

Quaderni di Studi Indo-Mediterranei

III
(2010)

Umana, divina Malinconia

a cura di
Alessandro Grossato



Edizioni dell'Orso
Alessandria

Volume pubblicato con contributo d'Ateneo, Università degli Studi di Bologna

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via Rattazzi, 47 15121 Alessandria
tel. 0131.252349 fax 0131.257567
e-mail: edizionidellorso@libero.it
<http://www.ediorso.it>

Redazione informatica e impaginazione a cura di BEAR (bear.am@savonaonline.it)

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ISBN 978-88-6274-254-2

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*Saturnine Traits, Melancholia, and Related Conditions
as Ascribed to Jews and Jewish Culture (and Jewish Responses)
from Imperial Rome to High Modernity*

by Ephraim Nissan – Abraham Ofir Shemesh

1. Introduction

The ascription of melancholia to an entire nation, in the history of ideas about nations, has turned up in early as well as high modernity. The present overview is concerned with how the Jews were perceived, and with the ascription of melancholia to them. That idea is alive and kicking. During a women's programme broadcasted by BBC Radio 4 on 8 May 2009, at 9.30am an interview started with a British lady who is a relative of the composer Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdi (1809–1847), about the latter's Jewish roots and on posthumous attitudes towards him on that account. Right before the interview, the conductor of the programme (she is not Jewish) introduced a well-known melody for violin by Mendelssohn by saying that it "is so melancholy that could only have been written by a Jewish composer."¹

The roots of the ascription of melancholia to the Jews has to do with late Graeco-Roman paganism associating the Jewish Sabbath with the Saturday, as in the weekly cycle this was Saturn's day.² Saturn, the farthest, slowest visible

¹ Sometimes such perceptions are apparently even internalised by some partly assimilated Jews. One of the present authors, Nissan, remembers a broadcast he listened to while living in Milan during the 1970s: the two broadcasters who used to conduct the *Gazzettino Padano* (a programme of regional news) were talking to the mezzo soprano singer Ersilia Lopez Colonna (the mother of a former classmate of Nissan's, from Jewish day school). She offered to sing one out of two Jewish songs, and asked them whether they would prefer a sad song, or a merry song. They told her to sing the merry one. But she sang quite a melancholy Judaeo-Spanish song. The man and the woman interviewing her made no comments, but immediately after she sang they were somewhat numb; no doubt, they – along with more than a few of the listeners – were left with the impression that if so sad a melody was the merry one out of the two she had offered to sing, then hers was a sad, very sad culture... And yet, arguably much of this is merely a fallacy in the tinted glasses in front of the eyes of beholders, rather not unlike the entirely unwarranted notion (researched by Shibles 1995) that the Saint Bernard "is" a sad breed of dogs based on what is taken to be its facial expression.

² Zafran (1979, p. 17) pointed out: "The fact that Saturday's, the Jews' sacred day of prayer and rest, was, as Alcabitius noted, ruled by Saturn – and actually derived its name from the malevolent planet – was

planet, was held to be cold, as cold as the Sabbath when the Jews do not light a fire and do not cook. But the old Saturn, superseded by Jupiter, was felt by the *Ecclesia triumphans* to be a befitting image of the superseded Jews, who, because of the Passion, were also the analogue of Kronos/Saturn eating his own babies. Saturn rules the melancholic temperament, and the Jews were considered to be inherently sad and fearful by those who deliberately made their circumstances to be ones arousing fear and sadness.

Far from being a medieval trope, or an early modern trope, reverberations of the myth of Jewish melancholia have had repercussions up to the twentieth century and beyond. Thus, like Eve and all women after her, menstruating since her Fall, male Jews were claimed to also have menses, because of the Passion that the Fall prefigured. Modernity rationalised this into haemorrhoids, ascribed to the Jews, and it was then further rationalised as enfeeblement from sedentary life, supposedly useless unlike that of Christian or positivist intellectuals. And Freud and Fliess,³ in their correspondence about nosebleeding in males, made this into the universal male menses, thus denying that male menses were specifically Jewish. Jewish responses also included, e.g., the rise of Jewish sportsmen (Kugelmass 2007), starting with London's Jewish boxers⁴ from the two quarters of century before and after the year 1800. Ansari (2009) states: "To many scholars of culture, an association between Jews and sports would seem a contradiction in terms. Just as black people are popularly assumed to be blessed with physical genius, so 'physical enfeeblement' has often been associated with being Jewish."

but one of many obvious connections." Once the Roman world had adopted the week of seven days, the various days were each associated with a different deity, and heavenly body. What was to become the Day of the Lord (*dominica*) had been the day of the sun (cf. English *Sunday*), and in fact Christianity as a state religion succeeded the imperial cult of the *Sol invictus*, "the unconquerable Sun". But the Jewish Sabbath happened to coincide with the day of Saturn (cf. English *Saturday*). Monday was the Moon's (*lunae dies*), and the Moon (Luna) was identified with Diana. Wednesday was Mercury's day (cf. French *mercredi*, Italian *mercoledì*). Thursday was the day of Mars (*Martis dies*), and in Germanic lands, the day of Thor. Friday was the day of Venus (*Veneris dies*, cf. Italian *venerdì*), and in Germanic lands, the day of her equivalent, Freya.

³ Katz (1999, pp. 455-457), relying upon Gilman (1993, pp. 93-99), discussed Freud's belief in male menstruation, expressing itself in nosebleeding, and that emerged in the context of his exchange of ideas with his bizarre friend Fliess. It was a belief that was in turn grounded in the nineteenth-century "quite vigorous pseudo-scientific discussion about the size of noses and the relation of this organ to racial types" (Katz, *ibid.*, p. 457).

2. Melancholia Ascribed to Particular Nations, or to Professional Groups

Londonian essayist Charles Lamb (1775–1834) is the author of the humorous essay ‘On the Melancholy of Tailors’. It starts with an epigraph from Virgil: “Sedet, æternumque sedebit, / Infelix Theseus.” This makes the title immediately clear: tailors, too, sit and sit, and will ever sit, which for sure must be reason enough for unhappiness. The essay begins thus: “That there is a professional melancholy, if I may so express myself, incident to the occupation of a tailor, is a fact which I think very few will venture to dispute.” Lamb notes of Sir Thomas Browne, that he wrote: “I was born in the planetary hour of Saturn, and I think I have a piece of that leaden planet in me.” Lamb comments: “One would think that he were anatomizing a tailor! save that to the latter’s occupation, methinks, a woollen planet would seem more consonant”. When a tailor displays his patterns, “He spreads them forth with a sullen incapacity for pleasure”. Unlike “that light and cheerful every-day interest in the affairs and goings-on of the world, which makes the barber such delightful company”, tailors have “pensiveness in them being so notorious”.

Lamb wonders at previous authors having overlooked it. “Shakspeare [sic] himself has overlooked it. ‘I have neither the scholar’s melancholy (saith Jaques) [sic] which is emulation; nor the courtier’s, which is proud; nor the sol-

⁴ There are, of course, social correlates for going into boxing. For example, Roman Jewish boxer Leone Èfrati, who perished in the Holocaust, was illiterate. The East End of London has produced Jewish boxers much later, too. At a ceremony at a university campus in the East End on 3 September 2008, the 2006 heavyweight champion Roman Greenberg was photographed shaking hands with the now old Sir Henry Cooper (the British heavyweight champion who once threw to the ground Muhammad Ali, and is now a fine speaker), in front of an unveiled plaque with a relief showing, on the ring, Daniel Mendoza (1764-1836), the father of scientific boxing, who was buried at a Jewish cemetery nearby. There even was a rabbi from the old Spanish and Portuguese Bevis Marks synagogue, reciting the *kaddish* (memorial prayer) for Mendoza. This is part of a modern culture of memory: the event was organised by the Jewish East End Celebration Society. Mendoza was a superstar at the apex of his boxing career, which is extraordinary considering his Jewishness and poor background, but that sits well with how also Black boxers have been rising above their background of poverty and emargination in the twentieth century (cf. Ungar and Berkowitz 2007). But after the wave of beatings of Jews in London’s streets in the 1770s, in the opinion of contemporaries it was Mendoza’s boxing school that built up confidence among young Jews, deterring potential attackers (Katz 1994, pp. 264-265).

“Though he stood only 5’7” and weighed only 160 pounds, Mendoza was England’s sixteenth Heavyweight Champion from 1792 to 1795, and is the only middleweight to ever win the Heavyweight Championship of the World. In 1789 he opened his own boxing academy and published the book *The Art of Boxing* on modern ‘scientific’ style boxing which every subsequent boxer learned from.” (Wikipedia, s.v.). And yet, his superiority was sometimes explained away as “science”, rather than strength. The likewise English-born, Jewish, Samuel Elias, known as Dutch Sam (1775-1816) and nicknamed “the Star of the East”, is credited with the discovery of the right hand uppercut, and in his heyday, he was feared as the deadliest puncher of the London Prize Ring.

dier's, which is politick; nor the lover's which is all of these:' – and then, when you might expect him to have brought in, 'not the tailor's, which is so and so' – he comes to an end of his enumeration, and falls to a defining of his own melancholy." Lamb proposes that "the efficient causes of this melancholy" of tailors depend on their "sedentary habits", and on "Something peculiar in his diet". The former are typical of scholars, and Lamb gives a literary reference for this, which causes swelling in the legs, as there is "communication between the brain and the legs." But tailors sit cross-legged, which "must also greatly aggravate the evil, insomuch that I have sometimes ventured to liken tailors at their boards to so many envious Junos, *sitting cross-legged to hinder the birth of their own felicity*. The legged transversed thus × cross-wise, or decussated, was among the ancients the posture of malediction. The Turks, who practise it at this day, are noted to be a melancholy people." (*ibid.*, p. 191, added underlining).

As to the tailor's diet, Lamb refers to Burton's⁵ "chapter entitled 'Bad diet a cause of melancholy'", and upon that authority and Galen's, singles out cabbage. For sure, in his frivolity Lamb was not denouncing the social conditions of poor people, but before signing himself "Burton, *Junior*", Lamb concludes noting about tailors: "It is well known that this last-named vegetable has, from the earliest periods we can discover, constituted almost the sole food of this extraordinary race of people." In jargon, *cabbage* is left-over fabric that tailors purloin from customers.

