The Birth Pangs of the Messiah

Transnational Networks and Cross-Religious Exchange in the Age of Sabbatai Sevi

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Abstract

Between 1648 CE and 1666 CE, news, rumours, and theories about the messiah and the Lost Tribes of Israel were disseminated amongst diverse populations of Jews, Christians, and Muslims. Employing a world history methodology, this thesis follows three sets of such narratives that were spread through the American colonies, England, the Dutch Republic, the Italian peninsula and the Ottoman Empire, connecting people separated by linguistic, religious, national, and continental divides. This dissertation starts by situating this transmission within a broader context that dates back to 1492 CE and then traces the three-stage process in which eschatological constructs originating in the Americas in the 1640s were transmitted across Europe to the Levant in the 1650s, preparing the minds of Jews and Christians for the return of these ideas from the Ottoman Empire in the 1660s. In this manner, this study seeks to make three contributions to the existing literature. It brings together often isolated historiographies, it unearths fresh archival sources, and it provides a new conceptual framework. Overall, it argues that one cannot understand the growth of apocalyptic tension that reached its peak in 1666 without examining the major historical events and processes that began in 1492 and affected Jews, Christians, and Muslims across the Atlantic and Mediterranean worlds.

Extended Abstract

Between 1648 CE and 1666 CE, news, rumours, and theories about the messiah and the Lost Tribes of Israel were disseminated amongst diverse populations of Jews, Christians, and Muslims. Utilising a world history methodology, this thesis follows three sets of such narratives that were spread through the American colonies, England, the Dutch Republic, the Italian peninsula and the Ottoman Empire, connecting people separated by linguistic, religious, national, and continental divides.

The thesis has two main sections. The first part situates the study of seventeenth-century eschatology within a broader context that dates back to 1492 CE. The opening chapter introduces the networks under consideration in the rest of the thesis and presents a model to explain their creation, a model in which migration plays a central role. Migration not only facilitated the construction of the infrastructure of intersecting networks; it was also interpreted in a manner that promoted the growth of messianic and millenarian excitement –a process that is analysed in the following chapter.

The second part of the thesis employs this intellectual, geographical, and conceptual background to examine the transmission of three interconnected sets of narratives about the messiah and the Lost Tribes of Israel between 1648 and 1666. The third chapter starts with the arrival of Antonio de Montezinos in the Dutch Republic. Montezinos, a former Converso, claimed to have discovered the ancient Hebrews in the jungles of South America. His account, originating and travelling along Jewish networks in the 1640s, was shared with Protestants throughout northern Europe and in the Americas, leading to the popularisation of the theory that the American indigenous peoples were descendants of the Lost Tribes.

From the Atlantic world, this thesis shifts its focus to Europe and the Levant. The fourth chapter focuses on the Quaker leader James Nayler, whose entrance into Bristol in 1656 replicated Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. Reports about the Bristol affair were dispersed far and wide in letters, gazettes, newsbooks and pamphlets, proving that Nayler was known about in Europe to a degree not previously acknowledged. Examining the possible networks along which the story of Nayler could have been brought to the Levant, however, provides evidence against certain historiographical claims that it had an impact on the messianic career of Sabbatai Sevi.

The final two chapters begin in the Ottoman Empire and trace the westward movement of rumours and news associated with the Jewish messianic outburst started by Sabbatai Sevi and Nathan of Gaza. The fifth chapter centres on the rumoured sack of Mecca in 1665, which was often tied to reports about the re-emergence of the Lost Tribes. Even though the tale of Mecca's destruction was completely fictitious, this rumour was in many ways similar to the other narratives considered: it connected Jews, Christians, and Muslims from the Middle East through Europe to North America; it was found in numerous sets of correspondence and publications; and it affected the ways in which its readers understood their own religion and that of others. The final chapter looks at Christian responses to the Jewish messiah in handwritten mercantile and diplomatic dispatches as well as printed gazettes and pamphlets in 1666. While the Jewish beliefs in Sabbatai have received substantial academic attention, the cross-religious representations of the Jews' saviour have been largely neglected.

In sum, this thesis seeks to make three contributions to the existing literature through its archival, historiographical, and conceptual approaches. First, it adds a vital dimension to the often isolated studies about the Lost Tribes, the Jewish Sabbatian

movement, and the Quaker messiah James Nayler by unearthing and combining recently uncovered and well-known sources that show how each was portrayed by people of other religions and nationalities. Second, it brings together various historiographies due to its emphasis on transnational and cross-religious transmission. Third, it provides a conceptual framework for the study of overlapping networks in world history that explains the complicated nature in which they were created and the ways in which they facilitated the movement of religious constructs. Overall, it argues that one cannot understand the growth of apocalyptic tension in 1666 without examining the major historical events and processes that began in 1492 and affected Jews, Christians, and Muslims across the Atlantic and Mediterranean worlds.

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List of Abbreviations

AAS	American Antiquarian Society, Worcester
ASV	Archivio di Stato di Venezia (Venetian State Archives), Venice
BR	Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana in the Amsterdam University Library, Amsterdam
BRBL	Beinecke Rare Books and Manuscripts Library at the University of Yale, New Haven
BNCF	Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze (The Central National Library of Florence), Florence
CSPD	Calendar of State Papers Domestic, Great Britain
CSPV	Calendar of State Papers Venetian, Great Britain
JTS	The Jewish Theological Seminary, New York
LSF	London Society of Friends' Library, London
MHS	Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston
NA	Nationaal Archief (National Archives), The Hague
NYPL	New York Public Library, New York
SA	Archivio Segreto Vaticano (Vatican Secret Archives), Vatican City
SP	State Papers in The National Archives at the Kew, London
TNA	The National Archives at the Kew, London
ULL	University Library of Leiden, Leiden

Parallel Timelines

Year	The Americas	Iberia and Italy	Northern Europe	The Levant
1400-1499 CE	**1492**: Christopher Columbus lands in the Bahamas Archipelago	**1492**: Spain expels its Jewish population **1497**: Portugal forcefully converts its Jews to Christianity		**1453**: The Ottoman conquest of Constantinople
1500-1599	Spanish colonisation of the Americas and the growth of Iberian interest in the origins of the aboriginals	**1516**: Creation of the Venetian ghetto **1524**: David Reubeni claims to be sent from the Lost Tribes in Arabia	**1517**: The beginning of the Protestant Reformation **1581**: The founding of the English Levant Company	Italian domination of Mediterranean trade is undermined by the northern Europeans
1600-1647	**1630s**: The Puritan Migration to New England **1641**: Antonio de Montezinos discovers the Lost Tribes in South America **1646**: John Eliot begins his missionary work among the aboriginals in		The expansion and systematisation of modern diplomacy, news industries, and postal services across Europe **1644**: Montezinos shares his story with Menasseh ben Israel in Amsterdam *c*. **1645**: John Dury hears about Montezinos' testimony from Menasseh	**1614**: Sabbatai's father moves from southern Greece to Smyrna where he acquires a job as a factor for English merchants

	New England			
1648: The year that kabbalists anticipated the Jews' redemption			Thorowgood gives a copy of his manuscript *Iewes in America* to Dury	Sabbatai Sevi's erratic behaviour in Smyrna culminates with his claim that he is the messiah
1649-1655	**1650**: Eliot accepts the Lost Tribes theory after reading the manuscripts of Thorowgood, Menasseh, and others sent to him by Winslow The growth of millenarianism leads some New Englanders to return to England to join the Fifth Monarchy Men **1655**: The beginning of Quaker missions to New England via Barbados		**1649**: Edward Winslow publishes *The Glorious Progress of the Gospel* with the help of Dury **1650**: Menasseh publishes the *Hope of Israel* **1650**: Thorowgood publishes *Iewes in America* **1654**: Menasseh introduces two-messiah theory to English Protestants **1655**: The campaign for the readmission of the Jews to England	**1651-1654**: Sabbatai is expelled from Smyrna for his blasphemous behaviour and wanders throughout the Ottoman Empire
1656: The year that English Protestants expected the conversion of the Jews, the return of Jesus, and the onset of the millennium	**October**: Eliot withdraws his support of the Lost Tribes theory when the anticipated millennium did not begin		**October**: James Nayler's messianic entrance into Bristol	
1657-1664		**1657**: Nayler is discussed in	**1657:** The Dutch	**1657**: The first Quaker mission

		Italian *avvisi* **1659**: Maurice Conry writes about Nayler in *De Extremis Anglo-Haereticorum* after being imprisoned with him in England	*Hollandtze Mercurius* and *Klachte der Quakers* report on Nayler's actions and punishment **1659**: Nayler is released from prison **1660**: Nayler dies in Great Britain **1660**: Thorowgood republishes *Jews in America* with a statement from Eliot **1662**: The founding of the Royal Society	to the Ottoman Empire via Livorno **1657**: A Quaker pilgrim arrives in Jerusalem while Nathan of Gaza is there *c.* **1658**: Abraham Gabbai reprints the *Hope of Israel* in Smyrna **1658**: The Quaker missionary Mary Fisher and Sabbatai may have been in Istanbul at the same time **1661**: Quaker missionaries and Sabbatai are both in Smyrna **1662**: Quaker missionaries in Alexandria may have crossed paths with Sabbatai
1665	**June**: New Amsterdam becomes New York	**April**: The rumoured sack of Mecca by solely Arabs first appears in a Venetian avviso	**July**: Dutch pamphlets print stories of the Lost Tribes sacking Mecca	**April:** Nathan has a vision that Sabbatai is the true messiah **June**: Nathan anoints Sabbatai as the messiah **Summer**: Unknown

	September: John Davenport is aware of the Jewish movement in the Levant **Winter**: Increase Mather preaches a series of sermons in Boston on Revelation that were inspired by the news that the Jews are heading to Palestine	**August**: A Venetian avviso reports that the Arabs at Mecca are joined by a *numero infinito* of Jews	**July**: The supposed destruction of Mecca is known about in Royal Society circles **December**: The English population reads about the Lost Tribes sacking Mecca and Sabbatai's messiahship in the *Gazette* **December**: The Sabbatian movement becomes a popular topic in Dutch gazettes due to its economic effects	English merchant in Smyrna meets Sabbatai and writes his English associates in Tuscany about the visit
1666: The year that Jews and Christians expected the imminent end of history and their ultimate redemption	**February:** Increase Mather delves into the scriptural writings and the political history of the Jews in the Levant **Summer**: Mather tries to convince three Jews that the messiah has already come	**April**: Englishmen in Tuscany write reports about Sabbatai **June**: Stories about the Jews' saviour appear in the Italian press		**February**: Sabbatai is imprisoned in Istanbul **March:** the Venetian *bailo* mentions the Jewish messiah in his diplomatic dispatch **September:** Sabbatai converts to Islam in

		December: The story of Sabbatai's conversion is printed in a Turin avviso	**November**: News about the apostasy reaches English and Dutch presses	Adrianople **October:** English merchants in Smyrna write about Sabbatai's conversion in letters to their associates in Tuscany
1667-1669		**1667**: An Italian broadsheet is printed in Rome that provides the entire history of the Sabbatian movement	**1667**: Some Jews remain in denial about the messiah's conversion **1669**: John Evelyn's *A History of the Three Late Impostors* is published in London **1669**: Petrus Serrarius sets out on his journey from Amsterdam to meet Sabbatai in Adrianople	**1667**: Thomas Coenen completes his Dutch account of the outbreak of Sabbatianism **1669**: Sabbatai becomes friends with the Sufi leader Muhammad Niyazi in Adrianople

Map of the Early Modern Atlantic and Mediterranean Worlds

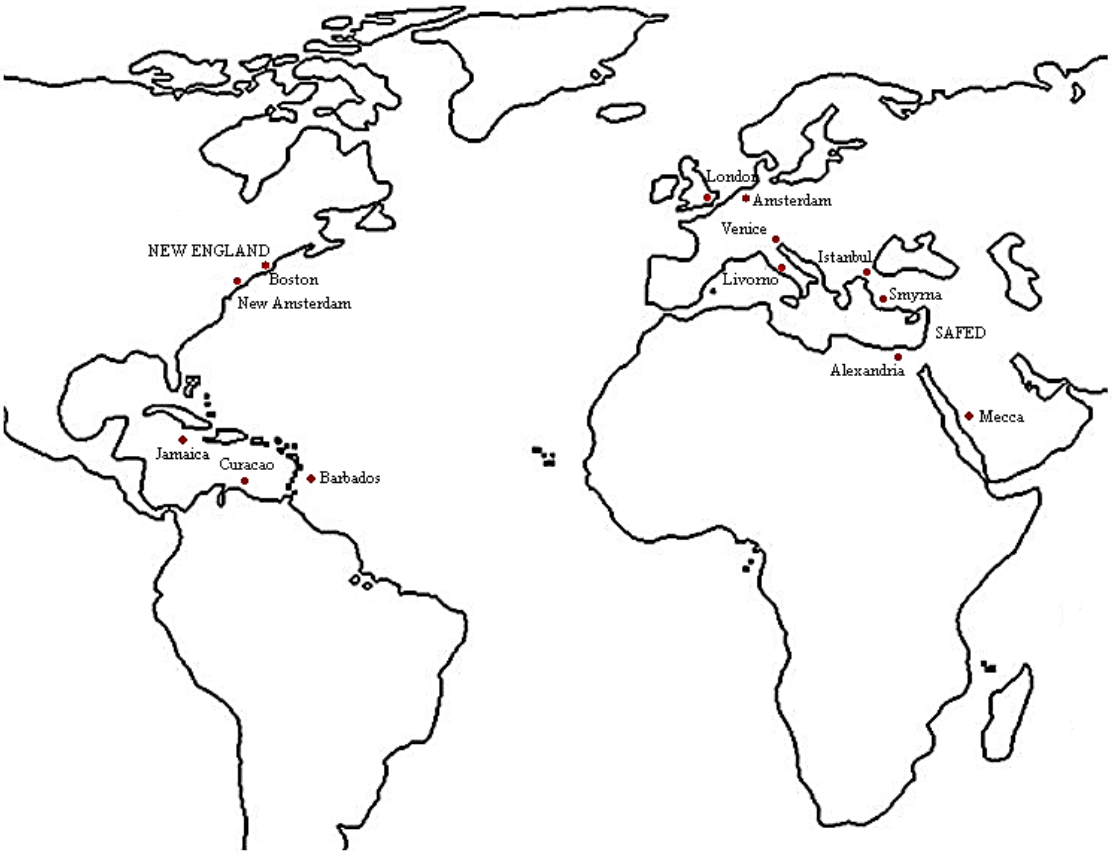

Figure 1: Locations of Migration and Exchange

Introduction

In 1669 CE, the Protestant scholar Petrus Serrarius set out on a journey from the Dutch Republic to the Ottoman Empire.[1] Like many European Christians travelling similar routes, Serrarius was on a religious mission. Yet he was not on pilgrimage to Jerusalem like most. He went in another direction, heading for the home of the Ottoman *divan* (or court) in Adrianople to meet Sabbatai Sevi, the Jewish messiah who had apostatised to Islam and was now one of the sultan's gatekeepers. At a time when long-distance travel entailed much hardship, why was a Dutch Christian crossing an entire continent only to see a Jewish convert to Islam he had neither met nor corresponded with before?

Serrarius was born into a Dutch merchant family in London. Growing up in seventeenth-century England, he studied at Christ Church in Oxford before returning to his fatherland where he obtained a master's degree in theology at the University of Leiden. Serrarius was a 'pious man, but also a learned one' and, after completing his education, he embarked upon a career in pastoral ministry.[2] A short time later, he moved to Amsterdam where he befriended the Jewish rabbi Menasseh ben Israel. A small group developed around these two men, and Serrarius' Christian friends began working hand in hand with Menasseh's Jewry on projects relating to Jewish-Christian reconciliation. Serrarius' close relationships with the *Sephardim* (the Jews of Spanish and Portuguese descent) meant that he was constantly informed of the latest news circulating amongst the Dutch Jews. When the letters announcing the messiahship of Sabbatai Sevi were received by the Amsterdam Jewry, Serrarius was one of the first Christians to hear about them.

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[1] All dates in this thesis are CE unless otherwise stated.

[2] Ernestine van der Wall, *De Mystieke Chiliast Petrus Serrarius (1600-1669) en Zijn Wereld* (Leiden: I.G.C. Printing, 1987), 624. For more on Serrarius, see this book as well as Ernestine van der Wall, 'The Amsterdam Millenarian Petrus Serrarius (1600-1669) and the Anglo-Dutch Circle of Philo-Judaists,' *Jewish-Christian Relations in the Seventeenth Century: Studies and Documents* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1988), 73-94.

Sabbatai Sevi was born and raised a continent away from Serrarius. Sabbatai spent the years of his youth in the bustling Ottoman port town of Smyrna that was home to diverse populations of Jews, Christians, and Muslims. While Sabbatai studied the sacred Hebrew texts, theology, history, and philosophy at a traditional Jewish educational institution known as a *yeshiva*, it was mysticism in the form of the *kabbalah* that truly fascinated him. Exploring the inner workings of Jewish mystical thought on his own, Sabbatai started committing strange acts, which culminated in his claim that he was the messiah.

Sabbatai's actions did not go unnoticed by the other scholars, and the heads of the Jewish community convened and banished him from Smyrna. Forced out of his hometown, Sabbatai wandered throughout the Ottoman Empire, travelling to Istanbul, Salonika, and eventually Jerusalem. It was there, in the religious heart of the Jewish world, that Sabbatai reinvented himself as a pious leader. Perhaps it was on the streets in the old city that a young boy named Nathan Benjamin Levi saw him with a small group of adherents.

Unlike Sabbatai, Nathan was an exceptionally gifted student, competent in both Jewish theology and rabbinical law. When Nathan finished his schooling in Jerusalem, he married and settled in Gaza where he too began to study the kabbalah. Then, in early 1665, Nathan had the most remarkable vision. The spirit came over him for a full twenty-four hours, and the reclusive scholar emerged as a prophet with an incredible message for the Jewish people: Sabbatai Sevi was the true messiah!

Nathan had never experienced such an intense vision before so he sought out Sabbatai and told him what had happened. A fervent discussion ensued and, shortly thereafter, Sabbatai publicly proclaimed himself the messiah. Although Sabbatai's previous messianic claims were not taken seriously, Nathan was respected by many Jews

in Gaza who accepted the authenticity of his vision, spreading news of it to their friends and close acquaintances via correspondence and word of mouth. With Nathan conducting an extensive proselytising campaign, Sabbatai went from one Jewish community to the next, gaining more and more followers. Within a year, Sabbatai was the most popular Jewish messiah since Jesus; his name was known from Yemen to the West Indies.

The growing messianic movement came to the attention of the Ottoman authorities who responded by ordering the arrest of the Jews' new saviour. While Sabbatai's arrest and subsequent imprisonment were unexpected, they did not diminish the Jews' enthusiasm. Visitors flocked to his prison cell from across Europe and the Levant, bribing the guards to simply kneel before their messiah. Excitement was at its peak when Sabbatai was finally called before the Ottoman divan to face the consequences of his actions. The Jews anticipated that the sultan would be so awestruck by Sabbatai that he would willingly yield his crown and become the messiah's servant.

This meeting, however, was to surprise and dismay Sabbatai and his believers. Standing in front of the highest members of the Ottoman government, Sabbatai was given an ultimatum. The choice, he was told, was simple: convert to Islam or die. It was necessary to decide at that moment and, with the executioner preparing to make him a martyr, Sabbatai relented and agreed to convert to Islam. The heads of the Ottoman Empire were so pleased with Sabbatai's decision that they rewarded him with a post at the court and a pension. Sabbatai walked out of the interview not with the sultan as his servant, but as the new Muslim servant of the sultan.

The messiah's apostasy sent shockwaves across the Jewish world, and the vast majority of Jews abandoned the Sabbatian movement as quickly as they had joined it. Although the disarray of his followers was indescribable, the messianic excitement had been so great that the apostasy could not quash it entirely. Sabbatai himself vacillated in

his behaviour. Sometimes he would act as a pious Muslim and revile Judaism. At other times, he would write letters to Jewish communities, signing his name, 'Messiah of the God of Israel and Judah, Sabbatai Sevi'.[3] Some Sabbatian believers copied Sabbatai's example and embraced Islam too, founding the *Donmeh* –a small sect of Muslims who secretly await the return of Sabbatai to this very day.[4]

When the initial news of the apostasy reached Amsterdam, most of the Jews cursed Sabbatai and never wanted to hear his name mentioned again. Serrarius did not agree with the majority; the Dutch scholar chose to support the few who remained faithful to the messiah. Three years later, Serrarius set out in hope of meeting Sabbatai himself. While the Dutch Protestant died en route to the Levant, never meeting the man who had captivated his attention for the last few years, his journey points to a paradox central to this study. In an era of heightened confessionalization, why was a Christian exhibiting such loyalty to a Jewish convert to Islam?

This period was one in which mutual antipathy often defined the relationships between Jews, Christians, and Muslims. Confessional walls were erected, children were indoctrinated, and religious identities were shaped and hardened through education, theological training, preaching, and the establishment of customs. Discourses between Christians and Jews, Christians and Muslims, and even various sects of Christians themselves were largely polemical and unenlightened. Whatever Judaism, Christianity, and Islam may have shared in a tradition dating back to the biblical patriarch Abraham, few individuals in this period recognised such commonality. Members of each faith were convinced of their own divine truth and looked forward to the downfall of their rivals. Informed knowledge of other religious cultures was 'extremely rare', and acts of hatred

[3] Ben Zvi Institute facsimile of MS 2262/79: Sabbatai Sevi to the Jewish community of Berat, August 1676.
[4] For the authoritative history of Sabbatianism, see Gershom Scholem (trans. R.J. Zwi Werblowsky), *Sabbatai Sevi: The Mystical Messiah* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976).

occasionally erupted into religious cleansing whether 'anti-Jewish, anti-Protestant, or anti-anyone else'.[5]

The confessionalization of Europe was the direct result of the extensive changes that began with the end of the great age of Iberian toleration. The immense upheavals starting in the fifteenth century, such as the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople, the Iberian *Reconquista* with the expulsions and conversions of Jews and Muslims, and the fracturing of Christendom with the Reformation, deeply shook peoples' understandings of history and the world around them. Turning to their sacred texts for explanations, many individuals interpreted these events as a sign of the imminent end of time. More and more Jews began to expect the immediate fulfilment of the prophecies in the Hebrew Bible, including those in the books of Daniel and Isaiah, that predicted the advent of the messiah who would rebuild the temple in Jerusalem, restore all the Jews to the holy land of Israel, and inaugurate a great period of peace. Christians, on the other hand, anticipated the return of Jesus who would rule with his saints for a thousand years, a period known as the millennium, which was elaborated upon in the book of Revelation or the Apocalypse.[6]

The proliferation of views about the coming end fanned the flames of inter-confessional conflict. Members of other faiths were often portrayed in negative

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[5] William Monter, 'Religion and Cultural Exchange, 1400-1700: Twenty-First-Century Implications,' *Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 9. For more on confessionalization in early modern Europe, see John Hedley, Hans Hillerbrand, and Anthony Papalas (eds.), *Confessionalization in Europe, 1555-1700: Essays in Honor and Memory of Bodo Nischan* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004); Wim Janse and Barbara Pitkin, *The Formation of Clerical and Confessional Identities in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2006); and Benjamin Kaplan, *Divided by Faith: Religious Conflict and the Practice of Toleration in Early Modern Europe* (London and Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007).

[6] Eschatology simply means teachings about the end. It is the broadest and most accepted term. Messianism is tied to the coming or return of a saviour figure whereas millenarianism comes from the millennium mentioned in Revelation (even though millenarianism is used in regard to a wide range of beliefs). Scholars often associate millenarianism with Christianity and messianism with Judaism; however, the distinction between the two falls apart in the apocalyptic writings of Islam that remarkably combine them. Apocalypticism, on the other hand, originally meant revelation, but it has developed negative connotations. For more on definitions, see Christopher Rowland, *The Open Heaven: A Study of Apocalyptic in Judaism and Early Christianity* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2002) and Howard Hotson, 'Anti-Semitism, Philo-Semitism, Apocalypticism, and Millenarianism in Early Modern Europe: A Case Study and Some Methodological Reflections,' *Seeing Things Their Way: Intellectual History and the Return of Religion* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009), 91-134.

apocalyptic terms. Protestants believed that the pope was the antichrist and the growing Islamic Empire in the Levant was Gog and Magog, the evil forces of the antichrist who would appear in the last days.[7] Meanwhile, Jews hoped that their messiah would save them from their Christian oppressors and return them to the promised land currently under Muslim occupation.[8]

These changes also made space for another process that co-existed alongside the mutual antipathy –a process in which increased cross-religious interactions facilitated reconciliation across religious divides. The reshaping of eschatology in this manner provided a framework for people of different faiths to come together, share their ideas, and formulate new expectations that blurred traditional religious boundaries. For instance, the Protestant view of the Catholic Church as the ultimate apocalyptic enemy coupled with their 'prejudice and ignorance' towards Islam opened the way for the growth of Protestant philo-Semitic interpretations of the last days. The Jews became the natural allies of the Protestants against their two greatest threats: the pope in Rome and the sultan in Istanbul.[9]

It is this lesser-known process of cross-religious transmission and fusion that this thesis investigates.[10] This study is ultimately one that explores how increased interconnectedness or globalisation brought about by the great changes in the early modern period transformed conceptions of the world and how it would end. The introductory chapter discusses the key events that spawned greater migration that in turn gave rise to transnational networks of communication. In other words, it situates the study of seventeenth-century eschatology within a larger historical context as well as within the

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[7] Richard Cogley, 'The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Restoration of Israel in the "Judeo-Centric" Strand of Puritan Millenarianism,' *Church History* Vol. 72, No. 2 (Jun., 2003), 318-319.
[8] Abraham Gross, 'The Expulsion and the Search for the Ten Tribes,' *Judaism* Vol. 41, No. 2 (Spring, 1992), 145.
[9] For more on Judeocentric Puritan eschatology, see Cogley, 'The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Restoration of Israel in the "Judeo-Centric" Strand of Puritan Millenarianism,' 304-332.
[10] Although the term 'syncretism' is widely employed, it has problematic implications. One can better understand this phenomenon in terms of 'fusion' –the combining of pre-existing and new ideas into a new cultural creation. For more on this concept, see Patrick Manning, *Navigating World History: Historians Create a Global Past* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), 281.

broader conceptual literature on networks. Exploring the movement of intellectual constructs across a variety of networks highlights problems with past frameworks and offers a new lens onto the transmission of religious ideas. Because the networks were formed through the very same migration that promoted the growth of eschatological excitement, the second chapter examines how people understood their journeys in an apocalyptic fashion.

With the necessary geographical, intellectual and conceptual background in place, the remainder of the dissertation tracks news, rumours, and theories about the messiah and the Lost Tribes of Israel between 1648 and 1666. The third chapter starts with the arrival of the former Converso Antonio de Montezinos in the Dutch Republic. Montezinos had an incredible story to tell: he claimed to have discovered the ancient Hebrews hidden in the jungles of South America. Montezinos' narrative, originating and travelling along Jewish networks in the 1640s, was shared with Protestants throughout northern Europe and in the Americas who used it to argue that the American indigenous peoples were the descendants of the Israelites.

From the Atlantic world, the focus of this thesis shifts to Europe and the Levant. The fourth chapter centres on the Quaker messiah James Nayler who rode into Bristol in 1656 in a manner that replicated Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. Reports about the Bristol affair were dispersed throughout Great Britain, the Dutch Republic, and the Italian peninsula in letters, gazettes, newsbooks, and pamphlets. Although the chapter proves that Europeans knew about Nayler to a degree not previously acknowledged, it also examines the possible networks along which the story of Nayler could have been brought to the Ottoman Empire and argues against certain historiographical claims that it was influential on the messianic career of Sabbatai Sevi.

The final two chapters explore the westward transmission of news and rumours associated with the Jewish Sabbatian movement that began in the Levant. The fifth chapter presents the history of the sack of Mecca in 1665. While the majority of the thesis discusses real people, accounts based in heavily documented testimony and intellectual theories, the tale of Mecca's destruction was completely fictitious. Even though it was only a rumour, it was in many ways similar to the other narratives: it connected Jews, Christians, and Muslims from the Middle East through Europe to North America; it was written about and printed in correspondence and publications in a variety of languages; and it affected the ways in which its readers understood their own religion as well as that of others. The last chapter looks at Christian responses to the Jewish messiah in handwritten mercantile and diplomatic dispatches as well as printed gazettes and pamphlets in 1666. While the Jewish beliefs in Sabbatai Sevi have received substantial attention, the cross-religious representations of the messiah have been largely neglected.

The first purpose of this dissertation is to tell this story –to reveal, explore, and analyse the process in which these eschatological ideas emerged, were passed on from one religious community to another, and were transformed through their transmission. Doing so would be impossible without a series of pre-existing scholarly traditions. Jewish messianism and Christian millenarianism in these years has been predominately studied by academics who work on singular instances, nations, or religions. Historians have rarely employed transnational and cross-religious frameworks by themselves and never in tandem.

There is a wealth of material on Sabbatai Sevi and his followers. Gershom Scholem's *Sabbatai Sevi: The Mystical Messiah* (1976) is the authoritative work on the subject and has been supplemented by other studies that explore different elements of the

Sabbatian movement.[11] There is also a rich Hebrew historiography on Sabbatianism, headlined by a two-volume collection edited by Rachel Elior entitled *The Sabbatian Movement and its Aftermath: Messianism, Sabbatianism and Frankism* (2000/2001).[12] Alongside the specific academic articles and books, much research has been undertaken on Jewish messianism more generally.[13] All of these scholarly works, however, only present Sabbatai, the Sabbatian movement, and Jewish messianism from a Jewish perspective and within a Jewish framework.

