d'Hilaire 1278

Adrienne Williams Boyarin

TNA E 9/26, 6; Calendar of the Plea Rolls of the Exchequer of the Jews, V, p. 43; Medieval Anglo-Jewish Women project record

Accounts and pieces: 18.

https://majw.uvic.ca/ev_1278_13.html

S093. Gli ebrei nell'Italia meridionale dall'età romana al secolo XVIII

Nicola Ferorelli

1915, pp. 53–56, especially p. 54, notes 3–6, and p. 55, notes 2 and 4; PDF pages 77–80 · Gli ebrei nell'Italia meridionale, 1915, pp. 55–56; especially Angevin Registers 206, f. 76v, measure of 1315

Accounts and pieces: 19.

https://sammlungen.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/freimann/content/titleinfo/758415

S094. Michna et Talmud de Babylone, Makkot

Mishnah Makkot 1:10; discussion in Makkot 7a · 7a; Mishnah Makkot 1:10 and discussion of the ṭerefah victim

Accounts and pieces: 20, 41.

https://www.sefaria.org/Makkot.7a

S095. La République, livre V

Platon

457c–d; historical translation by Benjamin Jowett

Accounts and pieces: 20.

https://classics.mit.edu/Plato/republic.6.v.html

S096. Mekhilta de-rabbi Yishmael

Vayehi Beshalach 2:28, commentary on Exodus 14:7; Hebrew text

Accounts and pieces: 20.

https://www.sefaria.org/Mekhilta_DeRabbi_Yishmael%2C_Tractate_Vayehi_Beshalach.2.28

S097. Livre des Nombres

35:30–31: witnesses and the murderer's punishment · 23:7–12: Balaam, Balak and the dust of Jacob

Accounts and pieces: 20, 21.

https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Bible_(King_James)/Numbers

S098. Livre de l'Exode

9:20–21 and 14:6–7: livestock preserved and Pharaoh's chariots · 12:37: the number of men leaving Egypt

Accounts and pieces: 20, 21.

https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Bible_(King_James)/Exodus

S099. Chronique de Guillaume de Nangis et de ses continuateurs

Continuator of Guillaume de Nangis

Year 1306; French translation published by Brière, 1825 · Year 1314; final illness and death of Philippe IV; translation published by Brière, 1825

Accounts and pieces: 21, 24.

https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/Chronique_de_Guillaume_de_Nangis/Règne_de_Philippe_IV_le_Bel_(1285-1314)

S100. Commentaire de Gersonide sur Nombres

Lévi ben Gershom, known as Gersonide

Béour ha-millot, Numbers 23:10; transcription of the Venice edition, 1547; additional comparison with Numbers 23–24

Accounts and pieces: 21.

https://www.sefaria.org/Ralbag_Beur_HaMilot_on_Torah%2C_Numbers.23.10

S101. Bibliothèque nationale de France, histoire du fonds hébreu

Bibliothèque nationale de France

“Manuscrits hébreux” section: the confiscations of 1306 and the transfer of 1372

Accounts and pieces: 21.

https://www.bnf.fr/fr/manuscrits-afrique-amerique-proche-orient

S102. Ordonnance de Louis X sur le rappel des Juifs

Louis X

28 July 1315, preamble; E. de Laurière, Ordonnances des roys de France, vol. I, 1723, pp. 595–597; RELMIN transcription · Preamble and articles 1, 4 and 11; Old French transcription, Laurière I, pp. 595–597 · 28 July 1315; preamble and clauses on the twelve years, synagogues, cemeteries, outstanding debts and protection; Laurière edition, vol. I, pp. 595–597 · Catalogue entry for the Paris ordinance: length of stay and advance notice

Accounts and pieces: 22, 23, 24, 25.

https://telma.irht.cnrs.fr/outils/relmin/extrait271953/

S103. Louis IX, grande ordonnance de décembre 1254

Louis IX

Article 32, Ordonnances des roys de France, I, p. 75; Latin reproduced in Rowan Dorin, Banishing Usury, 2015, p. 87, note 23

Accounts and pieces: 22.

https://dash.harvard.edu/server/api/core/bitstreams/04c3d8d4-dc52-4ed6-9371-3b4b3a11ac6a/content

S104. Rowan Dorin, Banishing Usury: The Expulsion of Foreign Moneylenders in Medieval Europe, 1200–1450

Rowan William Dorin

Doctoral dissertation, Harvard University, 2015, pp. 86–89, especially p. 87 and notes 22–23

Accounts and pieces: 22.

https://dash.harvard.edu/entities/publication/73120378-f5cf-6bd4-e053-0100007fdf3b

S105. Isaïe

1:19–20

Accounts and pieces: 23.

https://www.sefaria.org/Isaiah.1.19-20

S106. Philippe IV, ordonnance de Saint-Ouen du 22 août 1311

Philip IV

AN, JJ 42 A, no. 145, inventory 893; Laurière edition, I, p. 488; TELMA abstract no. 19071

Accounts and pieces: 23.

https://telma-chartes.irht.cnrs.fr/en/19071

S107. Philip V, Charles IV, and the Jews of France: The Alleged Expulsion of 1322

Elizabeth A. R. Brown

Speculum 66/2, p. 294–329

Accounts and pieces: 25.

https://www.jstor.org/stable/2864146

S108. Quamvis perfidiam

Clément VI

Latin text edited in J. C. Lara Olmo, Darom 5 (2023), pp. 55–56; date: VI Kalendas Octobris, anno septimo · Lara Olmo, Darom 5 (2023), pp. 36–38; Hebrew text in appendix A, pp. 51–52

Accounts and pieces: 26.

https://www.revistadarom.es/index.php/Darom/article/download/80/87/369

S109. Sobre la lletra que Hasday Cresques adreçà a la comunitat jueva d'Avinyó parlant dels avalots de 1391

Eduard Feliu

Tamid 5, pp. 171–219; transmission of the letter, pp. 174–175 and 179; documents, pp. 186–200 · I, pp. 16–18; entries of 22–25 July, 5–8 August and 14–22 December 1391; Catalan text reproduced by Eduard Feliu, Tamid 5 (2004–2005), pp. 187–189 · Recull de documents i estudis, I/2, pp. 158–159; Latin original reproduced by Feliu, Tamid 5, pp. 186–187, note 48 · Tamid 5, pp. 197–198 and notes 70–71; chronicle: 10 August; letter: 23 August 1391, ACA, register 1691, fols. 81r–v, edited by Baer, Die Juden, I, document 428 · I, pp. 16–18; events of 5–8 August 1391; Catalan text reproduced by Eduard Feliu, Tamid 5, pp. 187–188

Accounts and pieces: 27, 45, 48.

https://publicacions.iec.cat/repository/pdf/00000044/00000013.pdf

S110. Lettre à la communauté d'Avignon sur les violences de 1391

Hasdaï Crescas

Letter; compare the textual versions distinguished by Feliu

Accounts and pieces: 27.

https://cojs.org/spain-1391-hasdai-crescas-letter/

S111. Le retour voulu vers l'Égypte après le rapport des explorateurs

Hebrew Bible

Numbers 14:1–4, especially 14:4

Accounts and pieces: 27.

https://www.sefaria.org/Numbers.14.1-4

S112. La dispersion parmi les nations dans les clauses de l'alliance

Hebrew Bible

Leviticus 26:38

Accounts and pieces: 27.

https://www.sefaria.org/Leviticus.26.38

S113. The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela

Benjamin de Tudèle; ed. Marcus Nathan Adler

Constantinople, translation pp. 11–14; Hebrew marginal page references 19–24 · Amadia, translation pp. 54–56; Hebrew pagination pp. 76–81 · Constantinople and Pera, translation p. 14; Hebrew pagination p. 24 · Naples, translation p. 8; Hebrew pagination p. 12, before Salerno

Accounts and pieces: 28, 32, 37, 39.

https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/14981/pg14981-images.html

S114. Histoires, livre V

Hérodote

V, 4: customs of the Trauses

Accounts and pieces: 29.

https://lexundria.com/hdt/5.4/mcly

S115. Las Siete Partidas : l'interrogatoire sous la torture et la vérification des aveux

Alfonso X; edition of the Real Academia de la Historia

Partida VII, title XXX, laws II–IV; vol. III, pp. 702–704

Accounts and pieces: 29.

https://www.boe.es/biblioteca_juridica/abrir_pdf.php?id=PUB-LH-2021-217_3

S116. Naissance, mort et maison du deuil

Hebrew Bible

Ecclesiastes 7:1–4

Accounts and pieces: 29.

https://www.sefaria.org/Ecclesiastes.7.1-4

S117. Le pauvre et l'esprit abattu

Hebrew Bible

Isaiah 66:2

Accounts and pieces: 29.

https://www.sefaria.org/Isaiah.66.2

S118. Epistle to Yemen

Moïse Maïmonide

Catalogue entry: date, recipient and persecution in Yemen

Accounts and pieces: 30.

https://www.posenlibrary.com/entry/epistle-yemen

S119. Lettre à Samuel ibn Tibbon

Moïse Maïmonide; reproduced by D. Yellin and I. Abrahams

Maimonides, chapter XI, pp. 201–203: Fustat, Cairo and medical practice

Accounts and pieces: 30.

https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Gazetteer/People/Maimonides/YAAMAI/11*.html

S120. Épître au Yémen : adresse, situation et conseils au destinataire

Moses Maimonides; edited by Abraham S. Halkin, translated by Boaz Cohen

Address; sections I and XVIII of the English transcription

Accounts and pieces: 30.

https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Epistle_to_Yemen/Complete

S121. The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela

Benjamin de Tudèle; ed. Marcus Nathan Adler

Amadia and David Alroy, translation pp. 54–56; Hebrew marginal page references 76–81

Accounts and pieces: 31.

https://sourcebooks.web.fordham.edu/source/12Cbenjaminofttudela.asp

S122. Lettre sur l'astrologie aux savants du sud de la France

Moïse Maïmonide; translation by Jonas Weyl; Hebrew ed. Alexander Marx

Final part: "L'Histoire du Messie..."; parallel Hebrew text

Accounts and pieces: 31.

https://www.biblioj.fr/maimonide-lettre-astrologie-weyl-traduction/

S123. Élie et Élisée traversent le Jourdain

Hebrew Bible

2 Kings 2:8–14, especially 2:8 and 2:13–14

Accounts and pieces: 31.

https://www.sefaria.org/II_Kings.2.8-14

S124. Hamon, § 5 : Moses Hamon

Gotthard Deutsch and Meyer Kayserling

Jewish Encyclopedia, vol. VI, pp. 201–202; Moïse Hamon and bibliography of the letters

Accounts and pieces: 32.

https://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/7156-hamon

S125. L'ordre d'Haman contre les Juifs du royaume

Hebrew Bible

Esther 3:6–13, especially 3:9 and 3:13

Accounts and pieces: 32.

https://www.sefaria.org/Esther.3.6-13

S126. La Vallée des pleurs : Moïse Hamon et le recours à Soliman

Joseph ha-Kohen; translated by Julien Sée

pp. 125–126, passage following the events of 1545 · Julien Sée, translation, 1881, pp. 125–126; passage placed after the events of 1545

Accounts and pieces: 32, 64a.

https://archive.org/details/lavalledespleur01josegoog

S127. Décaméron

Giovanni Boccaccio

First day, story III: Saladin, Melchisédech and the three rings

Accounts and pieces: 32a.

https://www.gutenberg.org/files/23700/23700-h/23700-h.htm

S128. Vayikra Rabbah

Rabbinic tradition

33, 1: the banquet of tender and tough tongues

Accounts and pieces: 32a.

https://www.sefaria.org/Vayikra_Rabbah.33.1?lang=he

S129. Bereshit Rabbah

Rabbinic tradition

10, 6: the celestial body that commands the plant to grow

Accounts and pieces: 32a.

https://www.sefaria.org/Bereshit_Rabbah.10.6/

S130. Histoire des animaux

Aristote

Book IX, § 47 in D'Arcy W. Thompson's division; horse of the king of Scythia

Accounts and pieces: 32a.

https://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/history_anim.9.ix.html

S131. Genèse : Sara en Égypte et le plaidoyer de Juda

Hebrew Bible

12:10–20; 44:18–34

Accounts and pieces: 32a.

https://www.sefaria.org/Genesis

S132. Premier livre de Samuel : Anne, la royauté et Abigaïl

Hebrew Bible

2:1–10; 8:10–18; 25:23–35

Accounts and pieces: 32a.

https://www.sefaria.org/I_Samuel

S133. Explication du Psaume 57 latin : l'aspic et le refus d'écouter

Augustine of Hippo; English translation by J. E. Tweed

Enarrationes in Psalmos 57, §§ 6–7; English title Psalm 58; comparison with Acts 7:57

Accounts and pieces: 32a.

https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1801058.htm

S134. Psaume 21 de la Septante

Ancient Greek translation; ed. Rahlfs–Hanhart

21:17, corresponding to Hebrew Psalm 22:17

Accounts and pieces: 32b.