There is reference to religion, as Lamb speculates that one of the reasons that they are melancholy is because they are entrusted with clothing man after his expulsion from the Garden of Eden. On p. 190, Lamb writes "in the cabbalistic language of his [the tailor's] order". Lamb's tailors abstain from work on Sundays, and we can assume he did not have in mind Jewish⁶ tailors, who in London became conspicuous later during the nineteenth century. Artist Susie Vickery, who in March 2010 presented in London a tapestry inspired by Lamb's satirical essay on tailors, remarked to one of the present authors:

My dissertation, prior to this body of work, was a comparison between the sweat

⁵ Melancholia is from the devil (but so is especially despair, an obstacle to salvation) and Robert Burton, the seventeenth-century humoralist physician, recognises the intervention of evil spirits in melancholia. This is not unlike how some Jewish rabbinic authors reconciled a demonic interpretation of *ruach ra'ah* and Maimonidean humoralist explanation of melancholia. "Burton is careful to point out that 'melancholy and despair, though often, do not always concur', thus allowing for the direct action of G[-]d's heavy hand and avoiding the charge of physical determinism." (Snyder, p. 39).

⁶ Elsewhere in his *opus*, in his 1821 essay 'Imperfect Sympathies', Lamb expressed his dislike of the social distance between Christians and Jews diminishing (Julius 2010, p. 372).

shops of 19th Century East London and those in present day Mumbai. As you know it was in the 19th and early 20th [centuries] that large numbers of Jewish immigrants came to London and found themselves working in tailoring workshops in appalling conditions under the sweated system. These conditions, and their lack of autonomy in a system of subcontracting would have made the biggest optimist prone to melancholy. So I am not sure that it would have had anything inherently to do with their religion. But I may be wrong.

In fact, it was nothing inherent to either Jews or Judaism. In this paper, we are going to show how persistent ascriptions of melancholia to the Jews took shape.

3. Imperial Spain, Early Modern France, and the English Elizabethans: Melancholia as an Affectation of Nation and Social Class

Renaissance melancholia, i.e., melancholia being in fashion among part of the better classes during the Renaissance, was a cultural phenomenon affecting more than one nation in Western Europe. The *spleen*⁷ of later literary movements, such as late nineteenth century French and English Romantic writers, owes much to that precedent. Over a longer period within early modernity, and in perceptions of that period entertained in high modernity and up to the present, sometimes the supposed melancholia of a given nation was put in relation to melancholia as being contributed by other national cultures. Spanish melancholia in the Spanish Golden Age is the subject of a book by Teresa Scott Soufas (1990). In his essay “Arabs, Jews, and the Enigma of Imperial Spanish Melancholia” Roger Bartra (2000) pointed out:

The English Elizabethans wanted to snatch away Don Quixote’s melancholy to erect it as a national monument; Robert Burton’s *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621) no doubt contributed to this movement. Certainly, one of the distinctive symbols of the German Renaissance is Dürer’s famous print that portrays the angel of melancholy. The French constructed the *tristesse* to emulate the English *spleen*, and the Romantics exalted melancholic sentimentalism as seldom before. It is possible that the Florentine Neo-Platonists first propelled the rebirth of ancient Greek melancholy in Europe, supported by the Arabic and Jewish philosophic traditions. And the long Spanish Golden Age most contributed to consolidating in the West the black humors

⁷ By contrast to gloom as being associated with spleen, an anatomical metaphor based on functional ascriptions to the milt (making a person *splenetic*), in Jewish sources instead – from late antiquity or the early Middle Ages – mirth was associated with the spleen (*Babylonian Talmud* at *Berakhot*, 61b; *Ecclesiastes Rabbah*, 7:37). Thus, opposite functions were ascribed to the milt in different cultures.

as one of the propelling forces of politics and society. The era's immense Spanish melancholy shadowed all [p. 65:] of Western culture with such great force that its lengthened impact reaches all the way to the present. But when we gaze at Spanish culture, we will not easily find signs of the old melancholy. It seems that the archetype has faded: where are the dark paths of the mystics and the cabalistic signs of the Jewish doctors? [...]

“Medical knowledge had [p. 66:] been associated with the Jews for centuries, and after their expulsion, with the converts.” Bartra remarks (*ibid.*, p. 66) how in Christian Spain there was dissatisfaction with, even a sardonic attitude towards the prominence of ancient pagans, and medieval Jewish and Muslim physicians in medicine.⁸

We may add that still, in as late an era as the beginning of the reign of Phillip IV (1605–1665), the authors of a petition to reform the research about “purity of blood” asked themselves why a sword maker was automatically considered pure, while a doctor was invariably classified as Jewish (Yerushalmi 70). The problem is relevant because melancholy was traditionally considered a Jewish illness. Marcel Bataillon has asked in his “¿Melancolía renacentista o melancolia judía?” (Renaissance or Jewish Melancholy?) if Spanish melancholy has renaissance roots or Jewish origins. The theme of melancholy connects us to one of the most debated problems of Spanish history: the causes of the decadence of the empire, an idea [p. 67:] which has been abused in excess; [...]

During the Golden Age, Spain underwent “important metamorphoses that left deep imprints on its evolution. One of the marks was melancholy” (Bartra, *ibid.*, p. 67). “Golden Age Spaniards first examined the ways in which tempers and humors influenced the social and political body, as in religious spaces.” (*ibid.*). Thus, humoralism was no longer confined to medicine: “The Greek theory of humors passed from medicine to political writing and the religious texts of the mystics.” (*ibid.*). Bartra then turns to the mentality of Jewish converts, admittedly “quite complex and thorny” a topic.⁹ Bartra (2000, p.69) relates

⁸ “[T]he Arabic tradition in medicine had also become a prickly topic. [...] One of the most celebrated and influential doctors of Spanish medicine, Francisco Vallés, headed a powerful movement for the de-arabization of Galenic thought. The foundation of Arabized Galenism was Avicenna’s scholarly commentary, *The Canon of Medicine*, a text Gerardo de Cremona’s Latin version popularized. Doctor Vallés successfully imposed a movement directed at eliminating the teaching of *Canon* and the Arabic language in university medical studies. The persecution of the Moors explains the de-arabization of Galenic medicine. [...]” (Bartra 2000, p. 68).

⁹ Bartra enumerates, based on current scholarly literature, various patterns of behaviour. He then proceeds: “In spite of the extremity of the above characterizations, it is very possible that the condition of the Jewish converts would be a source of melancholy, and that this melancholy would be expressed in the liter-

melancholy in early modern Spain to the expulsions and the fate of the converts:

The topic of melancholy was situated in the center of a great polemic. In that era physicians, theologians and writers dealt with this topical issue. We know, for example, that Cervantes sketched the profile of Don Quixote with the black ink of melancholy. It seems to me that in the border condition of Renaissance Spain we find one of the clues that sheds a light upon the great import of the issue. Melancholy was a border illness, a disease of transition and transformation. A sickness of displaced peoples, of migrants, associated with the fragile life of the people who suffered forced conversions [...]. The Arabs and the Jews did not leave a smile in the air like the Cheshire cat when expelled from their Spanish lands: they left a deep aftertaste of melancholy.

4. Typical Associations of Saturn, and Perceptions of the Jews

Of all the planets known before modernity, Saturn is the one farthest from the earth (according to the geocentric conception). It is the slowest moving, too, and was reputed to be the coldest. It was claimed to rule the melancholic temperament, and it was associated with inactivity, the contemplative life, illness and old age. Such beliefs about planetary deities took various forms,¹⁰ e.g., in

ature[...]. I do not wish to enter this discussion, although I need to document the fact that Renaissance Europe considered melancholy to be an “illness” particular to the Jews. Johannes Reuchlen [Reuchlin], for example, wrote in his *De verbo Mirifico* (1494) that sadness of temperament characterizes the Jews and that they live under the sign of Saturn [...]. Isaac Cardoso believed that if any illness could be specifically Jewish, it was melancholy, because of the sadness and the fear contracted by the wounds and oppressions of exile [...]. Additionally since many doctors were Jewish or converts, we [p. 68:] can understand the reasons for melancholy’s outstanding place in medical treatment, and in fact, the great interest of many Spanish doctors in the topic of melancholy comes from being related to Jewish converts as ancestors. Many peninsular doctors lived under this suspicion, which was often an excuse for dispossessing them of their belongings and for feeding the popular anti-Semitic ire.”