In a similar vein, most studies of Christian eschatology have been confined to particular individuals, religious communities, or national contexts. Almost all of the twenty books about James Nayler limit their discussion to his English environment.[14] A broader approach has been used in the study of larger groups, such as the Fifth Monarchy Men and the Puritans, who were situated throughout the Atlantic world and are therefore

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[11] These include Ada Rapoport-Albert, *Women and the Messianic Heresy of Sabbatai Zevi 1666-1816* (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2011); Matt Goldish, *The Sabbatean Prophets* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004); Elisheva Carlebach, *The Pursuit of Heresy: Rabbi Moses Hagiz and the Sabbatian Controversies* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990); and a host of other articles including Jane Hathaway, 'The Grand Vizier and the False Messiah: The Sabbatai Sevi Controversy and Ottoman Reform in Egypt,' *Journal of the American Oriental Society* Vol. 117, No. 4 (1997), 665-671 and Moshe Idel, 'On Prophecy and Magic in Sabbateanism,' *Kabbalah: Journal for the Study of Jewish Mystical Text* Vol. 8 (2003), 7-50. There are also numerous articles by Jacob Barnai who has written extensively on Sabbatai's Jewish and Converso followers in the Ottoman Empire. For more, see the bibliography at the end of this thesis.

[12] Other Hebrew texts include Gershom Scholem (ed.), *Studies and Texts Concerning the History of Sabbatianism and its Metamorpheses* (Jerusalem, 1982) and Yehuda Liebes (ed.), *G. Scholem, Researches in Sabbatianism* (Tel Aviv, 1991). Hebrew articles include Isaiah Sonne, 'New Material on Sabbatai Zevi from a Notebook of R. Abraham Rovigo (Hebrew),' *Sefunot* Vol. 3, No. 4 (1960), 39-70; Jacob Barnai, 'A Document from Smyrna Concerning the History of Sabbatianism (Hebrew),' *Jerusalem Studies In Jewish Thought* Vol. 2 (1982), 118-131; and Yosef Kaplan, 'The Attitude of the Leadership of the Portuguese Community in Amsterdam to the Sabbatian Movement (Hebrew),' *Zion* Vol. 39 (1974), 198-216 among others.

[13] Such as Yehuda Liebes (trans. Batya Stein), *Studies in Jewish Myth and Jewish Messianism* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1993); Marc Saperstein (ed.), *Essential Papers on Messianic Movements and Personalities in Jewish History* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1992); and Gershom Scholem, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism: And Other Essays on Jewish Spirituality* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1971).

[14] For example, see William Bittle, *James Nayler 1618-1660: The Quaker Indicted by Parliament* (York: William Session Ltd., 1986); Leo Damrosch, *The Sorrows of the Quaker Jesus: James Nayler and the Puritan Crackdown on the Free Spirit* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996); Emilia Fogelklou (trans. Lajla Yapp), *James Nayler: The Rebel Saint 1618-1660* (London: Ernest Benn Ltd., 1931); Vera Massey, *The Clouded Quaker Star James Nayler, 1618-1660* (York: Sessions Book Trust, 1999), David Neelon, *James Nayler: Revolutionary to Prophet* (Becket: Leading Press, 2009) and others listed in the bibliography.

often studied within this regional arena.[15] But they are only ever framed against a Christian backdrop.

With the growth of world history, religious historians have begun to think bigger and even globally.[16] Most notably, Tudor Parfitt's *The Lost Tribes of Israel: The History of a Myth* (2002) and Zvi Ben-Dor Benite's *The Ten Lost Tribes: A World History* (2009) present the entire history of the Lost Tribes across the Judeo-Christian world from biblical times to the modern age.[17] In regard to the specific period under consideration, Montezinos' account has garnered formidable research whereas the rumour of the Lost Tribes sacking Mecca has received very scant attention.[18]

The independent historiographies have been bridged by a select few studies of cross-religious interactions that have only examined small groups of people in specific cities or nations.[19] Furthermore, some of the statements about cross-religious influences in these works need to be reconsidered.[20]

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[15] James Maclear, 'New England and the Fifth Monarchy: The Quest for the Millennium in Early American Puritanism,' *The William and Mary Quarterly* Vol. 32, No. 2 (Apr., 1975), 223-260 highlights the importance of fifth monarchist beliefs in the imminent return of Jesus and the onset of the millennium among the English on both sides of the Atlantic. Studies of seventeenth-century Puritan eschatology across the Atlantic world include James Holstun, *A Rational Millennium: Puritan Utopias of Seventeenth-Century England & America* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987) and Avihu Zakai, *Exile and Kingdom: History and Apocalypse in the Puritan Migration to America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

[16] In terms of Jewish history, David Cesarani (ed.) *Port Jews: Jewish Communities in Cosmopolitan Maritime Trading Centres, 1550*-1950 (London: Frank Cass, 2002) as well as the special volume of *Jewish History* dedicated to 'Port Jews of the Atlantic' were both part of a trend to study Jews involved in the expansion of Europe in ports throughout the world.

[17] There are numerous other studies of the Lost Tribes in both English and Hebrew from anthropological works such as Stuart Kirsch, 'Lost Tribes: Indigenous People and the Social Imaginary,' *Anthropological Quarterly* Vol. 70, No. 2 (Apr., 1997), 58-68 to religiously-driven texts such as Joshua Benjamin, *The Mystery of Israel's Ten Lost Tribes and the Legend of Jesus in India* (Oakville: Mosaic Books, 2001); however, many of them are polemical, and the recent books by Parfitt and Benite are the best at giving an overview of the entire legend.

[18] For more on Montezinos' story, see Ronnie Perelis, ''These Indians Are Jews!': Lost Tribes, Crypto-Jews, and Jewish Self-Fashioning in Antonio de Montezinos's Relacion of 1644,' *Atlantic Diasporas: Jews, Conversos, and Crypto-Jews in the Age of Mercantilism, 1500-1800* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2009), 195-212 and the introduction to Henry Mechoulan and Gerard Nahon (trans. by Richenda George), *Menasseh ben Israel, The Hope of Israel: The English Translation by Moses Wall, 1652* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

[19] For English interest in Sabbatianism, see Michael McKeon, 'Sabbatai Sevi in England,' *Journal of the Association for Jewish Studies Review* Vol. 2 (1977): 131-169; Michael Heyd, 'The 'Jewish Quaker': Christian Perceptions of Sabbatai Zevi as an Enthusiast,' *Hebraica Veritas?: Christian Hebraists and the Study of Judaism in Early Modern Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 234-265;

As the variety of scholarly texts demonstrates, there is not a synoptic historiography for this project. Without all of these independent ones, however, the writing of this dissertation would be impossible. This thesis brings together all of the pre-existing parallel literature in order to show how a world history methodology can bring a new perspective to this field.

Certain groups of historians have long argued for the importance of larger perspectives as a challenge to parochial national narratives. A regional outlook expands horizons and encourages broader thinking in historical analyses. A framework that transcends the Atlantic, for example, sheds light on how many people saw themselves as part of communities that crossed the ocean and actively fostered such identities. Even in the seventeenth century, they understood that they lived in a world that extended far beyond their particular localities.[21]

While many books call for an examination of the Atlantic basin as a whole, the surviving sources to support such claims are minimal, whereas the abundance of evidence that readily suggests seventeenth-century interconnectedness across the Mediterranean is generally ignored in favour of the prevailing historiographical perspective of this region

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and Richard Popkin, 'Three English Tellings of the Sabbatai Zevi Story,' *Jewish History* Vol. 8, Nos. 1-2 (1994), 43-54. For Dutch interest, see Jetteke van Wijk, 'The Rise and Fall of Shabbatai Zevi as Reflected in Contemporary Press Reports,' *Studia Rosenthaliana* Vol. 33 (1999), 7-27; N.H. van Wijk, *Wachtend op de Wolk naar Jeruzalem: De Verslaglegging Rond Shabbatai Tsvi in Nederlandse Pamfletten en Couranten* (University of Amsterdam: doctoral thesis, 1996); and Yosef Kaplan's introduction to the Hebrew edition of Thomas Coenen's *Vain Hopes of the Jews as Revealed in the Figure of Sabbetai Zevi* (Jerusalem: The Ben-Zion Dinur Institute for Research in Jewish History, 1998). For the connection between Conversos and the Sabbatian movement, see Jacob Barnai, 'Christian Messianism and the Portuguese Marranos: The Emergence of Sabbateanism in Smyrna,' *Jewish History* Vol. 7, No. 2 (Fall, 1993), 119-126.

[20] Especially the work of Richard Popkin, such as his 'Jewish-Christian Relations in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: The Conception of the Messiah,' *Jewish History* Vol. 6, Nos. 1-2 (1992), 163-177 and his 'Christian Interest and Concerns about Sabbatai Zevi,' *Millenarianism and Messianism in Early Modern European Culture I* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001), 91-101.

[21] April Lee Hatfield, *Atlantic Virginia: Intercolonial Relations in the Seventeenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 2, 84. Scholars of Jewish history have also started to engage with the idea of an Atlantic world, showing how the Sephardim fit into this regional framework. See Richard Kagan and Philip Morgan (eds.), *Atlantic Diasporas: Jews, Conversos, and Crypto-Jews in the Age of Mercantilism, 1500-1800* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2009) and Paolo Bernardini and Norman Fiering (eds.), *The Jews and the Expansion of Europe to the West, 1450-1850* (Oxford and New York: Berghahn, 2001).

that consistently separates it into 'East/West, Muslim/Christian, Venetian/Turk, Europe/Other'.[22] Recently, several scholars have sought to develop a more sophisticated model that stresses the porous frontiers of the Mediterranean,[23] and one forward-thinking historian has called for the Sabbatian movement to be understood against a background in which Europe and the Ottoman Empire are seen as part of a shared world.[24] Building on these historiographical trends, this dissertation places the movement of eschatological ideas within a framework that transcends these national and continental divides.

The first scholar to use the Mediterranean world as his framework, Fernand Braudel, noted that 'the historical Mediterranean seems to be a concept of infinite expansion' and wondered, 'how far in space are we justified in extending it?'[25] Recently this question has been posed in relation to Atlantic history, and a few academics have responded, 'the Atlantic is no longer enough'.[26]

Notwithstanding the importance of recognising the complexity of the individual regions, ultimately a solely Mediterranean or Atlantic perspective is limiting. Each obscures wider connections and fails to account for the long-distance, cross-religious networks that spanned both bodies of water. Indeed, it was the stories and theories about the Lost Tribes in the Atlantic world in the 1640s and 1650s that set the stage for the rumours of the reappearance of the Israelites and their sacking of Mecca that came from the Mediterranean world in the 1660s. These ties suggest that, much like the regional perspective's challenge to the national narratives, a wider lens and perhaps even a global

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[22] Eric Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople: Nation, Identity, and Coexistence in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2006), 6.
[23] Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople*, 152, 185: see Suraiya Faroqhi, *The Ottoman Empire and the World Around It* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004) and Molly Greene, *A Shared World: Christians and Muslims in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).
[24] Barnai, 'Some Social Aspects of the Polemics between Sabbatians and their Opponents,' 82.
[25] Fernand Braudel, *La Mediterranee et le Monde Mediterraneen a l'Epoque de Philippe II*, as quoted in David Armitage, 'Three Concepts of Atlantic History,' *The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 28.
[26] David Armitage and Michael Braddick, 'Introduction,' *The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 9.

one can illuminate new trends, expand horizons, and encourage broader thinking about historical phenomena. As one scholar has warned, 'Atlantic Jewish history, if not placed within a global context, risks further reinforcing this misleading and unhelpful division' between the westward-expanding European states and the Muslim lands.[27] This sentiment holds true for more than just Jewish history. A regional viewpoint separates northern Europe and its Atlantic colonies from the rest of the world whereas a focus on networks across a broader geographical area shows that the rest of the world was not only connected to Europe, but played an important role in shaping it as well. It is from this vantage point that this project follows the thread of eschatological transmission that began in the Americas in the 1640s, spread across Europe to the Levant in the 1650s, and then returned to the Americas via Europe in the 1660s.

Unfortunately, there is not an analytical framework in the historiography appropriate for the investigation of such a broad-ranging phenomenon. Networks appear to be the most useful tool in the study of intellectual communication because they highlight aspects of human society that are otherwise neglected: there are patterns of relations crucial in the flows of information, influence, goods, and contagious diseases that hardly anyone could imagine before they were discovered and mapped with networks.[28] From studies of ancient trans-Saharan travel through early modern Jewish and Armenian Diasporas to contemporary African trade routes, historians have realised the benefits of networks and have employed them in many ways too.[29]

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[27] Adam Sutcliffe, 'Jewish History in an Age of Atlanticism,' *Atlantic Diasporas: Jews, Conversos, and Crypto-Jews in the Age of Mercantilism, 1500-1800* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2009), 25.
[28] Jeroen Bruggeman, *Social Networks: An Introduction* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), 2.
[29] For a selection of historical studies that use networks in different manners, see Laura Jarnagin, *A Confluence of Transatlantic Networks: Elites, Capitalism, and Confederate Migration to Brazil* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2008); Ghislaine Lydon, *On Trans-Saharan Trails: Islamic Law, Trade Networks, and Cross-Cultural Exchange in Nineteenth-Century Western Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Gary Bryan Magee and Andrew Thompson, *Empires and Globalisation: Networks of People, Goods and Capital in the British World, c. 1850-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Anne Bang, *Sufis and Scholars of the Sea: Family Networks in East Africa, 1860-1925* (London:

There are, however, a few reccurring problems in the historiography, which means that there is no viable model to emulate. Historians tend to use networks so casually and in such generic ways that they do not define, conceptualise, or discuss the development and actual workings of the networks. Almost all of them limit themselves to what they regard as a single network and focus on what that network was intended to do. With such an approach, the network itself becomes the implicit boundary that delimits their research. When one investigates the transmission of information across multiple networks, however, issues of boundaries become more important and are harder to identify. Moreover, this thesis follows the movement of eschatological constructs along and across a variety of mercantile, diplomatic, missionary, ethno-religious, and refugee networks, which further complicates matters. Considering this historiographical situation, there is very little scholarly literature that is directly useful in formulating a framework for overlapping and intersecting networks. This dissertation therefore starts at the very beginning to construct a model that utilises networks in a manner effective to track the trans-regional transmission of ideas.

Because of its cross-religious approach, this project also uses a fresh body of sources. It presents seventeenth-century correspondence, gazettes, and pamphlets that have not been previously discussed. These include Italian *avvisi* (or gazettes) printed in Genoa and Venice, a Dutch newsbook published in Haarlem, and English mercantile and diplomatic correspondence written across Europe that all refer to the Jewish messiah and have gone unnoticed by academics who have not concerned themselves with views of Sabbatai penned by Catholics and Protestants. Similarly, the story of the Quaker messiah James Nayler was found in locations that historians have not expected, and this study has unearthed Italian avvisi in Milan and Genoa as well as Dutch pamphlets and newsbooks

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RoutledgeCurzon, 2003); and Ina Baghdiantz McCabe, Gelina Harlaftis, and Ioanna Pepelasis Minglou (eds.), *Diaspora Entrepreneurial Networks: Four Centuries of History* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2005).

from Haarlem and Amsterdam that spread the account of Nayler's messianic entrance into Bristol to a wider European audience. By piecing the fresh material together with well-known letters and publications, this thesis provides greater clarity in the transmission of eschatologically driven narratives across the seventeenth-century Abrahamic world.

In conclusion, this dissertation makes three claims to originality. First, it recounts a new story by bringing together parallel literary traditions. Second, it provides a new analytical framework necessary for understanding the transmission of news across multiple diverse networks. Third, it locates the movement of this news in new genres of sources. Taking these three strands together, it offers a new way of conceptualising the cross-religious and transnational transmission of eschatological constructs and explores the resulting beliefs that blurred traditional religious boundaries. Overall, it argues that one cannot understand the growth of millenarian and messianic excitement that peaked in 1666 and inspired Serrarius' journey in 1669 without going back to the year 1492 and exploring the major historical events and processes that affected Jews, Christians, and Muslims from the Levant to the Americas.

Chapter 1

Networks of Communication and Nodes of Exchange

An International Infrastructure Created by Coinciding Waves of Migration (1492-1666)

> And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him. But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself...
> – Leviticus 19: 33-34

The widespread transmission of eschatological ideas in the seventeenth century was dependent upon an infrastructure that allowed for such complex communication. This underlying framework can be best understood using the concept of networks, which are a 'useful heuristic device when not used generically' because they serve to identify particular channels through which individuals, goods, and knowledge moved.[1] Because this study centres on the flow of religious constructs along and across many different types of networks, including mercantile, diplomatic, religious and familial ones, a methodological question naturally arises: how does one construct a conceptual model that takes into account a multitude of intersecting and overlapping networks?

To do so, one has to start with the most basic building blocks and first examine the formation of the networks. The networks and nodes that would be vital for the circulation of narratives about the messiah and the Lost Tribes of Israel between 1648 and 1666 were

[1] Francesca Trivellato, 'Sephardic Merchants in the Early Modern Atlantic and Beyond: Towards a Comparative Historical Approach to Business Cooperation,' *Atlantic Diasporas: Jews, Conversos, and Crypto-Jews in the Age of Mercantilism, 1500-1800* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2009), 119. This project follows historians who utilize networks 'in a loose sense' to highlight 'forms of affiliation and association that are less defined than a "structure" but more than a collection of individuals engaging in transactions. Networks are organisations with voluntary and reciprocal patterns of exchange' that bound people together across national boundaries, nurturing and reflecting a sense of shared commitment and purpose. This definition was first used in Frederick Cooper, 'Networks, Moral Discourse and History,' *Intervention and Transnationalism in Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 24 and has subsequently been employed in Magee and Thompson, *Empires and Globalisation*, 27.

created by coinciding population displacements that began as early as 1492. While networks are intangible, exploring the ways in which they came into being due to specific events and processes grounds them in a firm historical foundation. This opening chapter therefore brings together a series of hitherto independent historiographies to form a preliminary account of the manner in which converging waves of forced and voluntary migration gave rise to transnational networks of communication that met in key cities deemed nodal points.

The Formation of Early Modern Transnational Networks

Each network was formed through the dispersion of significant numbers of people who retained ties to one another as they spread out to new locations. Forged through population displacement, the networks were then used to move more people, goods and information, which reinforced the connections. In the early modern period, numerous historical events and processes prompted an abundance of forced and voluntary migration –all of which led to the establishment and solidification of wide-ranging transnational networks of communication.

Forced Migration

In early modern Europe, the two principles of *cujus regio ejus religio* and *jus migrandi* reigned supreme. While the former recognised the ruler's right to impose his religion upon his subjects, the latter recognised the dissenters' right to leave.[2] Religious persecution was a major force in these centuries, "pushing" people out of their homelands, creating new communication dynamics, and facilitating cultural exchange.[3] Jews and

[2] Kaplan, *Divided By Faith*, 161.
[3] Mark Greengrass, 'Two Sixteenth-Century Religious Minorities and their Scribal Networks,' *Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 325.

Muslims were either converted or expelled from Iberia, and members of all kinds of Christian sects were imprisoned, massacred, and exiled throughout Europe.

Everyone involved in the large-scale migrations that resulted from religious persecution had their local networks expanded into transnational ones when they kept in touch with their friends, family, and co-religionists –some of whom stayed in their homelands, others of whom travelled to the same place, and many more of whom went in different directions. Although they were forced out, the refugees did not simply flee to the nearest safe haven. They chose their new homes based on factors beyond religious freedom, and available economic opportunities were a prominent cause in "pulling" diverse people to the same locations where they then utilised their resilient ties of religion, ethnicity, and family to build complex trade networks.[4]

The Jewish population of Spain, which had been in existence since the time of Jesus, was expelled in 1492.[5] Forced to sell their belongings for a fraction of their value and leave their homes with practically nothing, over a third of the 200,000 Jews set off to the east, hoping to start new lives in places throughout the Mediterranean world. Many travelled the long distance to the multi-ethnic and multi-religious Ottoman Empire where they were allowed to settle without any religious or economic restrictions. The Ottoman authorities welcomed the Sephardim for their business skills as well as their knowledge of the Iberian Peninsula.[6] In the economic and political capital of Istanbul (formerly Constantinople),

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[4] Transnational ethnic and religious connections offered a more secure way of building or expanding economic networks because compatriots were viewed as more trustworthy; members of family and ethnic groups could co-operate to overcome logistical challenges, to obtain finances, to coordinate transportation, and to regulate transactions. For more, see Lydon, *On Trans-Saharan Trails*, 343.

[5] For more on the Spanish expulsion, see Benjamin Gampel (ed.) *Crisis and Creativity in the Sephardic World 1391-1648* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997); Moshe Lazar and Stephen Haliczer (eds.), *The Jews of Spain and the Expulsion of 1492* (Lancaster: Labyrinthos, 1997); and Haim Beinart and Yaacov Green (eds.), *The Expulsion of the Jews from Spain* (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilizations, 2002).

[6] Minna Rozen, 'Strangers in a Strange Land: The Extraterritorial Status of Jews in Italy and the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Centuries,' *Ottoman and Turkish Jewry: Community and Leadership* (Bloomington: Indiana University Turkish Studies, 1992), 125.

the Jewry of 3,000 households before 1492 grew almost threefold by 1535.[7] Some of the exiles found employment in positions of importance and used the connections to their brethren scattered across the Mediterranean to acquire information that they occasionally shared with Ottoman officials. News of Dutch piracy in the Red Sea, for example, reached the Ottoman authorities in Istanbul through Jewish merchants before the Ottoman governor general in Yemen reported it.[8]

While the political and economic centre of Istanbul was an obvious choice for settlement, the port city of Smyrna (modern-day Izmir) was not. Smyrna was a town of little consequence at the time of the expulsion, and the Sephardim avoided it. They went to Salonika instead. When an economic crisis in the sixteenth century affected Salonika's textile trade, many Jews looked for places to resettle. It was during this time that Smyrna was growing in economic importance due to the Ottoman-Venetian war that had obstructed the sea route to Istanbul, so third and fourth generation descendants of the exiles decided to go to the Anatolian port city, forming wealthy, trade-oriented communities.[9]

Some Sephardic exiles did not make it as far as the Levant. They stayed in the Italian peninsula where the social climate was markedly anti-Jewish and their settlement was subjected to severe restrictions. But with financial investments in Italy or lacking the funds to carry on to the Ottoman Empire, they took up residence in one of the Italian states.[10]

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[7] Jonathan Israel, *European Jewry in the Age of Mercantilism 1550-1750* (Oxford: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1998), 23.
[8] Alexander de Groot, *The Ottoman Empire and the Dutch Republic: A History of the Earliest Diplomatic Relations 1610-1630* (Leiden and Istanbul: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut, 1978), 174.
[9] Daniel Goffman, *Izmir and the Levantine World, 1550-1650* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1990), 79, 82, 90; Jacob Barnai, 'The Sabbatean Movement in Smyrna: The Social Background,' *Jewish Sects, Religious Movements, and Political Parties: Proceedings of the Third Annual Symposium of the Philip M. And Ethel Klutznick Chair in Jewish Civilization held on Sunday-Monday, October 14-15, 1990* (Omaha: Creighton University Press, 1992), 119.
[10] Rozen, 'Strangers in a Strange Land,' 125.

Jews could only enter Venice briefly for business purposes until the Spanish expulsion made the Venetians reconsider their policy. Shortly after 1492, a ghetto was established in Venice where the Jews could live and engage in trade as long as they paid a third higher rent. Although the walled-in quarter was locked at night, the isolation did not discourage the Jews. In 1541, they petitioned the government to expand the ghetto because it was too cramped to hold all of the incoming immigrants.[11]

On the other side of Italy, the Tuscan authorities actually solicited the immigration of the Jews who were expected to promote economic growth by developing their commercial networks. Originally forced to live in a ghetto in the capital city of Florence, the Jews were then encouraged to settle in Livorno when the government decided to build an international port that would rival those in Venice and Genoa. The Jews could live wherever they wanted, conduct almost all types of trade, and screen new members for admission –conferring upon them the status of Tuscan citizens and granting them privileges and protection as long as they retained permanent residency in Livorno.[12]

Returning to the Iberian Peninsula, 120,000 Spanish exiles went to the closest state: Portugal. Five years later, all of these Jews were forcefully converted to Christianity when Portugal sought to create a uniform religious identity. With this one political manoeuvre, the entire Jewish population became *Conversos* (or Christian converts of Jewish origin).[13]

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[11] Brian Pullan and David Chambers (eds.), *Venice: A Documentary History, 1450-1630* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 338-339, 344.

[12] Francesca Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers: The Sephardic Diaspora, Livorno, and Cross-Cultural Trade in the Early Modern Period* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009), 77.

[13] Renata Segre, 'Sephardic Refugees in Ferrara: Two Notable Families,' *Crisis and Creativity in the Sephardic World 1391-1648* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 165: Conversos have been called *Marranos*, New Christians, and Crypto-Jews. While many were forcefully converted, some did so voluntarily, and the religious beliefs of Conversos were very complex. Some were practicing Christians, others were only Christians externally and practiced Judaism in secret, and many more mixed Christianity and Judaism in unique ways. For more on the Conversos, see David Graizbord, *Souls in Dispute: Converso Identities in Iberia and the Jewish Diaspora, 1580-1700* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004) and Yirmiyahu Yovel, *The Other Within, The Marranos: Split Identity and Emerging Modernity* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009).

The Portuguese Inquisition did not pursue these new Christians until 1547 when it became increasingly interested in the activities of the Conversos.[14] In response, many of the forced converts fled Portugal. Some followed the eastward route of their brethren, reinforcing and expanding the Sephardic transnational community while simultaneously complicating its religious composition.

Approximately 50,000 Conversos travelled to the Ottoman Empire where they too were welcomed for their linguistic skills, familial networks, and knowledge of the Iberian Peninsula. A particularly large Converso population moved to Smyrna where they returned to Judaism and established two of the most prominent and richest congregations.[15] From their new home, they retained connections to friends and family throughout Europe and some were known to frequent Istanbul, Venice, and Amsterdam.[16]

The Conversos who settled in Venice were expelled in 1550 because of fear they were influencing the local Catholics. Unlike the Jews, the Conversos were believed to be malevolent, faithless people who lived amongst the Christians and infected them with 'a wicked and evil doctrine'.[17] Conversos who wanted to stay in Venice often left for a short period of time to the Ottoman Empire and then returned as a *mercante levantino*, a Levantine Jewish merchant. A brief sojourn in the Empire was all that was needed to launder 'past sins' because Ottoman Jewish subjects residing in Venice were entitled to freedom of trade, freedom of movement, and tax exemptions that their co-religionists in the Republic were not.[18]

The Conversos were encouraged to move to Tuscany after the state chose to abandon its subservice to Rome in regard to the Christian converts in the 1580s. The

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[14] David Abulafia, *The Great Sea: A Human History of the Mediterranean* (London: Penguin Books, 2011), 464.
[15] Barnai, 'The Sabbatean Movement in Smyrna,' 114-115.
[16] Barnai, 'Christian Messianism and the Portuguese Marranos,' 121, 122.
[17] Pullan and Chambers (eds.), *Venice: A Documentary History, 1450-1630*, 345.
[18] Rozen, 'Strangers in a Strange Land,' 126, 129.

Conversos were too valuable because of their commercial networks. By choosing to ignore the Chrisitan pasts of anyone who lived as a Jew in Tuscany, the government allowed the Conversos to move to their state and return to Judaism without fear of prosecution. Then, in 1593, the Tuscan government issued a charter that made the Jews of Livorno the first Jewish community in the Christian world with no religious restrictions. The Conversos flocked to Livorno in response, returning to Judaism and helping to turn the port city into the main Mediterranean trade hub between the Levant and northern Europe.[19] Livorno's growth was noticed in Venice, a state currently in economic decline due to the Ottoman-Venetian war, and the Venetian council met and reconsidered their policy: it now sought to also attract Jewish and Converso merchants to compete with Tuscany.[20]

Because of their conversions to Christianity, the Conversos were accepted in countries where the Jews were not. From Portugal, some went to England and the Dutch Republic –states growing in economic strength. The regents of Amsterdam permitted the settlement of the Conversos for their economic abilities, 'trusting that they were Christians' even though the leaders of the Reformed Church opposed their admission.[21] When the fears of the Reformed pastors proved true and many Conversos began living openly as Jews, the Christian leaders reacted more vehemently and repeatedly complained of overt public displays of Jewish life.[22] But the Conversos-turned-Jews were just too

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[19] Lionel Kochan, *The Making of Western Jewry, 1600-1819* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 28-29. For more on the Sephardim in Livorno, see Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers*.

[20] Olivia Remie Constable, *Housing the Stranger in the Mediterranean World: Lodging, Trade, and Travel in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 330; Benjamin Arbel, *Trading Nations: Jews and Venetians in the Early Modern Eastern Mediterranean* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995), 2, 6, 184.

[21] Maarten Prak, *The Dutch Republic in the Seventeenth Century: The Golden Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 216; Thomas Glick, 'On Converso and Marrano Ethnicity,' *Crisis and Creativity in the Sephardic World 1391-1648* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 70.

[22] Yosef Kaplan, 'The Self-Definition of the Sephardic Jews of Western Europe and Their Relation to the Alien and the Stranger,' *Crisis and Creativity in the Sephardic World 1391-1648* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 121-122.

important to the Dutch economy, and the government chose to ignore their Protestant ministers.