https://www.die-bibel.de/bibel/LXX/PSA.21

S135. Psalmi iuxta Hebraeos, psaume 21

Jérôme; ed. Biblia Sacra Vulgata

21:17: vinxerunt manus meas et pedes meos

Accounts and pieces: 32b.

https://www.die-bibel.de/bibel/VUL/PSA.21

S136. Talmud de Babylone, Bava Batra

Rabbinic tradition

73a–73b: waves, frog, serpent, raven and axe

Accounts and pieces: 32b.

https://www.halakhah.com/bababathra/bababathra_73.html

S137. Talmud de Babylone, Yoma

Rabbinic tradition

20b: meaning of qeri'at ha-gever, a man's call or a cock's crow

Accounts and pieces: 32b.

https://www.sefaria.org/Yoma.20b

S138. Évangile selon Marc, récit de la Passion

Greek text; Nestle–Aland edition

15:15–24 and 15:34; Greek text consulted

Accounts and pieces: 32b.

https://www.die-bibel.de/bibel/NA28/MRK.15

S139. Évangile selon Jean, récit de la Passion

Greek text; Nestle–Aland edition

19:23: the soldiers and the crucifixion; Greek text consulted

Accounts and pieces: 32b.

https://www.die-bibel.de/bibel/NA28/JHN.19

S140. Psaume 22 : de l'appel au secours à la louange

Hebrew Bible

22:2–32, Hebrew numbering; particularly 22:19

Accounts and pieces: 32b.

https://www.sefaria.org/Psalms.22

S141. Lamentations : la plainte à la première personne

Hebrew Bible

3:1–8

Accounts and pieces: 32b.

https://www.sefaria.org/Lamentations.3.1-8

S142. Cantique des cantiques : reines et chevelure noire

Hebrew Bible

5:11; 6:8

Accounts and pieces: 32b.

https://www.sefaria.org/Song_of_Songs

S143. Proverbes : la sagesse comme arbre de vie

Hebrew Bible

3:18, within the praise of wisdom, 3:13–18

Accounts and pieces: 32b.

https://www.sefaria.org/Proverbs.3.18

S144. Ahah yarad — complainte sur les communautés d'Espagne et du Maghreb

Abraham ibn Ezra

Maghreb stanza: Fès, between Marrakech and Tlemcen

Accounts and pieces: 33.

https://he.wikisource.org/wiki/ירד_אהה

S145. La plainte de Jérusalem et ses enfants

Hebrew Bible

Lamentations 1:16; wording reused in Ahah yarad

Accounts and pieces: 33.

https://www.sefaria.org/Lamentations.1.16

S146. Récit des persécutions de 1096

Éliézer bar Nathan; ed. A. Neubauer and M. Stern, trans. S. Baer

Hebrew text p. 38; German translation pp. 155–156: Worms and Simḥa · German translation pp. 144–148, especially pp. 145–146; 20 Sivan 4931 · Hebrew text pp. 41–43; German translation pp. 160–163, especially the officiant Menaḥem at Wevelinghofen

Accounts and pieces: 34, 35, 36.

https://archive.org/details/hebrischeberic00neubuoft

S147. Esther demande un jeûne de trois jours

Hebrew Bible

Esther 4:16

Accounts and pieces: 34.

https://www.sefaria.org/Esther.4.16

S148. La mort de Samson dans le temple de Dagon

Hebrew Bible

Judges 16:23–30

Accounts and pieces: 35.

https://www.sefaria.org/Judges.16.23-30

S149. La ligature d'Isaac et l'arrêt du sacrifice

Hebrew Bible

Genesis 22:1–19, especially 22:11–13

Accounts and pieces: 36.

https://www.sefaria.org/Genesis.22.1-19

S150. Jérusalem dévastée et les morts sans sépulture

Hebrew Bible

Psalm 79:1–4 (78 in the Greek and Latin traditions)

Accounts and pieces: 36.

https://www.sefaria.org/Psalms.79.1-4

S151. Capitulations de Grenade, texte rapporté par Mármol

Luis del Mármol Carvajal; municipal transcription

Clauses on the Jews of Granada, authority over Muslims and distinguishing marks on clothing; passage cited as pp. 147–150

Accounts and pieces: 37.

https://www.granada.org/inet/wfotos.nsf/capitulaciones

S152. La judería de Jerez de la Frontera. Datos históricos

Fidel Fita, editor of municipal records

Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia 12, pp. 69–83: documents 4–9; 2 and 4 July 1459, 26–27 March and 2 May 1460

Accounts and pieces: 38.

https://www.letrasgalegas.org/obra-visor/boletin-de-la-real-academia-de-la-historia--1/html/p0000007.htm

S153. Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela

Benjamin de Tudèle; ed. and trans. Marcus Nathan Adler

English translation, pp. 5–6: the community of Rome, Pope Alexander and Jeḥiel; Hebrew marginal page references 8–9. · English translation, pp. 39–42: Baghdad and the exilarch Daniel son of Ḥisdai; Hebrew marginal page references 61–64.

Accounts and pieces: 39, 42.

https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/14981

S154. Sicut Iudeis

Clément III

Latin text; S. Simonsohn, The Apostolic See and the Jews, I, p. 66; manuscript identified: Toulouse BM625, fols. 104r–105v

Accounts and pieces: 39.

https://telma.irht.cnrs.fr/outils/relmin/extrait87468/

S155. Lettre à Paschasius, évêque de Naples, sur les fêtes juives

Gregory the Great; translated by James Barmby

Registrum epistolarum, book XIII, letter 12 in the English edition; NPNF, second series, XIII

Accounts and pieces: 39.

https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/360213012.htm

S156. Actes de la dispute de Tortosa, version latine

Notaries of the court of Benoît XIII; ed. Carlos del Valle Rodríguez

Volume I, pp. 161–163, session I §§ 1–3 · Volume I, pp. 161–163; first session, 7 February 1413, Tortosa

Accounts and pieces: 40, 46.

https://ifc.dpz.es/recursos/publicaciones/39/12/Tomo%20I.pdf

S157. Actes de la dispute de Tortosa, version hispano-aragonaise

Early version of the proceedings; ed. Carlos del Valle Rodríguez

Volume II, pp. 857–861, session I §§ 1–3; pp. 892–895, session VII §§ 1–3; p. 1554, session LXVIII

Accounts and pieces: 40.

https://ifc.dpz.es/recursos/publicaciones/39/12/Tomo%20II.pdf

S158. Sanhédrin 97a–97b

Babylonian Talmud

97a, the six thousand years and the three unexpected things; 97b, jubilees, Rav Ashi and calculations of the end

Accounts and pieces: 40.

https://www.sefaria.org/Sanhedrin.97b

S159. Berakhot 2:4, récit de la naissance du Messie

Jerusalem Talmud

2:4, story of the ploughman, the Arab and Menahem, followed by Isaiah 10:34–11:1

Accounts and pieces: 40.

https://www.sefaria.org/Jerusalem_Talmud_Berakhot.2.4

S160. Vikouaḥ : relation de la dispute de Barcelone

Moïse ben Nahman (Nahmanide)

First day: introduction, Judah's sceptre and the Messiah's birth; second day: the Messiah's whereabouts

Accounts and pieces: 40.

https://www.daat.ac.il/daat/mahshevt/haramban-2.htm

S161. La Disputa judeocristiana de Tortosa : chronique de Bonastruc, édition et apparat

Carlos del Valle Rodríguez

Volume III, pp. 1599–1602, §§ 1–4 and notes; pp. 1619–1622, Barcelona parallel

Accounts and pieces: 40.

https://ifc.dpz.es/recursos/publicaciones/39/12/Tomo%20III.pdf

S162. 1 Rois 13:2 et Genèse 5:5

Hebrew Bible

1 Kings 13:2: house of David; Genesis 5:5: Adam's age

Accounts and pieces: 40.

https://www.sefaria.org/I_Kings.13.2

S163. Isaïe : exhortation, rejeton de Jessé et enfantement de Sion

Hebrew Bible

1:18–20; 10:24–34; 11:1–9; 66:7–13

Accounts and pieces: 40.

https://www.sefaria.org/Isaiah

S164. Genèse : les paroles de Jacob à Juda

Hebrew Bible

49:1–12, particularly 49:10

Accounts and pieces: 40.

https://www.sefaria.org/Genesis.49.1-12

S165. Commentaire de Genèse 49,10 : sceptre, exilarques et Shiloh

Rashi

49:10, four comments; references to Sanhedrin 5a and Horayot 11b

Accounts and pieces: 40.

https://www.sefaria.org/Rashi_on_Genesis.49.10

S166. Sur le sens d'un silence : les réactions juives devant le Grand Schisme

Maurice Kriegel

Jornades sobre el Cisma d'Occident, first part, pp. 97–105, especially 104–105

Accounts and pieces: 41.

https://publicacions.iec.cat/repository/pdf/00000487/00000050.pdf

S167. Canon 67 du quatrième concile de Latran

Fourth Lateran Council

Canon 67; Latin text, ed. A. García García, 1981, pp. 106–107

Accounts and pieces: 41.

https://telma.irht.cnrs.fr/outils/relmin/extrait30315/

S168. Commentaire sur Exode 14:7

Rashi

Commentary on the Egyptian army's chariots; quotation attributed to the Mekhilta

Accounts and pieces: 41.

https://www.sefaria.org/Rashi_on_Exodus.14.7

S169. Kiddushin

Babylonian Talmud

82a; aphorisms about trades, physicians and butchers

Accounts and pieces: 41.

https://www.sefaria.org/Kiddushin.82a

S170. Jérémie

Hebrew Bible

50:1 and 50:12; oracle concerning Babylon

Accounts and pieces: 41.

https://www.sefaria.org/Jeremiah.50

S171. Mishneh Torah, Rois et guerres

Maïmonide

8:11; the righteous among the nations sharing in the world to come

Accounts and pieces: 41.

https://www.sefaria.org/Mishneh_Torah%2C_Kings_and_Wars.8.11

S172. Kuzari

Juda ha-Lévi

Book I, § 111 in the printed Hebrew numbering; § 117 in the Sefaria index

Accounts and pieces: 41.

https://www.sefaria.org/Kuzari.1.117

S173. Yevamot

Babylonian Talmud

61a, beginning; see also Bava Metzia 114b, attribution to Rabbi Shimon ben Yoḥaï

Accounts and pieces: 41.

https://www.sefaria.org/Yevamot.61a

S174. Taʿanit

Babylonian Talmud

20b, beginning; Rabbi Éléazar son of Rabbi Shimon and the reed

Accounts and pieces: 41.

https://www.sefaria.org/Taanit.20b

S175. Eikhah Rabbah — commentaire des Lamentations

Midrashic tradition

I, on Lamentations 1:18; § 53 in the Sefaria index, § 61 in another numbering

Accounts and pieces: 41.

https://www.sefaria.org/Lamentations_Rabbah.1.53

S176. Deuxième livre des Chroniques

Hebrew Bible

24:20–22; Zacharie son of Yehoyada

Accounts and pieces: 41.

https://www.sefaria.org/II_Chronicles.24.20-22

S177. Shabbat et Bava Batra

Babylonian Talmud

Shabbat 152b ; Bava Batra 134a, Jonathan ben Ouzziel

Accounts and pieces: 41.

https://www.sefaria.org/Shabbat.152b

S178. Lévitique

Hebrew Bible

23:40, plants for the Feast of Tabernacles; 26:44, promise against annihilation

Accounts and pieces: 41.

https://www.sefaria.org/Leviticus.23.40

S179. Esther : Haman, la reine et les fils d'Haman

Hebrew Bible

7:1–10; 9:6–14

Accounts and pieces: 41.

https://www.sefaria.org/Esther

S180. Exode : bétail mis à l'abri et poursuite par les chars

Hebrew Bible

9:18–26; 14:5–9

Accounts and pieces: 41.

https://www.sefaria.org/Exodus

S181. Ézéchiel : les bergers et le troupeau humain

Hebrew Bible

34:1–16 and 34:31

Accounts and pieces: 41.

https://www.sefaria.org/Ezekiel.34

S182. Genèse : expulsion du jardin d'Éden

Hebrew Bible

3:22–24

Accounts and pieces: 41.

https://www.sefaria.org/Genesis.3.22-24

S183. Relation de Nathan le Babylonien sur l'exilarque

Nathan ha-Kohen; ed. Adolf Neubauer

Mediaeval Jewish Chronicles, II, pp. 83–85; Hebrew text of the account inserted after Seder Olam Zuta

Accounts and pieces: 42.

https://archive.org/details/mediaevaljewishc02neub

S184. Premier livre des Rois et Psaumes

Hebrew Bible

1 Kings 12:7; Psalm 144:14, interpretation concerning leaders who know how to bear with others

Accounts and pieces: 42.