¹⁰ Bear in mind that astrology coloured culture not only in Christendom and the Mediterranean Islamic countries, but as far as India, where the cultivated Humayun, the second Mughal emperor, was so besotted with astrology that on Tuesdays he would be utterly cruel, because of the association of that day with Mars. According to the chronicler Abul Fazl, on one occasion he meted eccentrically draconian punishment to revellers from his army, and even (suspecting criticism) to an imam, on “a Tuesday, when Humayun, according to his astrologically determined fancy, ‘wore the red vesture of Mars and sat on the throne of wrath and vengeance.’” (Eraly 2003, p. 45). Humayun invented an astrology-linked ‘carpet of mirth’. “It had circles marked out on it in different colours to represent the planets, on which the courtiers [p. 46:] positioned themselves according to the planet that was appropriate to them, and played a curious game, in which they either stood, sat or reclined according to the fall of the dice” (*ibid.*, pp. 45-46). “What he did on each day was determined not by the exigencies of government, nor by any rational mode of time management, but by the attribute of the planet of the day – Sunday and Tuesday, for example, were given to gov-

the iconographical tradition of the so-called ‘Children of the Planets’ (Morrall 1993).¹¹

A major association of Saturn is with melancholy, and this connection was indeed the subject of a book by Klibansky, Panofsky and Saxl (1964). And yet, Zafran remarked (1979, p. 16), they

touch only indirectly upon one significant aspect or transformation of the ancient planetary deity – the interrelationship and even identification between Saturn and the Jews. They note that St. Augustine considered Saturn a god of the Jews [(Klibansky et al., *ibid.*, p. 161, n. 115)] and also quote two texts in which this connection is explicit. The earlier is a treatise of the ninth or tenth century by Alcabitus which claims for Saturn ‘the faith of Judaism.’ [(*ibid.*, p. 132)] The latter source is an eighteenth-century work by J. W. Appelius who finds the melancholy temperament which derives from the influence of Saturn ultimately responsible for the ““despicable timidity” of the Jews as a race.’ [(*ibid.*, p. 121)]

Saturn was believed to preside over cripples, and was himself represented sometimes as a cripple on crutches. So were Jews. It was so because the Jews were considered to be decrepit: old and superseded. Whereas in some images of Saturn, it is carrying a scythe, in other images he carries a staff, cane or crutch, and the latter two “became a common attribute of pilgrims, vagabonds, beggars – the children of Saturn who must make their way upon earth. Frequently in anti-Semitic propaganda Jews were also depicted supporting themselves with canes [...] but here clearly to indicate a moral and spiritual decrepitude.” (Zafran 1979, p. 22). As the Jews were destroyed and in exile, being on crutches was thought to befit them, but also the supposed inefficacy of their rites, and

ernment affairs because, as Abul Fazl (himself an astrologer) explains, ‘Sunday pertains to the sun whose rays regulate ... sovereignty, while Tuesday is Mars’s day and Mars is the patron of soldiers.’ For similar reasons, Saturday and Thursday were assigned to matters of religion and learning, while Monday and Wednesday were ‘days of joy’, and Friday was a day open to all matters and all classes of men. On each day Humayun wore clothes of the colour appropriate to the planet of the day – on Sundays he wore yellow, on Mondays green, and so on.” (*ibid.*, p. 46). Humayun was fatally wounded on falling while climbing down from his observatory, on the night of Friday, 24 January 1556, which he had considered auspicious because of the rise of Venus (*ibid.*, pp. 112-113).

¹¹ “Within the glass roundel, it is indeed the baleful shadow of Saturn that falls over the figures. Saturn, in his benigner aspect as the ancient Roman god of agriculture, is the ruler of those tied to the earth, his element: peasants, labourers and workers of the soil. As the coldest planet, his season is winter, which accounts for the inclusion of agricultural activities associated with the winter months – woodcutting, ploughing and the slaughtering of pigs. (Of all the animals, moreover, pigs were considered closest to the earth.) The planet’s malign aspects are also shown, for melancholics were inclined to dark moods and solitude; their star made them easily susceptible to crime and hence to prison and the pillory, to beggary and physical misfortunes.” (Morrall 1993, p. 213).

Judaism being the old, rejected religion – replaced with the *Ecclesia triumphans* – were suited by such symbolism. The idea was that having rejected Christianity, they could not stand on their legs, as their adherence to the Law of Moses would not support them.

Like the goat, the pig was an animal associated with Saturn. A goat-like physiognomy, as well as the fetid caprilic smell of goats, were ascribed to the Jews,¹² and actually the goat association has persisted in modern anti-Semitism. This also drew a response from the Italian poet Umberto Saba (1883–1957), whose mother was Jewish. In a famous poem, he wrote about the sadness of a goat, and described her as “una capra dal viso semita” (“a goat with a semitic face”). He did so without intending it to reflect negatively on either the Jews or the goat, and yet he did so by appropriating a well-known, and very negative caricature of male Jews. Saba was humanising the goat, attaching a Jewish identity to it, and then universalising the pain that he was reading into her bleating to the pain of everybody who is living.

Shakespeare’s Shylock is morally monstrous, but so is he portrayed visually as well. It is not only Shylock who is portrayed on the stage with a red beard and a hooked nose: that was a standard representation of the Jews, and in particular of Judas Iscariot (see Mellinkoff 1982). The entry for the latter in Jeffrey (1992, p. 419) states: “The linking of Judas and the Jews at large [...] is also frequent in medieval art, by way of stereotypical details: red hair and beard, ruddy skin, yellow robe and money bag, large, hooked nose,¹³ big lips, and bleary eyes.” But Shylock was also associated with money, and a man counting money is a traditional association of Saturn.¹⁴

¹² Stench as being a feature of Saturn, Zafran pointed out (1979, pp. 17-18), “was already in Roman [p. 18:] times an established feature of the Saturnine personality. This belief in a Saturnine or melancholic odour, ‘foetidus’, was later enlarged upon by Guido Bonatti who characterized it as ‘goatlike’. Jews too, according to medieval belief, had a characteristic stench, the ‘foetor judaicus’ which would only vanish upon baptism. Further this ‘Jewish odour’ was often described as goatlike. As Trachtenberg [(1943, pp. 46-48)] points out, this is not the only link between goats and the Jews. The latter were said to have goatish beards, or were depicted with goat horns, or riding upon a goat, one of the traditional mounts of the devil. That the goat was not only [...] an animal belonging to Saturn but also, in the form of the zodiacal sign of Capricorn, one of the two signs or houses associated with Saturn, draws the knot of relationship still tighter.”

¹³ Sander Gilman has discussed the nose in several of his articles, be it in the context of cosmetic surgery, or of ethnic (and Jewish) identity, or the representation of given fictional characters (e.g., see Gilman 1994).

¹⁴ Another association of Saturn was with arithmeticians, accountants, and moneylenders. In the words of Zafran (1979, p. 20): “During the fifteenth century the planetary deities were merged with aspects of the liberal arts; as a result Saturn took on the appearance of ‘an accountant or arithmetician ... the god of the coffers’ [Klibansky et al. (1964, p. 206)]. It is in this role that he appears in the upper left corner of a *Children of Saturn* in the fifteenth-century manuscript at Tübingen (Pl. 6a) and at Erfurt, as well as in a

Zafran (1979, Pl. 5e) shows “a mid-fifteenth-century German MS at Cassel” (*ibid.*, p. 19), in which “Saturn actually holds a banner bearing a pig. The pig was also sometimes the animal attribute of the melancholy humour, as seen for example in a woodcut from the French Calendar of the Shepherds of 1493.” (*ibid.*, pp. 19–20). Zafran also remarks (*ibid.*, p. 20, fn. 39) that “the pig as the attribute of melancholy also appears in the *Hours* of Simon Vostre of 1502 and a swine ridden by a witch appears in conjunction with Cranach’s painted figure of Melancholia in Copenhagen.”

Schäfer (1997, Chapter 3) discusses Graeco-Roman reactions to Jewish abstinence from pork. One would be mistaken to think that as pigs are not eaten by the Jews, pigs and Jews would not be associated with each other other than by mutual exclusion. Quite on the contrary. Shachar (1974) researched the Jewish sow (*Judensau*), a motif in anti-Semitism in Germanic lands. It used to be represented with the body of a sow, suckling not piglets, but adult Jews.¹⁵

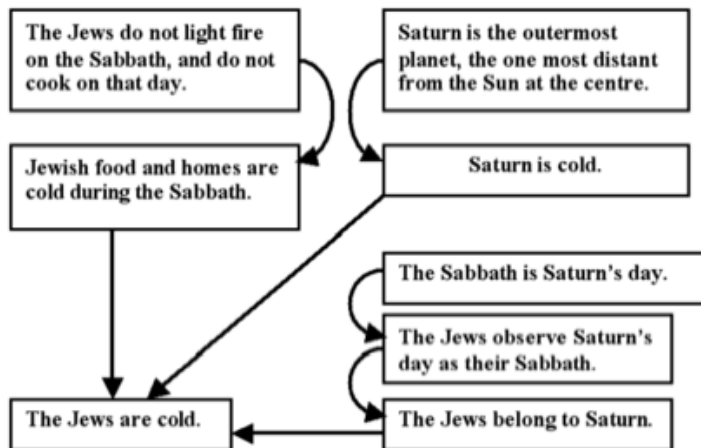


Fig. 1. The early development of received notions about the Jews in relation to Saturn.

manuscript on the planets in the Vatican Library (Pl. 5d). To a contemporary viewer, however, these depictions would have brought to mind the unpleasant character of the Jewish moneylender or usurer. The latter was an established type by the thirteenth century when one of the chief attributes of Jewish figures in the *Bible moralisée* was the money-bag. Saturn, as we have seen, engendered miserliness and avarice: thus the melancholy temperament which he also controlled came to be represented, as in a mid-fifteenth-century broadsheet of *The Four Temperaments* (Pl. 6b), by a despondent figure holding a large money-bag, with coins dispersed on his desk. Cesare Ripa’s *Iconologia* [ed. Venice 1645, p. 96 and fig. p. 100] served to reinforce the image of the miserly melancholic.” Woodcuts “show the Jewish usurer, like Saturn and the melancholic, at a desk counting out his money” (Zafran 1979, p. 21).

¹⁵ Zafran (1979, p. 25), while discussing broadsheets and imagery that propagandised the charge of ritual killing by Jews in Trento of the child Simonino, remarked that “one North Italian engraving (Pl. 9a) [from the 1470s] is fascinating not only for the fantastic caricatures of the Jews stabbing the oversize boy

5. Cold Saturn, Cold Saturday, Cold Jewish Sabbath, Cold Jews:
Meleager, the *Brevis Expositio in Vergilii Georgica*, and Rutilius Namatianus

“Love burns hot even on cold Sabbaths (*psychrois sabbasi*)”, stated the jealous lover Meleager, one of the earliest pagans to mention the Jewish Sabbath (ca. 100 BCE). Apparently the Jewish Sabbath was considered to be cold, because practising Jews did not (and do not) light fire during the Sabbath (even though they could light it before), so food may be cold or tepid instead of hot. The next step was to aetiologise the coldness of the Sabbath, i.e., the day of Saturn, Saturday, with the coldness of Saturn, the outermost planet.