Seeing the immense freedom of the new Jewish converts in Amsterdam, many Sephardic Jews joined the former Conversos in the Dutch Republic where they too engaged in trade. The Dutch authorities supported the Sephardim and tried to obtain the same foreign-trading rights and protections for their Jewish subjects as their Christian merchants enjoyed. The Jewish traders in Amsterdam thrived. They not only owned a quarter of the shares of the Dutch East India Company, but they also utilised their connections in the American colonies to expand the economic influence of the Dutch West India Company.[23] International trade was of such importance to the Sephardim that one rabbi in Amsterdam lamented that his congregation was always too eager to end the service in order to discuss the arrival of a ship or a cargo.[24] Another Jew, when asked for a monetary contribution for the Sabbatian movement, replied that 'he was more interested in great profits than in great prophets'.[25]

Economic considerations were just as critical in the formation of the Converso and, later, the Jewish community of London. Converso merchants began settling in London in the sixteenth century, acting as Catholics and worshipping at the Spanish embassy chapel.[26] When the English Navigation Act of 1651 threatened to undermine Dutch transatlantic trade, the Amsterdam Jewry wanted to establish an enlarged Jewish community in London to circumvent the effects of the act, and Menasseh ben Israel travelled to the English capital to petition the government for Jewish readmission. While

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[23] Jan de Vries and Ad van der Woude, *The First Modern Economy: Success, Failure, and Perseverance of the Dutch Economy, 1500-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 152.
[24] Peter van Rooden, 'Jews and Religious Toleration in the Dutch Republic,' *Calvinism and Religious Toleration in the Dutch Golden Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 133-135; Prak, *The Dutch Republic in the Seventeenth Century*, 219.
[25] This quote from an unnamed rich Jew was repeated by Martin Meyer and recorded by Johann Hottinger. The original stated, 'und heilten mehr von den alten Profiten als von den neuen Propheten' as quoted in Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi*, 463.
[26] Todd Endelman, *The Jews of Britain, 1656 to 2000* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 24, 27.

his request was only granted informally at first, the mere 26 Portuguese Conversos who were the 'first kernel and founders' of a Sephardic community in 1656 gained at least 57 more men by 1663 when some of the Conversos and other newly arriving Jews began to worship their Jewish faith openly.[27] Well situated between northern Europe, the Iberian Peninsula and the Americas, the London Sephardim became a proper community of global consequence by 1666. The bankruptcy of Jacob Aboab, for instance, was felt in Paris, Hamburg, Amsterdam, and Livorno.[28]

A final group of Conversos fled westward across the Atlantic. Although the Inquisition made it impossible for them to found viable communities in the Iberian colonies, the resettlement of the Jews in the Dutch Republic and England promoted transatlantic Jewish migration, which brought about overt Jewish settlements in the western hemisphere as some Conversos returned to Judaism and united with Jews from Europe to form congregations.[29] The new communities took the Amsterdam Jewry as their model and used their ties to their Dutch brethren to establish the first Jewish colony in North America. When the Portuguese recaptured the colonies in Dutch Brazil in 1654, twenty-three Jewish refugees fled to New Amsterdam. While the governor of the New Netherlands, Peter Stuyvesant, tried to block every attempt by Jews to take part in community life, the intercession of the Dutch Jews led the West India Company to grant the Sephardim permission to stay despite the wishes of Stuyvesant.[30] As the conflict raged openly in the Dutch colonies, the Jews quietly formed enclaves throughout the English

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[27] Yosef Kaplan, *An Alternative Path to Modernity: The Sephardic Diaspora in Western Europe* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2000), 156-158: For more on the London community, see the chapter in this book entitled 'The Jewish Profile of the Spanish-Portuguese Community of London during the Seventeenth Century,' as well as Maurice Woolf, 'Foreign Trade of London Jews in the Seventeenth Century,' *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England* Vol. 24 (1970-1973), 38-58.

[28] Henry Roseveare, *Markets and Merchants of the Late Seventeenth Century: The Marescoe-David Letters, 1668-1680* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 81-82, 81n.

[29] Jacob Marcus, *The Colonial American Jew 1492-1776* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1970), 1328.

[30] Noah Gelfand, 'A Transatlantic Approach to Understanding the Formation of a Jewish Community in New Netherland and New York,' *New York History* Vol. 89, No. 4 (Fall, 2008), 381. For more on Jewish settlement in North America, see this article.

foreign territories where most Jews and Christians regarded each other with little more than superficial friendship or a high degree of indifference.[31]

The American communities were one end of the complex social, familial, ethno-religious, and mercantile networks of Conversos and Sephardic Jews that stretched from Brazil through England, the Dutch Republic, and Italy to the Ottoman Empire. These people places kept in contact with one another through correspondence over shared familial, religious, and economic concerns. By the seventeenth century, the Sephardim constituted a single demographic and social entity whose members regarded themselves as belonging to the Portuguese and Spanish nation. No other diaspora ranged as widely, linked as many empires, or cut across as many confessional divides as that of the Sephardim.[32]

Persecution similarly drove Christians of a multitude of sects across Europe and the Atlantic during these centuries. The reforming aspirations created antagonisms which gave way to the confessionalization of Christendom and violence that forced communities to displace themselves. From the Reformation onwards, Catholics and Protestants fled their homes and sought refuge among like-minded peoples.[33] Petrus Serrarius' family, for example, left the Low Countries for England due to the rampage perpetrated by the Spanish. They then joined a Dutch stranger congregation in London where they used their contacts in their homeland to build a mercantile network across the channel.

Although the English authorities accepted the Dutch refugees, they persecuted their own Puritan population who dispersed throughout the Atlantic world. The Puritans had

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[31] Marcus, *The Colonial American Jew 1492-1776*, 1125, 1136.

[32] In some ways, the Sephardim and Iberian crypto-Jews actually constituted two distinct networks. Yet there were enduring links between them, consisting of family ties, religious sympathies, and active trading collaboration. For more on this, see Jonathan Israel, *Diasporas within a Diaspora: Jews, Crypto-Jews and the World Maritime Empires* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2002).

[33] For more on early modern European refugees, see Heiko Oberman, '"Europa Afflicta:" The Reformation of the Refugees,' *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* Vol. 83 (1992), 91-111.

sought to recapture the original apostolic faith and had opposed the ceremonies of the bishops in the early reign of Charles I. This gave rise to their persecution at the hands of Archbishop Laud.[34] Many Puritans responded by transporting 'themselves farr off beyond the seas into this our New England',[35] where some 21,000 of their brethren settled in the 1620s and 1630s.[36]

The Puritans left their homeland due to persecution, but many went to America for economic incentives. Religion and trade were believed to go hand in hand as one proponent of the Puritan migration aptly exclaimed, 'religion and profit [would] jump together' in New England.[37] Continued Puritan settlement brought permanent merchants to North America who established commercial networks that they integrated into the transatlantic trade. The scattering of Puritans from New England to the West Indies enabled them to form wide-ranging mercantile networks that were reinforced by blood relationships and family credit arrangements.[38] While transatlantic Puritan networks were founded through westward migration, every ship that sailed to Massachusetts also took passengers back to England to visit, procure goods, sell merchandise, or resettle –return journeys that solidified transatlantic bonds.[39]

Puritans moved information throughout their transnational community for both economic and religious purposes. Personal relationships and correspondence among co-

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[34] David Hall, *The Faithful Shepherd: A History of the New England Ministry in the Seventeenth Century* (Williamson: University of North Carolina Press, 1972), 47, 72.
[35] MHS Richards-Child Family Papers MS N-791, Folder #7: John Hull's diary, 1628.
[36] Allen French, *Charles I and the Puritan Upheaval: A Study of the Causes of the Great Migration* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1955), 15, 231, 238-240, 319.
[37] Alan Taylor, *American Colonies: The Settling of North America* (New York: Penguin Books, 2002), 188. For more on the Puritans and their migration, see David Cressy, *Coming Over: Migration and Communication between England and New England in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Perry Miller, *Errand into the Wilderness* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Beknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1970); French, *Charles I and the Puritan Upheaval*; and Zakai, *Exile and Kingdom*.
[38] Bernard Bailyn, *New England Merchants in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1955), 35, 87, 88, 144.
[39] James Horn, '"To Parts Beyonds the Seas": Free Emigration to the Chesapeake in the Seventeenth Century,' *"To Make America": European Expansion in the Early Modern Period* (Berkeley: University of Berkeley Press, 1991), 89, 115.

religionists aided in enlarging the mercantile networks. Letters often began with a religious exhortation followed by business news, cash reckonings, and reports on recent affairs that were believed to have an economic impact.[40] These letters brought news, rumour, and opinion back and forth between England and New England; information that was then spread further by word of mouth. John Haynes wrote to the younger John Winthrop that 'Newes from England' recently came to his hand and that Winthrop 'shall have sight of it att my coming to you, which wilbe at the end of harvest.'[41]

Newsletters, gazettes, and other publications accompanied the correspondence across the Atlantic. Hundreds of former New Englanders who returned to England sent printed newsbooks and manuscript newsletters to satisfy the newshunger of their friends and kinsmen in North America.[42] If there were no storms or pirates, news of an event in England could reach New England in two months.[43] Regardless of the time it took to travel, the large amount of material transiting between the Puritan colonies and England created a transatlantic community of information.

Voluntary Migration

Voluntary migration was just as instrumental in building transnational networks of communication. Many people were not "pushed" out of their homelands; they simply left to pursue new opportunities. One of the most prominent reasons for voluntary migration was foreign trade, which expanded greatly in the early modern period with the integration of commerce across Europe, the Mediterranean, and the Atlantic. Merchants were so

[40] Cressy, *Coming Over,* 191, 178-180, 222.
[41] John Haynes to John Winthrop Jr., 10 August 1652, as quoted in Malcolm Freiberg (ed.), *Winthrop Papers VI* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1992), 215.
[42] Cressy, *Coming Over,* 234, 246.
[43] Ibid., 225, 223, 229.

important in this period that '[w]hoever says "European expansion" or indeed "early modern" winds up saying "merchant".'[44]

In the Mediterranean world, there was a longstanding Italian economic hegemony because Italian merchants at home and abroad acted as middlemen in the trade between the Levant and Europe. Italian dominance was finally undermined in the seventeenth century due to the discovery of new sea routes to Asia, the rise of Ottoman and Hapsburg powers, the Thirty Years' War, the bankruptcy of Spain, and the restrictions that the sixteenth-century sultans placed on the Italians to squeeze them out of trade in Ottoman lands. English and Dutch merchants filled this void by bypassing their traditional Italian intermediaries, buying and selling goods in the Levant themselves.[45]

The inauguration of English trade in the Ottoman Empire occurred when the sultan granted two Englishmen, Edward Osborne and Richard Staper, the rights to trade. Shortly thereafter, William Harborne settled in Istanbul as their envoy. In 1581, the English Levant Company was officially formed when Queen Elizabeth gave these men and their partners a monopoly over Anglo-Ottoman trade and the right to appoint representatives in Levantine cities. By 1605, the Levant Company employed 40,000 people,[46] including twenty-five factors in Istanbul. By 1649, Smyrna overtook Istanbul as the largest English colony with over fifty merchants.

The Dutch came to the Ottoman lands shortly after the English, and the structure of the Dutch Levant Company paralleled its English counterpart to which it was intimately connected: the first Dutch merchants based their venture on the information of a Dutch

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[44] Sanjay Subrahmanyam, 'Introduction,' *Merchant Networks in the Early Modern World* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1996), xiii; Peter Kriedte, *Peasants, Landlords and Merchant Capitalists: Europe and the World Economy, 1500-1800* (Learnington Spa: Berg Publishers, 1983), 20.

[45] The 'Northern Invasion' is one of the few remaining remnants left of the problematic 'Expansion of the West' thesis, and it is difficult to identify anything as clear-cut as 'Muslim', 'French' or 'Christian' trade. While the literature refers to the English and French as coherent communities, it was more like states struggling to impose a national trade policy on a disparate collection of individuals. For more, see Molly Greene, 'Beyond the Northern Invasion: The Mediterranean in the Seventeenth Century,' *Past and Present* (2002), 42-71.

[46] Nabil Matar, *Islam in Britain, 1558-1685* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 10.

merchant's son who had been sent to London to join the English Levant Company. Dutch shipping in the Mediterranean grew quickly and, between 1645 and 1648, there were approximately 97 Dutch ships sailing this route a year. [47]

These merchants established trade networks that linked the Ottoman Empire to northern Europe via the Italian peninsula. The growth of Livorno's port with its relative freedom, low duties, and geographical position made it one of the great pivots for English and Dutch Mediterranean trade. Because Livorno was a better and cheaper distribution centre than Venice as well as a shorter and safer voyage from northern Europe, the Dutch and English moved there in great numbers, making Livorno a rendezvous for vessels from Barbary, Venice, and the Levant.[48]

While these merchants developed their commercial operations in the Mediterranean, their counterparts in the Atlantic broke the Iberian monopoly on transatlantic trade. The English and Dutch set up colonies in the Americas, which provided goods for both their home countries and their other settlements. Among the English, the southern plantations and islands produced valuable cash crops for export, such as tobacco, sugar, and cotton; New Englanders provided fish, timber, ships, and shipping services for the southerners; and England sent manufactured goods, food, and labour to all the colonies.[49]

The expansion across the Atlantic was part of a global commercial strategy. The goods from these plantations were expected to replace Mediterranean commodities, such as sugar, wine, cotton, and olive oil. Furthermore, overlapping participation in both regions was common from employees and investors who worked for and backed joint

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[47] De Vries and van der Woude, *The First Modern Economy*, 381.
[48] Alfred Wood, *A History of the Levant Company* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1964), 64-65.
[49] Nuala Zahedieh, 'Making Mercantilism Work: London Merchants and Atlantic Trade in the Seventeenth Century,' *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* Vol. 9 (1999), 144. For more on various merchant communities in the Atlantic, see Peter Coclanis (ed.), *The Atlantic Economy during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: Organization, Operation, Practice, and Personnel* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2005).

stock companies in both the Mediterranean and the Atlantic to adventures and sailors who brought maritime practices across the artificial regional divide.[50] In this manner, merchants forged connections that joined the three trade arenas centred on the Atlantic world, the Mediterranean world and Europe, creating 'a loosely articulated world economy'.[51]

No matter where they were located, international merchants needed to communicate with people in distant places to effectively run their business operations. The increased efficiency of postal services in the early modern period allowed merchants to install representatives, often family, abroad whose correspondence provided information that gave them an edge over their competitors.[52] Merchant letters 'served as sinews holding together European commerce'.[53] These handwritten documents primarily contained discussions of economic news, public investments, markets, exchange rates, and descriptions of products as well as comments on political, religious, and military affairs that were believed to have an economic impact.[54] Merchant letters were usually less than four pages, sent weekly or at least regularly, and presented news that was generally considered reliable. Increased trade therefore gave rise to the widespread movement of mercantile news between the Levant, the Americas, and Europe.

The growth of foreign merchant colonies gave rise to the voluntary migration of professional diplomats who established parallel and overlapping networks. Although diplomatic channels sometimes originated independent of merchant activities, they were

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[50] Lauren Benton, 'The British Atlantic in Global Context,' *The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 277-278, 288.
[51] Hermann Kellenbenz, *The Rise of the European Economy: An Economic History of Continental Europe from the Fifteenth to the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, 1976), 301.
[52] Jan Willem Veluwekamp, 'International Business Communication Patterns in the Dutch Commercial System, 1500-1800,' *Your Humble Servant: Agents in Early Modern Europe* (Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren, 2006), 122, 127-128.
[53] Francesca Trivellato, 'Merchants' Letters across Geographical and Social Boundaries,' *Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe III* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 102-103.
[54] Ibid., 88.

often a direct result of, and used to support, foreign trade. The modern diplomatic system began in fifteenth-century Italy where the established tradition of consul-merchant co-operation put Venice at the forefront of diplomacy's development.[55] Installing permanent residents in capital cities of neighbouring countries, the Venetians forged a diplomatic web that brought information from all over Europe to the Venetian senate.[56]

For merchants, transmitting information was a by-product of trade relations. For diplomats, it was one of their primary duties. Almost all ambassadors wrote regular reports about their host state based on their own observations, news acquired by trading items of political importance, and statements from informants who were cultivated through special favours and bribery. These dispatches were then sent to their home governments despite the difficulty of slow and expensive communications as well as the problem of keeping the contents secret.[57]

Diplomatic reports were similar to merchant letters in many regards. They were handwritten, usually only a few pages, sent regularly, and contained news that was considered reliable. If anything, the ambassadors wrote more frequently about political and military activities, utilising code for sensitive intelligence.[58]

By the 1650s, many European states had extensive diplomatic networks. The Ottoman Empire did not. The sultans refused to treat the European powers on 'a basis of equality and reciprocity'.[59] Instead, they chose to rely on their own extraordinary ambassadors as well as European diplomats stationed in Istanbul for their foreign relations.

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[55] Filippo de Vivo, *Information and Communication in Venice: Rethinking Early Modern Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 70.
[56] Donald Queller, *The Office of Ambassador in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 84. For more on diplomacy, see Keith Hamilton and Richard Langhorne, *The Practice of Diplomacy: Its Evolution, Theory and Administration* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995).
[57] Garrett Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1964), 99, 213-214.
[58] Mario Infelise, 'News Networks between Italy and Europe,' *The Dissemination of News and the Emergence of Contemporaneity in Early Modern Europe* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 52.
[59] Edhem Eldem, 'Foreigners at the Threshold of Felicity: the Reception of Foreigners in Ottoman Istanbul,' *Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 120.

The Italian states, on the other hand, had permanent residents throughout Europe. In England, the Tuscan ambassador sent letters to Florence every week, but the slow postal services meant that there was a two month gap between the time that he asked a question and when he could act on the response from the grand duke.[60] The Venetians too had a representative in England and, in the 1650s, it was Francesco Giavarina. The Venetian post in London was only one of thirteen stable legations. In Istanbul, their representative was known as the *bailo*, a man responsible for the entire Venetian colony in the Empire. Like all diplomats, the bailo negotiated trade agreements, interceded on the behalf of his country's merchants in day-to-day affairs, and wrote regular dispatches for his government. Intelligence did not simply flow to the Venetian government from the foreign posts; Venice acted as a hub in the dissemination of information throughout the diplomatic network. For example, the Venetian senate enclosed 'a copy of the news from Constantinople' in a letter to their English resident, which was to 'serve solely for your information and to give you material to discuss when opportunity offers.'[61]

Likewise, the English diplomatic network developed alongside of, and intertwined with, their mercantile network. England's political interaction with the Ottoman Empire even began due to the establishment of Anglo-Ottoman trade.[62] At the centre of the diplomatic network, the secretary of state worked with two undersecretaries in London. Like the trade in goods, diplomatic dispatches from the Levant to England often travelled via Tuscany, and family connections reinforced this network. The earl of Winchelsea, the

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[60] For more on Tuscan diplomacy in England, see Stefano Villani, *La Corrispondenza dei Residenti Toscani a Londra* (unpublished manuscript).

[61] CSPV: the Venetian senate to their English resident, October 1656 as translated and summarised in Allen Hinds (ed.), *Calendar of State Papers Relating to English Affiars in the Archives of Venice* Vol. 30: 1655-1656.

[62] The situation was similar with the Dutch, except that the Ottoman government initiated diplomatic communication with the Dutch authorities after Dutch merchants settled in the Levant. The Ottomans offered friendship and free trade if the Dutch sent an ambassador to Istanbul to negotiate an alliance. For more, see Mehmet Bulut, 'The Role of the Ottoman and Dutch in the Commercial Integration between the Levant and Atlantic in the Seventeenth Century,' *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* Vol. 45, No. 2 (2002), 197-230 and de Groot, *The Ottoman Empire and the Dutch Republic*.

English ambassador in Istanbul, wrote to his boss Lord Arlington in London that 'the best way to setting a quicker & securer correspondence with your Lordship' was 'by the medium of Sir John Finch' in Florence who was his 'neere kinsman' and 'cousin'.[63]

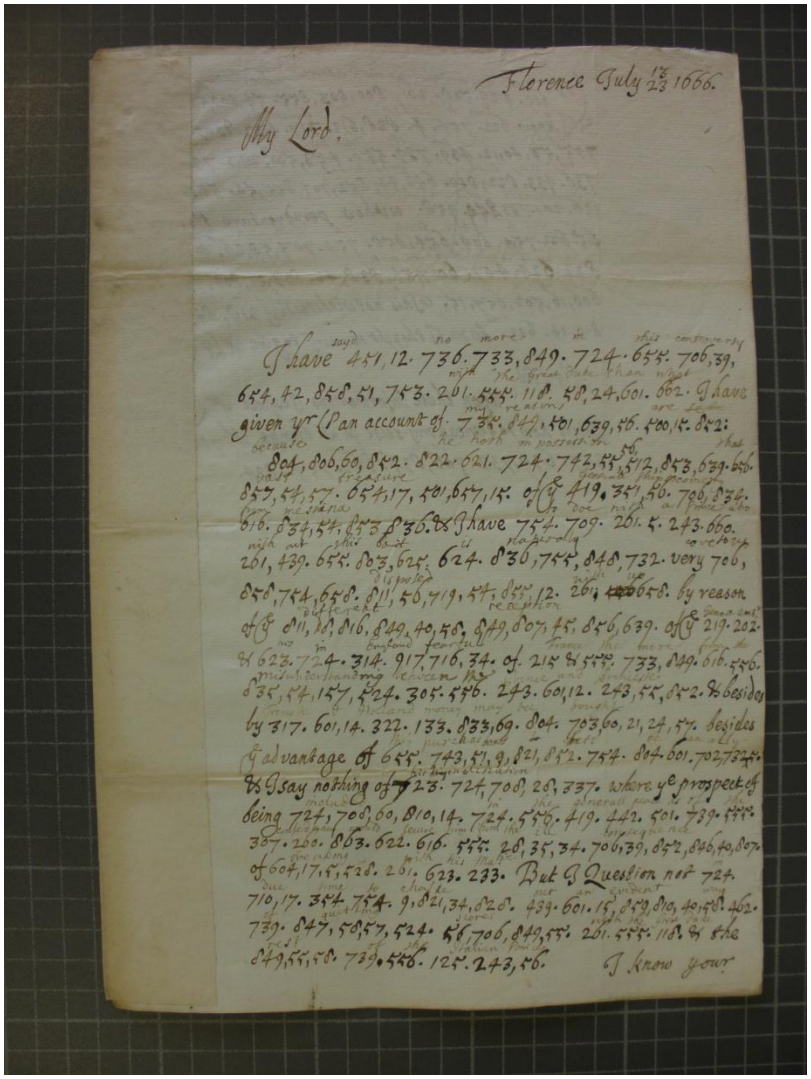

Figure 2: An Encrypted English Diplomatic Dispatch

While merchants paved the way for diplomats, permanent diplomacy brought about an increase in the number of religious officials in foreign lands. Each ambassador was

[63] TNA SP 97/18 130: the earl of Winchelsea to Lord Arlington, 12 July 1665.

allowed to bring his own chaplain to provide services for himself and his family, and each minister had his own embassy chapel that was also used by visiting merchants.

In the Ottoman Empire, the consuls were granted private chapels, and the earl of Winchelsea 'added (in his owne house) because it is against the law of Mahomet to give liberty to erect any places for Christian devotion'.[64] In spite of the earl's negative perception, the Ottomans did allow the erection of Christian churches in Istanbul and Smyrna. English services were really held in consular chapels because, like the Dutch and unlike the French, the English were too cheap to build their own church.[65]

In their new posts, the religious officials regularly to wrote their friends, family, and the heads of the company that employed them. Some chaplains even used their positions to pen full-length treatises about religious and cultural curiosities that were published in their homelands, spreading knowledge about other faiths to broader populations. Thomas Coenen, the Dutch Reformed chaplain in Smyrna, wrote a text about Sabbatai and his following after witnessing the messianic outburst firsthand. Coenen sent his 140-page manuscript entitled *Ydele Verwachtinge der Joden Getoont in den Persoon van Sabethai Zevi, Haren Laesten Vermeynden Messias* (1669) or 'The Idle Expectations of the Jews, Shown in the Person of Sabethai Zevi their Last So-Called Messiah' back to Amsterdam to be printed, dedicating it to its financers, 'the Honoured Club of the Lords Directors of the Levantine Commerce and Ship Company in the Mediterranean with its Seat in Amsterdam'.[66] Because the chaplains were there for their country's diplomats and merchants, the communication networks that they established were often connected to the others, demonstrating the intertwining of networks that were not only used to move merchandise and diplomatic reports, but also a wide variety of information.

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[64] TNA SP 97/18 35: the earl of Winchilsea to Lord Arlington, 5 August 1663.
[65] Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*, 225.
[66] Oegema, 'Thomas Coenen's "Ydele Verwachtinge Der Joden",' 333. Coenen's letters survive and two of them addressed to his employer at the 'Levantsen Handel y de Navigatie in de Middlezee tot Amsterdam' refer to Sabbatai. See NA R.A. Lev. H. 39 Port. 1.03.01.

Alongside these permanent settlers and semi-permanent residents, there were temporary voluntary migrants, such as missionaries, who cultivated fluid short-term networks. The Society of Friends or the Quakers emerged in England in the 1650s and quickly became notorious for their missionary endeavours. Developing naturally from their work in the British Isles, Quaker missionaries began to travel overseas in 1655, carrying their message to Protestants, Catholics, Jews, and Muslims from the Americas to the Middle East.

The American mission began in 1655 with the arrival of Mary Fisher and a companion in Barbados,[67] and they were followed by over 150 Quaker ministers in the next fifty years who went to the Puritan colonies in New England and Virginia by way of Barbados and Jamaica.[68] The Puritans may have been persecuted themselves, but they did not tolerate the Quakers. In Boston, they imposed the death penalty on any Quaker missionary who came back multiple times. While the Quakers were often accused of witchcraft in Plymouth, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Maine, economic factors may aid in explaining the rigid anti-Quaker legislation: Rhode Island Quaker merchants were known to undercut local trade in this region in the 1650s.[69] Certain Quakers ignored the threats of execution and continued to travel to Massachusetts where they had some success. One Quaker envoy to Boston in 1661 spoke of men who rejoiced to see him,[70] and the Puritan pastor Increase Mather, who had no love or sympathy for the Quakers, lamented over a man named 'Studley who was seduced by Quakers'.[71]

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[67] Rosemary Moore, *The Light in their Consciences: Early Quakers in Britain 1646-1666* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 34.
[68] Hatfield, *Atlantic Virginia*, 124. Over half of them were women. For more on the Quaker missionary work, see Bettina Lacock, *Quaker Missions to Europe and the Near East 1655-1665* (Birmingham University: undergraduate thesis, 1950).
[69] Barry Reay, *The Quakers and the English Revolution* (London: Temple Smith, 1985), 68, 71.
[70] Hall, *The Faithful Shepherd*, 229-230.
[71] AAS Mather Family Papers Box 3, Folder 1: Increase Mather's diary, 17 February 1664.

Quakers similarly travelled to the Dutch colonies where they were often imprisoned or sent away on the first ship leaving the port. The Dutch governor Stuyvesant responded to the Quaker Robert Hodgson's preaching at Hempstead by ordering him to work the roads chained to a wheelbarrow and guarded by a black man with a whip. When Hodgson continued to preach from his wheelbarrow, he was hung by the hands and severely beaten.[72]

Some of the Quaker missionaries, such as Mary Fisher, travelled to both the American colonies and the Ottoman Empire. Although such wide-ranging efforts were rare, missionaries often had a far greater impact than their trifling numbers suggest because they set about to change peoples' minds and habits.[73] By bringing their message to people of contrasting faiths on opposite sides of the globe, the Quakers attempted to create continuity across both regions, seeing neither place as too far away nor its people too different to join their religious community.

The Quaker missionaries created networks that expanded outwards from England by regularly informing their co-religionists about their latest activities.[74] Information predominately moved from the missionaries at the peripheries to the Quakers in London, and the shape of the network frequently changed due to constant travel. For both their journeys and their correspondence, Quakers depended on the help of merchants. John Luffe made it to Smyrna because he 'got passage by the hand of God upon the Zant frigot'[75] and then sent his letter back to England 'from Zant by the dragon the 23rd of the

[72] Karen Sivertsen, *Babel on the Hudson: Community Formation in Dutch Manhattan* (Duke University: doctoral thesis, 2007), 310-311.
[73] William McNeill, 'Human Migration in Historical Perspective,' *Population and Development Review* Vol. 10, No. 1 (Mar., 1984), 14.
[74] Quakers also left England due to persecution, which complicated the composition of their networks and highlights the interaction between forced and voluntary migration. For more on the persecution of Quakers, see Barry Reay, 'Popular Hostility Towards Quakers in Mid-Seventeenth-Century England,' *Social History* Vol. 5, No. 3 (Oct., 1980), 387-407.
[75] LSF Port MS 17.74: John Luffe to G.R., 10 October 1657.

8th moneth'.[76] Furthermore, Luffe utilised the English mercantile network to collect money necessary for continued missionary work. Luffe told his brethren to give money 'in London to some Turkey Merchant and his bills inclosed in thy letter to William Hedges' who would then pass it on to him in Italy.[77] More important, Luffe ordered them to make 'the superscription be as other Merchants with Mr Hedges Merchant else he will be slighted at the posthouses'.[78] In other words, Luffe did not just use the merchants; he pretended to be one himself. Thus, forced and voluntary migration gave rise to transnational familial, ethnic, religious, mercantile, and diplomatic networks that often overlapped and reinforced each other as they criss-crossed across the early modern world.

The Intersection of Networks at Nodes and the New Media of Dissemination

Networks zigged and zagged across the seventeenth-century Mediterranean and Atlantic worlds. But they did not exist in isolation; the networks intersected at key sites deemed nodal points or nodes. From a bird's-eye view, these nodes appear to be cities that were particularly popular places of immigration and, in some cases, emigration. Each nodal point had a thriving port that made it a centre of trade and settlement. Indeed, port cities had long acted as vectors for the transmission of ideas and religious beliefs. They were often the focal points in the spread of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.[79] For the networks under consideration, there were three pairs of nodal points in which the networks came together. The first set was found in the Levant, the second in Italy, and the third in northern Europe.

[76] Ibid.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Abulafia, *The Great Sea*, 643.

Under higher magnification, each node was made up of local networks that contained members of the transnational networks.[80] As each immigrant settled in their new city, he interacted with locals and other migrants, forging new bonds that would serve as pathways between their older, larger networks. Because the market created new possibilities for encounters as well as cross-cultural fertilisation,[81] it was often the occupations of these individuals that allowed them to acquaint themselves with each other. Business relationships gave way to social interactions and, on occasion, the sharing of religious beliefs. Fascinated with the knowledge they acquired, these people then shared it with their friends, family, co-religionists, and associates by employing their transnational networks, which shaped the flows of news from one country to the next.