https://www.sefaria.org/I_Kings.12.7

S185. Premier livre des Rois : Roboam, les anciens et la rupture du royaume

Hebrew Bible

12:6–16, particularly the elders' advice in verse 7

Accounts and pieces: 42.

https://www.sefaria.org/I_Kings.12.6-16

S186. Livre de Job

Hebrew Bible

1:22; expression “not to attribute wrongdoing to God”

Accounts and pieces: 43.

https://www.sefaria.org/Job.1.22

S187. Job : annonces des pertes et réaction de Job

Hebrew Bible

1:13–22

Accounts and pieces: 43.

https://www.sefaria.org/Job.1.13-22

S188. Description du manuscrit des Évangiles et Épîtres traduits par Martín de Lucena

Mario Schiff, transcription of the medieval rubrics

Bulletin hispanique 10/3, pp. 307–314; p. 308, rubric of fol. 1; p. 310, rubric of fol. 68

Accounts and pieces: 44.

https://www.persee.fr/doc/hispa_0007-4640_1908_num_10_3_1574

S189. Los Santos Evangelios en romance et Epístolas de San Pablo en romance

Martín de Lucena; catalogue of the Biblioteca Nacional de España

Madrid, BNE, MSS/9556, former shelfmarks Dd.181 and Escorial I.i.11; catalogue information

Accounts and pieces: 44.

https://datos.bne.es/edicion/biam0000013831

S190. Ordenamiento de Valladolid, loi 1

Jean II of Castile

Castilian text of the clause imposing a separate quarter; ed. F. Fernández y González, Estado social y político de los mudéjares de Castilla, pp. 397–405; RELMIN transcription

Accounts and pieces: 46.

https://telma.irht.cnrs.fr/outils/relmin/extrait243846/

S191. La legislación general acerca de los judíos en el reinado de Juan II de Castilla

Enrique Cantera Montenegro

Espacio, Tiempo y Forma, III/25, pp. 119–146, here p. 124 and note 12 · Espacio, Tiempo y Forma, III/25, p. 128 and note 21; Toledo, 25 January 1412, and Cifuentes, 24 June 1412

Accounts and pieces: 46.

https://revistas.uned.es/index.php/ETFIII/article/download/1681/1561/4530

S192. Lois de 1412 : texte complet de l'ordonnance

John II of Castile; Catherine's regency; edited by Francisco Fernández y González

Estado social y político de los mudéjares de Castilla, document LXXVII, pp. 400–405, articles 2, 10, 13, 16–17, and 20 · Document LXXVII, pp. 400–405; ordinance in the name of Jean II, issued at Valladolid

Accounts and pieces: 46, 49.

https://archive.org/details/estadosocialypo00gonzgoog

S193. Cédules d'Henri III relatives aux Juifs de Burgos

Henri III of Castile; excerpts published by the Archivo Municipal de Burgos

Shelfmarks HI-2959, HI-2960 and HI-2961; letters of 20 and 30 July 1392; Castilian excerpts in "La judería burgalesa (2ª parte)" · HI-2959, excerpt on the attacks in Seville and Cordoba; HI-2960–2961, protection of Jews of Burgos in July 1392

Accounts and pieces: 47, 48.

https://archmunburgos.blogspot.com/2018/12/la-juderia-burgalesa-2-parte.html

S194. Documentos de Enrique III — Fondo Mercedes Gaibrois de Ballesteros

Real Academia de la Historia

p. 220, no. 843 (AMB, Clasif. 2959); pp. 223–224, nos. 854 and 857 (AMB, Clasif. 2960–2961) · p. 117, nos. 444–446: letters of 10 and 13 October 1390 announcing the death of Jean I and the beginning of the new reign

Accounts and pieces: 47, 48.

https://www.rah.es/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Documentos_Enrique-III_M.-Gaibrois.pdf

S195. Chronique d'Henri III : communautés touchées et recours au Conseil

Pedro López de Ayala; excerpt published by Fidel Fita

Fita, "La Judería de Madrid en 1391", Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia, VIII, pp. 440–441: quotation from the chronicle for 1391 · Fita, "La Judería de Madrid en 1391", BRAH, VIII, document 3, pp. 450–454: record of 6 July 1392 incorporating a letter of 8 June · Fita, "La Judería de Madrid en 1391", BRAH, VIII, document 4, pp. 454–462, particularly pp. 456–458: annuity of 3,000 maravedís and the position since 1391

Accounts and pieces: 47, 48.

https://www.cervantesvirtual.com/obra-visor/boletin-de-la-real-academia-de-la-historia--4/html/02580c7e-82b2-11df-acc7-002185ce6064_87.html

S196. Témoignage présenté par le Conseil de Madrid au roi Henri III sur la destruction de l'aljama

Archivo de Villa de Madrid, catalogue

Shelfmark SEC -2-390-67; document concerning Madrid and Segovia; catalogue description checked

Accounts and pieces: 48.

https://catalogoarchivodevilla.madrid.es/ms-opac/doc?fo=and&fq=norm&fv=%2A&q=1925&rows=1&sort=fecha+asc&start=1

S197. Isaïe 59

Hebrew Bible; Masoretic text and JPS 1917 translation

59:21: covenant and transmission of the words

Accounts and pieces: 49.

https://mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt1059.htm

S198. Lévitique 26

Hebrew Bible; Masoretic text and JPS 1917 translation

26:38: perishing among the nations

Accounts and pieces: 49.

https://mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt0326.htm

S199. Lamentations 1

Hebrew Bible; Masoretic text and JPS 1917 translation

1:18: the Lord's righteousness and rebellion · 1:11: seeking bread and surrendering possessions for food

Accounts and pieces: 49, 56.

https://mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt3201.htm

S200. Récit hébreu italien de l'expulsion d'Espagne

Anonymous Italian Jewish author

Passages on departure from Spain, Portugal, North Africa and sea crossings; Hebrew edition identified: Alexander Marx, JQR 20, 1908, pp. 240 ff. · Passage on children taken in Portugal and quotation of Deuteronomy 28:32; translation published by Jacob R. Marcus, The Jew in the Medieval World, 1938, pp. 51–55

Accounts and pieces: 50, 51, 52, 53, 55, 59.

https://sourcebooks.web.fordham.edu/jewish/1492-jews-spain1.asp

S201. Ibn Shoshan, dans The Jewish Encyclopedia

Joseph Jacobs and Max Schloessinger

Vol. VI, pp.542–543; Joseph ben Solomon and the thirteenth-century family members

Accounts and pieces: 50.

https://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/8022-ibn-shoshan

S202. Deutéronome 28

Hebrew Bible; Masoretic text and JPS 1917 translation

28:61: calamities not enumerated in the book of the Law · 28:32: children given to another people and parental helplessness · 28:32: separation of children and parental helplessness

Accounts and pieces: 50, 55, 59.

https://mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt0528.htm

S203. Décret d'expulsion des Juifs, copie conservée à Simancas

Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabelle of Castile

Archivo General de Simancas, Patronato Real, PTR,LEG,28,DOC.6; entry cross-checked in European Digital Treasures, catalogue, document 28, pp. 72–73

Accounts and pieces: 51.

https://pares.mcu.es/ParesBusquedas20/catalogo/description/2214633

S204. Exiles, Migratory Flows and Solidarity: European Digital Treasures

European Digital Treasures, partner archival institutions

Document 28, pp. 72–73: description and reproduction of the Simancas copy

Accounts and pieces: 51.

https://hifo.no/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/NO-Exhibition-2-Unified-Final-v.-0.5.pdf

S205. Introduction au commentaire du Livre des Rois

Isaac Abrabanel

Autobiographical passage beginning ובשנה התשיעית שנת מזרה ישראל; transcription marked as unverified

Accounts and pieces: 51.

https://he.wikisource.org/wiki/הקדמה_א_מלכים_על_אברבנאל

S206. Esther 4

Hebrew Bible; Masoretic text and JPS 1917 translation

4:3: publication of the decree and mourning in the provinces

Accounts and pieces: 51.

https://mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt3304.htm

S207. Psaume 58

Hebrew Bible; Masoretic text and JPS 1917 translation

58:5 in Hebrew numbering; 58:4 in many English Bibles

Accounts and pieces: 51.

https://mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt2658.htm

S208. Jérémie 15

Hebrew Bible; Masoretic text and JPS 1917 translation

15:2: sword, famine and captivity

Accounts and pieces: 51.

https://mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt1115.htm

S209. Job 1

Hebrew Bible; Masoretic text and JPS 1917 translation

1:18–22: the children's deaths and Job's response

Accounts and pieces: 52.

https://mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt2701.htm

S210. Job 2

Hebrew Bible; Masoretic text and JPS 1917 translation

2:9–10: Job's exchange with his wife

Accounts and pieces: 52.

https://mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt2702.htm

S211. Chronica de el-rei D. João II

Garcia de Resende; ed. Gabriel Pereira

Vol. III, chapter CLXIII, pp. 17–19, and CLXXIX, p. 37

Accounts and pieces: 53, 54, 59.

https://archive.org/details/chronicadeelreid00rese

S212. Historia de los Reyes Católicos don Fernando y doña Isabel

Andrés Bernáldez; ed. Fernando de Gabriel y Ruiz de Apodaca

1870 edition, vol. I, ch. CXIII, pp.345–348, especially p.348 · Vol.I, ch.XLIV, pp.129–131: first arrests, Triana and departures for Portugal · Vol. I, chapters XLIII–XLIV, pp. 123–131; chapters LXXXVI–LXXXVII, pp. 252–256

Accounts and pieces: 53, 62, 64.

https://archive.org/details/historiadelosrey00bern

S213. Famines et épidémies au Maroc aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles

Bernard Rosenberger and Hamid Triki

Hespéris-Tamuda XIV (1973), pp.113–115, notes 8–14

Accounts and pieces: 53.

https://www.hesperis-tamuda.com/Downloads/1970-1979/Hesp%C3%A9ris-Tamuda%201973.pdf

S214. Lamentations 2

Hebrew Bible; Masoretic text and JPS 1917 translation

2:11–12: children fainting beside their mothers

Accounts and pieces: 53.

https://mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt3202.htm

S215. Lamentations 4

Hebrew Bible; Masoretic text and JPS 1917 translation

4:4 and 4:10: children's hunger and the extremity of famine

Accounts and pieces: 53.

https://mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt3204.htm

S216. Néhémie 5

Hebrew Bible; Masoretic text and JPS 1917 translation

5:1–13, especially 5:5,8,11–13: debt, enslaved children and restitution

Accounts and pieces: 54.

https://mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt35b05.htm

S217. De rebus Genuensibus commentaria

Bartolomeo Senarega; ed. Ludovico Antonio Muratori

Rerum Italicarum Scriptores, volume XXIV, cols. 531–532

Accounts and pieces: 56, 57, 58.

https://archive.org/details/RerumItalicarumScriptores24

S218. Alexandre VI : dates du pontificat

Holy See

Pontificate from 1492 to 1503; Alexander VI entry, name Rodrigo de Borja

Accounts and pieces: 57.

https://www.vatican.va/content/vatican/en/holy-father/alessandro-vi.html

S219. Talmud de Babylone, Bava Batra 21b

Babylonian Talmud; Soncino translation

21b, discussion of Rav Huna and Rav Huna son of Rav Joshua on competing trades and residence

Accounts and pieces: 57.

https://www.come-and-hear.com/bababathra/bababathra_21.html

S220. Évangile selon Luc 23

Gospel according to Luke; King James Version

23:32–43, especially 23:34: Jesus' intercession at the crucifixion

Accounts and pieces: 58.

https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%2023%3A32-43&version=KJV

S221. Álvaro de Caminha, Encyclopaedia of Portuguese Expansion

Arlindo Caldeira, Universidade NOVA de Lisboa

Captaincy of 1493–1499; charter of 29 July 1493; paragraphs on settlement and the children

Accounts and pieces: 59.

https://eve.fcsh.unl.pt/en/people/alvaro-de-caminha

S222. Chronica d'el-rei D. Manuel

Damião de Góis

First part, chapters CII–CIII; 1909 edition, vol. III, pp. 91–97

Accounts and pieces: 60.

https://archive.org/details/chronicadelreidm03giuoft

S223. Exode 12

Hebrew Bible; Masoretic text and JPS 1917 translation

12:8 and 12:14–18: unleavened bread, bitter herbs and the Passover commemoration

Accounts and pieces: 60.

https://mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt0212.htm

S224. Le folk-lore juif dans la chronique du Schébet Iehuda

Isidore Loeb

Revue des études juives 24, pp. 1–29; especially pp. 22–26

Accounts and pieces: 61.

https://www.persee.fr/doc/rjuiv_0484-8616_1892_num_24_47_3805

S225. Premier Livre des Rois 17

Hebrew Bible; Masoretic text and JPS 1917 translation

17:17–24: Elijah and the widow's son

Accounts and pieces: 61.