In light of much later authors of the fifth century C.E. one may suggest that it is indeed the prohibition of lighting fires on Shabbat and, as a result of this, of cooking, which gave rise to the notion of “cold Sabbaths”. Thus, the anonymous author of the *Brevis Expositio in Vergilii Georgica* (first half of the fifth century C.E.) explains the “cold star of Saturn”: “It has been sufficiently known that the star of Saturn is cold, and therefore the food among the Jews on the day of Saturn is cold.” (Schäfer 1997, p. 92).

In a travel-poem, *De reditu suo* (*On his Return*), the pagan Rutilius Namatianus relates with irritation about a Jew he saw on board of a ship. *De reditu suo* is pervaded with consternation at the squalor of the times, blamed on the decline of traditional pagan worship. Before bemoaning the Romans ever venturing into Judaea, as (presumably through Christianity) Jewish ideas conquered Rome,¹⁶ Rutilius Namatianus lashes at Jewish practices: “a root of silliness they are: chill Sabbaths are after their own heart, yet their heart is chillier than their creed. Each seventh day is condemned to ignoble sloth [...]”¹⁷ Fig. 1 shows the development of the concepts involved.

6. Standard Traits of Saturn, and the Medieval Theological Rationale for Ascribing These to the Jews

“[A] current of thought, over a great span of time, relates the Jews and

but also because the Jewish badges contain the image of a pig.” The badge (or *rota*) is a patch Jews were forced to wear, so they could be promptly told apart.

¹⁶ This is similar to “Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit” (Horace, *Epistulae*, II.i.156).

¹⁷ From J. Wight Duff and A. M. Duff’s English translation of Namatianus’ *De reditu suo* in the Loeb Classical Library. The original Latin reads as follows: “radix stultitiae, cui frigida sabbata cordi / sed cor frigidius religione sua. / Septima quaeque dies turpi damnata veterno, [...]” (Book 1, vv. 389-391).

Saturn” (Zafran 1979, p. 16).¹⁸ Given the social positioning on the margins of Christian society in the Middle Ages, in being considered to be under the influence of Saturn they were in the company of the lowest rung of medieval society, also associated with Saturn. Zafran quotes from the *Introductorium maius* by ninth or tenth-century Alcabitus (known in Europe in Latin translation from Arabic) a description of the traits of Saturn by way of a prototypical example: “Saturn is bad, masculine, in daytime cold, dry, melancholy”. (Being bad, and being melancholic were associates of the Jews.) Saturn “presides over fathers” and presides “over old age”. (Christians did not dispute that Judaism had fathered Christianity, and it was to them old and decrepit.) Saturn presides over “the worried, the low born” (both qualities were also ascribed by Christian society to the Jews). Saturn presided over “the heavy, the dead”. The Jews were dead, being excluded from the eternal life. Saturn presided over “magicians, demons, devils, and people of ill fame” (these were routinely associated with the Jews, or considered to be categories to which the Jews belonged), but “all this when his [Saturn’s] condition is good. But when he is evil, he presides over hatred, obstinacy, care, grief, lamenting, evil opinion, suspicion”.¹⁹

Jews being obstinate was proven by their failure to convert, and was supported by the fact that the generation of the Exodus was described as being obstinate by the Hebrew Bible itself. That Jews were associated with grief and lamenting was considered to be their deserved state, in retribution for the Passion. As to suspicion, they were suspected of anything evil, and according to a pattern usual in prelogical thinking, they could therefore be portrayed as being themselves suspecting.²⁰ Alcabitus also stated about Saturn that “further he presides over miserly gains, over old and impossible things, far travels, long

¹⁸ “Judas was also to become an example of the melancholic temperament.” (Zafran 1979, p. 17, fn. 14). This is a concept dealt with by Klibansky et al. (1964) on pp. 121, 195 and 286.

¹⁹ Of course, the hated Jews were charged with hating humankind and Christians in particular. The accusation of misanthropy had stuck already in pagan Roman times, especially because of the avoidance of interfaith marriages on the part of the Jews.

²⁰ This is Freudian-Kleinian psychoanalyst Ignacio Matte Blanco’s (1908-1995) Principle of Symmetry, and a major example of current application is the frequent charge that Jews are like the Nazis (the Zionist/Nazi analogy, which of course is also intended as the most deeply wounding insult, was dissected by Anthony Julius 2010, pp. 506-516). Matte Blanco applied mathematical logic to the human mind, and developed what he termed the “bi-logic of the unconscious”. His rule-based structure for the unconscious allows us to make sense of those aspects of thought that do not obey conventional logic. In his book *The Unconscious as Infinite Sets*, Matte Blanco (1975) proposed that the structure of the unconscious can be summarised by the principle of Generalisation and the principle of Symmetry, where it is the latter that contravenes on conventional logic, in that it makes relations reversible. Matte Blanco called this Symmetrical Logic. It is the mixture of the symmetrical logic of the unconscious and the conventional logic of the preconscious and consciousness, that according to Matte Blanco constitutes the bi-logic. See Rayner (1995).

absence, great poverty, avarice.” Miserly gains and avarice were of course frequent attributes of the Jews in medieval Christendom, and still are. As to wandering and long absence from their homeland, these, too, were situations ascribed to the Jews, albeit not by Alcabitius. But Alcabitius then stated about Saturn: “He has the faith of Judaism, black clothing; of days Saturday, and the night of Wednesday.”²¹

“Haughtiness and a profound hatred of Christianity were charges often levelled at the Jews, while guile and corruption were perhaps best embodied by the worst of all Jews, Judas Iscariot.” (Zafran 1979, p. 17). “In the treatise on Saturn by the ninth-century Arab astrologer Abu Ma’shar, which served as the model for Alcabitius”, and which does not mention the Jews, “Saturn presides over ‘avarice ... blindness, corruption, hatred, guile ... haughtiness ...’; and one of the qualities of his nature is its ‘stinking wind’.” (Zafran, *ibid.*). The blindfold figure of Synagoga²² (i.e., Jewry) was a commonplace: the Jews hold the Law of Moses, and cannot see its true meaning (true, that is, according to Christianity).

7. Saturn (Pictorially) the Jew, and the Child-Eating, then Defeated Kronos as Being an Allegory of the Passion and then the Triumph of the Church

Having “dealt with the Saturnine features of the Jews”, Zafran (1979, p. 21) turns to a discussion of such late fifteenth- and sixteenth-century images of Saturn, in which “Saturn himself assumed ‘Jewish’ characteristics.” (*ibid.*). Zafran relates how the Father Time-like iconography of Saturn was eventually relinquished: “Gradually the negative and malevolent nature of the planet who was responsible for an increasing number of disasters came to predominate and

²¹ Zafran (1979, p. 16). Moreover, “everything whatsoever that is black, and goats and bullocks” belong to Saturn (*ibid.*). Zafran pointed out that the blood of Jews was thought to be black and putrid (*ibid.*), apart from their association with the Devil (Trachtenberg 1943).

²² Zafran (1979, p. 17 and fnn. 15, 16), Hildenfänger (1903), Schlauch (1939). Zafran points out that “[p]artly for the same reason the owl, a bird of darkness, came to be identified with the Jews.” Mariko Miyazaki (1999) has analysed, in relation to anti-Semitism and to the hooked nose ascribed to the Jews, owls shown in relief on misericords, i.e., wooden supports on which the faithful are permitted to lean on, when forced to stand in prayer for a long time. Actually the owl, which has frontal eyes, was often depicted with a humanised face, and even with a mouth, its beak being made instead into a hooked nose (so in the British Library’s Harley MS 4751, Folio 47r). In the Middle Ages, it was claimed that when other birds see the owl hiding during the day, they noisily attack it to betray its hiding place (see Fig. 2): arguably this, too, dovetails with the prescribed behaviour towards the Jews (who prefer to live in darkness, as though) for members of Christian society, who have seen the light and live in it, and are therefore amenable to be likened to daily birds.

Saturn was endowed with decidedly caricatured features. The caricatures most resemble those employed at the same time for the Jews.” (*ibid.*). In one image “showing the planetary deities on the wheel of fortune”, none of them is shown in profile, except Saturn, and making a character appear in profile was “a method traditionally used to stigmatize evil figures”. It also “allowed the artist to emphasize the unpleasant facial characteristics” of Saturn, with a “sharp nose and goatlike beard” (Zafran, *ibid.*). Saturn even wore a Jewish hat.²³ In some images, Saturn was made to carry a staff or cane, but the staff, a symbol of exile, was associated with the iconography of the Wandering Jew (*ibid.*). Sometimes Saturn was even depicted using a crutch (or with a wooden leg), and the Jews, too, to symbolise their supposed decrepitude in the moral and spiritual domains, were “also depicted supporting themselves with canes” in anti-Jewish propaganda.



Fig. 2. The owl from the Harley MS 4751, Folio 47r.

²³ In a work of Christian and astrological lore with woodcuts by Hans Baldung Grien, one of the woodcuts shows Saturn amid planetary gods, and Saturn has a goatlike beard, wears an inverted-plate hat of the kind the Jews in Germany were forced to wear, carries a scythe in his left hand, and in his raised right hand holds a banner bearing the image of a scorpion (Zafran, *ibid.*, pp. 21-22). “Scorpio was not one of the prime zodiacal signs of Saturn, but according to some astrological systems the ‘termini’ of the scorpion belonged to Saturn and engendered melancholics as well as other undesirable types” (Zafran, *ibid.*, p. 22, citing Klibansky 1964, p. 147). Moreover, this was a further link to the Jews, because “the scorpion banner was also an established symbol of perfidy and one associated with the Jews and their betrayal of Christ.” (Zafran, *ibid.*, p. 22).