Each aforementioned wave of migration brought a new set of incoming migrants who added another layer to each nodal point, resulting in a situation of complex exchanges among individuals of a variety of professional, ethnic, religious, and national affiliations. Moreover, the establishment of postal services, news industries, and scientific institutions provided new means for the communication and dissemination of information, greatly expanding the potential audience for the intelligence transferred along the networks. Although the process was similar in each node, the type and amount of interactions varied due to the people who settled in it, the city's past history and specific environment as well as the policy of its state. The remainder of this chapter therefore focuses on the second part of the conceptual infrastructure: the locations of the six nodal points in Istanbul, Smyrna, Livorno, Venice, Amsterdam, and London.

[80] Many thanks to Luke Clossey for his insight and suggestions on conceptualising networks and nodes.
[81] Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers*, 20.

The Ottoman Empire

The first two nodes were located in the Ottoman Empire, a state which wilfully accepted merchants, diplomats, and refugees from a variety of backgrounds –be they Jews, Conversos or Christians. Yet even the Ottoman authorities had preferences. They were more receptive to the English and the Dutch because they were not Catholic and did not have a legacy of discord with Islam.[82]

Word of mouth was the medium of choice for communication in the Ottoman realms. A lower literacy rate, a later introduction of printing, an underdeveloped news industry, and a surveillance system discouraged the circulation of handwritten and printed information beyond the inner circles of power. This meant that news and ideas were exchanged primarily through conversations among people in the marketplace and in coffeehouses that were popular in the Empire long before they showed up in Europe.[83]

In most Ottoman cities, there was a tendency towards religious segregation,[84] but the political capital of Istanbul was different. Istanbul was a city recreated from scratch after the Ottoman conquest by importing selected ethnic, religious, and cultural populations.[85] It was also the home of European ambassadors whose work entailed much contact with each other as well as with Muslim, Greek Orthodox, and Armenian Christian officials in the political arena. These men met to discuss current affairs, politics, religion, philosophy and books; they came together to hunt, at banquets, and other social events held at the embassies.[86]

Each diplomat was responsible for his country's merchants. Although Istanbul was one of the largest cities in the seventeenth-century world with an estimated population of

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[82] Goffman, *Izmir and the Levantine World*, 94, 55.
[83] Ralph Hattox, *Coffee and Coffeehouses: The Origins of a Social Beverage in the Medieval Near East* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1985), 128-129, 98.
[84] Wood, *A History of the Levant Company,* 235.
[85] Eldem, 'Foreigners at the Threshold of Felicity,' 115.
[86] Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople*, 179.

700,000 people, the European merchants all lived together in a large, walled city called Galata in suburbs known as Pera. In such close proximity, interactions between them abounded.[87] The fifty Swiss Huguenots, for instance, rotated their attendance between the English and Dutch chapel services.[88]

Sometimes there were more positive relationships among foreigners living in Istanbul than between members of the colony and visitors from their own country. The English ambassador Thomas Bendish complained that the Quakers who arrived there were such 'notorious contempts of me and my authority' that he had to force them to leave.[89] The Ottoman officials, on the other hand, treated the English missionaries much better. Upon meeting Mary Fisher, the Sultan Muhammad IV engaged her in religious conversation and apparently invited her to stay in the Empire as his guest. He respected anyone who would travel so far to see him with a message from God.[90]

In the Ottoman capital, the European merchants and diplomats were particularly dependent upon the Jews who acted as indispensable mediators in their relations with the Muslim authorities.[91] When a new English factor arrived, he was immediately laid hold of by the first Jew that could secure him and was henceforth obliged to conduct his trade through that Jew. In short, 'the merchant can no more shake off his Jew than his skin'.[92]

The port city of Smyrna lay directly south of Istanbul and, with the development of its port, was one of the fastest growing cities in the Levant. Smyrna's population had skyrocketed from a mere 2,000 in 1595 to between 60,000 and 70,000 in 1660. Sephardic

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[87] Eldem, 'Foreigners at the Threshold of Felicity,' 127.
[88] De Groot, *The Ottoman Empire and the Dutch Republic*, 191, 219-220.
[89] See 'Thomas Bendish's Report in the Calendar of State Papers,' *Journal of the Friends Historical Society* Vol. 8 (1911), 168.
[90] William Braithwaite, *The Beginnings of Quakerism* (London: MacMillan and Co., 1912), 423.
[91] Daniel Goffman, *Britons in the Ottoman Empire 1642-1660* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998), 32; Goffman, *Izmir and the Levantine World*, 78, 79, 111; Jonathan Israel, 'Diasporas Jewish and Non-Jewish and the World Maritime Empires,' *Diaspora Entrepreneurial Networks: Four Centuries of History* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2005), 8.
[92] Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*, 214.

Jews and former Conversos comprised one of the immigrant populations who, like their co-religionists in Istanbul, monopolised government positions as tax collectors and customs officials for the Ottomans as well as administrators, translators, and factors for the Europeans.[93]

Unlike most places in the Empire, Smyrna was a 'cultural melting-pot' of ethnicities, races, and religions.[94] Most of the foreigners lived on either side of a road that ran along the water known as the 'Street of the Franks'. This part of Smyrna was a cultural outpost of European houses, shops, taverns, and religious institutions. While Europeans adopted Ottoman clothing in other parts of the Levant to try to pass for locals, in Smyrna they wore their hats to show their alien status.[95]

The Europeans worked with each other to promote their own business ventures. The Dutch first traded under English protection, and the Dutch ambassador in Istanbul appointed the English consul in Smyrna as the Dutch vice-consul.[96] Meanwhile, a Venetian jeweler returning from Persia passed through Smyrna under an English flag, and Dutch ships occasionally sailed under French, English, or Venetian flags in order to avoid paying their own consulate fees.[97]

Socially, the Europeans mingled without restraint and the convivial atmosphere earned Smyrna the nickname the *Petit Paris*. Nothing but French, English, and Dutch were spoken; Capuchins, Jesuits, and Franciscans promenaded the streets; and there was public singing and preaching in the churches and consular chapels as well as cabarets,

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[93] Goffman, *Izmir and the Levantine World*, 70, 87, 89. For more on the Sephardim in Smryna, see Jacob Barnai, 'Prototypes of Leadership in a Sephardic Community: Smyrna in the Seventeenth Century,' *Crisis and Creativity in the Sephardic World 1391-1648* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 146-163.
[94] Sonia Anderson, *An English Consul in Turkey: Paul Rycaut at Smyrna, 1667-1678* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 17-18. For more on Smyrna, see Goffman, *Izmir and the Levantine World*.
[95] Goffman, *Izmir and the Levantine World*, 135; Faroqhi, *The Ottoman Empire and the World Around It*, 212.
[96] Anderson, *An English Consul in Smyrna*, 54; de Groot, *The Ottoman Empire and the Dutch Republic*, 216; Jonathan Israel, *Dutch Primacy in World Trade, 1585-1740* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 225-226.
[97] Bulut, 'The Role of the Ottoman and Dutch in the Commercial Integration between the Levant and Atlantic in the Seventeenth Century,' 212.

banquets, and carnivals.[98] Such social interactions sometimes gave way to the exchange of religious ideas. The English consul invited a Capuchin prior and the English ambassador to dinner, which led to a conversation about salvation.[99]

Despite the close intra-European relations, the Quakers were given a better reception by the Ottomans than their own countrymen (as in Istanbul). The missionaries that arrived in Smyrna talked to 'Turkes Jewes and Greekes,' and 'held forth their testimony to the truth day by day' until 'the English consul sent a Turkish janisarie and a Druggerman with hammalls to their lodging to fetch them away'.[100]

Smyrna was such a cosmopolitan and tolerant city that it contained thirteen mosques, seven synagogues, three Roman Catholic churches, two Greek Orthodox churches, two Armenian churches, and a variety of consular chapels. The frequent and varied encounters between people of different backgrounds promoted exchange, conversion, and cross-religious fusion. Paul Rycaut was troubled by the amount of Christians who were daily converting to Islam;[101] Lutherans and Armenians were welcome in the Dutch Calvinist chapel; and the Dutch kept open house for Catholic priests and donated money for the Franciscan monastery. One English chaplain was dismissed for preaching heresy, and another assisted at Armenian services. Meanwhile, the Armenians took communion at the French chapel, the Greek bishop was in trouble for his neo-Jewish observances, and every year the French nation marched alongside Muslims and Jews to the Greek cathedral to celebrate Maundy Thursday. On occasion, Muslims showed up at churches and their exemplary conduct put the Christians to shame –sometimes they would attend the Jesuit church just to hear the boys recite their catechism in Sunday school. In short, divines of every persuasion exchanged their views with an open-mindedness that

[98] Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*, 237.
[99] Anderson, *An English Consul in Turkey*, 8-11.
[100] LSF Port MS 17.8: Daniel Baker and Richard Scosthrop to the London Quakers, 1661. 'Hammalls' comes from the Arabic and refers to porters. Thanks to Nick Davidson for pointing this out.
[101] Matar, *Islam in Britain, 1558-1685*, 105, 25-30.

verged on heresy.[102] Thus, the very population displacement of individuals and their juxtaposition next to members of other faiths far from home itself blurred religious boundaries.

The Italian Peninsula

In Venice, the situation was very different. Venice was an important port city like Smyrna and the capital of its state like Istanbul, but its population in 1650 was 140,000 and its skyline was dominated by Catholic churches. The Venetian Republic was a Catholic state. Although the government realised that cross-religious interactions were necessary for business purposes, it only tolerated immigration if the foreign populations could be controlled. The Venetians were anxious about Jews taking over commerce and being a polluting influence on Christians,[103] so they segregated the Jewish community in the ghetto that was created in 1516 and allowed the Inquisition to maintain the social distance between Jews and Catholics. Unlike the Jews, Protestants had no place of public worship aside from embassy chapels. In fact, they were granted far fewer privileges so they naturally avoided this city.[104]

While encounters between immigrants and locals were not prevalent, Venice was a centre in which networks of Catholics intersected. Unlike monarchical capitals, Venice had no court to separate 'the business of insiders from the participation of outsiders', and information revealed just outside the palace quickly spread through the various markets and communities where gentlemen mixed with the populace. The streets of Venice teemed with people beyond the political elite who talked about current affairs and distant events,

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[102] Anderson, *An English Consul in Turkey*, 3-18, 59.
[103] Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople*, 109.
[104] Pullan and Chambers (eds.), *Venice: A Documentary History, 1450-1630*, 325, 154. For more on the Jewish community and the Inquisition in Venice, see Brian Pullan, *The Jews of Europe and the Inquisition of Venice, 1550-1670* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1997) as well as the multi-volume series by Pier Cesar Ioly Zorattini, *Processi del S. Uffizio di Venezia Contro Ebrei e Giudaizzanti* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 1980).

engaging in discussions relating to a world of which they were supposed to have no knowledge.[105]

Venice was a hub of diplomatic and mercantile networks that made the transmission of news easier and in more demand, resulting in the city becoming one of the earliest centres of news distribution. Handwritten newsletters and then printed *avvisi* (early newspapers) emerged when authors began to extract and combine news of wider interest from the brief letters sent by merchants and the longer dispatches by diplomats. It was no coincidence that Venetian avvisi writers worked in the strategically located district of *San Moise*, in the immediate vicinity of both the palace and the post where foreign correspondence arrived. In the piazzas, in the streets, and in the cafes around the centre, much political talk occurred. Not long after the contents of foreign dispatches were received and read, they found their way to the news writers.[106]

The information in official letters was mixed with, and corroborated by, the news from merchants sent to their associates at the *Rialto*. As the secretary of the English ambassador remarked, 'the avvisi which go to foreign courts are written on the basis of discussions at the corner in Rialto where all foreign ambassadors and others meet every morning to discuss the affairs of the world'. [107] While news editors relied upon mercantile and diplomatic correspondence, this relationship was reciprocal: merchants and diplomats were some of the main clients of the new profession as well as stars of the press reports.

Written in the vernacular to reach the broadest possible audience, avvisi were often a page or two in length and each paragraph would present a different news item from

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[105] De Vivo, *Information and Communication in Venice*, 48, 112, 107, 117.
[106] Mario Infelise, 'Copisti e Gazzettieri nella Venezia del Seicento,' *Venezia: Itinerari per la Storia della Citta* (Bologna: Societa Editrice il Mulino, 1997), 198-199.
[107] Report of Tommaso Contarini, 29 August 1611, as quoted in de Vivo, *Information and Communication in Venice*, 81-82.

another place.[108] The handwritten and printed avvisi were circulated throughout the city, the state, and beyond. Locally, they ended up in common meeting places throughout Venice from pharmacies and liquor stores to *San Marco*'s square. Internationally, the seventeenth-century avvisi writer in Venice, Giovanni Quorli, sent 245 avvisi to over 60 subscribers across Europe every week.[109] The news re-exported from Venice was generally considered reliable abroad and, because of its geographical position and longstanding ties to the Levant, reports from the Ottoman Empire often first appeared in the Venetian avvisi.[110]

Like the Venetian Republic, Tuscany was a Catholic state. A short distance from the capital city of Florence, the much smaller city of Livorno lay on the coast and was home to most of the foreigners because of its vibrant port with unusually light customs duties and a liberal policy of acceptance towards religious minorities. It was a city intended to be a social experiment; the Tuscan authorities wanted to populate it with the right economic groups to encourage its growth.[111]

The arrival of the northern Europeans was one of the most significant events in Livorno's history, and its port quickly became an indispensable stopping point for ships to unload their surplus silk, acquire goods to export, take on provisions and new equipment as well as complete repairs. One of the reasons why the English and Dutch chose Livorno

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[108] Zsuza Barbarics and Renate Pieper, 'Handwritten Newsletters as a Means of Communication in Early Modern Europe,' *Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe III* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 60, 55.
[109] Infelise, 'News Networks between Italy and Europe,' 66, 55.
[110] Mario Infelise, 'From Merchants' Letters to Handwritten Political Avvisi: Notes on the Origins of Public Information,' *Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe III* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 36-37. For more on the development of the news industry in Venice, see de Vivo, *Information and Communication in Venice*; Infelise, 'Copisti e Gazzettieri nella Venezia del Seicento'; Mario Infelise, *Prima dei Giornali: Alle Origini della Pubblica Informazione* (Bari: Laterza, 2002); and Mario Infelise, 'Sulle Prime Gazette a Stampa Veneziane,' *Per Marino Berengo: Studi degli Allievi* (Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2000), 469-489.
[111] Gigliola Pagano de Divitiis, *English Merchants in Seventeenth-Century Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 114, 118; Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers,* 108, 74.

as their Mediterranean base of operations was because Jewish merchants had helped promote its thriving economy. From 1630 onwards, the plague coupled with the waning Venetian commercial power led the Sephardim to go to Livorno where they were not segregated in a ghetto and could interact freely with Christians.[112]

Unlike Venice, foreigners played an uncharacteristic role in the life and the economy of Livorno. Social encounters between Jews and Christians were plentiful because it was a city designed for minorities; the government did not have to worry about their local population being "contaminated" by outsiders. Although the public Jewish-Christian debates held in Amsterdam were unimaginable in Tuscany, the Jewish merchants in Livorno shaved their beards, dressed like Catholic gentlemen, and could hire Christians. From the town's central square to docks, taverns and coffee houses, Jews and Christians chatted with each other. Non-Catholics worshipped side by side in two churches that held a mixture of English, Dutch, French, Portuguese Converso and Armenian Christians,[113] and the Muslims prayed in the three mosques built for the merchants from the Ottoman lands.[114]

Quaker missionaries made it to Livorno too and their discussions with Catholics left their priests 'confounded and their followers in Idolatries wounded', whereas the Jews were 'prickt to the heart' and assured the Quakers that 'so farre they had not laboured in vain'.[115] The English factors, on the other hand, 'were abominable Malefactores' even though the 'Agent of the English nation received their message with thankfulness'.[116]

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[112] De Divitiis, *English Merchants in Seventeenth-Century Italy*, 95. For more on the Jewish community in Tuscany and especially the Sephardim and their mercantile networks in Livorno, see Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers* and Renzo Toaff, *La Nazione Ebrea a Livorno e a Pisa, 1591-1700* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 1990).
[113] Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers*, 101, 167, 80-81.
[114] Abulafia, *The Great Sea*, 465.
[115] LSF Port MS 17.75: John Perrot to Edward Borrough, 17 June 1657.
[116] Ibid.

While Venice was a centre for the news industry, Tuscany was not. Instead, the Tuscan population was forced to rely on gazettes from other places. Alongside a Venetian avvisi that was circulated in Florence, an avviso that was regularly printed in 'Genova' was then 'Ristampata in Firenze'.[117] Meanwhile, the English *Gazette* appears to have reached members of the colony stationed in Livorno as well. The merchant Thomas Dethick acquired a copy of one issue from another Englishman who must have received it from a correspondent in England.[118] The nodes in Catholic Italy were therefore opposites. In Venice, cross-religious interactions were minimal but news was disseminated widely through the new media of avvisi. In Livorno, the news industry was non-existent but large populations of Jews and Protestants interacted with each other.

Northern Europe

The final two nodes were found in the rapidly growing northern European states. The first one, Amsterdam, was so well known for its religious toleration that its market was lambasted for fomenting religious schisms. The seventeenth-century poet Andrew Marvell wrote,

> Hence Amsterdam, Turk-Christian-Pagan-Jew,
> Staple of Sects and Mint of Schisme grew;
> That Bank of Conscience, where not one so strange
> Opinion but finds Credit, and Exchange.[119]

With a tolerant policy and an abundance of economic opportunities, immigrants flocked to Amsterdam which progressed from a town of little significance to one of the world's most

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[117] See the collections of avvisi in the SA Segreteria di Stato, Avvisi, 26. The reprinted version was almost identical, except for slight changes to account for different dialects. For example, the word '*aveva'* became '*havea'*.
[118] TNA SP 98/6: Thomas Dethick to Joseph Williamson, 8 March 1666.
[119] See Andrew Marvell, *The Character of Holland in Complete Poetry* as quoted in David Katz, 'Henry Jessey and Conservative Millenarianism in Seventeenth-Century England and Holland,' *Jewish-Christian Relations in the Seventeenth Century: Studies and Documents* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1988), 5.

important centres in just a few centuries. The city's population exploded from 2,000 in 1494 to 140,000 in 1647.[120]

Amsterdam developed into a pluri-confessional city that was the most important meeting point for seventeenth-century Jewish and Christian intellectuals.[121] Christian scholars interested in the Hebrew language and biblical scholarship turned to the Jewish immigrants who had Christian backgrounds, a broad European education, and spoke several languages. Public debates began as early as 1606 and rabbis, such as Menasseh ben Israel and Elijah Montalto, wrote polemics that were disseminated throughout the Christian world.[122]

Some of the closest Christian-Jewish relationships were forged by Protestants from Great Britain. John Dury, for example, was an exiled Presbyterian minister raised in Holland, educated in France, and repeatedly displaced by the religious and military events of this period. Dury had also studied at the University of Leiden and at the Walloon Seminary of the Reformed Church where he met Petrus Serrarius. In Amsterdam, Dury stayed with Serrarius and then befriended Menasseh, joining their cross-religious circle that included Sephardic Jews, Anglicans, Mennonites, and Quakers –all working together on projects relating to Jewish-Christian reconciliation.[123]

The multitude of networks, especially mercantile ones, extending out of the Dutch Republic in all directions meant that information flowed to Amsterdam via oral and written communication from the Levant and the Americas. Much of the news found its way to the economic heart of Amsterdam where the main financial institutions were all located within

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[120] De Vries and van der Woude, *The First Modern Economy*, 47.
[121] J.L. Price, *Dutch Society 1588-1713* (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2000), 204.
[122] Theodor Dunkelgrun, *'"Neerlands Israel": Political Theology, Christian Hebraism, Biblical Antiquarianism, and Historical Myth* (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 2009), 224-226. For more on the Dutch Jewry, see Jozeph Michman (ed.) *Dutch Jewish History: Proceedings of the Fifth Symposium of the History of the Jews in the Netherlands* (Jerusalem, 1991) and Chaya Brasz and Yosef Kaplan (eds.), *Dutch Jews as Perceived by Themselves and by Others: Proceedings of the Eighth International Symposium on the History of the Jews in the Netherlands* (Jerusalem, 1998).
[123] For more on Dury, see J. Minton Batten, *John Dury: Advocate of Christian Reunion* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1944).

a few minutes walk of each other. It is no coincidence that, when coffeehouses came into vogue in the city, they were built in this area adjacent to the stock exchange.[124]

Following the Venetians, the Dutch developed their own news sources. In fact, the two news industries were intimately connected. The first Dutch *coranto* began with a piece of news from Venice, and each subsequent issue resembled the avvisi in content and format.[125] By the middle of the seventeenth century, corantos had been replaced by pamphlets and gazettes that supplied the Dutch population with the latest news. While pamphlets appeared in response to events, gazettes came out on fixed days. Pamphlets were filled with military, political, and religious reports as well as sensational stories. Gazettes, on the other hand, were seen to carry more sober information supplied by respectable compatriots on the scene, such as ambassadors, clergymen, soldiers, and most of all merchants.[126] Two prominent Dutch gazettes that were known for their accurate and objective reporting were the *Oprechte Haerlemse Saterdaegse Courant* and the *Oprechte Haerlemse Dingsdaegse Courant.* A Dutch newsbook entitled the *Hollandtze Mercurius* was also published weekly, but with consecutive page numbers so at the end of the year it could be put together to form a book.[127]

These sources were read by many people since most Dutch men and women could probably read by 1660 and actively interpreted texts, projecting on to them their own opinions and reinventing them to suit their own desires.[128] From the Low Countries, some gazettes reached the Dutch colonies in the Americas. Stuyvesant in New Amsterdam

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[124] De Vries and van der Woude, *The First Modern Economy*, 148.
[125] De Vivo, *Information and Communication in Venice*, 81.
[126] Van Wijk, 'The Rise and Fall of Shabbatai Zevi as Reflected in Contemporary Press Reports,' 15, 17.
[127] For more on the Dutch news industry, see Craig Harline, *Pamphlets, Printing, and Political Culture in the Early Dutch Republic* (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1987) and Otto Lankhorst, 'Newspapers in the Netherlands in the Seventeenth Century,' *The Politics of Information in Early Modern Europe* (London: Routledge, 2001), 151-159.
[128] Geoff Baker, *Reading and Politics in Early Modern England: The Mental World of a Seventeenth-Century Catholic Gentleman* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), 119; Harline, *Pamphlets, Printing, and Political Culture in the Early Dutch Republic*, 59.

wrote to Andries Hudde 'that two ships have arrived here from the fatherland', bringing 'some newspapers [that] shall be sent to you with the next communications.'[129]

Figure 3: A Bound Edition of the *Hollandtze Mercurius* (1657)

While immigration into Istanbul, Venice, and Amsterdam declined after 1625, London continued to grow rapidly. With over 8,000 immigrants a year, its population expanded to

[129] Petrus Stuyvesant to Andries Hudde, July 1648, translated and quoted in Charles Gehring (trans. and ed.), *New York Historical Manuscripts: Dutch Vol. XVIII-XIX Delaware Papers (Dutch Period), A Collection of Documents Pertaining to the Regulation of Affairs on the South River of New Netherland, 1648-1664* (Boston: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1981), 27.

375,000 by 1650, which propelled its financial success.[130] Some of these immigrants were Conversos and Jews who were encouraged to settle because they brought capital and enterprise to London and away from the Dutch Republic. They also supplied the English government with political intelligence.[131]

The first Jewish synagogue, or more accurately house-turned-synagogue, was open to Christian visitors; however, many of the strongest Protestant-Jewish relationships were with the Dutch Sephardim. When Menasseh ben Israel came to England in 1655, he dined with Henry Jessey, Henry Oldenburg, John Dury, Robert Boyle, Adam Boreel, and Edward Pococke. Menasseh neither lodged with the London Jewry nor did he turn to them when he needed help. He went to the English Protestants instead.[132]

Like their counterparts throughout Europe and the Levant, the diplomats in England supported their countries' merchants, upheld political relationships, and informed their government of the latest news. For instance, the Venetian ambassador Francesco Giavarina interacted with Levant Company merchants in London in hopes of influencing English activities in the Mediterranean. Meanwhile, the Italian diplomats stationed far from their homes went to each other for help. Years earlier when the Venetian Lorenzo Paulucci arrived, one of the first things he did was visit the Tuscan ambassador Giovanni Salvetti who promised to explain how ambassadors of foreign states were treated and how they acted in England. To acquire political and military information, the Italian diplomats often turned to the wide variety of English news sources, which they sent to the Venice. When there was not a Venetian resident in England, the Venetian ambassador Michiel

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[130] Kenneth Andrews, *Trade, Plunder and Settlement: Maritime Enterprise and the Genesis of the British Empire, 1480-1630* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 8; A.L. Beier and Roger Finlay, 'The Significance of the Metropolis,' *London 1500-1700: The Making of the Metropolis* (London and New York: Longman, 1986), 2-4. For more on the importance of cities and their changing demographics in early modern Europe, see James Bradford de Long and Andrei Shleifer, 'Princes and Merchants: European City Growth before the Industrial Revolution,' *Journal of Law and Economics* Vol. 36 (Oct., 1993), 671-702.
[131] Endelman, *The Jews of England*, 24, 27; Hayim Hillel ben Sasson, *A History of the Jewish People* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976), 638.
[132] David Katz, *Philo-Semitism and the Readmission of the Jews to England 1603-1655* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 238.

Morosini even appended the English gazettes to his reports and added, 'News sheet of London enclosed'.[133]

Originally, England had lagged behind the rest of Europe in developing periodical news. The first such sources came out in 1620 and were simply translations of Dutch works. By the 1660s, however, English gazettes, newsbooks, newsletters, and pamphlets were constantly printed and circulated.[134] The official *Gazette*, first released in 1665, was published twice a week and sold up to 15,000 copies per issue. It had the potential to reach an audience of two or three times more because it was recopied, passed among groups of friends, and read on market days in cities and towns around England.[135] Sometimes these publications were even sent across the Atlantic. By 1648, John Winthrop had received thirteen newsbooks from England,[136] and many years later Winthrop was still hungry for news, thanking John Davenport 'for the 2 weekely Intelligences' that Davenport had sent him in 1666.[137]

The English news industry itself was highly intertwined with the other networks in London. The *Gazette* was based out of the secretary of state's office where letters from diplomats, merchants, travellers, and spies were sent.[138] Henry Oldenburg was hired by Joseph Williamson, the undersecretary of state and editor of the *Gazette*, to work on England's official news source, collecting newsworthy information from correspondence

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[133] CSPV: Michiel Morosini to the Venetian doge and senate, 28 September 1649 as translated and summarised in Hinds (ed.), *Calendar of State Papers Relating to the English Affairs in the Archives of Venice* Vol. 28: 1647-1652, 116-120.

[134] Nicholas Brownlees, 'Narrating Contemporaneity: Text and Structure in English News,' *The Dissemination of News and the Emergence of Contemporaneity in Early Modern Europe* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 229, 245.

[135] Sonja Schultheiss-Heinz, 'Contemporaneity in 1672-1679: the Paris *Gazette*, the *London Gazette*, and the *Teutsche Kriegs-Kurier* (1672-1679),' *The Dissemination of News and the Emergence of Contemporaneity in Early Modern Europe* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 120. For more on the *London Gazette*, see P.M. Handover, *A History of the London Gazette 1665-1965* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1965).

[136] Sabrina Baron, 'The Guises of Dissemination in Early Seventeenth-Century England,' *The Politics of Information in Early Modern Europe* (London: Routledge, 2001), 50-51; Joad Raymond, *The Invention of Newspaper: English Newsbooks 1641-1649* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), 237, 252.

[137] John Davenport to John Winthrop, 20 July 1666, as quoted in Isabel MacBeath Calder (ed.) *Letters of John Davenport: Puritan Divine* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1937), 168.

[138] The secretary of state was also in charge of the post office. For more, see J.G. Muddiman, *The King's Journalist 1659-1689: Studies in the Reign of Charles II* (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1971), 144.

intercepted at the post office and printed gazettes from abroad, including one from Florence that reached Williamson via Thomas Dethick in Livorno.[139]

Henry Oldenburg's primary responsibility was not to the *Gazette*; it was to the Royal Society, a prominent scholarly institution founded in 1662 as a public body devoted to the corporate pursuit of scientific knowledge. Oldenburg was the society's secretary, and he employed the networks already established by merchants and diplomats to collect information from distant lands. Oldenburg sent his letter to Persia through Sir Andrew Riccard, the chairman of the East India and Levant Companies, and he asked John Finch, the English consul in Florence, to find out about the latest scientific ventures of the Italian intellectuals.[140]

The Royal Society itself was an arena in which information from a variety of networks came together. English diplomats including Paul Rycaut, Joseph Williamson, and John Finch were members, while Quakers and Sephardic Jews collected data for the Society from the Americas and the Iberian Peninsula respectively.[141] With a multitude of networks, institutions and industries in the English capital, information flowed to, through, and from London in a number of ways along a plethora of channels.