https://mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt09a17.htm

S226. Deuxième Livre des Rois 4

Hebrew Bible; Masoretic text and JPS 1917 translation

4:32–37: Elisha and the Shunammite's son

Accounts and pieces: 61.

https://mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt09b04.htm

S227. Ézéchiel 5

Hebrew Bible; Masoretic text and JPS 1917 translation

5:1–4 and 5:12: the hair divided into three portions

Accounts and pieces: 62.

https://mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt1205.htm

S228. Ézéchiel 12

Hebrew Bible; Masoretic text and JPS 1917 translation

12:3–7: exile acted out before the inhabitants

Accounts and pieces: 62.

https://mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt1212.htm

S229. Talmud de Babylone, Shabbat

Babylonian rabbinic tradition

89a: play on Sinaï and sin'ah, "hatred"

Accounts and pieces: 63.

https://www.sefaria.org/Shabbat.89a

S230. Talmud de Babylone, Sanhedrin

Babylonian rabbinic tradition

102a, Rabbi Yitzḥaq's statement about the sin of the golden calf and Exodus 32:34

Accounts and pieces: 63.

https://www.sefaria.org/Sanhedrin.102a

S231. Talmud de Babylone, Sanhedrin

Babylonian rabbinic tradition

103b: great is shared food, which brings those who are distant together

Accounts and pieces: 63.

https://www.sefaria.org/Sanhedrin.103b

S232. Sefer Mitzvot Gadol, commandements positifs

Moïse de Coucy

Positive commandment 74, discussion beginning כבר דרשתי לגלות ירושלים אשר בספרד, with Zephaniah 3:13

Accounts and pieces: 63.

https://www.sefaria.org/Sefer_Mitzvot_Gadol%2C_Positive_Commandments.74

S233. Commentaire sur l'Exode

Abraham ibn Ezra

Exodus 20:7: oaths, profanation of the Name and prolongation of exile

Accounts and pieces: 63.

https://www.sefaria.org/Ibn_Ezra_on_Exodus.20.7

S234. Mishnah, Sanhedrin

Rabbinic tradition

9:6: the formula qanna'im poge'in bo

Accounts and pieces: 63.

https://www.sefaria.org/Mishnah_Sanhedrin.9.6

S235. Amos 3

Hebrew Bible; Masoretic text and JPS 1917 translation

3:1–2: address to Israel brought out of Egypt and the opening quotation

Accounts and pieces: 63.

https://mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt1503.htm

S236. Exode 8

Hebrew Bible; Masoretic text and JPS 1917 translation

8:22 in Hebrew numbering, often 8:26 in English Bibles: Moses' reply to Pharaoh

Accounts and pieces: 63.

https://mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt0208.htm

S237. Sobre los judíos del obispado de Málaga (1485–1492)

José Enrique López de Coca Castañer

Historia. Instituciones. Documentos 40, pp. 153–177; pp. 154–156 and notes 7–14: accounts and documents from 1487–1489

Accounts and pieces: 64.

https://doi.org/10.12795/hid.2013.i40.05

S238. Antiquités judaïques / Jewish Antiquities, livre XV

Flavius Josèphe; historical translation by William Whiston

XV, 11, §§ 380–424; especially §§ 385–395, 411–421

Accounts and pieces: 64.

https://www.attalus.org/old/aj_15c.html

S239. Mishnah, Middot

Mishnah

1:1, 1:3–9; 2:1–6; 3:6–8; 4:2–7; 5:3–4

Accounts and pieces: 64.

https://www.sefaria.org/Mishnah_Middot.1

S240. Mishnah, Yoma

Mishnah

1:1, 1:3–5; 5:1–2; 7:4–5

Accounts and pieces: 64.

https://www.sefaria.org/Mishnah_Yoma.1

S241. Mishnah, Shekalim

Mishnah

5:1–2; 6:4; 8:4–5

Accounts and pieces: 64.

https://www.sefaria.org/Mishnah_Shekalim.5

S242. Mishnah, Sukkah

Mishnah

5:1–4: illumination, worn garments, music and fifteen steps

Accounts and pieces: 64.

https://www.sefaria.org/Mishnah_Sukkah.5

S243. Mishnah, Pesachim

Mishnah

5:5–10; 9:5: Passover sacrifice and selection of the animal on 10 Nisan

Accounts and pieces: 64.

https://www.sefaria.org/Mishnah_Pesachim.5

S244. Talmud de Babylone, Pesachim 64b

Babylonian Talmud

Episode of the old man crushed to death; count under Agrippa; arrangement of the gold and silver bowls

Accounts and pieces: 64.

https://www.sefaria.org/Pesachim.64b

S245. Talmud de Babylone, Rosh Hashanah 11b

Babylonian Talmud

End of bondage at Rosh Hashanah; departure from Egypt in Nisan

Accounts and pieces: 64.

https://www.sefaria.org/Rosh_Hashanah.11b

S246. Talmud de Babylone, Rosh Hashanah 23a

Babylonian Talmud

Types of cedar and extraction of coral using a ship loaded with sand

Accounts and pieces: 64.

https://www.sefaria.org/Rosh_Hashanah.23a

S247. Talmud de Babylone, Yoma 21b

Babylonian Talmud

Fire brought by people; differences between the two Temples, especially the Ark and the cherubim

Accounts and pieces: 64.

https://www.sefaria.org/Yoma.21b

S248. Talmud de Babylone, Yoma 38a

Babylonian Talmud

Nicanor's gates: storm, gate thrown into the sea and arrival at Acre

Accounts and pieces: 64.

https://www.sefaria.org/Yoma.38a

S249. Talmud de Babylone, Yoma 8b

Babylonian Talmud

Chamber of the Parhedrin and purchase of the office of high priest

Accounts and pieces: 64.

https://www.sefaria.org/Yoma.8b

S250. Talmud de Babylone, Menachot 29a

Babylonian Talmud

Refining of the gold of Solomon's lampstands

Accounts and pieces: 64.

https://www.sefaria.org/Menachot.29a

S251. Talmud de Babylone, Menachot 98a

Babylonian Talmud

Two explanations for the image of Susa on the eastern gate

Accounts and pieces: 64.

https://www.sefaria.org/Menachot.98a

S252. Talmud de Babylone, Menachot 98b

Babylonian Talmud

Solomon's ten tables and ten lampstands, five on each side

Accounts and pieces: 64.

https://www.sefaria.org/Menachot.98b

S253. Talmud de Babylone, Shabbat 88a

Babylonian Talmud

The two crowns given at Sinai and later taken away

Accounts and pieces: 64.

https://www.sefaria.org/Shabbat.88a

S254. Pirqé de-Rabbi Eliézer, chapitre 17

Pirqé de-Rabbi Eliézer

17:15–16: gates for the newly married, the mourners and those excluded

Accounts and pieces: 64.

https://www.sefaria.org/Pirkei_DeRabbi_Eliezer.17

S255. Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Teshuvah / Lois du repentir

Moïse Maïmonide

3:4: the shofar's call to awaken

Accounts and pieces: 64.

https://www.sefaria.org/Mishneh_Torah%2C_Repentance.3.4

S256. Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Beit ha-Bechirah / Lois du Temple

Moïse Maïmonide

2:2: site of the altar of Adam, Cain and Abel, Noah and Abraham

Accounts and pieces: 64.

https://www.sefaria.org/Mishneh_Torah%2C_The_Chosen_Temple.2.2

S257. Mishneh Torah, Lois des ustensiles du Sanctuaire et de ses desservants

Moïse Maïmonide

8:17: tunic reaching just above the heel and sleeves reaching the wrist

Accounts and pieces: 64.

https://www.sefaria.org/Mishneh_Torah%2C_Vessels_of_the_Sanctuary_and_Those_who_Serve_Therein.8.17

S258. Premier livre des Rois / I Kings

Hebrew Bible

5:15–32 in Hebrew numbering (= 5:1–18 in many Bibles); 6:2–3, 6:15–35; 7:10–25, 7:38; 10:11–14

Accounts and pieces: 64.

https://www.sefaria.org/I_Kings.5

S259. Premier livre des Chroniques / I Chronicles

Hebrew Bible

22:14; 23:3–5; 29:3–7: gifts, numbers of personnel and duties

Accounts and pieces: 64.

https://www.sefaria.org/I_Chronicles.23

S260. Deuxième livre des Chroniques / II Chronicles

Hebrew Bible

2:1, 2:16–17; 3:4, 3:11–15; 4:1–8; 5:12

Accounts and pieces: 64.

https://www.sefaria.org/II_Chronicles.3

S261. Exode / Exodus, chapitre 28

Hebrew Bible

28:39–43: priestly garments and linen undergarments

Accounts and pieces: 64.

https://www.sefaria.org/Exodus.28

S262. Genèse / Genesis, chapitre 8

Hebrew Bible

8:4 and 8:20: mountains of Ararat and altar after leaving the ark

Accounts and pieces: 64.

https://www.sefaria.org/Genesis.8

S263. Psaume 110 / Psalm 110

Hebrew Bible

110:1–3: the divine right hand, Zion's sceptre and dawn

Accounts and pieces: 64.

https://www.sefaria.org/Psalms.110

S264. Genèse / Genesis 22:13

Hebrew Bible

The ram offered in Isaac's place

Accounts and pieces: 64.

https://www.sefaria.org/Genesis.22.13

S265. Lévitique / Leviticus 7:23

Hebrew Bible

Prohibited fat of the ox, sheep and goat

Accounts and pieces: 64.

https://www.sefaria.org/Leviticus.7.23

S266. Deutéronome / Deuteronomy 25:19

Hebrew Bible

Remembrance of Amalek and the expression "under the heavens"

Accounts and pieces: 64.

https://www.sefaria.org/Deuteronomy.25.19

S267. Exode / Exodus 9:27

Hebrew Bible

Pharaoh acknowledges divine justice

Accounts and pieces: 64.

https://www.sefaria.org/Exodus.9.27

S268. Exode / Exodus 17:16

Hebrew Bible

War against Amalek

Accounts and pieces: 64.

https://www.sefaria.org/Exodus.17.16

S269. Premier Livre des Rois 6

Hebrew Bible; Masoretic text and JPS 1917 translation

6:1,37–38: beginning and completion of Solomon's construction

Accounts and pieces: 64.

https://mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt09a06.htm

S270. Deuxième Livre des Rois 25

Hebrew Bible; Masoretic text and JPS 1917 translation

25:8–17: Nebuzaradan, burning and removal of the furnishings

Accounts and pieces: 64.

https://mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt09b25.htm

S271. Esdras 6

Hebrew Bible; Masoretic text and JPS 1917 translation

6:15: completion of the Temple in Darius' sixth year

Accounts and pieces: 64.

https://mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt35a06.htm

S272. Lévitique 16

Hebrew Bible; Masoretic text and JPS 1917 translation

16:2–4,11–19,29–34: Aaron's entry, garments, incense, sprinklings and the annual date

Accounts and pieces: 64.

https://mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt0316.htm

S273. Talmud de Babylone, Ta'anit

24a, episode of the fig tree and the son of Rabbi Yossé of Yoqrat

Accounts and pieces: 64a.

https://www.sefaria.org/Taanit.24a.3-4

S274. Talmud de Babylone, Ta'anit

16a, the two explanations for visiting the cemetery

Accounts and pieces: 64a.

https://www.sefaria.org/Taanit.16a.7

S275. Rachi sur Ta'anit

16a:7:1, commentary on the graves of non-Jews

Accounts and pieces: 64a.

https://www.sefaria.org/Rashi_on_Taanit.16a.7.1

S276. Pirqé de-Rabbi Éliézer

Chapter 31, blessing of Isaac delivered from sacrifice

Accounts and pieces: 64a.

https://www.sefaria.org/Pirkei_DeRabbi_Eliezer.31.10

S277. Talmud de Babylone, Ḥaguiga

13b:12–13, number of the heavenly armies and destruction of the Temple

Accounts and pieces: 64a.

https://www.sefaria.org/Chagigah.13b.12-13

S278. Mishneh Torah, lois relatives au culte étranger

Maïmonide

11:16, divination and magic

Accounts and pieces: 64a.

https://www.sefaria.org/Mishneh_Torah%2C_Foreign_Worship_and_Customs_of_the_Nations.11.16

S279. Deutéronome

25:5–10, levirate marriage and removal of the shoe

Accounts and pieces: 64a.

https://www.sefaria.org/Deuteronomy.25.5-10

S280. Premier livre des Rois

8:41–43, the foreigner's prayer at the Temple

Accounts and pieces: 64a.

https://www.sefaria.org/I_Kings.8.41-43

S281. Deuxième livre des Rois

4:42–44, twenty loaves for a hundred people

Accounts and pieces: 64a.

https://www.sefaria.org/II_Kings.4.42-44

S282. Megilat Mitsrayim — Le Rouleau d'Égypte

Anonymous; translation by George Margoliouth

Extract from the account; ransom demand, attack in the bath, outcome and final calendar

Accounts and pieces: 64a.