Zafran conceded: “This identification of Saturn with the Jews might still appear conjecture [p. 23:] without one image that proves the case.” He was able to produce just such an image, a woodcut from an almanac for 1492 published in Nuremberg by Peter Wagner. That image shows Saturn devouring a child, and thus reproducing an already extant motif, “but in the woodcut of 1492 Saturn is clearly identified by his hat and badge as a Jew.” (Zafran 1979, p. 23).²⁴ Saturn was represented while eating children, because the ancient Romans conflated their own Saturn with the Greek Kronos, who used to eat his children lest any of them would overthrow him, until Zeus (who had been hidden and therefore was not eaten by Kronos) defeated Kronos, and by some accounts castrated him. Zafran remarks (*ibid.*, p. 24):

This connection with age, outdated, dying things and the displacement of one god by another provides an analogy to the relationship between Christianity and Judaism. It was the Jews who, according to the dominant medieval concept, sought to destroy their own offspring or son, Christ, but he was miraculously resurrected and a new era born. Thus Saturn and the Jews both represent the unworthy fathers, who are rejected, defeated and displaced by their sons who establish new orders (Christianity and the reign of the Olympian gods). The rejected parents cannot accept this new order but remain isolated misanthropes nurturing their vengeful resentment and hatred. They are thought of as the embodiments of all that is worst in mankind and become the archetypal pariahs of the world.

Moreover, “the horrific image as child-eater would have immediately brought to mind the most serious and pernicious charge lodged against the Jews in this period, namely ritual murder.” (Zafran, *ibid.*, pp. 24–25).²⁵ Of course, the child-eating Kronos/Saturn, inasmuch a ghoulish demonic character, in Christian Europe had an affinity in terms of identity with the Devil, and this arguably

²⁴ Zafran (*ibid.*, pp. 26-27) examines the likely impact of Peter Wagner’s woodcut. He remarks: “This transformation could evolve even further in popular imagery and folklore” (*ibid.*, p. 26). The child-eating ogre (the *Kinderfresser* or *Kindlifresser*) appeared, e.g., “in the festival floats of the Nuremberg Schembart carnival” (*ibid.*), during the century that preceded, and the one which followed Wagner’s woodcut. “This wild, grotesque figure devouring the children he gathers in his sack is obviously an outgrowth of the child-eating Saturn” (*ibid.*).

²⁵ The myth of the infant Dionysus is quite relevant. Already Belden (1924), in an article written in a reformed spelling of English and titled ‘The Jew’s Daughter and the Myth of Zagreus’, traced the blood libel against the Jews (as typified in a famous English ballad) to accusations of baby-eating levelled against the early Christians by the Roman authorities (in his *Octavius*, Minucius Felix, the earliest Christian apologist, decried this), and in turn this latter libel to the myth of the child Dionysus or Zagreus, enticed, torn to pieces and devoured by the Titans (bear in mind that Kronos, too, was a Titan). Athena, according to the myth, revived the child.

reinforced the motivation to associate both with the Jews. Trachtenberg's study (1943) *The Devil and the Jews* is a classic,²⁶ so suffice it to just mention its subject matter, and to point out in addition that the spiritual world of pagan Europe had been relegated to witchcraft, and whatever is of the Devil. The supersession of paganism by Christianity relegated any persistence of pre-existing spiritual options to the realm of the Devil. But then Kronos eating its children was likened to Judaism or Jewry and the Passion, i.e., to the old people and religion eating the Child that to Christianity is the Saviour, whereas the triumph of Zeus, in the same metaphor, is the *Ecclesia triumphans*. To further drive in the point that the Jews were dangerous to Christians even in the present, it was convenient to blame them with still being the child-eating Kronos, with still being prone to doing something atrocious to Christian children.

²⁶ A minor strand, quite differently motivated, was the likening of Black people to the Devil. Gilman discussed this in “Das-ist-der-Teu-fel-si-cher-lich”: The Image of the Black on the Viennese Stage from Schikaneder to Grillparzer” (Gilman 1975). Cf. in Italian: “nero come il Diavolo”. Carlo Porta (1775-1821), the most prominent poet in the Milanese dialect, has a lower-class character utter the following: “che tir fioeul d’ona negra el m’ha giugaa” [lit., “what a son-of-a-black-woman of a trick he played on me”] (in *La Ninetta del Verzee*, 24. This is a work of 1812-1814). By contrast, standard Italian has *tiro birbone* for ‘bad trick’, and colloquial Italian has *scherzo da prete* (lit., ‘a priest’s prank’).

Nissan recalls the following three episodes on public transportation in Milan somewhere between the mid-1970s and the early 1980s in Milan. In all three cases, perpetrators were old white males, probably reflecting the upsurge of racism at the time of Italy’s conquest of Ethiopia in 1935. In one case, an old man in the tramcar on its way to Piazza Cordusio, on seeing a black man walking past the Credito Italiano, shouted: “Un negher!” (“A blackamoor!”, in Milanese).

On another occasion, one evening inside a bus of the line 60 travelling in Via Mario Pagano, a young black woman in the front of the bus, dressed as a model, with gold threads in her hair, and perhaps travelling in order to attend a photographing session, was shouted at by an angry old man: “Tutta d’oro! Tutta d’oro!” (“She’s all gold! All gold!”), whereas a white young lady, rather homely, was staring at her resentfully, and probably in envy. The victim looked back in fear. She eventually stood up, and had a calm, subdued chat with the driver. Once she alighted, the driver gave Nissan a dreamy star, as a silent commentary about the young lady who looked like a celebrity.

The third episode took place in Piazza Leonardo da Vinci, and Nissan observed from the pavement while a tramcar of the line 23 was proceeding in the direction of Lambrate. An old white, besuited man was standing in front of a young black man, visibly apprehensive. The old man (by chance, a lookalike of the then neo-Fascist leader Giorgio Almirante) gave him a strange stare, then started to touch him, to the victim’s visible alarm.

A fourth episode took place inside a tramcar travelling along the southern side of the cathedral, in Piazza Duomo. In the almost empty tramcar, between Nissan, who was rather in the back of the vehicle and a few women in the front of the vehicle, three Rom children were sitting in front. One of them was a boy, and the other two were girls. A middle-aged woman, wearing a rather upmarket coat, started to shout in panic: “Gli zingari! Gli zingari!” (“The Gypsies! The Gypsies!”). The two little girls were terrified. The little boy, instead, offended and defiant, retorted in heavily accented Italian: “Io faccio uno scippo. Una rapina!” (lit., “I snatch purses. I carry out a robbery!”). This is an example in which out of anger, a victim targeted because of belonging to a dispreferred ethnic group was retorting by accepting and asserting the forbidding stereotypical image proclaimed to his face by the perpetrator.

It cannot be said that the theme of Jews doing something atrocious to non-Jewish children has died out. Nor, judging from Fig. 3, has the iconography of Saturn and the Jews. That cartoon, by Dave Brown, was published by the newspaper *Independent* on 27 January 2003, and on 25 November 2003 was selected as Britain's Cartoon of the Year. The competition was held on the premises of the weekly *The Economist*. The cartoonist received the award by a prominent politician, Claire Short, previously minister for overseas (on another occasion she reportedly [Wistrich 2008] blamed global warming on Israel). Admittedly, this cartoon was a direct reference to Goya's painting *Saturn Devouring One of His Sons*. Here instead the point, of course, is that here the relevant categories are 'evil and unsubdued Jew' vs. 'non-Jewish child', by no means his own son (which was how the Passion instead was conceptualised).



Fig. 3. A 2003 cartoon showing a gigantic Sharon devouring a (non-Jewish) child.

8. The Hebrew Name of the Planet, and Jewish Appropriations of Saturn

For all of its prominence in the literature about Saturn and the Jews, Zafran's article (1979) does not mention that the Hebrew name for the planet Saturn is *Shabbetai*. It is found as early as the talmudic and midrashic literature. But in the Jewish tradition, the planet *Shabbetai* is unrelated to the seventh day

of the week, the *Shabbath* (Sabbath). Rather, *Pirque de Rabbi Eli'ezer*, ch. 6, claims that Shabbetai rules on the fourth day of the week, i.e., Wednesday. According to the *Babylonian Talmud*, tractate *Shabbath*, 156a, “he who was born under Shabbetai, shall be a man whose thoughts (i.e., plans) will be discarded (i.e., frustrated)”. Marcus Jastrow (1903, s.v. *Shabbetai*) remarked that this is because the Aramaic verb *b̄tel* has (roughly) the same sense as the Hebrew verb *shabat* (‘to cease’).

Consider however that the name *Shabbetai* being given to Saturn in Hebrew may itself have been a response to the Roman association of Saturn with Saturday.²⁷ But in biblical times, arguably the name *Kewan*, found in the other Semitic languages (and in Persia), was Saturn’s name. This is often given as the interpretation of *kywn* (*Kiyyun*), the name of an idol in *Amos* 5:26.

It must be said that it wasn’t always the case that the association of Saturn with the Jews was met with rejection. Abraham Ibn Ezra accepted it explicitly.²⁸ Judah Ibn Matqah accepted Ptolemy’s associating the influence of Saturn with the Lands of Syria and Israel cautiously, and then proceeded to refute it on two grounds: the special interest of the Providence for the Land of Israel, and Ptolemy relating countries to planets rather than to the fixed stars.

²⁷ The pattern of the days in ancient Rome is the subject of Broughall (1936). The planetary week in Hebrew literature was discussed by Gandz (1948-1949).

²⁸ “Astrology played a prominent role in both Abraham Ibn Ezra’s (ca. 1089 - ca. 1167) scientific treatises and biblical commentaries. [...] the astrologer’s paraphernalia was, to his mind, highly useful in explicating major biblical events and issues.” (Sela 2004, p. 21). Astrologers working under the orbit of Islam had ascribed Islam to the control of the planet Venus, Christendom, to Mercury’s, and the Jews, to Saturn’s (*ibid.*, p. 23). “Saturn [...] was called *Shabbtai* in the Babylonian Talmud, i.e. the star of the Sabbath, the Jewish sacred day” (*ibid.*, p. 24; the locus is in tractate *Shabbat*, 156a). “Abraham Ibn Ezra was the first Jewish thinker, as far as we know, to be concerned with the astrological elements of the Saturn–Jewish myth and to make a significant contribution towards its further development and absorption within medieval Jewish society.” (*ibid.*). His super-commentator took it even further: “Fourteenth-century Jewish thinkers looked for and *found* the presence of Saturn in some of Ibn Ezra’s biblical commentaries, not least in places where Ibn Ezra never referred explicitly to the malefic planet.” (*ibid.*). Cf. Sela (2003, pp. 151-159).