If globalisation is 'the closer integration of the countries and peoples of the world',[142] then the establishment of transnational networks has long been an instrumental part of this process, connecting places and shortening perceived distances. This opening chapter has,

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[139] TNA SP 98/7: Thomas Dethick to Joseph Williamson, 1666. Oldenburg became Williamson's Latin secretary and a source for foreign news while Williamson became Oldenburg's employer, patron, and protector, supplying him with free postage and helping him financially.
[140] Henry Oldenburg to John Finch, 7 December 1665 and 10 April 1666, as quoted in Hall and Hall, *The Correspondence of Henry Oldenburg III*, 86, 632-634.
[141] Geoffrey Cantor, *Quakers, Jews, and Science: Religious Responses to Modernity and the Sciences in Britain, 1650-1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 111, 112. For more on the Royal Society, see Michael Hunter, *Establishing the New Science: The Experience of the Early Royal Society* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1989) and Michael Hunter, *The Royal Society and its Fellows 1660-1700: The Morphology of an Early Scientific Institution* (Preston: Alphaprint, 1982).
[142] Magee and Thompson, *Empires and Globalisation*, 111.

first and foremost, sought to describe the creation and functioning of the networks and nodes in a manner that provides a conceptual framework for the study of complex intellectual transmission in world history. It has responded to problems in the historiography, including the lack of discussion about the creation of the networks, transmission across multiple networks, and the unintended usage of networks. It has also moved past the problematic portrayal of networks as insular institutions disconnected from the social and cultural environments in which they operated.[143] Because this study deals with many different types of networks that all transmitted information they were not intended to carry, this chapter has designed a framework that takes into account the complexity of this situation while grounding the intangible networks in a firm historical basis. At the same time, it has introduced the networks and nodes that were central in the dissemination of the narratives about the messiah and the Lost Tribes between 1648 and 1666. The aforementioned individuals, publications, and institutions will appear time and time again in the following pages.

World historians know a good deal about the global flow of trade, but they are just beginning to consider the global circulation of information.[144] While the majority of this thesis uses a world history methodology to address this lacuna, this first chapter has provided the essential background that allowed for the vast movement of the eschatological ideas in 1666. After all, there would be no transnational transmission without the networks and no cross-religious interactions without the nodes, and both were informed by specific historical events and processes that began as early as 1492. With the necessary geographical context in place, it is now time to turn to the intellectual context of the seventeenth-century networks of eschatological exchange.

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[143] Lydon, *On Trans-Saharan Trails*, 395.
[144] Benton, 'The British Atlantic in Global Context,' 272.

Chapter 2

Migration, Messianism, and Millenarianism

The Influence of Displacement on the Eschatological Mentality (1492-1666)

> Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden,
> to till the ground from whence he was taken. – Genesis 3:23

Human history, according to the Abrahamic tradition, began with an expulsion. Shortly after God created Adam and Eve, he expelled them from the Garden of Eden for eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge. Their son Cain fared no better: he was forced to wander the earth after he murdered his brother Abel. Indeed, exile is a theme that runs throughout the scriptures sacred for both Jews and Christians. Whether to Babylon or to Egypt, the Israelites were constantly marched off into captivity under one ancient kingdom or another.

In these biblical books, persecution surfaces almost as frequently. Both God's prophet, Elijah, and his anointed ruler, David, take flight into the wilderness in fear for their lives. Daniel was thrown into a den of lions because he refused to worship any other god than the God of Israel, and Esther was forced to dissimulate her religion while residing in the court of a foreign king.

Time and time again, the situation for God's chosen people seemed dire. Yet no matter how hopeless it appeared, redemption was always nigh. Esther revealed her Jewish heritage and saved her people from massacre, Daniel emerged from the lion's den to become one of the most important men in the king's court, Elijah was fed by ravens in the wilderness, and David rose to claim his rightful place as king. No matter where they were

exiled to, the Israelites eventually returned to the holy land, singing and rejoicing under the guidance of their leaders. But after all, what else is to be expected? God promised Abraham that he would protect and enrich his descendants and, in the end, God's promise must prevail.

Similar stories of redemption are also found in the holy books and histories of Christians and Muslims who also claim to be descendants of the patriarch Abraham. In the Christian tradition, Joseph and Mary fled to Egypt with a newborn Jesus. Jesus himself was executed thirty years later only to rise from the dead after three days. His disciples and then the early Christians were subject to persecution as well until Christianity emerged as the official religion of the Roman Empire. In the Islamic tradition, Muhammad was forced to leave his hometown of Mecca for Medina (an event known as the *hijra*) and, much like the Jewish and Christian narratives, this one ended with Muhammad's triumphant return to Mecca with thousands of followers.

Tales such as these have long served as moral lessons, instruction, and entertainment for Jews, Christians, and Muslims. At a time when exile and persecution were abundant, such stories also provided hope for people who found themselves experiencing hardship. The great age of religious pluralism in Iberia ended in 1492 with the expulsion of the Jews and later the Muslims, inaugurating a new period of homogeneity. The forced conversion to Christianity of the remaining Jews in Portugal was followed by the advent of Protestantism and violence accompanying confessionalization that then gave rise to the migration of countless religious recalcitrants. For Jews, Christians, and Muslims who believed that they were God's chosen people, but were in dire straits, what better examples were there to take comfort in than those of their religious forefathers?

Exile and redemption are more than just reoccurring themes in the sacred texts of the three monotheistic faiths. These two concepts form the dialectic on which the Abrahamic tradition grounds its universal human history. According to its overarching teleological script, alienated from God with the expulsion from Eden, humanity migrates to their ultimate redemption and reconciliation with him in a future period of glory.[1] Considering this, migration can also be understood as part of the necessary path that leads man to the messianic age –an interpretation that, if taken literally, has the potential to heighten apocalyptic tension.

This chapter therefore returns to the historical events that brought about the transnational networks of communication and examines how the migrations associated with these momentus changes were interpreted by people in a two-fold manner in relation to their religious texts. On one hand, the exiles, migrants, and refugees all looked backwards and paralleled their experiences with those of their biblical heroes. On the other, they looked forward to their expected eschatological sequence and understood their migrations as ones that would bring about their ultimate redemption and the end of history. In this manner, the major events and processes starting in 1492 led to both the formation of the infrastructure along which eschatological constructs would travel and encouraged the growth of apocalyptic thought that peaked in 1666.

The Expulsion from Spain as a Stimulus to Jewish Messianism

The Spanish Jewry had existed since the founding of Christianity and had flourished under both Muslim and Christian regimes. By the fifteenth century, the Jews formed wealthy communities across Iberia and were renowned for their treatises dedicated to matters of theology. The *Zohar*, the foundational work of Jewish mysticism, first appeared in

[1] For more on the theological conceptions of migration and exile, see Zakai, *Exile and Kingdom*.

thirteenth-century Spain, inaugurating the golden age of the *kabbalah* –the set of esoteric teachings that were designed to explain the relationship between God and the universe.

As part of the Reconquista, all 200,000 Jews were expelled in 1492. Forced to sell their property for a fraction of its value and leave most of their possessions behind, the Sephardim left in shock, scattering throughout the Mediterranean world. Some were murdered by pirates and thieves, others died of hunger and disease, and many more were robbed. The kabbalist Judah Hayat, for instance, left for Italy with 250 other exiles; but an epidemic broke out in their ship and they were forced to wander the seas for four months before pirates captured them. When they were eventually allowed to anchor in Malaga, the Jews were forced to either convert to Christianity to re-enter Spain or stay onboard in port. Many chose to convert and several of those who did not, including Hayat's wife, died. The ship finally set sail again and, two months later, it landed in Fez where Hayyat continued on towards the Italian peninsula.[2] With so many exiles, such stories were common.

For the Sephardim, their exile was tragic, but their ancestors had faced similar adversity and God had always watched over them so surely he would do the same now. Like the followers of Moses marching out of Egypt, the Spanish Jews expected to 'go out with much honor and riches, without losing any of their goods, to possess the holy promised land, which they confessed to having lost through their great and abominable sins which their ancestors had committed against God.'[3] This did not occur. Stripped of their wealth and compelled to search for a new home, the Jews reinterpreted the expulsion: they were more like Cain, forced to leave his homeland and wander the world. The mark

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[2] Stephen Sharot, 'Jewish Millenarianism: A Comparison of Medieval Communities,' *Comparative Studies in Society and History* Vol. 22, No. 3 (July, 1980), 404, 405; Beinart, *The Expulsion of the Jews from Spain*, 278-279, 290; Moshe Idel, 'Encounters between Spanish and Italian Kabbalists,' *Crisis and Creativity in the Sephardic World 1391-1648* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 200-201.
[3] John Edwards, 'Jews and Conversos in the Region of Soria and Almazan: Departures and Returns,' *Religion and Society in Spain* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1996), 279.

of Cain became a common symbol to describe their suffering even though it was not a symbol the Jews developed themselves. It was one that the Catholic Church had tried to impose upon them and, while they had originally rejected it, some of the Sephardim accepted it after the expulsion, refining its meaning to fit their viewpoint. They were not entirely like Cain; they were innocent and their experience was much more difficult. Cain only had to wander from place to place whereas they were actually expelled from their homeland and could never return.[4]

The Spanish expulsion was the culmination of a series of expulsions from Western Europe and was therefore perceived as the symbolic removal of the entire Jewish population from Christendom. No other persecutions warranted as much of a response in Jewish writings than that of the exile from Spain. As the last Jews left on the 7th of *Av* on the Jewish calendar, the expulsion was added to the commemoration of the two most tragic events in Jewish history: the destruction of the first and second temples, which were remembered on the 9th of *Av*. The trauma was so great that even Catholics and later Protestants felt the need to respond to the expulsion.[5] And when they did, they understood it alongside other major events, such as the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453, as a sign that the end of the world was approaching.

Messianism was an appealing response to the expulsion because exile and redemption formed the two parts of the Jewish covenant with God; the messiah could be interpreted as the fulfilment of exile. Jeremiah 31:10 states,

> He who scattered Israel will gather them
> On the day the temple was destroyed the Redeemer was born.[6]

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[4] Hayim Hillel ben Sasson, 'Exile and Salvation in the Eyes of the Generation of the Spanish Diaspora (Hebrew),' *Yitzhak F. Baer Jubilee Volume* (Jerusalem: Merkaz Zalman Shazar, 1960), 216-217.
[5] Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, 'Exile and Expulsion in Jewish History,' *Crisis and Creativity in the Sephardic World 1391-1648* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 19; Haim Beinart, 'Order of the Expulsion from Spain: Antecedents, Causes, and Textual Analysis,' *Crisis and Creativity in the Sephardic World 1391-1648* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 93.
[6] Yerushalmi, 'Exile and Expulsion in Jewish History,' 5.

The messianic idea in Judaism held that the coming of the messiah would only follow a series of unparalleled disasters in which history would be dislodged and destroyed. The Spanish expulsion was so significant that it was interpreted as one of these events. It was the beginning of the 'birth pangs of the messiah', the disturbances which would occur immediately prior to their redemption. For forty years after the expulsion, there was a deep messianic yearning among Jewish scholars, including Abraham ben Eliezer ha-Levi, Isaac Abravanel, and Samuel Usque.[7] Heightened messianic expectations manifested themselves in numerous ways: contemporary events were given greater eschatological significance, people began prophesising and calling for prayer vigils to hasten the coming of the messiah, and mystical texts, such as the Zohar, were disseminated more broadly.[8]

Many of the exiles fled to the Italian peninsula where the 90,000 Sephardic Jews brought with them a new messianic passion, which was grounded in a long history of such activity. While there had not been a single messiah between 1065 and 1492 among the Franco-German Jewry, there were over a dozen among the Sephardim. Messianism was a constant theme of scholarly exchange, and it is not a coincidence that most messianic incidents among the European Jewry occurred in Spain prior to 1492 or in Italy after the expulsion.[9]

Messianism was not only prevalent among the new immigrants; many Italian Jews accepted messianic claimants too, such as David Reubeni who came to Venice in 1524. The growth of this phenomenon among the Italian Jewry could be a dual influence from

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[7] Scholem, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism*, 37, 41-42; Israel, *European Jewry in the Age of Mercantilism 1550-1750.* For more on Abravanel and the Sephardic messianic response to the expulsion, especially in relation to beliefs about the Lost Tribes, see Eric Lawee, 'The Messianism of Isaac Abrabanel, Father of the [Jewish] Messianic Movements of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,' *Millenarianism and Messinaism in Early Modern European Culture I* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001), 1-40 as well as the section entitled 'Abravanel' in Gross, 'The Expulsion and the Search for the Ten Tribes,' 130-148.

[8] Marc Saperstein, 'Introduction,' *Essential Papers on Messianic Movements and Personalities in Jewish History* (New York and London: New York University Press), 13.

[9] Gerson Cohen, 'Messianic Postures of Ashkenazim and Sephardim,' *Essential Papers on Messianic Movements and Personalities in Jewish History* (New York and London: New York University Press), 205.

the Sephardim and the local Italian Christians who were experiencing their own waves of messianic activity during the Italian Renaissance:

> Northern Italy was the home of many messianic phenomena in Christian circles during the later decades of the fifteenth century, for the most part connected to internal church strife. These events most likely had an influence on the Jews as well. There is clear evidence of Jews, such as R. Yohanan Alemanno, copying almost verbatim types of astrological predictions of the end made by Christians.[10]

The coming together of the Sephardic exiles with the Italian Christians may have begun a process of cross-religious fertilisation that prompted eschatological excitement among members of both faiths a century before Sabbatai Sevi.

Spain had been the centre for the development of the kabbalah for centuries, but the expulsion dispersed the Sephardim throughout the Mediterranean world. The Levant, especially Safed, contained the spiritual homeland of the Jews as well as thriving Jewish communities with long-standing scholarly traditions, which made this region a choice location of migration for many of the displaced. Those who arrived there posed questions about exile brought about from their experience that led to the rethinking of kabbalistic doctrine among scholars in their new home. The year 1492 therefore inaugurated a shift in the central location of the kabbalah from Iberia to the Levant. There 'can be no doubt that the expulsion of the Jews from Spain and Portugal at the end of the 15th century was *the* decisive event that changed the course of the history of Kabbalah in North Africa, as it did the development of Kabbalah in general.'[11]

The sixteenth-century kabbalist Isaac Luria was a particularly important figure who provided a solution to the problem of exile by tying the cosmic ideas of exile and redemption to the historic struggle of the Jews. Luria, who moved to Safed in 1569, was aware of the trauma brought about by the expulsion and argued that exile was punishment

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[10] Moshe Idel, *Messianic Mystics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 142. For more, see the section entitled 'Messianism and Christianity' in this text.
[11] Moshe Idel, 'Jewish Mysticism Among the Jews of Arab/Moslem Lands,' *The Journal for the Study of Sephardic and Mizrahi Jewry* (Feb., 2007), 22.

for sin, a test of faith, and part of the mystical mission in which the Jews worked towards their redemption. Luria's 'great myth of exile' gave meaning for the suffering of the Sephardim by connecting their physical experience to the supernatural exile of man from God, and this created a messianic tension not previously found in the kabbalah.[12]

It was this possibility of messianism perpetuated through Lurianic Kabbalism that would become explicit a century later in the Sabbatian movement.[13] Luria's teachings were well known by scholars across the Jewish world, and Nathan of Gaza himself remarked that he recognised that Sabbatai Sevi was the true messiah 'by the signs which Isaac Luria had taught'.[14] In short, Jewish messianic activity from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century, culminating in the Sabbatian movement was 'a direct response to the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492'.[15] The Spanish expulsion laid the foundation of the transnational Sephardic networks and helped give rise to the eschatological motifs that would reach their peak centuries later in the Jewish messianic movement of 1666.

Forced Conversions and Blurred Identities: the *Conversos* and Sabbatai's Apostasy

With the 1492 removal of the Jews from Spain, the majority of the exiles fled to Portugal where they were allowed to settle for a fee. Five years later, Portugal followed its

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[12] W.D. Davies, 'From Schweitzer to Scholem: Reflections on Sabbatai Svi,' *Essential Papers on Messianic Movements and Personalities in Jewish History* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1992), 345; Gershom Scholem, 'Isaac Luria: A Central Figure in Jewish Mysticism,' *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* Vol. 29, No. 8 (May, 1976), 345; Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1955), 286.

[13] David Biale, 'Gershom Scholem on Jewish Messianism,' *Essential Papers on Messianic Movements and Personalities in Jewish History* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1992), 531; Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, 246, 288.

[14] Goldish, *The Sabbatean Prophets*, 59.

[15] David Ruderman, 'Hope Against Hope: Jewish and Christian Messianic Expectations in the Late Middle Ages,' *Exile and Diaspora: Studies in the History of the Jewish People* (Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute, 1991), 187: While revisionists have argued that the effects of the expulsion on Jewish mysticism as well as the influence of Lurianic Kabbalism on Sabbatiannism have been over-emphasised, there are still important connections that cannot be completely discounted. For the revisionist argument, see the work of Moshe Idel, especially his '"One from a Town, Two from a Clan": The Diffusion of Lurianic Kabbalah and Sabbateanism –a Re-Examination,' *Jewish History* Vol. 7, No. 2 (1993), 79-104 and the subsection entitled 'Messianism and Eschatology' in his 'Religion, Thought, and Attitudes: The Impact of the Expulsion on the Jews,' *Spain and the Jews: The Sephardi Experience, 1492 and After* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1992), 123-139.

neighbour in creating a uniform religious identity. The Portuguese government, however, did not want to lose the economic benefits of the Jews through expulsion so they forcefully converted the entire Jewish population to Christianity instead. This one act, which officially eliminated the Jewish presence in Iberia, blurred the boundaries between Judaism and Christianity by increasing the religious complexity of these peoples' identities: they were now Conversos, Christians of Jewish descent.[16]

While many Conversos wanted to leave Portugal, only those with a royal license who left their family behind as a guarantee of their return could go. Despite such restrictions, Conversos still managed to escape to lands out of reach of the Inquisition and settled in England, the Dutch Republic, Italy, and the Ottoman Empire.[17]

The Conversos used their complicated religious identities to further their business ventures in their new homes. The 10,000 who went to the Ottoman Empire by 1575 mostly returned to Judaism because the Ottoman authorities welcomed Jewish merchants. Those who went to Venice, on the other hand, kept their religious options open to conduct trade: members of the same family would outwardly belong to different religions. If one brother was a Christian and the other a Jew, they could maintain mercantile connections with members of both faiths.[18] The Conversos who moved to London chose to live publicly as Christians even though many maintained internal Jewish beliefs. This situation became so normalised that when the Conversos in England were officially allowed to practice Judaism openly, some 'preferred to persist in the habits which they had acquired

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[16] Henry Kamen, *Spain 1469-1714: A Society of Conflict* (London and New York: Longman, 1986), 38; Jerome Friedman, 'New Christian Religious Alternatives,' *The Expulsion of the Jews* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1994), 19; Francois Soyer, *The Persecution of the Jews and Muslims of Portugal: King Manuel I and the End of Religious Tolerance* (Leiden and Boston: E.J. Brill, 2007), 239; Yirmiyahu Yovel, *The Other Within, The Marranos*, 7, 39, 57: Conversos had been around since the seventh century when King Sisebut ordered all the Jews to become Catholics or leave his realm. Then, between 1391 and 1415, almost 100,000 Iberian Jews became Conversos. Conversos were not always forced to convert. Some chose to become Christians because they were promised privileges, such as tax breaks, and the increased ability to trade with foreign merchants.

[17] Friedman, 'New Christian Religious Alternatives,' 20-22; David Graizbord, *Souls in Dispute*, 64.

[18] Brian Pullan, *The Jews of Europe and the Inquisition of Venice, 1550-1670*, 229-230.

as Conversos and to preserve their Christian image, since, for them, Judaism was a matter solely of their inner identity.'[19]

Such religious ambiguity was a marker of the Converso experience. Rodrigo Mendez Silva, circumcised and renamed Jacob in Venice sometime after 1662, was hardly seen in the synagogue and continued to raise his hat at the mention of Jesus or Mary and kiss the robes of priests with whom he conversed.[20] Joao Batista was born a Christian in Portugal around 1564, lived as a Jew in Salonika, was baptised a Catholic in Rome, and travelled to Safed where he lived as a Jew and then a Muslim. He ended his life as a Christian in Venice. For the Conversos, this type of cultural commuting was normal because one could be something different everywhere, but 'everywhere it was unacceptable to be nothing.'[21] Quite simply, Conversos belonged to networks of overlapping communities that were as complex as their identities.[22]

Like their Jewish brethren, Conversos turned to the Bible to make sense of their experience. Although they were well aware of the tales of persecution and redemption in the New Testament, Christianity had been involuntarily thrust on many of them so they did not identify with Christian heroes and heroine. Instead, they turned to the Old Testament and paralleled their persecution with that of the Israelites in Exodus who chose religious and national self-affirmation in the face of oppression. Conversos even assigned the Iberian Christians to the role of the Egyptians.[23]

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[19] Glick, 'On Converso and Marrano Ethnicity,' 73; Kaplan, *Divided By Faith*, 320.
[20] Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *From Spanish Court to Italian Ghetto Isaac Cardoso: A Study in Seventeenth-Century Marranism and Jewish Apologetics* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1981), 206.
[21] Glick, 'On Converso and Marrano Ethnicity,' 71, 72: While Batista may be an extreme example, a typical Converso journey started in Lisbon and continued through Flanders and Antwerp to Venice before ending in Salonika or Safed. This journey could take a long period of time and include extended stays in any of these locations. See Pullan, *The Jews of Europe and the Inquisition of Venice, 1550-1670,* 212-213.
[22] Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, 319; Pullan, *The Jews of Europe and the Inquisition of Venice, 1550-1670,* 212-213.
[23] Miriam Bodian, *Hebrews of the Portuguese Nation: Conversos and Community in Early Modern Amsterdam* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997), 15, 17.

The story of the Exodus was only of secondary importance for the Conversos; they more readily empathised with the biblical figure of Esther. Esther was a Jewish maiden in Persia who was raised in exile by her cousin Mordecai. One day, the king wanted another wife and, after viewing all the virgins, he picked Esther. Meanwhile, Mordecai had made a mortal enemy of one of the king's counsellors, Haman, who devised a plan to have all the Jews killed in order to get his revenge. Haman duped the king into agreement, and Mordecai tore his clothes and begged Esther to make the king change his mind. But entering the king's presence uninvited was punishable by death so Esther and the Jews fasted for three days before she went before him. When she finally did, the king received her warmly and, in the end, she told him about her Jewish heritage and he revoked the planned genocide, ordering Haman to be hanged on the gallows he had built for Mordecai.

At the king's court, Esther had dissimulated her beliefs: she told no one of 'her race nor her birth' but remained faithful to the religion of her ancestors.[24] The crypto-Jewish Conversos saw hope in the Esther narrative. Forced to live an "Esther-like" experience where they too were subject to religious persecution and identity concealment, they drew parallels to the story of Esther, situating themselves in the Jewish tradition even though they were currently isolated from mainstream Jewish life. Furthermore, Esther saved the entire Jewish population through her actions, and the redemptive nature of the account suggested the possibility of the Conversos' own deliverance and return to Judaism.[25]

Conversos knew about Esther through the Catholic Vulgate, and 'Saint Esther' found her way into Converso theology[26] –a name the Conversos gave her that itself highlights a cross-religious fusion. Conversos exhibited an especially strong attraction to the fast held in commemoration of Esther. When the Converso Leonor de Pina was

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[24] Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, 309-310.
[25] Bodian, *Hebrews of the Portuguese Nation*, 15, 17; Miriam Bodian, '"Men of the Nation": The Shaping of Converso Identity in Early Modern Europe,' *Past and Present* No. 143 (May, 1994), 63.
[26] Cecil Roth, 'The Religion of the Marranos,' *The Jewish Quarterly Review* Vol. 22, No. 1 (Jul., 1931), 6.

interrogated by the Inquisition in 1619 on the suspicion of being a Judaiser, her brief remark about the major holiday of Passover was eclipsed by a long-winded discussion about the minor fast for Esther that she and many others observed for three days.[27] Such fasting served a dual purpose. It reminded the Conversos of how Esther saved the Jews and it was believed to hasten the advent of the messiah.[28]

The expectation of the messiah's coming was a central tenet of the faith of the crypto-Jewish Conversos because it formed the basis of their rejection of Jesus as the messiah, which was sometimes the only Jewish principle they held onto while dissimulating their religious identity. Many Conversos' desperate desire to retain their Jewishness in the face of the dangers of the Inquisition led them to conceive of the miraculous appearance of the messiah as their only hope. If the Christians were right and the messiah had already come in the form of Jesus then their suffering made no sense.[29] In Iberia, the Conversos were constantly ridiculed for following any messianic figure who appeared, and Conversos clung to the messianic promises of David Reubeni long after the majority of Jews recognised him as an impostor. A Converso Diego Pires (Molcho) even followed Reubeni in claiming to be the messiah himself.[30]

The forced conversions in 1497 were interpreted alongside the 1492 expulsion as part of the messianic birth pangs. Some thought that the event in Portugal was more tragic than that in Spain and thus a more prominent sign of the imminent end. Like in the case of their Sephardic brethren, messianism had long been part of the Converso beliefs, and periods that witnessed the persecution of the new Christians also saw a rise in such expectations. It was not a coincidence that between 1391 and 1492 there was an increase

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[27] Bodian, *Hebrews of the Portuguese Nation*, 10.
[28] Nathan Wachel, 'Marrano Religiosity in Hispanic America in the Seventeenth Century,' *The Jews and the Expansion of Europe to the West, 1450 to 1800* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2001), 160.
[29] Sharot, *Messianism, Mysticism, and Magic*, 84.
[30] Yerushalmi, *From Spanish Court to Italian Ghetto Isaac Cardoso*, 304-305; A.Z. Aescoly, 'David Reubeni in the Light of History,' *The Jewish Quarterly Review* Vol. 28, No. 1 (July, 1937), 37; Sharot, 'Jewish Millenarianism,' 399.

in violence perpetrated against the Conversos and in frequent calculations of messianic timetables.[31]

Converso messianism culminated in the significant role that many former Converso played in the Sabbatian movement. In Smyrna, several of Sabbatai's close friends and fellow students were from Converso families, and they had a significant impact on Sabbatai's messianic interests.[32] With the widespread outbreak of Sabbatianism, the centres of messianic enthusiasm were linked to the geographic distribution of the Iberian exiles and, in particular, of former Conversos.[33] These communities received the Sabbatian gospel eagerly because it struck a chord with them: they or their parents had been forced to live lives of dissimulation in Iberia, and the Sabbatian movement gave them a Jewish outlet for the devout messianic fervour of their youth.[34]

The Conversos' Christian heritage affected their Jewish messianic beliefs. Their dialectic with Christianity meant that the Conversos were preoccupied with the identity of the messiah but not deeply rooted in the messianic tradition of either Christianity or Judaism. This created an unusual flexibility in the variety of messianic scenarios they were willing to entertain. Some of these featured the belief that the messiah would be a Converso, an idea that became important when Sabbatai converted to Islam at the height of his popularity. While the majority of Sabbatai's Jewish followers quickly abandoned their faith in him after he became a Muslim, Sabbatianism still found a particularly strong response among former Conversos because their own experience prepared them to accept the rationalisation of the messiah's conversion: it was just an outward mask necessary to

[31] Isaiah Tishby, 'Acute Apocalyptic Messianism,' *Essential Papers on Messianic Movements and Personalities in Jewish History* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1992), 263; Yerushalmi, *From Spanish Court to Italian Ghetto Isaac Cardoso*, 304-305.
[32] Barnai, 'The Sabbatean Movement in Smyrna, 116.
[33] Sharot, *Messianism, Mysticism, and Magic*, 101.
[34] Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi*, 486.

cover a different inner experience. In other words, Sabbatai was living a life similar to that of a crypto-Jewish Converso.[35]

This link was made explicit in the words of the Sabbatian prophet Abraham Cardoso who exclaimed in a letter to his brother Isaac in 1668,

> it was also two years ago that it was told me that the king messiah was destined to wear the clothes of a *converso* [anus], because of which the Jews would not recognize him; and in fine, that he was destined to be a *converso* like me.[36]

By connecting the messiah's conversion to the Converso experience, Cardoso justified Sabbatai's actions and gave the former Conversos' acceptance of Christianity a religious and messianic significance.[37]

With Sabbatai's apostasy, the story of Esther resurfaced as a way to explain why the messiah had to hide his true religious faith. In converting to Islam, Sabbatai was dissimulating his true religious identity and, like Esther, he would bring about the redemption of the Jews.[38] This belief was so prevalent that one version of Sabbatai's interview before the sultan included the addition of a planned genocide similar to that in the Esther narrative. It was said that the Ottoman authorities wanted to massacre the Jews in response to their messianic movement; however, the sultan was so pleased with the messiah's decision to become a Muslim that he granted Sabbatai's request to spare the Ottoman Jewry. As the English merchants in Smyrna knew, the Jews 'look on this deliverance not Inferior to that procured by Q[ueen] Ester'.[39]

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[35] Goldish, *The Sabbatean Prophets*, 49, 46; Yerushalmi, *From Spanish Court to Italian Ghetto Isaac Cardoso*, 304.
[36] Abraham Cardoso to Isaac Cardoso in 1668 as translated and quoted in Goldish, *The Sabbatean Prophets*, 99.
[37] Yosef Kaplan, *From Christianity to Judaism: The Story of Isaac Orobio de Castro* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 213.
[38] Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, 309-310.
[39] TNA SP 97/18/214: S. Pentlow, J. Foley, and T. Laxton to Thomas Dethick, 9 October 1666. This comparison found its way into the London *Gazette* which reported that Sabbatai 'freely exchanged the Law of *Moses* for that of *Mahomet*, and was by the Grand Signior made a Cappegee Baffa, and called *Mahomet*', and with that, the Jews escaped severe punishment, which they 'look upon as a deliverance not inferior to that procured by Queen *Esther*'. See the *London Gazette*, 26 November 1666.

Thus, similar to the exile from Spain, the forced conversions in Portugal set the stage for later developments in two quite different ways: it established networks and promoted messianism. But the 1497 event had another significant repercussion. The conversions blurred the religious boundary between Judaism and Christianity in a manner would be of vital importance for the history of Sabbatianism both before and after the messiah's apostasy.