https://www.posenlibrary.com/entry/scroll-egypt

S283. Annals, récit de la chute de Jérusalem

Roger de Howden

Year 1187; Riley translation, vol. II, pp. 62–70

Accounts and pieces: 64a.

https://sourcebooks.web.fordham.edu/source/hoveden1187.asp

S284. Gesta Philippi Augusti — La troisième croisade

Rigord

§§ 79–82, surrender of Acre in 1191; §§ 85–90, continuation of the expedition

Accounts and pieces: 64a.

https://sourcebooks.web.fordham.edu/source/Rigord-transHyamsandLoud.asp

S285. Histoire de l'hérésie des Albigeois

Pierre des Vaux-de-Cernay

Translation in the Guizot collection; chapter XVI, pp. 52–54; LXXXI, pp. 310–313; LXXXII, pp. 318–320

Accounts and pieces: 64a.

https://archive.org/details/PierreVauxDeCernayHistoireDeLaGuerreDesAlbigeois

S286. Itinéraire de Palestine

Samuel ben Samson

Ed. Carmoly, Itinéraires de la Terre Sainte, 1847, pp. 127–128: arrival with the Cohen of Lunel · Ed. Carmoly, 1847, p. 185: tomb of Moïse son of Maïmon at Tiberias; introduction pp. 173–175

Accounts and pieces: 64a.

https://archive.org/details/itinrairesdelate00carm

S287. Quatrième concile du Latran

Lateran Council

Canon 68 (1215), distinguishing clothing; documentary note reproducing canon 3 of Narbonne (1227)

Accounts and pieces: 64a.

https://sourcebooks.web.fordham.edu/basis/lateran4.asp

S288. Vie d'Auguste

Suétone

34, laws on luxury and marriage

Accounts and pieces: 64a.

https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Suetonius/12Caesars/Augustus*.html

S289. Annales

Tacite

II, 33, discussion of luxury and silk clothing under Tibère

Accounts and pieces: 64a.

https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Tacitus/Annals/2B*.html

S290. Chronique latine

Guillaume de Nangis

Ed. H. Géraud, vol. I, 1843, years 1250–1251, pp. 207–208; year 1254, p. 211; fuller version of the Shepherds' Crusade, note A, pp. 435–436

Accounts and pieces: 64a.

https://archive.org/details/chroniquelatined01guiluoft

S291. Lévitique

1:16, removal of the bird's crop

Accounts and pieces: 64a.

https://www.sefaria.org/Leviticus.1.16

S292. Lévitique

5:23, restoration of stolen property; 6:4 in some numbering systems

Accounts and pieces: 64a.

https://www.sefaria.org/Leviticus.5.23

S293. Genèse 22

Hebrew Bible; Masoretic text and JPS 1917 translation

22:9–13: the binding of Isaac and substitution of the ram

Accounts and pieces: 64a.

https://mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt0122.htm

S294. Évangile selon Marc 6

Gospel according to Mark; King James Version

6:35–44: five loaves, two fish and five thousand men

Accounts and pieces: 64a.

https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark%206%3A35-44&version=KJV

S295. Évangile selon Marc 8

Gospel according to Mark; King James Version

8:1–9: seven loaves and about four thousand people

Accounts and pieces: 64a.

https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark%208%3A1-9&version=KJV

S296. Esther 9

Hebrew Bible; Masoretic text and JPS 1917 translation

9:20–22,27–28: letter, deliverance and annual Purim commemoration

Accounts and pieces: 64a.

https://mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt3309.htm

S297. Michna, Yevamot 16,4

Rabbinic tradition; Hebrew transcription on Wikisource

16:4: disappearance in water and evidence of death; Mishnah text, distinct from the following commentaries

Accounts and pieces: 64a.

https://he.wikisource.org/wiki/משנה_יבמות_ד_טז

S298. Richard Gottheil et Meyer Kayserling, « Carrion de los Condes », Jewish Encyclopedia

vol. III, p. 593; account of the riot and concluding bibliography

Accounts and pieces: 64b.

https://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/4080-carrion-de-los-condes

S299. Genèse

41:1–36, Pharaoh's dream and Joseph's interpretation

Accounts and pieces: 64b.

https://www.sefaria.org/Genesis.41

S300. Daniel

2:1–49, Nebuchadnezzar's dream and Daniel's interpretation

Accounts and pieces: 64b.

https://www.sefaria.org/Daniel.2

S301. Talmud de Babylone, Berakhot

57b, a dream as one-sixtieth of prophecy

Accounts and pieces: 64b.

https://www.sefaria.org/Berakhot.57b

S302. Talmud de Babylone, Berakhot

7a, Moses's requests concerning the divine presence and Exodus 33:16

Accounts and pieces: 64b.

https://www.sefaria.org/Berakhot.7a

S303. Jérémie

48:11, Moab at rest and the image of wine not poured from vessel to vessel

Accounts and pieces: 64b.

https://www.sefaria.org/Jeremiah.48.11

S304. Flavius Josèphe, Contre Apion, livre I

I, 22, §§ 176–183: Clearchus, Aristotle and a Jew from Coele-Syria

Accounts and pieces: 64b.

https://penelope.uchicago.edu/josephus/apion-1.html

S305. Talmud de Babylone, Bava Batra

91a, Abraham's ten years of captivity, Kouta and Kardou

Accounts and pieces: 64b.

https://www.sefaria.org/Bava_Batra.91a

S306. Bereshit Rabbah / Genèse Rabbah

38:13, Abraham, Nimrod, Haran and the furnace

Accounts and pieces: 64b.

https://www.sefaria.org/Bereshit_Rabbah.38.13

S307. Maïmonide, Guide des égarés

I, 58, negative attributes of God; English translation by M. Friedländer, 1903

Accounts and pieces: 64b.

https://www.sefaria.org/Guide_for_the_Perplexed%2C_Part_1.58

S308. Talmud de Babylone, Ḥagigah

13a, a distance of five hundred years between earth and firmament

Accounts and pieces: 64b.

https://www.sefaria.org/Chagigah.13a

S309. Ptolémée, Almageste, livre V

V, 16, relative dimensions of the Sun, Moon and Earth; French translation published on EcliptiQc

Accounts and pieces: 64b.

https://ecliptiqc.ca/Almageste_Livre5.php

S310. Aristote, Du ciel

II, 7, celestial bodies, motion and the production of heat; translation by J. L. Stocks · II, 9: supposed harmony of the celestial bodies and the objection that no sound is perceptible

Accounts and pieces: 64b, 64c.

https://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/heavens.2.ii.html

S311. Psaumes

39:2 in Hebrew numbering, restraint of the mouth in the presence of the wicked

Accounts and pieces: 64b.

https://www.sefaria.org/Psalms.39.2

S312. Amos

5:2, fall of the virgin of Israel

Accounts and pieces: 64b.

https://www.sefaria.org/Amos.5.2

S313. Isaïe

26:13, beʿalounou: rule and a play on marriage

Accounts and pieces: 64b.

https://www.sefaria.org/Isaiah.26.13

S314. Michna, Avot

4:22, birth, death, resurrection and judgement

Accounts and pieces: 64b.

https://www.sefaria.org/Pirkei_Avot.4.22

S315. Premier livre de Samuel

15:3, 7–9 and 24–26, Amalek and Saul's acknowledgement of his fault

Accounts and pieces: 64b.

https://www.sefaria.org/I_Samuel.15

S316. Premier livre de Samuel

28:6 and 19, Saul's prayer and the announcement of his death

Accounts and pieces: 64b.

https://www.sefaria.org/I_Samuel.28

S317. Deuxième livre de Samuel

12:13–17 and 21–23, David's fault, forgiveness and weeping for the child

Accounts and pieces: 64b.

https://www.sefaria.org/II_Samuel.12

S318. Talmud de Babylone, Yoma

22b, Saul's objections concerning the children and comparison of Saul and David

Accounts and pieces: 64b.

https://www.sefaria.org/Yoma.22b

S319. Vayikra Rabbah / Lévitique Rabbah

26:7, Saul goes to war after the announcement of his death; comparison with a feast

Accounts and pieces: 64b.

https://www.sefaria.org/Vayikra_Rabbah.26.7

S320. Israel Abrahams, The Book of Delight and Other Papers, 1912

"The Fox's Heart", end of the chapter, the two lion cubs and the heart reduced to one tenth of its size

Accounts and pieces: 64b.

https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/9886/pg9886-images.html

S321. Genèse 11

Hebrew Bible; Masoretic text and JPS 1917 translation

11:27–32: Terah's family, Ur and Haran

Accounts and pieces: 64b.

https://mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt0111.htm

S322. Genèse 12

Hebrew Bible; Masoretic text and JPS 1917 translation

12:1–5: Abram's call and departure at seventy-five

Accounts and pieces: 64b.

https://mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt0112.htm

S323. Premier Livre de Samuel 31

Hebrew Bible; Masoretic text and JPS 1917 translation

31:1–6: battle of Gilboa and the deaths of Saul and three of his sons

Accounts and pieces: 64b.

https://mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt08a31.htm

S324. Visión deleytable

Alfonso de la Torre

Part I, chapter 34, "Recapitulación de lo que vido el Entendimiento en casa de la Natura"; transcription, pp. 72–73

Accounts and pieces: 64c.

https://www.biblioteca-antologica.org/es/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/TORRE-Visi%C3%B3n-deleytable.pdf

S325. Du ciel / On the Heavens

Aristote; translation by J. L. Stocks

I, 10, especially 279b–280a: generation and destruction of the world

Accounts and pieces: 64c.

https://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/heavens.1.i.html

S326. Annales / Annals

Tacite

XV, 60–64: order for Seneca's death after the discovery of the Pisonian conspiracy

Accounts and pieces: 64c.

https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Tacitus/Annals/15C*.html

S327. Shoulḥan Aroukh, Oraḥ Ḥayyim

Joseph Caro

180:5: knife covered during grace after meals

Accounts and pieces: 64c.

https://www.sefaria.org/Shulchan_Arukh%2C_Orach_Chayim.180.5

S328. Kaf ha-Ḥayyim, Oraḥ Ḥayyim

Yaakov Ḥayyim Sofer

180:15: tradition of Ben Dinaï, quoted from Matteh Moshe, § 304

Accounts and pieces: 64c.

https://www.sefaria.org/Kaf_HaChayim_on_Shulchan_Arukh%2C_Orach_Chayim.180.15

S329. Lettre contre les accusations de meurtre rituel

Grégoire X

7 October 1272; translation of the provisions concerning false testimony and papal protection

Accounts and pieces: 64c.

https://www.ccjr.us/dialogika-resources/primary-texts-from-the-history-of-the-relationship/primary-texts-from-1000-to-modernity/gregoryx

S330. Proverbes

19:18 and 19:22: correction of the son; poverty and falsehood

Accounts and pieces: 64c.

https://www.sefaria.org/Proverbs.19

S331. Deutéronome

26:6: use of וירעו; comparison with the cardinal's interpretation

Accounts and pieces: 64c.

https://www.sefaria.org/Deuteronomy.26.6

S332. Beit Yosef, Oraḥ Ḥayyim 180

Joseph Karo; Hebrew transcription within the Tur dossier

Beit Yosef section, paragraph beginning כתב הרוקח בסימן של"ב; citations of Rokeaḥ § 332 and Shibbolei ha-Leket

Accounts and pieces: 64c.

https://he.wikisource.org/wiki/קפ_חיים_אורח_טור

S333. Deutéronome 27

Hebrew Bible; Masoretic text and JPS 1917 translation

27:5: no iron tool upon the altar stones

Accounts and pieces: 64c.

https://mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt0527.htm

S334. Genèse 27

Hebrew Bible; Masoretic text and JPS 1917 translation

27:27–29,39–40: Isaac's blessings of Jacob and Esau

Accounts and pieces: 64c.

https://mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt0127.htm

S335. Genèse 33

Hebrew Bible; Masoretic text and JPS 1917 translation

33:8–11: the brothers' meeting and exchange about gifts

Accounts and pieces: 64c.

https://mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt0133.htm

Illustration Credits

These works are reproduced as documents of visual history. Their dates, collections and, where known, reproduction licences are stated. The miniatures are not presented as contemporary portraits or depictions of ancient events.

The Exodus in the Golden Haggadah

Miniature from the Golden Haggadah, c. 1320. British Library, Add. MS 27210, f. 14v. Reproduction distributed by the National Library of Israel education service under CC BY-SA 3.0; underlying artwork in the public domain. Resized without alteration of content. Licence. Placed in Account VII for the biblical memory of the Exodus.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Exodus_golden_haggadah.jpg

Scenes from the Life of Moses

Sister Haggadah, c. 1325–1375, British Library, Or. 2884, f. 12v. Image: British Library Board; photograph credited to Chris McGlashon in the record. Reproduction of a two-dimensional public-domain work, released as PD-Art. This is not the Golden Haggadah.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Scenes_from_the_life_of_Moses_f_12v.jpg

The Shepherds Besiege a Tower

French miniature, c. 1380–1400, British Library, Royal MS 20 C VII, f. 55v. Illustration of the Shepherds' violence in 1320. Public-domain artwork and faithful reproduction (PD-Art).