Born in Tudela (a town which was close to the border between Muslim and Christian Spain), Abraham Ibn Ezra, who is also a famous Hebrew poet (Schirmann 1997, Ch. 1, pp. 13-92), left Spain (possibly fleeing, like others, upon the conquest of the till then fragmented, Almoravid-ruled Moslem part of Spain by the fanatic Almohades, who had already destroyed or forcibly converted the Jewish and Christian communities of the Maghreb). At least as early as 1140, Abraham Ibn Ezra was residing in Rome. In 1145 (and possibly earlier) he was in Lucca, and also in 1145 in Mantua; then two years later he was in Verona (where he started to write his works of science). He then moved to Provence, and then again to northern France. In 1148 he moved from Rouen to London, but in 1160 was in Narbonne. He died in 1167 or 1164, the place being uncertain: in the town of Calahorra in Navarra (according to a source from 1487), or in Rome (this was a widespread conjecture among scholars in the 19th century, and it was based on an inference from a manuscript colophon), or, according to a medieval, unsympathetic source (Taku), in England.

Judah ha-Kohen Ibn Matqah was born in Toledo around 1215 into a family of astrologers. He moved to Italy, first to Tuscany and then to Lombardy, and worked as a scholar at the court of the emperor Frederick II (Sirat 1977). Ibn Matqah's *Otot ha-Shamayim* – the astrological part of his encyclopaedia *Midrash ha-Chokhmah* (Spiro 1886) – basically adopts Ptolemy's approach to astrology, with departures. Ibn Matqah has no qualms with Ptolemy's treatment of the second quadrant of the Earth, namely, southern Asia, from Anatolia to India included, and therefore Ibn Matqah accepts that Venus and Saturn influence those regions (in Ptolemy, also Mercury). Thus, their inhabitants, e.g., "behave according to simple customs owing to Saturn", "are strong and warriors owing to Saturn seen at the east, and who acts upon them". "As to the lands of Turkey, whence Capricorn and Saturn are seen, their people are of ungainly appearance and of savage ideas." (cf. Benedetto 2010, p. 185). But then, Judah Ibn Matqah turns to the Land of Israel and the Land of Syria, which according to Ptolemy, are under the influence of

Jupiter, Mars and Mercury, which is why the people of those places are merchants and cheaters, and the Land of Syria and the Land of Israel partake in this of Aries and Mars, and therefore they [their inhabitants] are stupid and ignorant of G-d. Ptolemy said so.

At this point, Ibn Matqah proceeds to refute Ptolemy: "Even assuming that Ptolemy's words are true, we have what supports us, and the spirit of salvation will come from another place." Ibn Matqah claims that Ptolemy should have considered the nature of the places in relation to the fixed stars, and of their constellation, not in relation to the planets and triplicities (i.e., the domination on the part of a planet over signs of the same element that forms a triangle). What Ptolemy did consider, Ibn Matqah avers, was only secondary, and he neglected what is most important, and this makes Ptolemy untrustworthy. Then Ibn Matqah quotes a passage from the *Babylonian Talmud* at tractate *Kiddushin* 49b, about the qualities of various lands: the Land of Israel took most of the wisdom that descended into the world; Rome, most of the riches; Babylonia, most of the poverty; 'Elam (Elymais), most of the coarseness; Egypt, most of the magic.

And then we have conjectures about acceptance of the Saturn association, on not as firm ground, but by way of conjectures. The name of the seventeenth-century pseudo-Messiah from Smyrna, Shabbetai Zevi, being the same as *Shabbetai*, the Hebrew name for the planet Saturn, was used to explain his "madness". Moshe Idel (1997) suggested this onomastic connection. Benite writes (2009, p. 236, n. 72):

Idel proposes that "astral mythology", and not only Jewish kabalistic tradition, be

‘taken into account’ in the writing of the history of this Messianic movement. Taking his cue from redemptive qualities assigned to Saturn in Jewish astrological writings, Idel offers a combined reading of medieval and early modern astrological depictions of the star and depictions of Zvi, emphasizing among other things the melancholic quality supposedly ‘shared’ by the planet and his Shabtai Zvi’s namesake.

Benite himself, at the risk (we fear) of engaging in creative homiletics, proposes (2009, p. 81) that “of the features and facets of the Roman Saturn”, “some were woven into the basic framework of the ten tribes’ story from early on.”²⁹

9. Jewish Male Menses and Melancholic Blood: Imagined Physiology Sub-serving Theology

Jewish males were believed to menstruate,³⁰ in medieval Christendom. Just as Eve began to menstruate because of the Fall, which was itself a prefiguration of the Passion, so male Jews were said to menstruate since the Passion. This was in relation to a legend about the origins of ritual murder, also ascribed to the Jews. “Indeed, Christian theology and natural science proposed as many motives for ritual murder as there were imagined uses for Christian blood.” (Resnick 2000, p. 243). Evidence was coaxed out of Scripture, at *loci* that of course to the Jews mean something else.³¹

²⁹ The ten tribes, according to Benite’s interpretation, were swallowed up, but remain intact, like Kronos’ children disappearing inside him. Virgil meant a good outcome, when announcing the return of justice and of Saturn’s realm, and “a worthier race of men” descending from heaven. Saturn is (to Ptolemy) the farthest planet from Earth, and the ten lost tribes of Israel are beyond the river Sambation (*ibid.*), but the latter, remote place is a transformation of the *rivus Sabbatis*, itself evolved (*ibid.*, p. 79) from Pliny’s “In Judaea is a stream that dries up every Sabbath” (*in Iudaea rivus, sabbatis omnibus siccatur*).

³⁰ In general on supposed male menstruations, see Brain (1988) and Pomata (1992 [in Italian = 2001, in English]). The Christian belief in the menstruations of Jewish males has been discussed by Johnson (1998), Katz (1999), Resnick (2000), in the footsteps of Sander Gilman, who raised the topic in works about the Jews’ imagined body or sexuality, as well as in Gilman (1986, pp. 74-75), where he wrote about “a specific form of sexual pathology that is part of a Christian iconography seeing the Jew as inherently different: Jewish male menstruation”, and remarked that “this image of the Jewish male as female was first introduced to link the Jew with the corrupt nature of the woman, since both are marked as different by the sign that signified Eve’s mortal nature after her fall from grace”.

³¹ For example, *Psalms* 78:56 relates about the people’s disobedience. V. 57 relates: “They withdrew, and betrayed, like their fathers; they turned back, like a *qeshet remiyyah*”, a throwing weapon, that if not hitting, turns back (even though the ancient Near Eastern models do not quite turn back up to the person who threw them, the way the Australian boomerang does). But *qeshet remiyyah* could also be literally understood to mean “bow of mendacity”, instead of “bow of throwing”. Of course, this made that psalm all the more appealing for Christian polemicists. V. 58, “And they irritated Him with their [forbidden] altars, and made Him jealous with their sculpted idols”, is less suitable for those polemicists, as it was quite obvi-

A statement of the belief in the Jewish male menses was unequivocally made, e.g., in a commentary (ca. 1324) by the Italian physician and astrologer Cecco d'Ascoli (the first university scholar to be burnt by the Inquisition: in Florence in 1327). The commentary was to Johannes de Sacrobosco's *Tractatus de sphaera*, also known as *De sphaera mundi* (itself published around 1230). Caesarius of Heisterbach (d. 1240), a Cistercian, authored a collection of exempla, the *Dialogus miraculorum* (Strange 1851). An article by Ivan Marcus (1996), 'Images of the Jews in the *Exempla* of Caesarius of Heisterbach', was a source for Resnick (2000, pp. 250-251), who relates this particular episode (in Latin in ed. Strange, *ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 92): a young English cleric was courting a beautiful Jewish girl, and whereas she was willing, she explained to him that he would have to wait until Good Friday, which is when her father would relent in guarding her, because her father, like the other male Jews, would be too troubled with his menstruations to care:

I am very much loved by my father who guards me so carefully that I cannot come to you nor you to me except on the Friday night that precedes your Easter. For then the Jews [i.e., Jewish males] are said to labor under a certain infirmity, which is called a bloody flux. They are so preoccupied by this that they can only pay less attention to other matters.

The seasonality of the male *menses* in spring time dovetails with the belief that

Whether we see menstruation as purification or plethora, in either case women have

ous to medieval Jews that they themselves were not worshipping sculpted images, whereas their hosting society definitely and ostensibly did. But v. 59, "G-d heard, and was angry, and He rejected (or: had much revulsion for) Israel", for the Christian polemicists was to be applied to carnal Israel, i.e., to such Jews who remained Jewish. V. 60 grounds the context historically, at the end of the Tabernacle at Shiloh.

V. 66 states: *Vayyakh tsarav achor, cherpai 'olam natan lamo*. ("He hit His enemies [making them withdraw] back; eternal shame gave them.") V. 77 states the rejection of the tribe of Ephraim, whereas v. 68 proclaims the election of the tribe of Judah and of the beloved Mt. Zion. V. 70 states the election of David (and therefore, of the Davidic dynasty). It does not take much to realise that the end of the Tabernacle at Shiloh, from the period of the Judges, was projected forward for a polemic purpose extolling the Kingdom of Judah, against the northern, secessionist Kingdom of Israel, itself led by the tribe of Ephraim.

Christian scriptural exegesis resorts to allegoric interpretation in a sweeping manner not found in Jewish exegesis (where allegory only predominates in the interpretation of *Song of Songs*). Therefore, vv. 77-78 were amenable to be interpreted as prefiguring the rejection of carnal Israel, and the election of the Christians. But there was more to it. "Eternal shame" in the second hemistich of v. 66 looked suitable for application to the Jews in Christendom. The first hemistich of v. 66, "He hit His enemies – back" was taken to refer to their buttocks, and therefore, to haemorrhoids.

a natural mechanism for expelling the unwanted blood. Men have no such thing, and are driven to regular artificial blood-letting, to phlebotomy, to achieve the same objective that women reach naturally. Men were most often bled in the spring, but also at other times for those who got little exercise. (Katz 1999, p. 445).