'The New World equals the end of the world'[40]

The expulsion of the Jews from Spain was not, of course, the only monumental event of 1492. It was also the year of the first transatlantic crossing. While Christopher Columbus' voyage was a voluntary one, it too was interpreted in a messianic manner. Indeed, 'the history of America begins with the quest for the millennium.'[41] Like many of his contemporaries, Columbus was fascinated by the prospect of the approaching end of time, and he thought that he was the harbinger of a new messianic figure: King Ferdinand of Spain whom he envisaged as 'King David redivivus'.[42] The Spanish missionaries who followed Columbus portrayed their conquest of the Americas for God as a millennial mission too. They were working towards the final conversion of unbelievers and started converting the indigenous peoples who most considered to be descendants of the Lost Tribes of Israel.[43]

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[40] John Phelan, *The Millennial Kingdom of the Franciscans in the New World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 110. For more on the impact of the Americas and the age of discovery on European millenarian thought, see this book.

[41] Leonard Sweet, 'Christopher Columbus and the Millennial Vision of the New World,' *The Catholic Historical Review* Vol. 7, No. 3 (Jul., 1986), 372.

[42] Goldish, *The Sabbatean Prophets*, 28.

[43] Eugen Weber, *Apocalypses: Prophecies, Cults and Millennial Beliefs through the Ages* (Toronto: Pimlico, 2000), 168. Much has been written about Columbus and Catholic apocalyptic understandings of the "New World", including Pauline Moffitt Watts, 'Prophecy and Discovery: On the Spiritual Origins of Christopher Columbus's "Enterprise of the Indies",' *American Historical Review* Vol. 90 (1985), 73-102; Phelan, *The Millennial Kingdom of the Franciscans in the New World*; Sweet, 'Christopher Columbus and the Millennial Vision of the New World'; Delno West, 'Medieval Ideas of Apocalyptic Mission and the Early Franciscans in Mexico,' *Americas* Vol. 45 (1989), 293-313; and Jennifer Britnell, 'New Worlds, Worlds Renewed:

The Catholics who crossed the Atlantic saw themselves as following in the footsteps of their biblical forefathers. Because their journeys were voluntary, they did not empathise with the Israelites fleeing Egypt. They turned to the story of the biblical patriarch Abraham instead. God had called Abraham to leave his home and seek a new land in which his seed would prosper, and the Catholics believed they were extending Abraham's destiny across the ocean. Some went a step further and gave their transatlantic migrations eschatological significance by utilising Jesus' own words.[44] Jesus said in Matthew 24:14,

> And this gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

Surely the American aboriginals were the last people on earth to hear the Bible, they thought. And, now that they had, history would finally come to its close. Thus, combining statements of Old and New Testament figures, these Catholics interpreted their peaceful migrations as one that would lead to the end of the world.

Jews understood the European discovery of the Americas in an apocalyptic fashion as well. Eschatological interpretations were most pronounced in the writings of Sephardic men who had direct links to the Iberian persecutions, such as Solomon ibn Verga, Samuel Usque, and Joseph b. Joshua ha-Kohen. These individuals saw the discovery in line with the expulsion from Spain and the forced conversions in Portugal as a sign of the world being turned upside down –changes only expected in the last days. In other words, their understanding of the "New World" was shaped by the persecutions. As the sixteenth century ended, most traces of messianism in the Jewish accounts of the Americas

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Prophetic Models in the Age of Columbus,' *Nouveaux Mondes: From the Twelfth to the Twentieth Century* (Durham: University of Durham Press, 1994), 37-49.

[44] Kaplan, *Divided By Faith*, 128.

disappeared because the Jewish authors no longer had immediate ties to the expulsion from or forced conversions in Iberia.[45]

The spike in messianic excitement in the middle of the seventeenth century was accompanied by the renewal of apocalyptic interpretations of voyages across the Atlantic. In 1650, Menasseh ben Israel published the *Hope of Israel* (1650) in which he argued that the dispersion of the Jews to all corners of the world was a harbinger of the messianic age. By charting the major migrations of Jews in the early modern period, Menasseh demonstrated that this dispersal was becoming universal at a rapid rate and could only mean one thing: the messiah was about to arrive.[46] The scattering of the Jews, however, was only one half of the equation. Like his predecessors, Menasseh believed that it was all the evils the Jews had suffered, such as the Spanish expulsion, which let him to 'conclude therefore, that the good, which God hath promised, will shortly come, since we see that we have suffered those evils, which he hath threatened us with, by the Prophets.'[47]

Menasseh's *Hope of Israel* was distributed widely, and its messianic doctrine most likely influenced the founders of the first overt Jewish settlements in the Atlantic world. Not only do the names of many of the synagogues in the Americas reflect the prevailing messianic atmosphere, such as the 'Remnant of Israel' in New York, the 'Dispersed of Israel' in Barbados and the 'Salvation of Israel' in Newport, but the communities in Curacao and Philadelphia were also both named the 'Hope of Israel'.[48] Thus, overlapping waves of migration, some voluntary and other forced, promoted and then reinforced Jewish messianic interpretations of major historic events.

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[45] Noah Efron, 'Knowledge of Newly Discovered Lands among Jewish Community of Europe (from 1492 to the Thirty Years' War),' *The Jews and the Expansion of Europe to the West, 1450 to 1800* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2001), 49, 53, 58.
[46] Richard Cogley, '"Some Other Kinde of Being and Condition": The Controversy in Mid-Seventeenth-Century England over the Peopling of Ancient America,' *Journal of the History of Ideas* Vol. 68, No. 1 (Jan., 2007), 37-38.
[47] Menasseh Ben Israel, *The Hope of Israel* (London: Livewell Chapman, 1652), 41.
[48] Jonathan Sarna, 'The Jews in British America,' *The Jews and the Expansion of Europe to the West, 1450 to 1800* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2001), 520. The community in Philadelphia was only established in 1782.

With the advent and expansion of northern European colonisation, 400,000 British people undertook similar transatlantic journeys between 1607 and 1700.[49] Like their Iberian predecessors, the Englishmen saw themselves re-living Abraham's migration in their voyages. Neither Catholics nor Protestants chose New Testament figures as their models unless they were found in the book of Revelation. These Christians were fascinated with the Old Testament. When William Symond preached that it was England's divine duty to spread 'the seed' (the gospel of Jesus across the Atlantic), he argued that it was necessary because the Englishmen were the sons of Abraham. As Abraham had been called, now England was called. Some went as far as to claim that Britain was the New Israel. John Sadler, for example, invented an Israelite genealogy for the British in his *Rights of the Kingdom* (1649).[50]

The English endeavour took on eschatological significance because it was believed that, like the sun, the gospel and the true church moved westward.[51] From Judea through Europe, the word of God must be taken to America so that everyone could hear it –a necessary precondition before the return of Jesus. Although Protestants and Catholics engaged in the same process, combining millenarianism and colonisation to promote the belief that their transatlantic journeys would bring about Jesus' millennial kingdom,[52] they were in direct competition with each other so Protestants assigned Catholics an evil role in the apocalyptic sequence. Turning to the story of the great whore of Babylon in Revelation, Symond warned the Virginia Company to be sure not to take 'Traitors, nor

[49] For more on European transatlantic migration, see Altman and Horn (eds.), *"To Make America"*.
[50] Parfitt, *The Lost Tribes of Israel*, 37.
[51] David Lovejoy, *Religious Enthusiasm in the New World: Heresy to Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985), 17.
[52] Zakai, *Exile and Kingdom*, 61-63, 81-82, 105-111.

Papists that depend on the Great Whore' to America.[53] After all, they were now at war with the antichrist and his forces on both sides of the ocean.

The Englishmen who most extensively settled the Americas were the Puritans. Like many Puritan leaders, the Cambridge-educated John Cotton preached millenarian doctrines to his congregation in England until he received word in 1632 that he was going to receive a summons to the Court of High Commission. Cotton reacted quickly. He packed up his belongings and left for New England before the summons arrived. He preferred to start a new life a continent away than face possible excommunication and punishment. Many of Cotton's congregation joined him, and similar circumstances throughout England gave rise to the great migration of Puritans.[54]

English Puritans followed their Protestant brethren by viewing their American colonisation in a religious, and specifically eschatological, manner. They too thought that it was their divine duty to spread the gospel to the remote parts of the Americas in the battle against the Catholic Church.[55] While the Puritans self-identified as the children of Abraham and the New Israel, they did not believe that they were extending their nation's destiny to the Americas like the earlier English Protestants and Iberian Catholics. The Puritans were escaping a sinful land of persecution to find a new refuge of hope. They therefore only turned to the story of Abraham to emphasise the negative aspect of his covenant with God: the Englishmen had been called by God, but they had abandoned the covenant. Now it was necessary to start again in a new land where the few remaining faithful could renew the agreement with God.[56]

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[53] Zakai, *Exile and Kingdom*, 106.
[54] Michael Winship, *Making Heretics: Militant Protestantism and Free Grace in Massachusetts, 1636-1641* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2002), 29, 61, 36-37.
[55] Susan Hardman Moore, 'New England's Reformation: "Wee shall be as a Citty upon a Hill, the Eies of all People are upon Us",' *Religious Politics in Post-Reformation England: Essays in Honour of Nicholas Tyacke* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2006), 143-144.
[56] Tai Liu, *Discord in Zion: The Puritan Divines and the Puritan Revolution 1640-1660* (The Hague: Matinus Nijhoff, 1973), 35; Miller, *The New England Mind*, 377, 475-477, 415. The idea of the covenant

Because their experience was one of persecution like the Sephardim, the Puritans similarly saw themselves as the Israelites escaping their bondage in Egypt. When Thomas Hooker spoke of God deserting England, he told the story of God leading his chosen people out of Egypt. Other Puritans made these connections explicit: England was Egypt, New England was the promised land of Canaan, and some, including Winthrop, saw the Atlantic Ocean as the Red Sea.[57]

Unlike most biblical narratives, the Exodus story has an apocalyptic nature, which was used to reinforce Puritan eschatological conceptions. The book of Exodus tells of how God's chosen people were oppressed only to escape from a sinful place with God's guidance to the promised land. Drawing these connections, Cotton spoke of the Exodus in the same sermon that he delineated the apocalyptic elements of the Puritan journey to America.[58]

New England was not the promised land that they anticipated it to be. Life was hard, and many Puritans suffered as they tried to carve out new lives in the Americas. This model, however, was too ingrained for the Puritans to forsake it when they experienced hardship, so they modified it instead. Their trials were necessary because, like the Israelites who were forced to wander through the desert of Sinai before they entered Canaan, their troubles were part of God's plan to purge them of their sins first.[59]

Alongside Exodus, Puritans turned to the book of Revelation to understand their experience. A year after the pilgrim fathers arrived, Robert Cushman turned to Revelation and delivered a sermon at Plymouth that portrayed New England as a refuge designed by

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appeared in numerous Puritan sermons, including John Cotton's farewell to the fleet in 1630, John Winthrop's statement on emigrating in 1630, and Thomas Hooker's address upon leaving in 1633.

[57] Zakai, *Exile and Kingdom*, 65, 169; Miller, *The New England Mind*, 469, 419; Peter Carroll, *Puritanism and the Wilderness: The Intellectual Significance of the New England Frontier 1629-1700* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), 27: Winthrop even viewed himself as another Moses who would outline the basis of New England politics.

[58] Zakai, *Exile and Kingdom*, 9, 66-67, 169, 10.

[59] Carroll, *Puritanism and the Wilderness*, 50, 61.

God for his chosen people to escape the imminent judgement that would soon fall on the rest of the world. Such 'eschatological expectations and apocalyptic visions constituted the very theme of the Pilgrims' migration to Plymouth, and later they constituted the very motive of the great Puritan migration to New England.'[60] Specifically, the Puritans' reasoning was drawn from the prophetic vision in Revelation of the woman's flight into the wilderness in the face of the dragon's rage. This story coupled with Thomas Brightman's correlation of England with the biblical Laodicea encouraged thousands of Puritans to flee the doomed "English Laodicea" to New England in the 1630s. While Cotton utilised Brightman's formulations in a series of sermons on Revelation that he delivered in England between 1639 and 1641,[61] his millenarianism grew as he preached in North America that the Puritans were living in the last days. Even on the other side of the ocean, Cotton established a reputation as a prophet of the millennium and as 'the eschatological and figural link between Old England and New England'.[62]

The Puritans' views of their transatlantic journeys were part of a broader perspective of history in which they believed that God was continually intervening to protect them: his new chosen people. For them, the Atlantic crossing was just a preparatory stage in the drama of the world's redemption that was occurring through the Puritan errand into the wilderness. It would soon end with the realisation of the coming glory of an American millennium.[63] Indeed, eschatological excitement was so prominent

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[60] Zakai, *Exile and Kingdom*, 130.
[61] MacLear, 'New England and the Fifth Monarchy,' 227.
[62] Mason Lowance, *The Language of Canaan: Metaphor and Symbol in New England from the Puritans to the Transcendentalists* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980), 42.
[63] Lowance, *The Language of Canaan*, 117. Eschatological understandings of their migration fit into a broader trend of Puritan apocalypticism that was vital in their views of their settlement, history, and the world around them. For more on the larger context of Puritan millenarianism, see Avihu Zakai, 'Puritan Millenarianism and Theocracy in Early Massachusetts,' *History of European Ideas* Vol. 8, No. 3 (1987), 309-318; Miller, *Errand into the Wilderness*; Miller, *New England Mind*; and the chapter entitled, 'The Shaping of the Future: Eschatological Symbolism in Old and New England during the Seventeenth Century' in Lowance, *The Language of Canaan*.

in the everyday lives of the Puritans that 'a belief in future fulfilment shone from every page of the seventeenth-century sermon.'[64]

Early modern migration, especially as a result of persecution, was traumatic and resulted in drastic change. Individuals in such circumstances sought to understand their experience in a meaningful manner, and religion often provided the language and the frame of reference even if there were other, often economic, factors involved. Jews, Conversos, and Christians of varying national and religious backgrounds engaged in a similar two-fold process. They turned to the stories first found in the Hebrew scriptures and paralleled their journeys with that of the ancient Israelites, placing themselves within their religious tradition. Those who were exiled or persecuted often chose narratives in which the oppressed Israelites were eventually redeemed because this promoted their belief that God was still watching over them and would save them too. Voluntary transatlantic migrants, on the other hand, chose the peaceful migration of Abraham to justify their colonisation of the Americas.

Because the Abrahamic religions contain linear, teleological trajectories in which the respective eschatological scenarios include a period of suffering before the final messianic or millennial bliss, these people also interpreted their experiences as part of the necessary stage that preceded their ultimate redemption. For Jews and Conversos, persecution served as the birth pangs of the messianic age. For Puritans, their migration equalled the true church fleeing into the wilderness in the last days. Even voluntary migrants turned to Jesus' words to claim that their activities in the Americas would bring about the coming end. By interpreting the great changes in their lives in light of these prophecies, they all saw themselves as living in the final days of history.

[64] Lowance, *The Language of Canaan*, 116. The Dutch too appropriated the biblical Israelites as an effective method in promoting their claim that they were the New Israel or God's new chosen people. For more, see Dunkelgrun, '"*Neerlands Israel*"'.

Their individual experiences were more than just solitary events; many people had a much broader perspective. Jews, Conversos, Catholics, and Protestants were all aware of the events that inspired each others' journeys, and they understood their own migration alongside the other drastic changes in this period as proof that the world was being turned upside down. The Sephardim viewed their persecutions in relation to Columbus' monumental journey and the Ottoman capture of Constantinople in 1453.[65] They hoped the latter signalled the start of their deliverance from the oppressive hands of Christians.[66]

Meanwhile, Columbus and the Iberian missionaries saw their journeys across the Atlantic in line with the Ottoman conquest. Unlike the Jews, Christians understood the Ottoman victory in a negative apocalyptic fashion. It was the advance of the forces of the antichrist. For Catholics, the colonisation of the Americas was hoped to fund the crusade that would free the holy land from Islamic rule. They would squeeze the Muslim threat out from the east and the west.[67]

From the Levant to the Americas, the great changes in the early modern period had a profound influence on the eschatological mentality of members of the Abrahamic faiths. These well-known events not only spawned migration that took diverse people to new places and brought them into frequent contact with one another, but they also affected the ways in which many of these individuals perceived the world and when it would end. As important, the 1492 expulsion and 1497 forced conversions had long-term consequences that would come to the fore in 1666. Who would have predicted that the forced conversions of the fifteenth-century Portuguese Jews to Christianity would influence the way in which seventeenth-century Conversos understood their messiah's apostasy to Islam? In short, the major events of the early modern period that gave rise to migration across the Atlantic and Mediterranean worlds served as a crucial component in the

[65] Sharot, 'Jewish Millenarianism,' 397.
[66] Gross, 'The Expulsion and the Search for the Ten Tribes,' 139.
[67] Sweet, 'Christopher Columbus and the Millennial Vision of the New World,' 374.

formation of both the geographical and intellectual contexts for the seventeenth-century networks of eschatological exchange. They would create an environment ripe for the widespread growth of messianic and millenarian excitement between 1648 and 1666.

Chapter 3

The Lost Tribes in the Americas

Judeo-Christian Reciprocity across the Atlantic World (1648-1666)

Coepitah his, defertur ad hos, referetur ad illos
Nostrafides, & erunt submundi fine fideles.

From the Jewes our faith began,
To the Gentiles then it ran,
To the Jewes returne it shall,
Before the dreadfull end of all.[1]

In 1492, Christopher Columbus landed in the Bahamas archipelago, and his well-known voyage marks the beginning of transatlantic travel. But Columbus started a lesser known intellectual trend upon meeting the American aboriginals. Thinking he had arrived on the outskirts of Asia, he misidentified them. He called them *indios*.

The Iberians who followed Columbus cared little about the aboriginals' origins. It was not until later, when Amerigo Vespucci first identified the Americas as a *Mundus Novus*, a 'New World' distinct from the religious spheres of Christianity and Islam, that questions about the history of its inhabitants came to the fore.[2] Saint Augustine had stated that even the most monstrous races were children of Adam and Eve, and the pope had concurred. The indigenous peoples were fully human. Therefore, they had to be

[1] Thomas Thorowgood, *Iewes in America, or, Probabilities that the Americans are of that Race* (London, 1650), 23-24.
[2] For more on Vespucci, see Chapter 19 entitled 'Vespucci's Tabloid Journalism, 1497-1504' in David Abulafia, *The Discovery of Mankind: Atlantic Encounters in the Age of Columbus* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008).

connected to the biblical world. To deny them such an origin was to place them outside of scripture, making the Bible incomplete and inadequate.[3]

The lone survivors of the great flood were Noah and his family. So, if the indigenous peoples were descendants of Noah, then how did they travel to the Americas in a manner that fit into the accepted chronology in the book of Genesis? Numerous theories emerged. Some scholars thought the aboriginals were related to the Phoenicians, others to the Arabians, and a few to the people of the biblical Ophir –a land that King Solomon acquired treasure from. One of the more creative answers was offered by Isaac La Peyrere who postulated that they came from men who existed before Adam. Yet even in his aptly titled *Men Before Adam* (1656), La Peyrere took great pains to tie his argument into the Bible. Indeed, no scholar before the seventeenth century put forth a hypothesis without biblical foundations.[4]

Eventually the question of the origins of the American indigenous peoples intersected with a separate and much older problem. Early modern scholars had never fully determined what had become of the Lost Tribes of Israel. The story of the Lost Tribes begins in the Bible with the ancient Hebrews who had originally consisted of twelve tribes, descended from the twelve sons of Jacob. The twelve tribes were then divided into two camps. The two tribes of the southern kingdom of Judah and their descendants became the Jews whereas the other ten tribes were led into captivity by the Assyrian King Salmanassar and disappeared entirely from the biblical record. It was this group, the northern tribes or the ten tribes, which became known as the Lost Tribes.

With the incorporation of the Hebrew scriptures into the Christian Bible, the Lost Tribes passed effortlessly into the Christian canon, and Christians too started to wonder

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[3] For more on the importance of this discovery and its impact on European intellectuals, see Abulafia, *The Discovery of Mankind* and Anthony Grafton, *New World, Ancient Texts: The Power of Tradition and the Shock of Discovery* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1992).
[4] Lee Eldridge Huddleston, *Origins of the American Indians: European Concepts, 1492-1729* (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1967), 11.

about the whereabouts of the ancient Hebrews. Because many of the messianic promises of the Old Testament were addressed to the children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, it was believed that God had preserved the Lost Tribes in some distant corner of the globe, from which they would emerge before the end of the world.[5] The Lost Tribes must still exist somewhere; if they did not then God's promises could not be fulfilled, and God cannot be a liar. The question of the Lost Tribes' location therefore remained in the background of theological and historical discussion until the discovery of the inhabitants of the Americas provided a new answer to this old problem.

Scholars began to search for evidence that proved that the indigenous peoples were descendants of the Israelites. Because most European scholars would never visit the Americas, they simply compared descriptions of languages, habits, and buildings in order to extrapolate upon the probability of this connection, which became known as the Lost Tribes theory. Spanish writers dominated the field until the beginning of the seventeenth century when the English and Dutch began to go to the Americas in larger numbers and faced the same ethnological problems. The northern Europeans approached the question of the aboriginals' history in a similar manner, but few had access to Spanish works so they frequently rediscovered theories that their Iberian counterparts had toyed with for generations.[6]

In New England, most Puritans did not think that the aboriginals were related to the Lost Tribes. Men like John Cotton and Increase Mather thought that the ancient Hebrews were somewhere in Asia. Although believed to dwell much farther away, the Lost Tribes were still important for these American Christians who expected the world to end shortly

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[5] For a history of the Lost Tribes, see Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, *The Ten Lost Tribes: A World History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

[6] Richard Cogley '"Some Other Kinde of Being and Condition",' 36. For more on Spanish understandings of the American aboriginals, see 'Chapter 4: Acosta and Garcia, 1590-1607,' in Christopher Minster, *Literature and the Other: Political History, Origins, and the Invention of the American in the Early Spanish Colonial Period* (Ohio State University: doctoral thesis, 2006).

because, as Cotton explained in one of his many sermons on the book of Revelation, the prophecies in the Bible pointed to three great events that had to occur before Jesus' return: a mass conversion of gentiles, a mass conversion of Jews, and the re-emergence of the Lost Tribes. Based on his biblical calculations and knowledge of history, Cotton anticipated that the conversion of the Jews would happen first –sometime in the middle of the 1650s.

Sitting next to John Winthrop in the Boston chapel, John Eliot listened to many of Cotton's sermons and agreed with him that the Lost Tribes were in Asia. This had important implications for Eliot because he was a missionary to the American aboriginals. Since the indigenous peoples were gentiles and not Jews, any major missionary activity was useless because they would not convert en masse until after the Jews did. While Eliot knew better than to expect the mass conversion of the aboriginals, he continued to work alongside his partner Thomas Shepard in the Massachusetts Bay region from 1646 onwards, hoping for the occasional convert or two.[7]

Eliot was satisfied with bringing the gospel to the "indigenous gentiles" on a small scale in 1648, but his views would evolve significantly over the next twenty years. By 1650, Eliot had changed his mind. He became an outspoken proponent of the theory that the indigenous peoples were descendants of the ancient Hebrews, believing that his own missionary work was helping to bring about Jesus' millennial kingdom. Within a decade, Eliot had returned to his original position and withdrawn his support for the Lost Tribes theory. Then, in 1666, his interest in the Lost Tribes re-emerged and would remain with him for the rest of his life. In sum, Eliot flip-flopped on this issue multiple times between 1648 and 1666.

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[7] Cogley, 'John Eliot and the Origins of the American Indians,' 211-213, 223n; Richard Cogley, '"The Most Vile and Barbarous Nation of All the World": Giles Fletcher the Elder's "The Tarts or, Ten Tribes" (Ca. 1610),' *Renaissance Quarterly* Vol. 58, No. 3 (Fall, 2005), 792. The correspondence of John Eliot has not survived; however, published accounts of his letters in pamphlets provide an insight into his beliefs. For more on Eliot, see the work of Richard Cogley.

During this period, the Puritan missionary was in North America. He lived in a developing town with no printing press and little scholarly exchange; he was separated from mainstream European intellectual life by an ocean. So, in such circumstances, who or what was responsible for repeatedly influencing his beliefs?

To understand Eliot's frequently changing perspective, one has to start with a man he would never meet, a Converso in South America who had an incredible tale to tell: Antonio de Montezinos or Aaron Levi. Montezinos was born around 1604 into a family that had been forcefully converted to Catholicism in 1497. Like many young Conversos, Montezinos left Portugal for the West Indies where he secretly returned to Judaism.[8]

Years later, in 1639, Montezinos came across an aboriginal named Franciscus somewhere in the Andes on one of his many expeditions in South America. Not concerned with Franciscus at first, Montezinos continued on his journey until he was arrested in Cartagena and locked away in the prison of the Inquisition for the next eighteen months.[9] Even though he was imprisoned for suspicion of Judaising, Montezinos held firm to his secret faith and at night quietly thanked God for not making him 'a Barbarian, a Black-a-Moore, or an Indian'. But when he said, 'Indian,' he became angry with himself and thought, 'The Hebrews are Indians!' Not sure what had come over him, Montezinos suddenly remembered Franciscus and the aboriginals in the Andes whom he had witnessed praying on a Friday evening. 'Could they have been performing a Jewish service?' He wondered.[10]

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[8] Zvi, *The Ten Lost Tribes*, 136.
[9] Henry Mechoulan and Gerard Nahon (trans. Richenda George), *Menasseh ben Israel, The Hope of Israel: The English Translation by Moses Wall, 1652* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 75. For more on accusations against Judaisers in South America, see Irene Silverblatt, 'New Christians and New World Fears in Seventeenth-Century Peru,' *Comparative Studies in Society and History* Vol. 42, No. 3 (Jul., 2000), 524-546.
[10] Ben Israel, *The Hope of Israel*, 3.

Montezinos promised himself that he would learn the truth when he was released from prison so, in 1641, he tracked down Franciscus, identified himself as a Jew, and asked Franciscus to help him. Franciscus told Montezinos that he could only do so if the Converso relinquished his food, his cloak, and his sword, and then followed him wherever he may go. Montezinos agreed. The two men set out, hiking through the Peruvian jungles for a week, resting only on the Sabbath, and eating only the maize that Franciscus carried on his back. Early one morning, they finally came to a river early and, standing on the shore, Montezinos watched as a boat full of people with skin scorched by the sun, ornaments on their feet and legs, and linen cloths tied around their heads paddled across to see them. Upon reaching Montezinos, these mysterious people turned to him and, speaking in Hebrew, they proclaimed, 'Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one'.[11]

Montezinos was truly astounded. He and Franciscus arranged their camp and waited patiently day after day as more of these people came across the river to see them. Every boatload, however, simply repeated the same things, including that their fathers were Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Israel. On the third day, Montezinos grew frustrated. He wanted to know more and tried to jump into their boat as they were leaving, but he almost drowned and they warned him to stay away. Franciscus would inform him further, they said. When Montezinos asked Franciscus what they meant, Franciscus told him that these were the sons of Israel who were protected by God. Every time his people had tried to attack them, no one from their war party ever returned. After all, Franciscus continued, 'the God of those Children of Israel is the true God, that all that which is engraven upon their stones is true; that about the end of the World they shall be Lords of the world...and

[11] Ibid., 3-4: this is Deuteronomy 6:4.

those Children of Israel going forth out of their Country, shall subdue the whole World to them.'[12]

Montezinos could not believe his ears. Here were his lost brethren, and they had revealed themselves to him. Excited by his experience, Montezinos headed for the centre of the Sephardic world, the community in Amsterdam founded by Conversos like himself. It was there that Montezinos felt comfortable and shared his story with the leaders of the Amsterdam Jewry in 1644.

One of the men who sat patiently and listened to Montezinos was the rabbi Menasseh ben Israel. Menasseh was a Sephardic Jew whose ancestors too had lived in Portugal as professing Christians for over a century. Menasseh's own father was a Converso who had been imprisoned and tortured by the Inquisition for Judaising and, upon his release, fled to Amsterdam with his family. They all returned to Judaism in the Dutch Republic, and Menasseh grew up to become a rabbi and a bookseller with a printing press.[13]

Because Menasseh was a scholar, he was doubtless aware that more and more people were beginning to think that the descendants of the ancient Hebrews were in the Americas. But he had shown no interest in this theory himself. It was only based upon a deductive line of reasoning that utilised a comparative approach. That was until Montezinos arrived. Now the academic discourse was bolstered by an eyewitness account, and Montezinos' testimony enthralled Menasseh.

Although Montezinos had just come from South America with a tale that could hardly be believed, Menasseh endorsed it because he saw Montezinos as part of his community. According to the rabbi, Montezinos came from a respectable family, was

[12] Ibid., 4-5.
[13] Mechoulan and Nahon, *Menasseh ben Israel*, 23, 28.