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Croisade_des_Pastoreaux_Britisch_Librairy.jpg

Alfonso X and His Court

Libro de los juegos, made for Alfonso X, 1283, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial. Court miniature; public-domain work and reproduction (PD-Art).

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Libro_de_los_Juegos,_Alfonso_X_y_su_corte.jpg

Philip V, the Shepherds and the Lepers

Jean Fouquet, miniature from the *Grandes Chroniques de France*, c. 1455–1460, Bibliothèque nationale de France. Philip V and Louis of Nevers, with scenes of violence in the foreground. Public-domain artwork and reproduction (PD-Art). Printed at a moderate size appropriate to the reproduction's resolution. BnF, Français 6465, f. 327v.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Philippe_V_le_Long_et_Louis_de_Nevers.jpg

Purim in Amsterdam's Portuguese Synagogue

The Feast of Purim, 1737, print by Balthasar Bernaerts after Louis Fabritius Dubourg. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2020.272, Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Arthur H. Elkind, 2020. Open Access public-domain image. Its Amsterdam setting illuminates the dedication of 1744.

https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/848465

Granada in Civitates orbis terrarum

Civitates orbis terrarum, Georg Braun and Frans Hogenberg, Granada plate, 1572; reproduction from the 1582 edition held by Heidelberg University Library. Public-domain engraving and PD-Art reproduction.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Braun_Granada_UBHD.jpg

Toledo in the Sixteenth Century

View of Toledo, *Civitates orbis terrarum*, Georg Braun and Frans Hogenberg, plate of 1572, Cologne edition of 1582. Heidelberg University Library. Public domain, PD-Art.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Braun_Toledo_UBHD.jpg

Tortosa in 1563

Anthonis van den Wyngaerde, view of Tortosa, 1563. Sixteenth-century panoramic drawing. Public-domain artwork and faithful reproduction (PD-Art).

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Vista_de_Tortosa_el_1563_per_Athonie_van_den_Wijngaerde.jpg

Five Moroccan Ports in 1572

Georg Braun and Frans Hogenberg, *Tingis… Tzaffin… Septa… Arzilla… Sala*, 1572. BnF, Maps and Plans department, GE SH 18 PF 224 DIV 2 P 17 D; digitisation btv1b53143253x. Public domain, PD-Art.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tingis,_Lusitanis,_Tangiara_;_Tzaffin_;_Septa_;_Arzilla_;_Sala_-_(Georg_Braun)_;_(Franz_Hogenberg)_-_btv1b53143253x.jpg

Lisbon in 1572

View of Lisbon, Georg Braun and Frans Hogenberg, *Civitates orbis terrarum*, volume I, 1572. Public-domain engraving, PD-Art reproduction.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:City_of_Lisbon,_1572.jpg

Seville in the Late Sixteenth Century

View of Seville by Joris Hoefnagel, Georg Braun and Frans Hogenberg's *Civitates orbis terrarum*, Cologne edition, 1598. Public-domain artwork and reproduction (PD-Art).

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Vista_de_Sevilla_Hoefnagel.jpg

Pompey in the Temple

Flavius Josephus, Jewish Antiquities, BnF, Département des Manuscrits, Français 247. Folio 293v, Book XIV. The traditional attribution to Fouquet is debated in favour of his workshop, particularly the Master of the Munich Boccaccio. Entire leaf extracted from the facsimile; its setting renders antiquity in a fifteenth-century visual language. Reproduction of an old public-domain work, supplied through Wikimedia Commons (PD-Art). BnF record.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Flavius_Jos%C3%A8phe,_Les_Antiquit%C3%A9s_juda%C3%AFques.pdf

Nebuchadnezzar before Jerusalem

Flavius Josephus, Jewish Antiquities, BnF, Département des Manuscrits, Français 247. Folio 213v, Book X. Traditionally associated with Fouquet, the miniature has also been attributed to the Master of the Munich Boccaccio. It is a medieval interpretation of the narratives of conquest and exile. Reproduction of an old public-domain work, supplied through Wikimedia Commons (PD-Art). BnF record. The complete leaf is reproduced on the cover, without retouching or recolouring.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Flavius_Jos%C3%A8phe,_Les_Antiquit%C3%A9s_juda%C3%AFques.pdf

The Building of the Temple

Flavius Josephus, Jewish Antiquities, BnF, Département des Manuscrits, Français 247. Folio 163r, Book VIII. The lifting machinery and the workers' gestures belong to a medieval representation of construction. This is an old artistic vision of the Temple, not an architectural survey of the ancient building. Reproduction of an old public-domain work, supplied through Wikimedia Commons (PD-Art). BnF study of the construction scene.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Flavius_Jos%C3%A8phe,_Les_Antiquit%C3%A9s_juda%C3%AFques.pdf

The Ark and the Capture of Jericho

Flavius Josephus, Jewish Antiquities, BnF, Département des Manuscrits, Français 247. Folio 89r, Book V. The procession and walls illustrate Joshua 6 in a fifteenth-century French setting. The traditional attribution to Fouquet is now considered in relation to his workshop. Reproduction of an old public-domain work, supplied through Wikimedia Commons (PD-Art). BnF record.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Flavius_Jos%C3%A8phe,_Les_Antiquit%C3%A9s_juda%C3%AFques.pdf

The Clemency of Cyrus

Flavius Josephus, Jewish Antiquities, BnF, Département des Manuscrits, Français 247. Folio 230v, Book XI. The BnF has also exhibited the work under the name of the Master of the Munich Boccaccio. Palace and clothing constitute a medieval interpretation of an ancient audience. Reproduction of an old public-domain work, supplied through Wikimedia Commons (PD-Art). BnF record.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Flavius_Jos%C3%A8phe,_Les_Antiquit%C3%A9s_juda%C3%AFques.pdf

A Battle in the Maccabean Period

Flavius Josephus, Jewish Antiquities, BnF, Département des Manuscrits, Français 247. Folio 270v, Book XIII; the miniature is also known as Battle on the Sabbath. The commentary distinguishes the Maccabean episodes brought together by Ibn Verga. Reproduction of an old public-domain work, supplied through Wikimedia Commons (PD-Art). Image record.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Flavius_Jos%C3%A8phe,_Les_Antiquit%C3%A9s_juda%C3%AFques.pdf

Joseph, the Pit and the Sale

Flavius Josephus, Jewish Antiquities, BnF, Département des Manuscrits, Français 247. Folio 25r, opening of Book II. Painted for Jean de Berry by the Master of the Josephus, before Fouquet's workshop worked on the same manuscript. Several moments are combined in one landscape. Reproduction of an old public-domain work, supplied through Wikimedia Commons (PD-Art).

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Flavius_Jos%C3%A8phe,_Les_Antiquit%C3%A9s_juda%C3%AFques.pdf

The Hebrews in the Wilderness

Flavius Josephus, Jewish Antiquities, BnF, Département des Manuscrits, Français 247. Folio 49r, opening of Book III. The illuminator combines episodes of Marah, the battle against Amalek and the Decalogue. An old image of biblical traditions recurring in the commentaries. Reproduction of an old public-domain work, supplied through Wikimedia Commons (PD-Art).

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Flavius_Jos%C3%A8phe,_Les_Antiquit%C3%A9s_juda%C3%AFques.pdf

Herod in Jerusalem

Flavius Josephus, Jewish Antiquities, Book XV. BnF, NAF 21013, f. 1v. The traditional attribution to Fouquet is refined by the catalogue, which associates most of this volume with Bourdichon's early work in his workshop. Reproduction of an old public-domain work, supplied through Wikimedia Commons (PD-Art). Manuscript record.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Prise_de_J%C3%A9rusalem_par_H%C3%A9rode_le_Grand.jpg

Jerusalem and the Temple in the Chronicle of 1493

Hartmann Schedel, Liber chronicarum, Latin edition, Nuremberg, 1493, detail of f. 15r. Coloured woodcut, scanned by contributor Schedel. Public-domain work; the reproduction is identified as such on Commons.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nuremberg_chronicles_-_f_15r.png

Jerusalem in Flames in the Chronicle of 1493

Hartmann Schedel, Liber chronicarum, 1493, f. 63v. Coloured woodcut from the workshop of Michael Wolgemut and Wilhelm Pleydenwurff. The city is a symbolic representation within the chronicle. Reproduction of an old public-domain work, supplied through Wikimedia Commons (PD-Art).

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nuremberg_chronicles_f_63v_1.png

Solomon and the Queen of Sheba

Master of Lecceto, King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, tempera on wood with embossed gilt ornament. Metropolitan Museum of Art, no. 14.44, Rogers Fund, 1914. The queen departs for Jerusalem and then meets Solomon. Open Access image, public domain.

https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/437012

The Cairo Purim Scroll

Megilat ha-Śaṭan ha-yadua, Halper 328, Cairo Genizah Collection, Library at the Katz Center, University of Pennsylvania. Two surviving leaves; the beginning of the scroll, not its chronological conclusion. Reproduction supplied by Penn Libraries. Record's rights statement: No Copyright — United States (NoC-US 1.0). Rights statement.

https://digitalcollections.library.upenn.edu/items/f1ec4d00-d674-4878-afd8-2dfd101283ba

Title of La vara de Judá, 1744

La vara de Judá, Amsterdam, 5504/1744. Title page extracted from the supplied source file, view 5. Old public-domain text; the leaf is reproduced without rewriting.

Saladin, Melchizedek, and the Three Rings

Unidentified Florentine artist, 1427. Giovanni Boccaccio, Decameron, I.3; BnF, Département des manuscrits, Italien 63, fol. 19r. Date and place: Mandragore creation-unit record. Gallica reproduction distributed on Wikimedia Commons by Rvalette; the file page carries PD-Art and CC BY-SA 4.0. Licence. Image reproduced without alteration of its content.

https://mandragore.bnf.fr/mdgcd1755

The Three Hebrews in the Fiery Furnace

Unidentified Flemish illuminator, Ghent, c. 1475. Miroir historial, Ms. Ludwig XIII 5, vol. 1, fol. 144v. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles. Getty Open Content Program image; CC0 1.0 confirmed in this leaf's IIIF manifest. Licence. Full leaf reproduced without alteration.

https://www.getty.edu/art/collection/object/105W3F

Avicenna in a Latin Medical Manuscript

Lectiones super quartam fen primi Canonis Avicennae, attributed to Jacobus de Sanatis de Padua; c. 1475 (?), Padua (?). Wellcome Collection, MS.376, p. 1. Unidentified illuminator. Source and reproduction: Wellcome Collection, Public Domain Mark 1.0. Rights statement. The date and place retain the catalogue's uncertainty. Leaf reproduced without alteration.

https://wellcomecollection.org/works/fvfhtjab

A Transaction in the Vidal Mayor

Vidal Mayor, customs of Aragon, c. 1290–1310, northeastern Spain. Unidentified illuminator; scribe Michael Lupi de Çandiu. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, Ms. Ludwig XIV 6, fol. 180 (83.MQ.165.180). Getty Open Content Program; CC0 1.0 confirmed in the IIIF manifest. Licence. Full leaf reproduced without alteration.

https://www.getty.edu/art/collection/object/105WD7

Solomon Teaches Royal Wisdom

Master of Jean de Mandeville, Paris, c. 1360–1370. Bible historiale, second volume, frontispiece to Proverbs. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, Ms. 1, vol. 2, fol. 1 (84.MA.40.2.1). Getty Open Content Program; CC0 1.0 confirmed in the IIIF manifest. Licence. Full leaf reproduced without alteration.

https://www.getty.edu/art/collection/object/103S15

The Port of Modon in 1488

After Erhard Reuwich, La Peregrination en Terre Sainte, Bernhard von Breydenbach, translated by Nicolas Le Huen, published by Topie, Lyon, 1488. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1928, 28.86.2, image DP841233. Met Open Access image, public domain, CC0 1.0. Licence. The inscription Modon is visible; identification is confirmed by the Chertsey Tiles university project. Reproduction without alteration.

https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/338312

A Qur'anic Leaf from the Maghreb

Folio from a Qur'an Manuscript, North Africa, c. 1250–1300. Metropolitan Museum of Art, no. 37.21, Rogers Fund, 1937. The gold calligraphy and coloured signs belong to the original leaf. Open Access image, public domain.

https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/449110

The Opening of Surah Maryam

Folio from a Qur'an Manuscript with Verses from the Surat al-Maryam. Ink, colours and gold on paper. Metropolitan Museum of Art, no. 1975.29.1, Purchase, Ehsan Yarshater Gift, 1975. Open Access image, public domain.

https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/452704

Title of the Hebrew Edition of 1554

Shevet Yehudah, Hebrew printing catalogued as 1554, title bearing the name of Adrianople. First leaf of HebrewBooks facsimile no. 45186, retaining the provider's notice. Old public-domain text.