The classical authorities in medicine, Hippocrates and Galen, differed in how they explained menstruation. To Hippocrates, it was a kind of fermentation of the blood, and its purpose was to purge women's bodies (colder than men's) of impurities: something that men do by sweating, whereas women were more sedentary. To Galen instead, menstruation is the expelling of plethora, i.e., excess blood. "Women who were neither pregnant nor breast-feeding menstruated in order to expel the plethora of unneeded blood." (Katz 1999, p. 443).³²

Indeed, even if men were not bled, there were other mechanisms that the body might use spontaneously to achieve the benefits of menstruation. Nosebleeds were one possibility. [...] A second prospect was haemorrhoids.³³ The connection between menstruation and haemorrhoids goes back at least to Aristotle. [...] (Katz 1999, pp. 445-446).

David Katz (1999, p. 449) points out that a "late fourteenth-century Hebrew translation of Bernard de Gordon's *Lilium Medicinae* (1305), contains the following sage wisdom", namely: "The Jews suffer greatly from haemorrhoids for three reasons: first, because they are generally sedentary and therefore the excessive melancholy humours collect; secondly, because they are usually in fear and anxiety and therefore the melancholy blood becomes increased, besides (according to Hippocrates) fear and faint-heartedness, should they last a long time, produce the melancholy humour; and thirdly, it is the divine vengeance against them (as written in Ps. 78: 66), and 'he smote his enemies in

³² Medical understanding of the loss of blood by women, up to the early modern era, made it not entirely gender-specific. "Blood-letting, nosebleeds, haemorrhoids: all these might be seen as substitute male menstruation, and even breast-feeding might be possible. The early modern border between male and female was highly fluid, like the female humoral constitution itself." (Katz 1999, p. 447).

³³ Resnick states (2000, pp. 251-252): "The Dominican master Hugh of St. Cher (ca. 1195-1263) offers a typical exegesis of these texts when he writes" as follows: "He smote his enemies in their posteriors . . . So too it is read (1 Sam 5) that mice bubbled up from the earth and the Lord struck Ashdod in the secret place of their buttocks [the anus?], and the mice gnawed the tumors which protruded from their rectums. It was *everlasting shame* because an infirmity of this type is most vile. And some say that the Jews endure this shame because they suffer a flux of blood as vengeance for the passion of the Lord, and that is why they are so pale." Because of how those tumors are named, in reading from the Hebrew Bible, both Jews and Christians understood that the Philistines of Ashdod were hit with haemorrhoids, even though some modern interpreters understand that it was the bubonic plague.

the hinder parts, he put them to a perpetual reproach’.” Katz continues: “The Hebrew translation of Jekuthiel b. [= ben] Solomon of Narbonne adds the warning that ‘what is written is a lie and they, who believe it, lie’.”

“Albert the Great (d. 1280) explained³⁴ that haemorrhoids afflict Jews especially because of their defective diet and because their blood has more of an ‘earthy’ or melancholy humor than Christian blood” (Resnick 2000, p. 253). An alternative to haemorrhoids was the claim that Jews urinated blood. There are different associations of ideas, according to whether male Jews are claimed to actually menstruate, or ascribed menses are rationalised as haemorrhoids. Some early modern Jews came to internalise the latter ascription, as they found it to make sense that as the stereotypical Jewish lifestyle was sedentary (all the more so because of the ideal³⁵ of diligence at learning), this would be conducive to a higher incidence of haemorrhoids among Jews.

But if it is menstruating from one’s genitals that is claimed, for all of the anatomical absurdity of this, then arguably the concept, among such cultures where men are usually uncircumcised, that circumcised men have a diminished masculinity must have played a role. The stereotype according to which male Jews are less masculine,³⁶ do not excel at sports, and the like, has loomed and still looms large, there is considerable literature about the subject, and we cannot delve into this here. Nor can we deal here with medical or pseudo-medical arguments against or in favour of circumcision, even though there has been and still is such a debate within the discourse of modernity. Deriding Jews because of circumcision is as ancient as ancient Roman attitudes toward the Jews. This attitude was perpetuated in Western civilisation.

Bartholomaeus Anglicus “argued that hemorrhoids, understood as nature’s way of purging the body of a certain type of melancholy blood, were especially prevalent among Jewish men.” (Resnick 2000, p. 255). In a quodlibetal disputation (an academic exercise) from around 1300 from the University of Paris, one

³⁴ In his *Quaestiones de animalibus* 9:7.

³⁵ “Learnedness and study have long played a central role both in the Jewish tradition and in perceptions of it. The scholarly habitus continues to be a formative part of male Jewish identity as well as a source of pride and prejudice in pro- and anti-Jewish rhetoric.” Susan Kassouf stated that much (1998, p. 101) at the very beginning of her paper in which she “examine[d] the ways in which the studious lifestyles of Jews and scholars became associated with disease in late eighteenth-century Western and Central European discourse. Suffering from an array of shared symptoms that ranged from gout to the golden vein, male Jews and intellectuals became pathologized similarly.”

³⁶ Kassouf remarked (1998, p. 101): “As readings of their [Jews’ and intellectuals’] ailing bodies will show, contemplative lifestyles proved to be high-risk ones that blurred the boundaries of the male subject and posed a threat to dominant ideals of masculinity, specifically manliness. Numerous ills will call into question any stable sense of the sufferers’ gender, sexuality, and morality.”

Henry (either Henry the German or Henry of Bruxelles) answered the question “whether Jews suffer a flux of blood”, and gave a response quoted in both Latin and English by Resnick (*ibid.*), claiming that “Jews have a flux of blood” being the piles, because they are melancholic: “This abounds more in Jews because for the most part they are melancholics.”

Henry then proceeded to offer various arguments for Jews being melancholic: the first argument is their social isolation; “because the melancholic shuns dwelling and assembling with others and likes cut off or solitary places. However, Jews naturally withdraw themselves from society and from being connected with others, as is patent, therefore they are melancholics.” Another argument was from the looks of Jews: “Item, they are pallid, therefore they are of melancholic complexion.” A third argument was from the Jews’ temperament: “Item, they are naturally timid, and these three are the contingent properties of melancholics, as Hippocrates says.”

Then Henry turned to melancholic blood: “But he who is melancholic has a lot of melancholic blood, and manifestly must have a flux of blood, but Jews are of this sort.” Henry used for this the dietary argument: “I prove this, because they use roast foods and not boiled or cooked,³⁷ and these are difficult to digest, as it is said in the fourth book of the *Meteora*.” All the more so, as Jews “have roast fat, such as oil, etc., and these are difficult to digest.” Then, Henry felt he had to exclude that the Jews were getting rid of their melancholy blood by bloodletting: “Item, they do not have blood-letting, or very little,

³⁷ Resnick remarks (2000, p. 255): “cooked here means in a way other than roasting or frying”. Resnick recapitulates *ibid.*, on p. 256: “The Parisian master who responds during the quodlibetal disputation locates the cause of hemorrhoids in a melancholy complexion found especially among Jews because of the nature of their diet. He expands on Albert’s account by adding the psychological and physiological evidence of Jewish melancholia: timidity, pallor, and a certain anti-social disposition.” Then Resnick continues, by pointing out that such an explanation was propitious for notions of gender-reversal, as ascribed to the Jews: “Characteristics such as timidity and pallor were understood by medieval author to be ‘womanish’, and they clearly perceived that just as women may exhibit masculine traits on occasion, so too men could display the characteristics of women.” This had a place within humoralist medicine: “This abstract concept of gender extended not only to psychological traits that were perceived to be either ‘male’ or ‘female’, but also to physical features (for example, the size of the feet, facial hair) and, in general, to humoral complexion.” Hence the physiological explanation for the female menses: “Women were generally understood to be phlegmatic and therefore ‘colder’ in nature than men. It is this complexional coldness governing their nature that makes women unable to complete the digestion of blood, resulting in the necessity to purge the body of its coarse and undigested blood via menstruation. Men, naturally ‘hotter’, fully perfect the digestive process, thereby obviating the need for menstruation.” Not so for male Jews: “Yet the blood flow of Jewish men contradicts Joan Cadden’s assessment that ‘menstruation distinguishes women from men... [as] a specifically womanly mark of the Fall’. This ‘womanly mark of the Fall’ was extended to cover Jewish males as well, implying both a deficient masculinity and divine punishment.”

therefore they emit blood through the outside pores, etc.” (Resnick 2000, p. 255).³⁸

10. Melancholy, Haemorrhoids, and Lifestyle in Early Modern Medical Discourse

“Joseph Rohrer devotes an entire chapter of his essay on the Jewish inhabitants of the Austrian monarchy to the physical disposition of the Jews”, says Kassouf (1998, p. 104), referring to Rohrer’s *Versuch über die jüdischen Bewohner der österreichischen Monarchie* (*Study on the Jewish Inhabitants of the Austrian Monarchy*, 1804). Rohrer blamed occupational, spatial seclusion, and early marriage (and thus, to him, too early sexual activity) for the sickly and unmanly body of male Jews. Kassouf proceeds to remark and quote as follows (*ibid.*):

More specific diagnoses show that scholars and Jews were particularly prone to melancholia and hypochondria, their bodies and demeanors exhibiting an explosion of symptoms to be interpreted.