'[o]f honest and known parents, 40 years old, honest, and not ambitious'.[14] Menasseh referred to him as 'our Montezinos, being a Portingal, and a Jew of our Order' and described how he spent six months with Montezinos, how Montezinos swore an oath testifying to the truthfulness of the account in his presence, and how Montezinos repeated the same oath on his deathbed two years later.[15] Menasseh believed Montezinos' narrative to such an extent that, after reading the works of numerous scholars, he stated, 'I Returne to the relation of our Montezinos, which I prefer before the opinion of all others, as most true.'[16]

Why did Montezinos tell this story, and why was it so readily accepted? Already in trouble with the Inquisition, such claims would have only caused him further problems. Montezinos made no attempt to profit from it, he received no alms from the Jews, and apparently turned down an offer to go to England to share his experience with interested Protestants because he wanted to keep the location of the tribe secret.[17]

While the specific source of his narrative remains unclear, Montezinos was clearly affected by the continuing legacy of Converso messianism that had flourished since the persecutions in Iberia. For Montezinos and Conversos like him, the Lost Tribes were understood to be a powerful military force waiting in a remote location to save them. The return of their ancient brethren signalled both the redemption of the Jews and a promise of punishment for the Spanish crimes in the Americas.[18]

From the belief that the Lost Tribes were hidden beyond the mythological Sambatyon river that they could not cross until the last days to legends of Prester John and his Christian kingdom at the edge of the known world, such myths deeply informed Montezinos' encounter with the aboriginals and shaped the way his account was received

[14] Ben Israel, *The Hope of Israel*, 18.
[15] Ibid., 17-18.
[16] Ibid., 43.
[17] Mechoulan and Nahon, *Menasseh ben Israel*, 69.
[18] Benite, *The Ten Lost Tribes*, 161.

and recorded by his audience.[19] Even the timing points to this influence: kabbalists predicted the Jews' final redemption would occur in 1648, and the years preceding it witnessed the renewed interest in the Lost Tribes.[20] It is no coincidence that Montezinos' story, told in 1644, incorporated a large river he could not cross (like the Sambatyon) near the edge of the known world as well as a hidden population that had never been bested in warfare. Montezinos' tale may seem completely fantastical, but it ignited a spark that would inflame the hearts and minds of Jews and Christians for the next three hundred years.[21]

Cross-Religious Fertilisation and Publication

Montezinos' testimony was first spread amongst the Sephardim largely by word of mouth. It may have stayed solely within the Jewish world if it was not for the actions of one man, an itinerant Scotsman named John Dury. An exiled Presbyterian minister repeatedly displaced by religious and military struggles, Dury was a product of the great events of his age and his continuous migrations made him a crucial agent in stitching the pieces of this story together. In the 1640s, Dury was travelling throughout Europe on behalf of the unification of the Protestant world and was in the Dutch Republic shortly after Montezinos arrived. In Amsterdam, Dury met Menasseh who told him about Montezinos' adventure. Dury did not think too much about it; he did not try to get a copy of Montezinos' account. After all, reports like that were not unfamiliar to him. Six months earlier in The Hague, Dury had heard about the arrival of a messenger from the Lost Tribes in Istanbul from a 'godly man'.[22]

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[19] Perelis, '"These Indians Are Jews!",' 203.
[20] Katz, *Philo-Semitism and the Readmission of the Jews to England 1603-1655*, 141-142.
[21] Parfitt, *The Lost Tribes of Israel*, 79-80.
[22] Thorowgood, *Iewes in America*, 'An Epistolicall Discourse of Mr. Iohn Dury'.

From the Low Countries, Dury continued on his way and, in 1648, he happened to come across a Presbyterian minister in Norfolk named Thomas Thorowgood. Thorowgood's interest in the Lost Tribes theory had recently been re-invigorated by the words of John Eliot in New England. In order to fund and garner support for his missionary endeavour, Eliot wrote regularly about his experiences in dispatches sent to Edward Winslow in London. Winslow then collected, compiled, and passed Eliot's letters along for publication in pamphlets that have become known as the Eliot tracts.[23] Thorowgood had read one of these pamphlets, which had nothing to do with the Lost Tribes, and it had a profound and unintended effect on him. It convinced the Presbyterian minister that the American aboriginals could be of Jewish origin because Eliot had quickly restored them to Christianity from centuries of 'accumulated barbarianism'.[24] Thorowgood was so moved by Eliot's correspondence that he wrote,

> When the glad tidings of the Gospels sounding in America by the preaching of the English arrived hither, my soule also rejoyced within me, and I remembred certaine papers that had been laid aside a long time, upon review of them, and some additions to them, they were privately communicated unto such as perswaded earnestly they might behold further light.[25]

Inspired by Eliot's mission, Thorowgood became engrossed in his own investigation of the history of the indigenous peoples and, by 1648, he reached a conclusion. Like many other scholars before him, Thorowgood had found the answer: the American aboriginals were descendants of the Lost Tribes.

When Thorowgood met Dury in 1648, he told the Scotsman about his research and gave him the latest version of his manuscript entitled *Iewes in America* (1650). Reading Thorowgood's work reminded Dury of the two stories about the Lost Tribes that he had heard in the Dutch Republic and, after telling Thorowgood about them, he wrote to

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[23] Richard Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission to the Indians before King Philip's War* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), 66.
[24] Cogley, 'Some Other Kinde of Being and Condition,' 53.
[25] Thorowgood, *Iewes in America*, Epistle Dedicatory.

Menasseh requesting a copy of Montezinos' testimony.[26] Menasseh complied, and Dury passed it onwards to Thorowgood who was so taken with Montezinos' narrative that he added it to his text alongside a letter from Dury that introduced it.

Unbeknownst to Menasseh, Thorowgood used the material from the rabbi to claim that the aboriginals were directly related to the ancient Hebrews. After utilising Montezinos' words to argue in favour of the Lost Tribes theory, Thorowgood turned to Eliot's reports to provide a framework for the necessary Christianisation of the Americas.[27] For Thorowgood, it neither mattered that Montezinos was a Converso and Eliot was a Puritan nor that their experiences occurred in different continents among different indigenous populations. Thorowgood still combined their statements to create a coherent account, an account with eschatological implications. If the aboriginals were of Jewish origin then their conversion, which had already begun due to Eliot's efforts, would be the expected conversion of the Jews –the penultimate event before the return of Jesus.

When Dury wrote Menasseh in order to acquire a copy of Montezinos' testimony, he asked the rabbi about the Jewish perspective on the Lost Tribes. Menasseh replied,

> in two Letters, telling me [Dury] that by the occasion of the Questions which I proposed unto him concerning this adjoyned Narrative of Mr. *Antonie Monterinos,* hee to give me satisfaction, had written insteed of a Letter, a Treatise, which hee shortly would publish, and whereof I should receive so many Copies as I should desire.[28]

Menasseh penned this treatise, entitled the *Hope of Israel* (1650), to put a quick end to the Lost Tribes theory suggested by Dury and supported by Thorowgood. Unlike most of his Protestant correspondents, Menasseh believed the Israelites had remained ethnically distinct and observant of Jewish culture in the Americas, Persia, Tartary and other places. God had preserved them as a unique people who still followed the biblical ways. The

[26] Ibid., 'An Epistolicall Discourse of Mr. Iohn Dury'.
[27] Ibid., 94.
[28] Ibid., 'An Epistolicall Discourse of Mr. Iohn Dury'.

American aboriginals had only replicated some of the Jewish culture they had witnessed among the tribe that Montezinos had discovered; they were not the descendants of the ancient Hebrews.

Dury's questions encouraged Menasseh to write the *Hope of Israel,* and the Jewish rabbi responded in a manner that 'harnessed Christian chiliastic energies to Jewish messianic ends'.[29] While the Protestants employed Montezinos' narrative as proof that the Christian millennium was about to happen, Menasseh used it to expound a Jewish messianic platform that also portrayed the early modern migrations of the Jews as the fulfillment of prophecy,

> As Daniel saith, Dan. 12.7. And when the scattering of the holy people shall have an end, all those things shall be fulfilled. And this appeares now to be done, when as our Synagogues are found in America.[30]

Before he published the Latin edition, Menasseh printed his text in Spanish for the Sephardim, titling it the *Esperanca de Israel,* which was derived from a verse in the book of Jeremiah. He chose '*Esperanca*' for 'Hope', knowing full well the 'explosive charge' that this word had for Converso messianism.[31] Thus, inspired by an itinerant Scotsmen, the Dutch rabbi composed a treatise that promoted messianism among the Sephardim and introduced the Jewish messianic doctrine into Christian circles and the republic of letters.[32] By the early eighteenth century, the *Hope of Israel* had been reprinted a dozen times in a half a dozen languages. It ranks among one of the 'most influential documents of seventeenth-century Jewish history' and was certainly one of the most 'widely read pieces of early Jewish Americana'.[33]

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[29] Benjamin Shmidt, 'The Hope of the Netherlands: Menasseh ben Israel and the Dutch Idea of America,' *The Jews and the Expansion of Europe to the West, 1450 to 1800* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2001), 99.
[30] Ben Israel, *The Hope of Israel*, 42.
[31] Mechoulan and Nahon, *Menasseh ben Israel*, 67. For more on the importance of '*Esperanca*' in the messianic beliefs of the Judaising Conversos, see Yovel, *The Other Within, The Marranos*, 84.
[32] Mechoulan and Nahon, *Menasseh ben Israel*, 68.
[33] Shmidt, 'The Hope of the Netherlands,' 92.

When Dury received the full account of Montezinos' testimony from Menasseh, he shared it with Edward Winslow who was editing a selection of John Eliot's missionary letters, which he planned to publish under the title *The Glorious Progress of the Gospel* (1649). Like Thorowgood, Winslow was so excited by Montezinos' story that he added it to his text even though it had nothing to do with Eliot's work.

Winslow saw a clear connection between the history of the Lost Tribes and that of the aboriginals. He began by stating that he was going to relate the latest missionary activities of John Eliot and Thomas Mayhew, but first two questions needed to be addressed: 'What became of the ten tribes of Israel?' and 'Where are the aboriginals in the Americas from?'[34] Answering his own questions with another question, Winslow continued, 'Let me acquaint your Honors, that a godly Minister of this City writing to Rabbi-ben-Israel, a great Dr. of the Jewes, now living at Amsterdam, to know whether after all their labor, travells, and most diligent enquiry, they did yet know what was become of the ten Tribes of Israel?'[35] According to Winslow, Menasseh's answer was that they were 'certainly transported into America' where he and many other New Englanders observed that the practices of the aboriginals were very similar to that of the Jews.[36] For Winslow, this had obvious implications,

> It is not less probable that these Indians should come from the Stock of Abraham, then any other nation this day known in the world: Especially considering the juncture of time wherein God hath opened their hearts to entertain the Gospel, being so nigh the very years, in which many eminent and learned Divines, have from Scripture grounds, accounting to their apprehensions foretold the conversion of the Jews.[37]

[34] Edward Winslow, *The Glorious Progress of the Gospel amongst the Indians in New England* (London, 1649), The Epistle Dedicatory.
[35] Ibid., The Epistle Dedicatory.
[36] Ibid., The Epistle Dedicatory.
[37] Ibid., The Epistle Dedicatory.

Winslow's eschatologically charged introduction was followed by the missionary letters from New England that made no mention of the Lost Tribes. They simply recounted Eliot's successes, failures, and needs in his work among the aboriginals.

The imminent apocalypse returned to the fore in the conclusion where Dury provided his own conjecture as to why the indigenous people were descendants of the ancient Israelites: 'the Jews of the Netherlands (being intreated thereunto) informe that after much inquiry they found some of the ten Tribes to be in America'.[38] This was important because,

> The palpable and present acts of providence, doe more then hint the approach of Jesus Christ: And the Generall consent of many judicious, and godly Divines, doth induce considering minds to beleeve, that the conversion of the Jewes is at hand. Its the expectation of some of the wisest Jewes now living, that about the year 1650. *Either we Christians shall be Mosaick, or else that themselves Jewes shall be Christians.* The serious consideration of the preceding Letters, induceth me to think, that there may be at least a remnant of the Generation of Jacob in America.[39]

In this manner, the accounts of a Puritan missionary in North America and a Converso in South America were brought together in northern Europe through the interaction of a Jewish rabbi and his philo-Semitic friends. While the former used Montezinos' narrative to propound a Jewish messianic ideology that argued the Lost Tribes were a distinct peoples in the Americas, the latter combined Eliot's and Montezinos' reports to advance the Lost Tribes theory, which they used as proof of the imminent Christian millennium. Together, these men produced some of the most potent apocalyptic texts of the seventeenth century.

The Rise of Millenarianism on Both Sides of the Atlantic

John Eliot learnt about the upsurge of interest in the Israelites and the aboriginals among Englishmen due to his continued correspondence with Edward Winslow. These two men

[38] Ibid., 23.
[39] Ibid., 22.

were in frequent communication about Eliot's missionary work and, in late 1648 or early 1649, Winslow wrote to Eliot that he had embraced the Lost Tribes theory. Eliot replied in July 1649 that he had already started to examine the origins of the indigenous people himself; however, he could not accept the proposition that the Israelites came to the Americas. Like John Cotton, he still thought the Lost Tribes were in Asia. Regardless, Eliot was curious to learn more and asked Winslow for some scholarly literature on the topic. His English friend graciously agreed and provided Eliot with the treatises of Menasseh, Dury, and Thorowgood before they were even published.[40]

Reading these texts changed Eliot's mind. He himself wrote, 'By reading your book, intituled, *Jews in America, or Probabilities that the Americans are of that Race,* the Lord did put it into my heart to search into some Scriptures about that subject, and by comparing one thing with another, I thought, I saw some ground to conceive, that some of the Ten Tribes might be scattered even thus far, into these parts of America'.[41] In short, the Puritan missionary accepted the reinterpretation of his own activities by people who would never travel to the Americas themselves.

Eliot began to write fervent letters to Winslow confessing that the aboriginals' Hebrew origin placed his own work in a new perspective and confirmed his faith in the imminent millennium. Dwelling on the 'Valley of Dry Bones' in the book of Ezekiel, Eliot believed that the dead bones that were miraculously restored to life by the preaching of God's word referred to the 'New World Jews' who would return to their covenant with God by converting to Christianity.[42] Cotton had claimed that the conversion of the Jews would begin in the mid-1650s and, if the aboriginals were Jews and not gentiles, then their time of mass conversion was closer than expected. He no longer had to wait for the Jews

[40] Cogley, 'John Eliot and the Origins of the American Indians,' 216.
[41] Thomas Thorowgood, *Jews in America* (London, 1660), 'The Learned Conjectures of the Reverend John Eliot Touching the Americans'.
[42] Maclear, 'New England and the Fifth Monarchy,' 246.

to become Christians before he could hope for the indigenous peoples to embrace Christianity en masse. The aboriginals were the Jews and therefore the millennium would soon come through his efforts.

Eliot sought out corroborating evidence for his new belief and found some in a secondhand report from Mr. Dudley who said that Captain Cromwell, a man recently deceased in Boston, had spoken of aboriginals in the south who were circumcised. According to Eliot, Cromwell's report was one of the most probable arguments he had heard for the Lost Tribes theory. Eliot was so excited that he initiated a correspondence with Thorowgood after reading the Presbyterian minister's *Iewes in America.* For his part, Thorowgood was fascinated with Eliot's direct knowledge of the indigenous peoples and requested a statement of his views. Eliot happily provided one, and Thorowgood published it under the title of 'The Learned Conjectures of the Reverend John Eliot Touching the Americans' in the revised edition of *Jews in America* (1660).[43]

Eliot's millenarian excitement was echoed across the Atlantic in the increase in both millenarianism and the interest in the Lost Tribes among the English population. The texts of Menasseh, Thorowgood, and Winslow fed into the changing religious and political climate, informing the arguments of John Dury, Edmund Hall, and Nathaniel Homes who claimed that the discovery of the Israelites in the Americas proved that the end was upon them.[44] The rise of such hopes made these years the 'keenest and most widespread millennial expectancy' in England and America.[45]

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[43] This letter by Eliot was the longest statement by someone in North America on the origins of the aboriginals. Thorowgood's text was reprinted as early as 1652 under the title *Digitus dei*. After 1660, it was then republished as *Vindiciae Judaeorum*, which was the same title as Menasseh's 1656 work, possibly showing further connections between these individuals. In this latter book, Thorowgood modified his argument and claimed that the Tartars were also descendents of the Lost Tribes, which made the Lost Tribes, the North American aboriginals, and the Tartars the same people. For more, see Cogley, 'Some Other Kinde of Being and Condition'.

[44] Cogley, 'The Most Vile and Barbarous Nation of All the World,' 793: Homes believed that they did so not as aboriginals, showing his views aligned more with Menasseh in this regard.

[45] James de Jong, *As the Waters Cover the Sea: Millennial Expectations in the Rise of Anglo-American Missions 1640-1810* (Kampen: J.H. Kok, 1970), 37.

Certain people gave specific dates to the anticipated end of the world. While Ralph Josselin, Nathaniel Homes, John Dury, Samuel Hartlib, and Abraham van Franckensburg believed the final drama would occur in 1654 or 1655, the year 1656 was the most popular choice because it was thought to mirror the year of the flood.[46] As the Fifth Monarchist John Rogers argued, the flood had come in 1656 BCE and lasted for forty days, now fire would come to the world in 1656 CE and last for forty years. Mary Cary, the Fifth Monarchist prophetess, confidently stated that the conversion of the Jews would happen in 1656 and her preoccupation with the Jews was indicative of the Fifth Monarchist platform, which also included the expectation of finding and converting the Lost Tribes.[47]

Returning to the Americas, the growing millenarian spirit inspired men such as Hansard Knollys, Thomas Millam, William Aspinwall, and Thomas Venner to return to England in the 1650s to join the Fifth Monarchy movement –the religious and political sect that anticipated the imminent return of Jesus.[48] Millenarianism may have been more 'low-key' in North America, but numerous people in England and New England were fervently awaiting the establishment of Jesus' kingdom on earth in these years.[49]

Such beliefs led English Protestants to take an interest in contemporary Jews whose expected conversions would make them crucial participants in the imminent onset of the millennium. By 1653, the Jews were a constant topic of discussion,[50] which created a unique environment conducive for the campaign for Jewish readmission to England. While Eliot's revelations concerning the Lost Tribes were one of the initial sparks that

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[46] Endelman, *The Jews of Britain, 1656 to 2000*, 20. For more on the importance of 1656 in English eschatological thought, see Christopher Hill, 'Till the Conversion of the Jews,' *Millenarianism and Messianism in English Literature and Thought 1650-1800: Clark Library Lectures 1981-1982* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1988), 12-36.
[47] See Mary Cary, *The Little Horns Doom and Downfall* (London, 1651).
[48] Fifth Monarchists considered going to America when support for the movement faltered as well. Anna Trapnel noted that 'she was getting little encouragement, and was thinking of crossing the sea.' Louise Brown, *The Political Activities of the Baptists and Fifth Monarchy Men in England During the Interregnum* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1911), 101.
[49] Maclear, 'New England and the Fifth Monarchy,' 223, 225.
[50] Katz, *Philo-Semitism and the Readmission of the Jews to England*, 189.

ultimately led to the return of the Jews,[51] it was the upsurge of interest in the Jews 'among the English Puritans and Fifth Monarchists more specifically' that encouraged the readmission campaign.[52] The former were the first Englishmen to propose the readmission because they thought it was necessary for the coming of the millennium and the conversion of the Jews.[53] The latter were anxious for the Jews to be readmitted to England so that their conversion to Christianity could begin in 1655.[54]

The readmission campaign itself began in the Jewish-Christian circle in which Montezinos' testimony was first shared. Menasseh wrote, under Dury's influence, the *Humble Address* (1655) in order to petition Oliver Cromwell to allow the Jews to live in England. According to Menasseh, his serious consideration of the readmission was brought about by his Christian correspondents,

> Concerning the state of this my expedition, and negotiation at present, I shall onely say, and that briefly, that the communication and correspondence I have held, for some yeares since, with some eminent persons of England, was the first originall of my undertaking this design. For I always found by them, a great probability of obtaining what I now request; whilst they affirmed, that at this time the minds of men stood very well affected towards us; and that our entrance into this Island, would be very acceptable and well-pleasing unto them. And from this beginning sprang up in me a semblable affection, and desire of obtaining this purpose.[55]

News of the readmission campaign spread far and wide, reinforcing the messianic and millenarian tension that had originally promoted it. The Quaker missionary John Stubbs met Jews in the Italian peninsula who 'delight to heare of any hopes of an admission for them to live in England'.[56] Stubbs too framed the readmission in terms of

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[51] Ibid., 94, 84.
[52] Christopher Hill, *Antichrist in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 107.
[53] Endelman, *The Jews of Britain*, 19.
[54] Edwards, *The Jews in Christian Europe 1400-1700*, 174: financial and commercial needs also played a role and must not be forgotten.
[55] Menasseh ben Israel, *Vindicae Judaeorum* (London, 1656), 37. Henry Jessey was one of these 'eminent persons of England' who played such a vital role in the readmission process that he became 'among the greatest friends of Israel in the early modern period'. For more, see David Katz, 'Philo-Semitism in the Radical Tradition: Henry Jessey, Morgan Llwyd, and Jacob Boehme,' *Jewish-Christian Relations in the Seventeenth Century: Studies and Documents* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1988), 195.
[56] LSF Port MS 17.77: John Stubbs to his Quaker Friends in London, 29 March 1658.

the hoped-for conversion of the Jews: he thought that it 'might tend much to the conversion of some among them if such a thing might come to pass'.[57] Even in the Americas, John Eliot understood the negotiation to allow the Jews to return to England in relation to the prophecy in Deuteronomy 28:64 in which God promised to scatter the Jews among the nations.[58] Indeed, certain people believed that this prophecy could not be fulfilled and the eschatological sequence could not proceed further until the Jews were in England. After all, if there were no Jews in the British Isles then they had not been scattered throughout all the nations. Moreover, many Englishmen expected England to play a special role in the coming end of history, making the Jews' return to their country even more important. Thus, interest in the Lost Tribes coupled with the growth of eschatological tension helped promote the readmission campaign –a campaign which itself was then interpreted in a manner that spawned more millenarian and messianic excitement.

The Failure of the Millennium and its Long-Term Effects

Like many English Protestants, John Eliot's belief in the Lost Tribes was tied to the much anticipated millennium. But the years 1654, 1655, and then the long-awaited 1656 came and went without the conversion of the Jews or Jesus' second coming. The continual disappointment had dire consequences. It soured Eliot's views. He lost interest in the arguments over the Israelites and wrote to Thorowgood in October of 1656 that he was withdrawing his endorsement of the Lost Tribes theory. He never would have taken such a strong stance, he said, if it had not been for Thorowgood's insistence.[59]

Despite the failure and disillusionment felt in these years, the bonds between Jews and Protestant philo-Semites forged through these interactions had long-term

[57] Ibid.
[58] See Thorowgood, *Jews in America*, 'The Learned Conjectures of the Reverend John Eliot Touching the Americans'.
[59] Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission to the Indians before King Philip's War*, 96.

consequences. Alongside increased correspondence and meetings between the Jewish rabbi and his Christian friends about the Lost Tribes and the readmission, the Protestants became acquainted with another rabbi: Nathan Shapira from Jerusalem. Shortly before departing for England, Menasseh met Shapira who had been sent as an emissary to collect money for the Jews in the holy land from the Sephardic Diaspora. Menasseh showed Shapira's letter to Cromwell to further his argument that the Jews needed a new place to live because they were being treated poorly in the Ottoman realms. Meanwhile, Henry Jessey, Petrus Serrarius, John Dury, and Samuel Hartlib all actively helped Shapira raise money. In Amsterdam, Serrarius engaged the rabbi from Jerusalem in religious discussions and later wrote Jessey about the visit. Upon learning of Shapira's views of the messiah, Serrarius told Jessey, 'When I heard these things, my bowels were inwardly stirred within me, and it seemed to me, that I did not hear a Jew, but a Christian…[who] was admitted to the inward mysteries of our Religion.'[60] Shapira's perspective apparently aligned with Serrarius', and the rabbi may have been the Jew from Cracovia who convinced the Dutch chiliast that the redemption of Israel was drawing near;[61] a belief that would come to the fore a decade later when Serrarius would become a vocal advocate for the restoration of the Jews to Palestine in 1666.

The interactions brought about by Shapira's mission to Amsterdam highlight multiple links between the Protestant philo-Semites and many of the key figures in the Sabbatian movement of the mid-1660s. Jessey was friends with Serrarius who supplied the English Christians with much of the information about Sabbatai that reached Europe from the Ottoman Empire. Jessey was also in communication with Raphael Supino who too would be an important source of Sabbatian news. Meanwhile, the rabbi Jacob Hagiz,

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[60] John Dury, *An Information Concerning the Present State of the Jewish Nation in Europe and Judea* (London: R.W., 1658), 13.
[61] David Katz, 'English Charity and Jewish Qualms: The Rescue of the Ashkenazi Community of Seventeenth-Century Jerusalem,' *Jewish History: Essays in Honour of Chimen Abramsky* (London: Peter Halban, 1988), 254.

the teacher of Nathan of Gaza and excommunicator of Sabbatai, was aware of Jessey and his Puritan compatriots' work to raise money for the Jews. Although Jessey died three years before the emergence of the Sabbatianism, he was in close contact with Dury and Hartlib who acquired information from Serrarius, Supino, and Hagiz after 1658.[62]

During these years, the same Christians fundraised for missions in the Americas. Alongside their frequent correspondences with John Eliot, Jessey, Thorowgood and others sent the Puritan missionary £200 worth of merchandise between 1651 and 1657.[63] For the English millenarians, there was a direct connection between their work with the Jews in the Levant and their support for the Christianisation of the American aboriginals. These distant places and different people were part of a single storyline in which the fulfilment of prophecy would come about across the world through their diligent efforts in England.

There were other significant ties between the messianism and millenarianism of this period and the Sabbatian movement of the following decade. With the original *Esperanca de Israel*, Menasseh sought to share Montezinos' testimony and the great news it entailed with the Sephardic Jewry that he both belonged to and taught. Menasseh claimed that the dispersal of the Jews all over the globe was a precondition for the coming of the messiah, and Jewish migrants accepted this idea and justified their journeys across the Atlantic based on this messianic doctrine. The former Converso Joao de Yllan and the other founders of first Jewish congregation in the Caribbean even chose to name it 'Mikveh Israel' or the 'Hope of Israel' after Menasseh's treatise published a year earlier.[64]

Turning from the far side of the Atlantic to the opposite side of the Mediterranean, Menasseh's allure as a famous rabbi with a Converso background led other former Conversos to reprint the *Esperanca de Israel* in the Ottoman Empire. Originally owners of

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[62] For more on these connections, see Katz, 'English Charity and Jewish Qualms'.
[63] Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission to the Indians before King Philip's War*, 213.
[64] Wim Klooster, 'Networks of Colonial Entrepreneurs: The Founders of the Jewish Settlements in Dutch America, 1650s and 1660s,' *Atlantic Diasporas: Jews, Conversos, and Crypto-Jews in the Age of Mercantilism, 1500-1800* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2009), 41.

a printing house in Livorno, the Gabbai family immigrated to Smyrna and set up a printing press in 1658.[65] It was there that the rabbi and printer Abraham Gabbai published the *Esperanca de Israel* after travelling to the Dutch Republic where he may have personally acquired a copy of it himself.[66] Spread among the Smyrnan Jewry, Menasseh's messianic message could have had an impact on the young Sabbatai Sevi; it is well known that the Conversos involved in the publishing of the *Esperanca de Israel* in Smyrna, such as Moses Pinheiro, were influenced by Menasseh's text, were friends of Sabbatai in his youth, and would later become enthusiastic Sabbatians.[67]

Even if it is not possible to prove that the *Esperanca de Israel* inspired Sabbatai and the outbreak of the Sabbatian movement, it is generally accepted that this treatise prepared the minds of the Jews from the Levant through Europe to the Americas for an enthusiastic reception to Sabbatai's messiahship in 1666. Its messianic message was disseminated throughout the Jewish world, and Menasseh himself was close to people who would be important Sabbatians, including Isaac Aboab de Fonseca and Abraham Israel Pereira. Furthermore, Joao de Yllan returned from the Caribbean and reappeared in Amsterdam in 1666 as a fervent Sabbatian believer. Joao expected their redemption to occur any day and, with the dangers of sailing due to the Anglo-Dutch war, he wrote to the king of England to secure assurance for the safe passage of a Dutch ship to take his Jewish brethren to Jerusalem.[68]

In the Dutch Republic, the advent of Sabbatianism brought about the re-emergence of interest in Menasseh's work and, at the peak of Sabbatai's popularity, a Dutch translation entitled *De Hoop van Israel* (1666) was printed twice in order to enlighten the

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[65] Barnai, 'The Sabbatean Movement in Smyrna,' 116.
[66] Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi*, 150; Barnai, 'Christian Messianism and the Portuguese Marranos,' 121.
[67] Goldish, *The Sabbatean Prophets*, 49; Barnai, 'Christian Messianism and the Portuguese Marranos,' 120, 123.
[68] Klooster, 'Networks of Colonial Entrepreneurs,' 42.

Dutch public about Jewish messianism.[69] In this manner, the *Hope of Israel* set the stage for the largest messianic movement in Jewish history, and one 'might wonder whether Durie realised that his simple inquiry with Menasseh in 1649 had been one of the initial factors, by occasioning the publication of an influential book, of the messianic outburst of the 1660s.'[70]

The Impact of the Sabbatian Movement on John Eliot

Jews anticipated the return of the Lost Tribes of Israel alongside the coming of the messiah so it should not be surprising that news of Sabbatai's messiahship was accompanied by rumours that the Lost Tribes had indeed surfaced from their hidden dwelling. Like Montezinos' testimony, these tales were disseminated widely. Unlike the discovery of a single tribe located in the jungle in 1648, the stories in 1665 told of the appearance of mysterious armies of ancient Israelites in Persia, the Arabian Peninsula, North Africa and even the British Isles.[71] These reports were published in pamphlets, gazettes, and avvisi in Italian, Dutch, and English as well as moved across the Atlantic along Puritan channels.

When the rumours reached John Eliot in New England, he was enthralled. Although he had withdrawn his endorsement of the Lost Tribes theory, he thought these were different: they were news that was confirmed from many places and printed in trusted sources. His earlier belief that the millennium was at hand had been right all along. It only needed to be modified a little, from 1656 to 1666. Once again, Eliot became interested in the Lost Tribes.[72] Like all the previous accounts, these ones too would eventually be proven false. Yet Eliot would not be entirely dissuaded this time. He

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[69] Mechoulan and Nahon, *Menasseh ben Israel*, 91.
[70] Ernestine van der Wall, 'Three Letters by Menasseh ben Israel to John Durie: English Philo-Judaism and the 'Spes Israelis,' *Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis* Vol. 65 (1985), 60.
[71] For more on this topic, see Chapter 5: Who Sacked Mecca? The Life of a Rumour (1665-1666).
[72] Cogley, 'John Eliot and the Origins of the American Indians,' 221-222.

remained intrigued by the Lost Tribes for the rest of his life even though the next generation of Puritans was embarrassed by their predecessors' ideas.[73]

John Eliot's evolving beliefs about the Lost Tribes were a product of a broad historical environment that included Jews and Christians across the Atlantic and Mediterranean worlds. Eliot was a local actor, living a sedentary life in North America, who was influenced by far-reaching intellectual currents. His views were affected by multiple threads of narratives that were woven together in different patterns as they were moved among and between networks of Jews, Judaising Conversos, Presbyterians and Puritans from one side of the Atlantic to the far side of the Mediterranean and then back again. While this chapter has started and ended with John Eliot in New England, one cannot make sense of his changing perspective without the larger background of all of these people –many of whom, including Menasseh ben Israel, Antonio de Montezinos, John Dury and John Cotton, had been displaced by the great changes of their age.