https://hebrewbooks.org/45186

Eleazar ben Azariah in the Haggadah

Rylands Sephardi Haggadah, Catalonia, 1335–1340. The University of Manchester Library, John Rylands Library, Hebrew MS 6, fol. 22v. Reproduction supplied through OPenn; images © 2017 The University of Manchester Library Special Collections, licensed under CC BY 4.0. Complete page, with no alteration of content. Licence.

https://openn.library.upenn.edu/Data/0021/html/HebrewMss6.html#a22b

The Celebration of Passover

Rylands Sephardi Haggadah, Catalonia, 1335–1340. The University of Manchester Library, John Rylands Library, Hebrew MS 6, fol. 19v. Reproduction supplied through OPenn; images © 2017 The University of Manchester Library Special Collections, licensed under CC BY 4.0. Complete page, with no alteration of content. Licence.

https://openn.library.upenn.edu/Data/0021/html/HebrewMss6.html#a19b

Ben Sira in a Syriac Bible

Syriac Bible, Upper Mesopotamia, third quarter of the sixth century (551–575 in the INHA record). BnF, Département des Manuscrits, Syriaque 341, fol. 218v. Reproduction distributed by the Institut national d'histoire de l'art and the Bibliothèque nationale de France, CC BY 4.0. Licence.

https://fabriques.inha.fr/s/fva/item/c7ded64f-f47c-4fb1-8d9b-922a21c9fc60

A Sasanian Court Imagined in the Sixteenth Century

Bashdan Qara, Ferdowsi's Shāhnāmeh, Shah Tahmasp manuscript, fol. 592r, about 1530–1535. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, image DP107179; Open Access programme. Reproduction: Wikimedia Commons_of_Shah_Tahmasp_MET_DP107179.jpg). Licence CC0. Cropped reproduction: outer margins omitted; miniature and text preserved.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:%22Yazdigird_II_Accedes_to_the_Throne%22,_Folio_592r_from_the_Shahnama_(Book_of_Kings)_of_Shah_Tahmasp_MET_DP107179.jpg

Marrakesh in an Old Print

Demoulin brothers, after Adriaen Matham, Palatium magni Regis Maroci in Barbaria. The date 1641 belongs to the view reproduced; this engraved reproduction is later. BnF, Département des Cartes et plans, Gallica btv1b530573367. Reproduction: Wikimedia Commons. Historical work and reproduction identified as public domain.

https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b530573367

Sisebut

Mariano de la Roca y Delgado, oil on canvas, 1854. Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid, inv. P006910, on loan to the Congreso de los Diputados. Reproduction: Wikimedia Commons.jpg). Historical work and reproduction identified as public domain.

https://www.museodelprado.es/coleccion/obra-de-arte/sisebuto/cd0ed293-c2f4-42a1-bc78-74f5da9d01cf

Royal Law under Alfonso XI

Alfonso XI, Ordenamiento de Alcalá, parchment manuscript, fourteenth century; copying and decoration attributed to Nicolás González. Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid. The date of promulgation is distinguished from that of the copy. Reproduction: Wikimedia Commons_primera_p%C3%A1gina.png). Historical work and reproduction identified as public domain.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ordenamiento_de_Alcal%C3%A1_(1348)_primera_p%C3%A1gina.png

The Crossing of the Sea in the Haggadah

The University of Manchester Library, John Rylands Library, Hebrew MS 6, fol. 19r in the OPenn catalogue (19a). The scene corresponds to Exodus 14:21–31; the catalogue's reference to "12:27–28" is erroneous. Images © 2017 The University of Manchester Library Special Collections, via OPenn. Complete page. Licence CC BY 4.0.

https://openn.library.upenn.edu/Data/0021/html/HebrewMss6.html#a19a

Antonio de Guevara Writing

Old portrait from the Franciscan convent in Valladolid, detail reproduced as the frontispiece in Augustin Redondo, Antonio de Guevara (1480?–1545) et l'Espagne de son temps, Droz, 1976. The identification is retained as presumed. Reproduction: Wikimedia Commons. Historical work and reproduction identified as public domain.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Portrait_of_Antonio_de_Guevara.jpg

A Preacher before the Pope

Bartolomeo degli Erri, panel painting, fifteenth century. Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford, inv. WA1850.18. Image distributed through Art UK. Reproduction: Wikimedia Commons_-_St_Vincent_Ferrer_preaching_before_a_Pope_-_WA1850.18_-_Ashmolean_Museum.jpg). Historical work and reproduction identified as public domain.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bartolomeo_degli_Erri_(active_c.1430-1479)_-_St_Vincent_Ferrer_preaching_before_a_Pope_-_WA1850.18_-_Ashmolean_Museum.jpg

The Arms of Sancha of Majorca

Histoire ancienne jusqu'à César, second redaction, Naples, about 1335–1340. British Library, Royal MS 20 D I, fol. 35r. Detail of the miniature showing the Greek army approaching Troy. Reproduction: Wikimedia Commons.png). Historical work and reproduction identified as public domain.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Detail_of_the_Arms_of_Sancha_of_Majorca_(folio_35r,_Histoire_ancienne_jusqu%27%C3%A0_C%C3%A9sar,_second_redaction).png

Children's Games

Pieter Bruegel the Elder, oil on panel, 1560. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna. Google Art Project reproduction. Reproduction: Wikimedia Commons. Historical work and reproduction identified as public domain.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pieter_Bruegel_the_Elder_-_Children%E2%80%99s_Games_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg

Ahasuerus Has the Chronicles Read

Philips Galle, after Maarten van Heemskerck, Ahasuerus Consulting the Book of Chronicles, engraving, 1564. KBR, Royal Library of Belgium, Prints Department, S.I 55694. Reproduction: Wikimedia Commons. Historical work and reproduction identified as public domain.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ahasuerus_Consulting_The_Book_of_Chronicles_1564_print_by_Maarten_van_Heemskerck,_S.I_55694,_Prints_Department,_Royal_Library_of_Belgium.jpg

The King's Justice at Vendôme

Boccaccio, Des cas des nobles hommes et femmes, translated by Laurent de Premierfait, known as the Munich Boccaccio. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod.gall. 6, fol. 2v. Frontispiece attributed to Jean Fouquet, about 1459–1460. Reproduction: Wikimedia Commons. Historical work and reproduction identified as public domain.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Le_Lit_de_justice_de_Vend%C3%B4me.jpg

The Expulsion of the Jews from England

Rochester Chronicle, fourteenth century. British Library, Cotton MS Nero D II, fol. 183v; detail. Reproduction: Wikimedia Commons. Historical work and reproduction identified as public domain.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:BritLibCottonNeroDiiFol183vPersecutedJews.jpg

Trani and Its Harbour

Cassiano de Silva, illustration for Giovanni Battista Pacichelli, Il regno di Napoli in prospettiva, Naples, Michele Luigi Mutio, 1703. Reproduction by the Fondo Antiguo de la Biblioteca de la Universidad de Sevilla, distributed under CC BY 2.0. Reproduction: Wikimedia Commons.jpg). Licence CC BY 2.0.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:%22Trani%22_(22089730899).jpg

Confession among the Seven Sacraments

Rogier van der Weyden, triptych, mid-fifteenth century. Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen, Antwerp, inv. 393–395. Reproduction: Wikimedia Commons. Historical work and reproduction identified as public domain.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rogier_van_der_Weyden_-_De_Zeven_Sacramenten_-_393-395_-_Royal_Museum_of_Fine_Arts_Antwerp.jpg

Philip the Fair and His Family

Kalila wa Dimna, Latin translation by Raymond of Béziers, Paris, 1313. BnF, Département des Manuscrits, Latin 8504, fol. 1v. Date and subject checked in Mandragore. Reproduction: Wikimedia Commons. Historical work and reproduction identified as public domain.

https://mandragore.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cgfbt670631

A Queen and a Young King

Moralized Bible known as the Saint Louis Bible, Paris, 1227–1234. The Morgan Library & Museum, New York, MS M.240, fol. 8r. Google Art Project reproduction; date and qualified identification checked in the Morgan catalogue. Reproduction: Wikimedia Commons. Historical work and reproduction identified as public domain.

https://ica.themorgan.org/manuscript/page/8/77422

The King and the Prelates

Grandes Chroniques de France, British Library, Royal MS 16 G VI, fol. 258, about 1332–1350. Detail distributed under the title Council of Rheims. Reproduction: Wikimedia Commons.jpg). Historical work and reproduction identified as public domain.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Council_of_Rheims,_Grandes_chroniques_de_France,_Royal_16_G_VI_f.258,_c._1332-1350_(22093699984).jpg

An Image of Philip IV's Death

Boccaccio, Des cas des nobles hommes et femmes, translated by Laurent de Premierfait, Bruges, 1479–1480. British Library, Royal MS 14 E V, fol. 497v; detail. Reproduction: Wikimedia Commons. Historical work and reproduction identified as public domain.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Philip4_Death.jpg

The Coronation of Charles IV

Fourteenth-century French miniature, Coronation of Charles IV the Fair. BnF, Gallica btv1b84525476; detail. Reproduction: Wikimedia Commons. Historical work and reproduction identified as public domain.

https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84525476

Burying the Victims of the Plague

Gilles li Muisit, Tractatus quartus, illuminated by Pierart dou Tielt, Tournai, about 1353. KBR, ms. 13076–13077, fol. 24v. IRPA/KIK-IRPA reproduction, photograph X004175, object 20049662, via Commons. Reproduction: Wikimedia Commons. Historical work and reproduction identified as public domain.

http://balat.kikirpa.be/photo.php?path=X004175&objnr=20049662

Valencia in the Sixteenth Century

Anton van den Wyngaerde, panoramic drawing of Valencia, 1563, pen and colours on paper. Reproduction: Wikimedia Commons. Historical work and reproduction identified as public domain.
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Val%C3%A8ncia_el_1563,_per_Anton_van_den_Wyngaerde.jpg

Constantinople and Pera

Georg Braun and Frans Hogenberg, Civitates orbis terrarum, first published 1572; copy of the German edition, Cologne, 1582. Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg. Reproduction: Wikimedia Commons. Historical work and reproduction identified as public domain.
https://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/braun1582bd1

A Legal Scene in the Vidal Mayor

Vidal Mayor, initial A, northeastern Spain, about 1290–1310. J. Paul Getty Museum, Ms. Ludwig XIV 6 (83.MQ.165), fol. 97; section concerning orphans' property. Open Content. Reproduction: Wikimedia Commons. Historical work and reproduction identified as public domain.
https://www.getty.edu/art/collection/object/103SAN

Maimonides' Mishneh Torah

Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, National Library of Israel, MS Heb. 4°1193. Text copied in Spain or southern France before 1351; illumination attributed to Matteo di Ser Cambio, Perugia, about 1400. Reproduction: Wikimedia Commons. Historical work and reproduction identified as public domain.
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Spanish_Mishneh_Torah_manuscript.jpg

Benjamin of Tudela's Journey

Benjamin of Tudela, Itinerarium in Hebrew. Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, MS. Opp. Add. 8° 58, fol. 1r, sixteenth–seventeenth century. Bodleian digital facsimile. Reproduction: Wikimedia Commons. Historical work and reproduction identified as public domain.
https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/objects/27bdf199-f3ed-4dbe-9a75-ae50f84fbae2/

The Court of Kayumars

Shah Tahmasp's Shāhnāmeh, fol. 20v, attributed to Sultan Muhammad, about 1524–1525. Aga Khan Museum, Toronto, AKM165. Reproduction distributed on Commons from a printed facsimile; date checked in the museum catalogue. Reproduction: Wikimedia Commons. Historical work and reproduction identified as public domain. Cropped reproduction: outer margins omitted; miniature and text preserved.
https://collections.agakhanmuseum.org/collection/artifact/court-of-kayumars-akm165

David and the Music of the Psalms

Paris Psalter, BnF, Département des Manuscrits, Grec 139, fol. 1v, tenth century, about 960. Reproduction distributed by Gennadii Saus i Segura on Commons; manuscript digitised in Gallica. Reproduction: Wikimedia Commons. Historical work and reproduction identified as public domain.

https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10515446x

Three Cities of the Rhine

Georg Braun and Frans Hogenberg, Heidelberga; Spira; Wormatia, edition of 1645, BnF, Gallica btv1b53179008b. This plate's date is distinguished from that of the earliest Civitates editions. Reproduction: Wikimedia Commons.jpg). Historical work and reproduction identified as public domain.

https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53179008b

Cologne on the Rhine

Anton Woensam, Ansicht von Köln, woodcut, 1531; panoramic reproduction distributed by Zeno.org. Reproduction: Wikimedia Commons. Historical work and reproduction identified as public domain.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Anton_Woensam,_Ansicht_von_K%C3%B6ln.jpg