The pale complexion of the Jew, his crooked posture, his never-ending expressions of anxiety, his constant worry about every appearance of offense that crosses his path; his behavior at home that is seldom accompanied by laughter; all this and much more should lead us to assume that a majority of Jews has no small tendency toward melancholy. Regardless of this the Jew still longs very

³⁸ Resnick (2000, pp. 260–261) discussed the emergence of a conflated medieval Christian account of Jewish melancholy, bleeding haemorrhoids in male Jews, physiological reasons for this, and the theological claim that this was a supernatural punishment for the Passion, along with the claim that male Jews suffered monthly periods, like women. One of the things that Resnick remarked about the popular medical text *Omnes homines*, was: “This text not only identifies the flow of blood in Jews with the menstrual cycle but also ‘en-genders’ them in another way: Jews, like women, have a cold complexion, not by nature perhaps but because they live in fear and are idle.” Resnick, in a footnote (*ibid.*, p. 261, fn. 67), based on p. 217 in Ron Barkai’s (1998) *A History of Jewish Gynaecological Texts in the Middle Ages*, pointed out that one medical text by a Jewish author accepted the categorisation of Jewish males as being melancholic: “Interestingly, however, the medieval Jewish author of *The Treatise on Procreation*, proclaims that although Jewish women have a complexion that is cold and wet (that is phlegmatic), Jewish men are ‘cold and dry’ (that is melancholic), confirming thereby the determination of Christian medical texts.” This may have been by deference to what was taken to be, even by that Jewish author, a proven fact from the current scientific discourse. This kind of phenomenon, of Jewish physicians internalising representations of Jews asserted in non-Jewish medical discourse, was to become commonplace in the late nineteenth century. In the case of *The Treatise on Procreation*, arguably what was at work was not the appropriation of a negative caricature, but agreement about some physiological causes in relation to lifestyle, such as living in fear of the hostile gentile society, being downtrodden because in exile and because Jerusalem is destroyed, and a prevalently sedentary lifestyle.

early for a woman; this revelry of this sort is quite compatible sometimes with this temperament of feeling that we tend to call the melancholic.

Kassouf remarks (1998, p. 102): “One particular occupational hazard illustrates the implicit links between Jews and scholars: namely, hemorrhoids.”

The author of the *Lilium Medicinae*, Bernard de Gordon, further attributes the supposedly Jewish predisposition toward hemorrhoids to the constant fear and anxiety in which the persecuted people lived, a state that led to the collection of melancholy juices, and to a psalmic bit of divine revenge in which Jews were whacked on their collective posterior. The explicit connection with scholarship reemerges in the eighteenth century among writers such as Johann Adolf Behrends who continue to propagate a connection between too much Talmud study and hemorrhoids: “the consequence of their lifestyle is that nowhere are more inhabitants plagued with hemorrhoids than in the Judengasse.” In *Von den Krankheiten der Juden (On the Diseases of the Jews, 1777)*, the Mannheimer Jewish physician Elcan Isaac Wolf [(1777, p. 84)] constructs a similar relation between the stationary life of the Jewish scholar and his posterior afflictions.

By the early modern period, haemorrhoids had become an option for rationalising the medieval Christian belief that Jewish males menstruate. There already was a tradition relating the piles to the Jews. “Jews in general had a difficult time in getting rid of excess and impure blood. Galen in the second century speaks of the digestive problems of Jews, and the link between Judaism and haemorrhoids.” (Katz 1999, p. 449). “On the prevalence of hemorrhoids among Jews causing in them a menstrual flow, note too that this notion survived among physicians into the modern era, as evidenced by the fact that Abbé Grégoire must refute it at the end of the eighteenth century.” (Resnick 2000, p. 253, fn. 48). This was in Abbé Grégoire’s *Essay on the Physical, Moral, and Political Reformation of the Jews*.

11. Medicalised Jewish Identity in the Nineteenth Century and Beyond

In the nineteenth century, pseudo-medical theorisation about Jewish disease developed within the discourse of modern science. Medical fictions about race have not died out even at present (Gilman 2006). Also during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when spurious pseudo-scientific ascriptions to Jews and other groups were burgeoning, melancholia was one of the traits ascribed to Jews. A very important secondary source on the subject is Sander Gilman’s essay (1984) “Jews and Mental Illness: Medical Metaphors, Anti-

Semitism and the Jewish Response". Some of Gilman's³⁹ books are classics (e.g., 1985, 1986, 1991), and are more loosely relevant. "Medieval thought had long associated Jews with disease", e.g., by being made into a social equivalent of a leper" (Gilman 1984, p. 150):

In a scholarly forum, Boudin (1863), Gilman remarks (1984, p. 152), used statistics to claim and interpret a nearly double incidence of psychopathologies among Jews in Germany than among Protestants or Catholics. Gilman juxtaposes this to what anti-abolitionists in the United States made of their claim that enslaved Black people were less subject to mental illness than when free.⁴⁰ The commonplace associating Jews with insanity was found in "[s]tandard German textbooks of psychiatry" (Gilman 1984, p. 153). The aetiologies varied: to some it was endogamous marriages, to others, association with the rhythms of the modern city. Even some Jewish physicians accepted the commonplace. Even the Freudian turn away from biology into psychodynamics did not do away with the myth of Jewish mental illness (Gilman 1984, pp. 155-157).⁴¹ But

³⁹ "Gilman has become one of the most important dissectors of stereotypes" (Mosse 1987, p. 163). Mosse also remarks (*ibid.*, p. 164): "In his earlier work, *Seeing the Insane* [(1982b)], Gilman demonstrated through text and pictures how the insane were stereotyped during the 19th century. They were recognized by their posture and gestures, their melancholy looks and what was called their 'movable physiognomy', that is, a facial expression and bodily posture which projects nervously and an inactive mind incapable of attention or interest. The iconography of insanity was transferred to other outsiders, and the close connection drawn between Jews, blacks, and madness provides a central argument for *Difference and Pathology* [(1985)]."

⁴⁰ Gilman (*ibid.*): "Statistics as a means of quantifying insanity as a sign of difference had been used following the 1840 American census. In the interpretation of that data the anti-abolitionist forces, headed by John C. Calhoun, argued that blacks suffered more frequently from mental illness when free than when enslaved. For Boudin inbreeding, the exclusivity of the Jews, was the pseudoscientific origin of the Jew's tendency to psychopathology. The contemporary demand for legal equality was translated into its antithesis, madness and its resultant dependency. [...] What for de La Fontaine was a general predisposition to illness had become by the mid-nineteenth century a predisposition to mental illness. The Jews were seen as covertly ill, ill in a manner that provided the observer with proof of his own emotional and intellectual superiority. [...] By the 1880s the linkage of the Jew with psychopathology was accepted in anthropological circles. [...]"

⁴¹ Gilman (1984, p. 157) concluded: "In the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries a number of various justification of the myth of the mental illness of the Jews emerged. European biology served, especially in Germany and France, to reify accepted attitudes toward all marginal groups, especially the Jews. The scientific 'fact' that the Jew was predisposed to madness would have enabled society, as the legal arm of science, to deal with Jews as it dealt with the insane. However, the reality was quite different. While the fantasy of the privileged group would have banished the Jews out of sight, into the asylum, the best it could do was to institutionalize the idea of the madness of the Jews." This was like with women (*ibid.*, p. 157): "Jews, like women, possessed a basic biological predisposition to specific forms of mental illness. Thus, like women, who were also making specific political demands on the privileged group at the same moment in history, Jews could be dismissed as unworthy of becoming part of the privileged group because of their aberration." And it was like with Black people (*ibid.*, p. 157): "Like the American slaves who

then there existed Jewish physicians, and these found themselves in a position to take a stand, while negotiating an uneasy situation (*ibid.*, pp. 157-158).⁴²

Andrew Heinze (2001) discussed the role of Jewish authors in popular psychology texts in the United States. He remarked (*ibid.*, p. 959) that “we can identify critical issues that concerned them as Jews and that consequently amplified the distinctiveness of the Jewish voice in the chorus of popular psychology.”

Embracing the functionalist concept of the adaptable individual in a constantly evolving society, they defended the Jewish immigrant against nativist criticism and thereby defined the Jew as an exemplar of the adaptable personality on which social evolution depended. Their writings centered on the premise that such evolution would occur only if Americans would avoid three dangers in the psychological realm: hereditary assumptions about human nature, mystical interpretations of the subconscious mind, and human vulnerability to mass delusion.

And yet, Heinze points out (*ibid.*, p. 963), “the stereotype of Jews as abnormally and problematically ‘nervous’ gained a strong hold in the United States.” In Britain, Lappin (2009) has recently shown how in the 2000s some who preach the dismantling of the State of Israel posture as though they were therapists, addressing the mental illness of the Israelis or the Jews, in order to deny them the role of a rational interlocutor.

were labeled as mad because they desired to escape from slavery, Jews, by acting on the promise made to them though the granting of political emancipation in the eighteenth century, proved their madness.”

⁴² Negative perceptions of the Jews by non-Jewish European culture have often been internalised by modern Jews, and, e.g., in Zionism the need was stated to overcome the type of the diasporic Jew, and early Zionists such as Max Nordau stressed the code of *mens sana in corpore sano*; whereas “the American Jew [...] saw his own acculturation as the cure for the madness of the Jew” (*ibid.*). During all the twentieth century and beyond, various brands of deeply secularised anti-Zionists of still perceived Jewish ancestry (or then of the *Yevseksya*, the early Soviet de-Judaising task force) felt/feel impelled to show that *they* are the good Jew, good as he is no longer a Jew. This in turn was the *rationale*, in European dominant culture over the centuries, of fingering the only kind of good Jew (if any), namely, the converted Jew. But Gilman (1984, p. 156) also shows how an anti-assimilationist Jewish doctor, Becker (1918), felt able to maintain that it was assimilated Jews, rather than ones not assimilated, who were prone to mental illness.

“That the Jew was predisposed to mental illness in the form of neurasthenia was never in doubt.” (Gilman 1984, p. 154). Gilman continued (*ibid.*): “It is in this medical context that Max Nordau’s often cited call for the Jews to become ‘muscle Jews’, published in 1900, must be read. [...] Nordau’s call was yet another attempt from within the Jewish community to adapt the underlying structure of anti-Semitic rhetoric and use its strong political message for their own ends. Nordau’s call for a ‘new muscle Jew’ was based on the degeneration of the Jew ‘in the narrow confines of the ghetto’. But it was not merely the muscles of the Jews but also their minds that had atrophied in the ghetto. Implicit in Nordau’s call was the equation of the ‘old Jew’ and his attitude toward life.” This involved acceptance of the ascription of negative features to the Jew. It was the new Jew, rather than the old Jew who was believed by Nordau and others to be free from those features. Those opposing renovation “were viewed merely as Jews possessing all the qualities ascribed to them (including madness) by the anti-Semites.” (Gilman 1984, p. 155).

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