Jerez de la Frontera

Anton van den Wyngaerde, panorama of Jerez de la Frontera, 1560s. Reproduction by Menesteo, CC BY-SA 3.0, with no alteration of content. Reproduction: Wikimedia Commons. Licence CC BY-SA 3.0.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wjerezdelafrontera.jpg

Rome in the Nuremberg Chronicle

Hartmann Schedel, Liber chronicarum, Nuremberg, Anton Koberger, 1493. Workshop of Michael Wolgemut and Wilhelm Pleydenwurff; view of Rome. Reproduction: Wikimedia Commons. Historical work and reproduction identified as public domain.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nuremberg_chronicles_-_ROMA.png

The Bible Presented to Its Patron

Alba Bible, Castilian translation directed by Moses Arragel, 1422–1430. Casa de Alba collection, Palacio de Liria, Madrid. Manuscript-presentation scene described by the facsimile publisher; the painted ceremony is not treated as an attested event. Reproduction: Wikimedia Commons. Historical work and reproduction identified as public domain.

https://facsimile-editions.com/ab/

Barcelona in the Civitates

Georg Braun and Frans Hogenberg, Civitates orbis terrarum, first published 1572; copy of the German edition Beschreibung vnd Contrafactur der vornembster Stät der Welt, Cologne, 1582. Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg. Reproduction: Wikimedia Commons. Historical work and reproduction identified as public domain.

https://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/braun1582bd1

Valladolid in the Civitates

Georg Braun and Frans Hogenberg, Civitates orbis terrarum, first published 1572; copy of the German edition Beschreibung vnd Contrafactur der vornembster Stät der Welt, Cologne, 1582. Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg. Reproduction: Wikimedia Commons. Historical work and reproduction identified as public domain.

https://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/braun1582bd1

Burgos in the Civitates

Georg Braun and Frans Hogenberg, Civitates orbis terrarum, first published 1572; copy of the German edition Beschreibung vnd Contrafactur der vornembster Stät der Welt, Cologne, 1582. Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg. Reproduction: Wikimedia Commons. Historical work and reproduction identified as public domain.

https://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/braun1582bd1

Genoa in the Civitates

Georg Braun and Frans Hogenberg, Civitates orbis terrarum, first published 1572; copy of the German edition Beschreibung vnd Contrafactur der vornembster Stät der Welt, Cologne, 1582. Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg. Reproduction: Wikimedia Commons. Historical work and reproduction identified as public domain.

https://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/braun1582bd1

Madrid in a Drawing of 1562

Anton van den Wyngaerde, finished drawing of Madrid, 1562, pen, sepia ink and coloured washes. Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna, Ms. Min. 41, 35ro. Reproduction distributed by Pasión por Madrid. Reproduction: Wikimedia Commons. Historical work and reproduction identified as public domain.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Madrid_final_drawing_Ant%C3%B3n_van_der_Wyngaerde.jpg

The Expulsion from Spain in History Painting

Emilio Sala Francés, Expulsión de los judíos, oil on canvas, 1889. Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid. Reproduction: Wikimedia Commons. Historical work and reproduction identified as public domain.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Expulsi%C3%B3n_de_los_jud%C3%ADos.jpg

Job and His Wife

Georges de La Tour, oil on canvas, disputed dating; about 1630 in the Musées Grand-Est record. MUDAAC, Épinal, inv. L.I.86. Reproduction by David Monniaux distributed on Commons. The painting's original title is unknown. Reproduction: Wikimedia Commons. Historical work and reproduction identified as public domain.

https://www.museesgrandest.org/les-collections/job-raille-par-sa-femme-2/

The Kingdoms of Fez and Marrakesh

Jodocus Hondius, Fessae et Marocchi Regna, engraved and coloured map, 1606. Reproduction distributed on Commons under CC0. Reproduction: Wikimedia Commons. Licence CC0.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Fessae_et_Marocchi_Regna.jpg

The Book of Nehemiah in a Medieval Bible

Bible, southern France, Toulouse (?), about 1270. Cleveland Museum of Art, inv. 2008.2.178.b, fol. 178v. Open Access image, CC0. Reproduction: Wikimedia Commons,_13th_century_-_Fol._178v,_Nehemiah,_historiated_initial_V,_Nehemiah_presenting_the_golden_-_2008.2.178.b_-_Cleveland_Museum_of_Art.jpg). Licence CC0.

https://www.clevelandart.org/art/2008.2.178.b

Rome and Its Districts in the Sixteenth Century

Georg Braun and Frans Hogenberg, Roma, Civitates orbis terrarum, 1572, coloured engraving. Reproduction of an old copy distributed by Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps. Reproduction: Wikimedia Commons. Historical work and reproduction identified as public domain.

https://www.raremaps.com/gallery/detail/67361/roma-braun-hogenberg

An Armed Four-Master Puts to Sea

Frans Huys, after Pieter Bruegel the Elder; publisher Hieronymus Cock, Armed Four-Master Putting Out to Sea, about 1555–1556. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. 28.4(3), Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1928. Open Access. Reproduction: Wikimedia Commons. Licence CC0.

https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/383047

The Town of São Tomé

Urbs S. Thomae, 1647, plate no. 50; catalogue attribution to Joan Blaeu, Georg Marcgrave and Frans Post. Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Netherlands, through the Atlas of Mutual Heritage, image AMH-7323-KB. Reproduction: Wikimedia Commons. Historical work and reproduction identified as public domain.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:AMH-7323-KB_Map_of_the_city_of_S._Thom%C3%A9.jpg

Elijah Restores the Widow's Son to Life

Simon Bening, Prayer Book of Cardinal Albrecht of Brandenburg, Bruges, about 1525–1530. J. Paul Getty Museum, Ms. Ludwig IX 19 (83.ML.115), fol. 70. Complete page, Open Content programme, CC0. Licence CC0.

https://www.getty.edu/art/collection/object/107SF6

Amos in a Thirteenth-Century Bible

Bible, southern France, Toulouse (?), about 1270. Cleveland Museum of Art, inv. 2008.2.354.b, fol. 354v. Open Access image, CC0. Reproduction: Wikimedia Commons,_13th_century_-_Fol._354v,_Amos,_historiated_initial_V,_Amos_kneeling_in_prayer,_bust_of_Go_-_2008.2.354.b_-_Cleveland_Museum_of_Art.jpg). Licence CC0.

https://www.clevelandart.org/art/2008.2.354.b

Alexander Instructed by Aristotle

Pseudo-Aristotle, Secretum secretorum, Latin translation by Philip of Tripoli, English manuscript of 1326–1327. British Library, Add MS 47680, fol. 14v. The modern image-upload date is not the manuscript's date. Reproduction: Wikimedia Commons. Historical work and reproduction identified as public domain.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:British_Library_MS_Add_47680.jpg

German title page of 1856

G1856 facsimile, view 5, Princeton copy digitised by Google and distributed through Internet Archive. Old work in the public domain.

https://archive.org/details/bub_gb__BJAAAAAYAAJ

The Sceptre of Judah

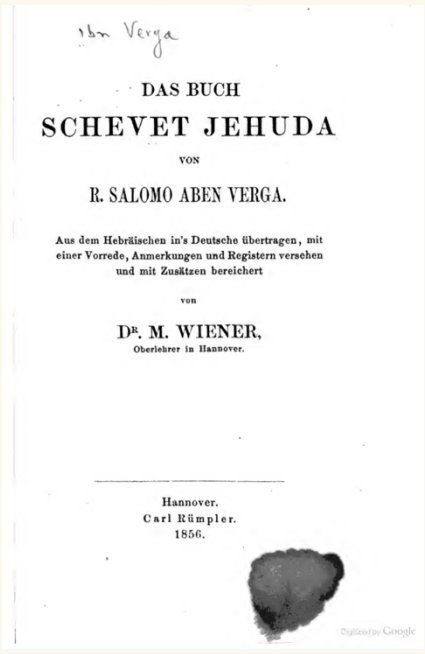
Sixty-four accounts Five supplementary pieces

Compared translation Historical commentary Translation choices

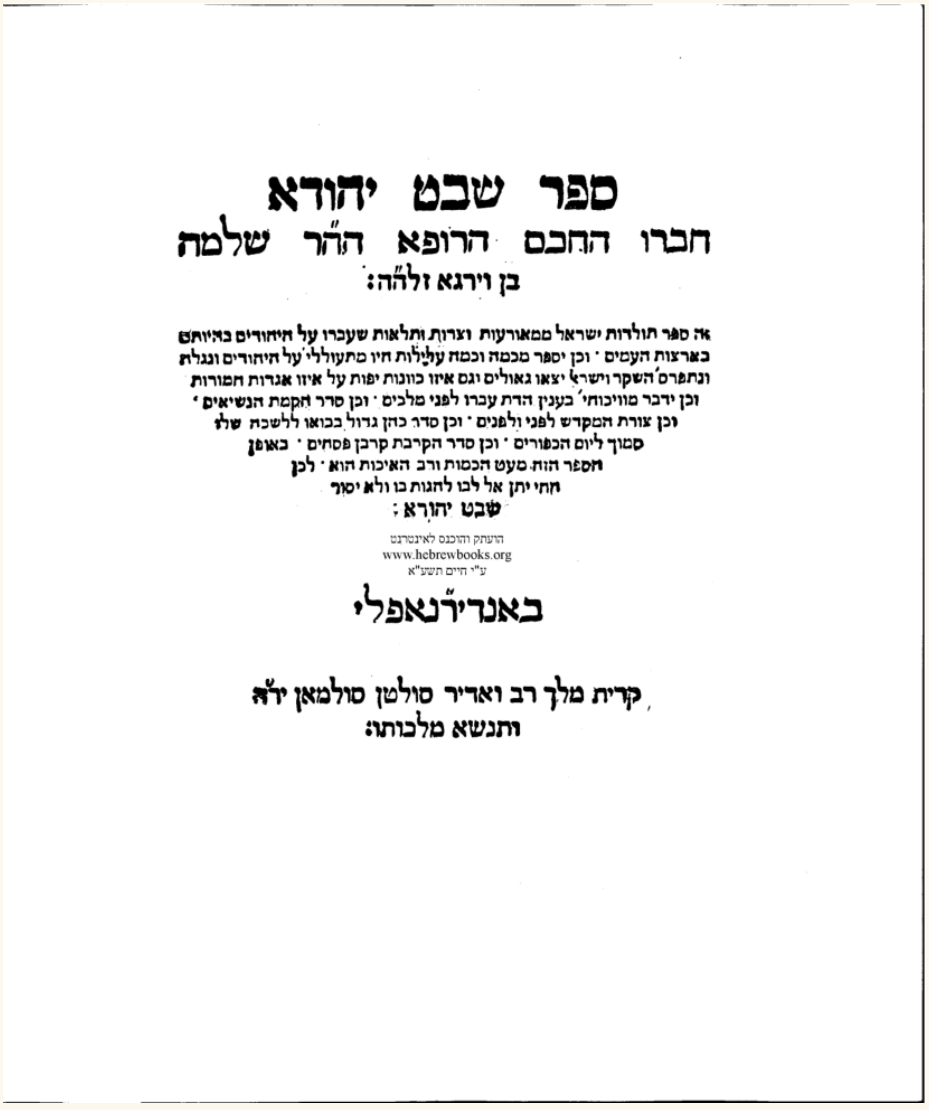
Set in EB Garamond 18 × 25.5 cm October 2026

The Spanish and German title pages

Title of La vara de Judá, 1744
Title page of the Spanish edition of 1744, the copy supplied for translation. [provenance]



German title page, 1856. Meïr Wiener, Hanover, Carl Rümpler. [G1856]



ספר שבט יהודא

חברו החכם הרופא הר׳ שלמה

בן וירגא זלה״ה:

אה ספר תולדות ישראל ממאורעות וצרות ותלאות שעברו על היהודים באיחם
בארצות העמים · וכן יספר מכמה וכמה עלילות חיו מתעוללי על היהודים ונגלת
ונתפרסם השקר וישרא יצאו גאולים וגם איזו כוונות יפות על איזו אגדות חמורות
וכן ידבר מוויכוחי בענין הדת עברו לפני מלכים · וכן סדר הקמת הנשיאים ·
וכן צורת המקדש לפני ולפנים · וכן סדר כהן גדול בבואו ללשכת שלו
סמוך ליום הכפורים · וכן סדר הקרבת קרבן פסחים · באופן
שהספר הזה מעט הכמות ורב האיכות הוא · לכן
תחי יתן אל לבו לחנות בו ולא יסור
שבט יהודא:

הועתק והוכנס לאינטרנט
www.hebrewbooks.org
ע״י חיים תשע״א

באנדיר׳נאפלי

קרית מלך רב ואדיר סולטן סולמאן ירה
ותנשא מלכותו:

Title of the Hebrew Edition of 1554

Title page of Shevet Yehudah, a Hebrew printing catalogued as 1554 and bearing the name of Adrianople. HebrewBooks facsimile, no. 45186. This documentary reproduction does not imply that the edition was collated in full. [provenance]