Eliot's original belief that the Israelites were in Asia was informed by a history of Puritan eschatological thought and dialogue that connected England and New England. The argument that he repeated, outlined by his Boston pastor John Cotton, originated in Europe and was advocated by English Protestants such as Thomas Brightman and John Archer.

Eliot changed his mind and became a proponent of the theory that the aboriginals were the descendants of the ancient Hebrews largely because of a chain of events that he was only remotely linked to: events that included the journey of a Converso from South

[73] Katz, *Philo-Semitism and the Readmission of the Jews to England 1603-1655*, 157. Eliot was not the only New Englander interested in the Lost Tribes: Samuel Mather owned copies of *Jews Jubilee; or the Conjunction and Resurrection of the Dry Bones of the House of Israel* (London, 1688) and Giles Fletcher's *Israel Redux: or the Restauration of Israel* (London, 1677). In the latter book, Mather wrote all over it, marking the section on the Sambayton River and writing 1290 on the front page –a number most likely referring to the amount of years involved in eschatological calculations. For these sources, see AAS Mather's Library.

America to Amsterdam, the Conversos' dialogue with a Dutch rabbi, the rabbi's discussion with an itinerant Scotsmen who then met a Presbyterian minister in England who had, remarkably, been influenced by Eliot's writings himself. The numerous interactions between the Englishmen and Dutch rabbi produced publications that led the Puritan missionary to reconsider the apocalyptic consequences of his own work. They also had ramifications in the political and religious arenas. In the former, they encouraged the Jewish readmission to England. In the latter, they fed into an environment that promoted the growth of Christian millenarianism and Jewish messianism.

Although the long-awaited millennium did not arrive in 1656, disheartening Eliot and prompting him to abandon his advocacy of the Lost Tribes theory, Menasseh's *Hope of Israel* may have been influential in sparking the Judaic Sabbatian movement years after the Dutch rabbi's death. At the very least, it prepared the way for the acceptance of Sabbatai's messiahship among the European Jewries, and the Jewish-Christian connections forged in the late 1640s and early 1650s furthered cross-religious exchanges that would be utilised in the transmission of Sabbatian information in 1665 and 1666.

It was the rumours of the Lost Tribes that were then spread alongside the news of Sabbatai in the mid-1660s that caused Eliot to reconsider his ideas again. Quite simply, the reports reinvigorated his earlier beliefs. This chapter has only briefly touched upon this final process because the history of the rumours of the Lost Tribes in 1665 comprises the entire fifth chapter of this dissertation. However, before we can consider the movement of these accounts from the Levant across Europe to the American colonies, it is necessary to discuss the possibility of the transmission and influence of an intermediary eschatological construct from England to the Ottoman Empire –that of the Quaker leader James Nayler's messianic entrance into Bristol in 1656.

Chapter 4

New Monarchs or Grand Impostors?

James Nayler and Sabbatai Sevi (1656-1666)

Figure 4: Woodcut of James Nayler and Sabbatai Sevi in *Anabaptisticum et Enthusiasticum Pantheon* (1702)

Here stands James Nayler as he should be dressed,
The Quakers' chosen monarch in the west:
And here is Sabatai, who in the east
The Jews' Messiah reigns, their King and Priest.[1]

[1] The *Anabaptisticum et Enthusiasticum Pantheon und Geistliches Rust-Hauss, Wider die Alten Quacker und Neuen Frey-Geister* (Hamburg, 1702) is found in the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana in the University of Amsterdam. The translation of this quotation is found in Mabel Richmond Brailsford, *A Quaker from Cromwell's Army: James Nayler* (London: The Swathmore Press Ltd., 1927), 187.

These lines, inscribed on a woodcut in *Anabaptisticum et Enthusiasticum Pantheon* (1702), deride the two 'Monarchia Nova' featured above: the English Quaker James Nayler and the Ottoman Jew Sabbatai Sevi. Although shown standing side by side, Nayler and Sevi neither met nor travelled to any of the same places. Indeed, Sevi was not known outside of the Jewish world until 1665 whereas Nayler, who died in 1660, was principally known for his actions committed almost a decade earlier in 1656.

It was in the autumn of 1656, the year that many Englishmen expected Jesus to return, that Nayler and his small band of followers approached the city gates of Bristol. Nayler sat on horseback as Martha Simmonds, Hanna Stranger, Dorcas Erbury and a few others walked alongside him, knee-deep in mud. 'Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest,' they cried as they entered the city, gaining the attention of those around. After all, in seventeenth-century England, what they were doing was considered scandalous. They were consciously replicating Jesus' entry into Jerusalem.

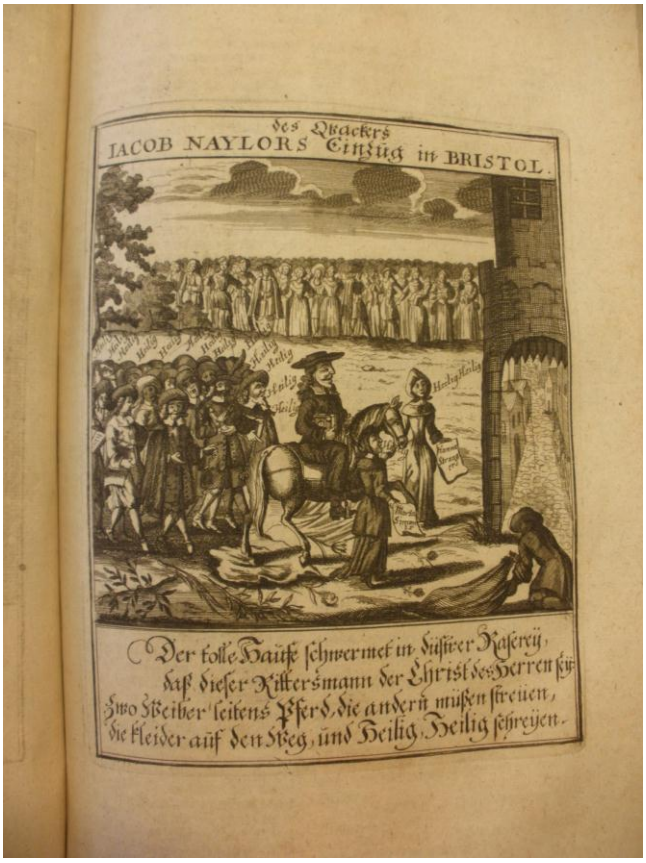

Figure 5: James Nayler's Entrance into Bristol as Pictured in *Anabaptisticum et Enthusiasticum Pantheon* (1702)

Word of their performance spread quickly throughout the city, and the authorities ordered the arrest of Nayler and his adherents. The Quakers were brought before the magistrates of Bristol to explain themselves. In front of the judges, Nayler's followers showed their audacity. Martha Simmonds and Hannah Stranger told them that Nayler was Jesus, and God had inspired them to worship him. Then there was the testimony of Dorcas Erbury who claimed to have died when she was imprisoned in Exeter. It had been two days, she said, before the women brought Nayler to see her body. When Nayler touched her, she rose from the dead. This was all the proof she needed; surely this man was Jesus reincarnated.

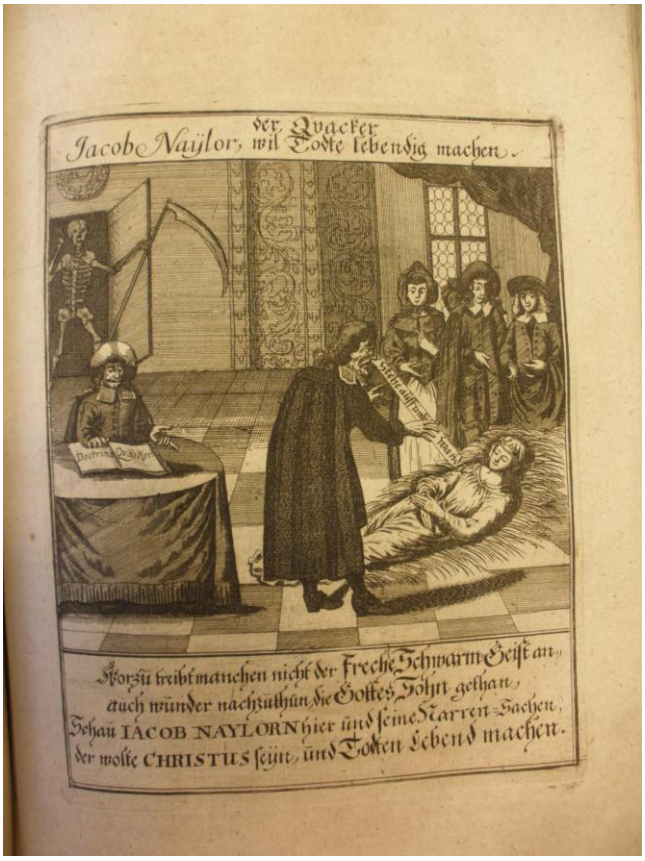

Figure 6: Nayler Raising Erbury from the Dead as Portrayed in *Anabaptisticum et Enthusiasticum Pantheon* (1702)

The magistrates were not impressed. Nayler and most of his followers were escorted under guard to London where the Quaker leader was questioned before the English parliament. Throughout his examination, Nayler admitted the facts at the same time that he frequently repeated that he did not take part in or condone immorality. His act had allegorical significance, nothing more.[2] When Nayler was asked at his trial, 'Do you own the title of the King of Israel, and Prince of Peace?' He answered, 'It is but one, and that of God born in one, the King of Israel, Jesus Christ, who is the King of Israel, is manifested in me, that I own.'[3]

[2] Ivan Roots, *The Great Rebellion 1642-1660* (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd., 1972), 206.
[3] Lesley Hall Higgins, *Radical Puritans and Jews in England, 1648-1672* (Yale University: doctoral thesis, 1967), 206.

After much deliberation, a verdict was delivered: Nayler was guilty of blasphemy. Although he escaped the death sentence, his punishment was severe. A hole was bored in his tongue, the letter 'B' was branded on his forehead for blasphemer and, after being whipped through the streets of London and Bristol, he was imprisoned.

News of Nayler's actions and punishment was disseminated far and wide. From the English colonies on the far side of the Atlantic across Europe to Italy and Poland, people of a variety of religious and national backgrounds knew about James Nayler. Ten years later, word of Sabbatai Sevi's messiahship reached the same Christian populations, and many of these people remembered Nayler and saw connections between the English Quaker and the Ottoman Jew. Alongside the woodcut in *Anabaptisticum et Enthusiasticum Pantheon,* John Evelyn's *History of the Three Late Famous Impostors* (1669) presented Nayler's biography next to Sevi's, while a German pamphlet titled *Beschreibung Des Newen Judischen Konigs Sabetha Sebi* (1666) labelled Sevi 'a Turkish [Moslem] or a Jewish Quaker', and a Polish correspondent from Amsterdam wrote of a boatload of Quakers who left Bristol for Jerusalem simply to find out more about the Sabbatian movement.[4]

Sources such as these have led historians to make claims about the potential cross-religious impact of Nayler's messianic actions on Sevi and the outbreak of Sabbatianism. Richard Popkin has argued that Sabbatai 'may have been influenced by the earlier Quaker Messianic claimant. His father worked for Quaker merchants.'[5] He has also written that,

> David Katz and I have been following possible connection between the Nayler movement and the prelude to Sabbatai Sevi. There were Quaker merchants in Smyrna, and Sabbatai's father is supposed to have worked for one of them. Possibly more interesting is that a couple of Quaker missionaries went off to convert the Pope and the Sultan...In a report it is said that they were arrested for

[4] Heyd, 'The "Jewish Quaker",' 234; Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi*, 548.
[5] Richard Popkin, 'Seventeenth-Century Millenarianism,' *Apocalypse Theory and the Ends of the World* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 122.

> preaching the imminent coming of the Messiah. Their arrest occurred when Sabbatai was in Jerusalem.[6]

Matt Goldish has correctly pointed out that Popkin was mistaken about Sevi being in Jerusalem at this time; however, he added that the presence of the Nathan of Gaza in Jerusalem is probably more interesting anyway,[7] leaving the possibility of transmission and influence open to question. Other historians have touched upon this issue, if only in passing. A few of the twenty biographers of Nayler have dedicated a paragraph or two to this topic.

If there were links between Nayler and the Sabbatian leadership then the largest Jewish messianic outburst since the time of Jesus had a Christian impetus –a striking connection between Jews and Christians across Europe and the Mediterranean world that goes against the dominant historical trend. Events in the Jewish world have long affected Christians, stretching back to the incorporation of the Hebrew Bible into the Christian canon. Judaism is part of the Christian heritage, not vice versa. Christian influence on Jewish thought has been less profound.

In the seventeenth century, the Jews lived in small pockets scattered amongst large Christian or Muslim populations. With the growth of Christian Europe's political and economic might, could this have been the moment in which Christians had a deeper, more significant religious impact on the Jews? In spite of the substantial unsubstantiated declarations made by scholars, there has yet to be a sustained investigation of the possible ways in which Nayler and the Quakers could have affected the outbreak of the Sabbatian movement. This chapter is therefore the first systematic study of the networks along which narratives of Nayler's entry into Bristol and the messianism associated with the Quaker leader could have been transmitted across Europe and to the Levantine Jewry.

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[6] Popkin, 'Christian Interest and Concerns about Sabbatai Zevi,' 94.
[7] Goldish, *The Sabbatean Prophets*, 202.

News of Nayler across Europe

The drama at Bristol was known about in Europe to a degree not previously recognised. In England, printed gazettes reported on Nayler's messianic entrance within a week. Within two months, the Quaker messiah was the subject of multiple pamphlets. Between late October and January, the two primary English news sources of the day, the *Mercurius Politicus* and the *Publick Intelligencer,* each printed at least fifteen stories about Nayler. Sometimes there were numerous items in a single issue and, on more than one occasion, at such a length that they took up multiple pages. In their articles, the editors of the gazettes consistently described Nayler and his group negatively. Nayler was 'a grand Impostor, and a great Seducer of the people'; he was 'guilty of horrid Blasphemy'.[8]

The first two full-length pamphlets about the Nayler affair appeared in December, hardly two month after he entered Bristol, and they utilised it as an entry point for a broader attack on the Quakers. Ralph Farmer, a preacher who had lost to Nayler in debates, titled his treatise *Satan Inthron'd in his Chair of Pestilence* (1656). Like the editors of the gazettes, he presented Nayler as an 'Impostor' who had 'come this way to play their pranks with us'.[9] For Farmer, Nayler and his entourage were clearly evil: 'There have (and there may again) come false Christs, and Antichrists accompanied with the workings of Satan'.[10] The Quakers were clearly 'Satans Factors'.[11]

John Deacon's *The Grand Impostor Examined* (1656) came out shortly after Farmer's pamphlet, and it was neither as in-depth as Farmer's nor was it intended to be. Like Farmer, Deacon had nothing but sheer disdain for Nayler. He was 'a deluded and

[8] *Mercurius Politicus,* 4 December 1656.
[9] Ralph Farmer, *Sathan Inthron'd in his Chair of Pestilence* (London, 1656), 3.
[10] Ibid., 41.
[11] Ibid., 41.

deluding Quaker and Impostor', a man 'of so erroneous and unsanctified a disposition, that it is hard to say whether heresie or impudencie beareth the greater rule in him'.[12]

These two pamphlets did not go unanswered. Shortly after their release, George Bishop, the great champion and defender of the Quakers, published his *The Throne of Truth Exalted over the Povvers of Darkness* (1657). Not concerned with Deacon's work, Bishop took apart Farmer's manuscript, discrediting it to defend the Quakers. He accused Farmer 'of the foul Forgery and dishonest dealing in such a matter of weight as his life, and the name of the Truth of the living God'.[13] In order to protect the Quaker movement, Bishop turned his back on Nayler. Nayler had 'walked in the Light, and in it ruled' until 'his hour of Temptation being come, and Darkness getting about him quick and sudden'.[14] Such polemical sources spread Nayler's story to a broader population and kept it in the spotlight long after it had ceased to be newsworthy.

At the time that these gazettes and pamphlets were widely available to the English public, three Italian diplomats were stationed in London. All of the diplomats kept abreast of the latest events in England and often turned to such sources to either confirm the reports they were hearing or as an entry point to the news. Although the diplomats were all doubtless aware of Nayler's actions and interview before parliament, they thought the Quaker leader was worthy of different amounts of attention as reflected in the time they took to inform their home governments of the affair. The Venetian ambassador, Francesco Giavarina, cared little about Nayler and only indirectly referred to him in one of his regular dispatches to the Venetian senate,

> Thus it would seem that at present there is not a thoroughly good understanding between the Protector and the Parliament, and his Highness has taken occasion to display his vexation at some death sentences made by the Assembly without his

[12] John Deacon, *The Grand Impostor Examined* (London, 1656), 40.
[13] George Bishop, *The Throne of Truth Exalted over the Povvers of Darkness* (London, 1657), 25.
[14] Ibid., 3, 4.

> consent. He has written a sharp letter to parliament in which, while admitting the sentences to be just, he blames the members for coming to these without seeking his advice and approval, which he declares are necessary since he is associated with them in the government of the State and in all things.[15]

Giavarina must have been confused because Nayler was not sentenced to death. Regardless, the Quaker leader of no interest to the Venetian ambassador.

Unlike Giavarina, the Genoese resident Francesco Bernardi thought Nayler was worthy of mention in his regular diplomatic reports. While Nayler's entrance into Bristol occurred in late October and English gazettes and pamphlets appeared by December, Bernardi did not write about Nayler until the 17th of December. When he did, Bernardi described Nayler as a political rebel.[16] No longer viewed as the initiator of a 'prank', Nayler was part of a 'conspiracy' against the government; this 'so-called Christ' aimed for nothing less than the 'totale distruttione della Christianita et ogni buon governo' (total destruction of Christianity and every good government).[17] The Quakers had recently reached such a high degree of blasphemy that they raised 'un Capo, che chiamasi il secondo Christo' (a leader who they called the second Christ) who walked diverse provinces with a great following and 'Maria e Magdalena' (Mary and Magdalene), committing the actions of 'nostro Redentore' (our redeemer) written of in the sacred scriptures.[18]

Being a diplomat, Bernardi focused on the political arena he was a part of, providing a view of Cromwell's interaction with Nayler that was unavailable in the gazettes. Writing in a manner that suggested he was at Nayler's interview before

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[15] According to the editor of the state papers, this letter undoubtedly referred to Nayler. CSPV: Francesco Giavarina to the Venetian doge and senate, 12 January 1657, as translated and summarised in Hinds (ed.), *Calendar of State Papers Relating to the English Affairs in the Archives of Venice* Vol. 31: 1657-1659, 1-11.
[16] Francesco Bernardi to the Republic of Genoa, 17 December 1656, as quoted in Stefano Villani, 'Un Masaniello Quacchero: James Nayler,' *Rivista di Storia e Letteratura Religiosa* (Florence: Leo. S. Olschki, 1997), 77-78.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid.

Cromwell himself, Bernardi quoted the Protector turning to the Quaker leader and saying, 'Tu sei un seduttore del popolo' (You are a seducer of the people).[19]

Throughout his dispatches, Bernardi employed the same terms and phrases as the English press: Nayler was guilty of 'horribil blasphemia' (horrible blasphemy) and of being 'un grandissimo impostore, et seduttore del popolo' (a grand impostor, and a seducer of the people).[20] Despite these similarities, the Genoese diplomat claimed, on two occasions, that part of Nayler's punishments was to have his ears cut off, so he must not have drawn his information from the English gazettes.[21] Bernardi may have had better political access than the English news editors, but he still inaccurately reported the basics of Nayler's punishment, which were widely known through these sources. While somewhat unexpected, a mistake such as this could easily have occurred because the removal of one's ears was common punishment.[22] John Traske, for example, had the letter 'J' branded on his forehead for Judaiser and his ears nailed to the pillory.[23]

The last Italian diplomat in London was the most experienced. The Tuscan Giovanni Salvetti had lived in England for over twenty years and, after learning of the Bristol affair, Salvetti wrote extensively about Nayler in six of his reports in December and January. Although Salvetti stated that Nayler committed 'nefando biasteme' (nefarious blasphemy),[24] he did not use the common terms of 'Impostor' and 'Seducer' like most other English and Italian authors. Instead, Salvetti spoke of 'sua pazzia' (his madness) and his 'humori malinconici' (melancholy humours),[25] descriptions of Nayler which had no precedent.

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[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Thanks to Nick Davidson for pointing this out.
[23] Stefano Villani, *I Primi Quaccheri e gli Ebrei* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1997), 45.
[24] Amerigo Salvetti to Giambattista Gondi, 26 January 1656, as quoted in Villani, *La Corrispondenza dei Residenti Toscani a Londra*.
[25] Amerigo Salvetti to Giambattista Gondi, 12 January 1656, as quoted in Villani, *La Corrispondenza dei Residenti Toscani a Londra*.

Salvetti, who moved in the same political circles as Bernardi, was not concerned with Cromwell's views. For Salvetti, Nayler was important due to the political influence of the Quakers on one hand and as a distraction to parliamentary affairs on the other. His commentary on Nayler immediately preceded comments about the future of the government: it would have to be negotiated delicately, especially with the opposition from the Presbyterians and Quakers. Salvetti also noted that the new messiah, on this occasion and others, was a cause of distraction between the religious sects.[26]

All of the diplomats sent their dispatches to their respective Italian political authorities in states where news industries were currently developing. Early Italian news sources similar to the gazettes were known as *avvisi*, and they served as the primary mediums of news transmission. Avvisi editors were renowned for acquiring much of their information from the letters written by diplomats across Europe and, three months after the first stories about Nayler appeared in the English gazettes, avvisi editors printed items about Nayler.

The first Italian report on Nayler was found in an avviso from Genoa, which was then reprinted in Florence with slight changes to account for the different dialect.[27] The January 6th issue stated that Cromwell 'aveva fatto carcerare 4 donne, & un' huomo, che lo chiamavano il Messia, qual parlava contro il presente governo' (had imprisoned four women and a man, who they called the Messiah and had spoken against the present government).[28] Although these nameless people can be none other than Nayler and his circle, the origins of the account are hard to identify. The avvisi claimed to draw its information from letters from London, but these were most likely not from the diplomats who only sent their correspondence after December 17th and all provided names and details.

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[26] Ibid.
[27] For example, the word '*aveva'* became '*havea'*.
[28] SA Segreteria di Stato, Avvisi, 27, 10: Genoa, 6 January 1657.

A month later, on February 7th, another article about Nayler surfaced in the Italian press, this time in Milan,

> The so-called head of the Quakers (one of the new sects in that kingdom) called James Naylor, has been convicted by the parliament in London on the 22nd of December as a seducer of the people because he claimed to be the messiah. He is to be brought through the major areas of the city to that infamous place where, having a hot iron passed through his tongue and put on his forehead as a blasphemer, he is to be sent to Bristol to do the same and then back to London to be imprisoned for life. Daily one can hear both the news and the unpleasant effects of the religions that are all harmful and contrary to the true Roman Catholicism as well as to the design of Cromwell himself.[29]

This news item was much more detailed. It provided Nayler's name, labelled him the head of the Quakers, and told of his punishment for divulging himself as the messiah and for being a seducer of the people. The avviso editor then placed the story in an Italian religious context: Nayler's actions were harmful and contrary to both Cromwell's designs and the true Roman Catholic faith.[30] These details suggest that, like the earlier avviso from Genoa, this one was not based on any of the diplomatic dispatches. The accurate description of Nayler's punishment meant that it did not come from Bernardi, while the usage of 'seducer of the people' meant it did not come from Salvetti either. Instead, it most closely resembled the reports found in the English gazettes, which could have been reprinted in Spanish or French gazettes that then made their way to Italy.[31]

Although items about Nayler were published in avvisi in multiple Italian states with diplomatic representatives in England, there were no connections between the accounts written in the English gazettes, the Italian diplomatic correspondence, and the

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[29] BNCF Codd Magliabechiani XXV, 738, 74b: Milan, 7 Febuary 1657. The original stated, 'L'avvisato Capo delli Trembolori (una delle Sette nuovamente suscitate in quell Regno) nominato Giacomo Naylor, in pena d'essersi divulgato per il Messia, era stato alli 22. di Decembre condannato dal Parlamento di Londra, come sedutore del Popolo, ad esser condotto in public in un luogo infame, fustigato per le contrade maggiori di quella Città, trapassataglila lingua con un ferro infuocato, e col medesimo marcato in fronte, come biastermatore, per dover esser poscia mandato à Bristol sua Patria à far il medesimo, & d'indi di nuovo à Londra in Carcere perpetua, mà ciò non ostante giornalmente si sentivano nuovi, e grand'inconvenienti di Religione, per esser tutte dannose, e contrarie alla vera Catolica Romana, non men che a dissegni dello stesso Cromwell.'

[30] Ibid.

[31] Thanks to Stefano Villani for suggesting this possibility.

Italian avvisi.[32] The transmission of the Nayler narrative therefore highlights disconnections in the movement of information between England and Italy, even among sources that would be expected to be linked.

There were also Latin works about Nayler that were circulated around Italy. In 1659, the Irish Franciscan Maurice Conry published *De Extremis Anglo-Haereticorum* (1659), which presented the history of the many sects of English "heretics", including the Quakers. In the course of his discussion, Conry dedicated a couple of lines to Nayler, 'Habent quondam, haeresiarcham Jacobum Nayler, quem nonnulli ipsorum, Christum, Salvatorem mundi, et Jesum appellarunt, et pro tali coluerunt' (there was a certain heretic named James Nayler, who people had called Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the World, and worshipped him as such).[33]

A decade later, the Franciscan Anthony Bruodin published *Propugnaculum Catholicae Veritatis* (1669). In a subsection of this text, entitled 'De Quakerorum Secta', Bruodin chose Nayler as an example of the madness that occurs with the abandonment of the Catholic Church. Nayler, who had the support of his followers and the admiration of all, was 'a quo circa fundamento malignae suae sectae' (of the fundamental wickedness of his sect).[34] He was a 'Smigmator' (a concocter or rabble-rouser), a 'Hispidus' (a word mainly used to describe animals as hairy and brutish) and an 'Insatiabilis Helluo' (insatiable glutton) who was devoted to carnal pleasures and renowned for a thousand other terrible transgressions. [35] By selling himself as Jesus with his voice, appearance and gestures, Nayler garnered the devotion of all his disciples who worshipped him as the

[32] There are no extant Venetian avvisi that mention Nayler, but that could be because very few from this period survived.
[33] Maurice Conry, *De Extremis Anglo-Haereticorum* (1659) as printed in Stefano Villani, 'Appendix: Documents Relating to the Hat Controversy,' *Benjamin Furly 1646-1714: A Quaker Merchant and His Milieu* (Florence: Leo. S. Olschki Editore, 2007), 185-186.
[34] Anthony Bruodin, *Propugnaculum Catholicae Veritatis* (1669) as printed in Stefano Villani, 'Appendix: Documents Relating to the Hat Controversy,' *Benjamin Furly 1646-1714: A Quaker Merchant and His Milieu* (Florence: Leo. S. Olschki Editore, 2007), 192.
[35] Ibid. Many thanks to Ida Toth for aiding in the translation of this text, especially with the word 'Smigmator' –a Greek word with a Latin suffix.

saviour of the world. All of this happened, according to Bruodin, through the powers of the antichrist.[36]

Despite being published ten years apart, most of the information about Nayler in both Catholic texts came from Conry who had been imprisoned in Bristol and London until 1658. By chance, Conry was incarcerated alongside Nayler as he later recounted, 'vidi ipsum in caceribus Bristoliae, et saepissime locutus sum illi' (I have seen him in prison at Bristol, and with wisdom I have spoken to him).[37] After serving as a fellow prisoner of Nayler, Conry returned to Rome where he actually participated in the trial, most likely as a translator, of the two Quaker missionaries John Perrot and John Luffe before the Inquisition.[38] Not only did Conry take part in the religious persecution of the very same group he suffered with in England, but he also shared his experience with his Franciscan brother Bruodin who later used it in his own polemic against the Quakers.[39]

Like in the Italian peninsula, multiple types of documents in the Dutch Republic published accounts of Nayler's messianic entrance into Bristol. Due to the Dutch press' close proximity to England and their complex relationship with the English gazettes, the Dutch *Hollandtze Mercurius* was one of the first European sources to print Nayler's story. As early as December, the Dutch newsbook told the well-known history of the Quaker leader, describing him as an 'Impostor' and providing his background: Nayler was a Quartermaster under Major General Lambert in Scotland and a soldier under Fairfax – supplementary information found in none of the Italian diplomatic dispatches or avvisi.[40]

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[36] Ibid.
[37] Conry, *De Extremis Anglo-Haereticorum*, 185-186.
[38] Stefano Villani, 'Conscience and Convention: the Young Furly and the Hat Controversy,' *Benjamin Furly 1646-1714: A Quaker Merchant and His Milieu* (Florence: Leo. S. Olschki Editore, 2007), 107-108.
[39] Villani, 'Conscience and Convention,' 107-108.
[40] ULL: Pieter Castelyn (ed.), *Hollandtze Mercurius*, 126: December 1656.

Despite presenting accurate details, the *Hollandtze Mercurius* incorrectly stated that the Bristol affair occurred in November. More important, the *Hollandtze Mercurius* had a broader geographical perspective. It turned directly from its discussion of Nayler to seven Quakers who were recently discovered in Boston.[41] Nayler was not a big deal himself. He was indicative of a larger movement that was spreading eastward across Europe and westward across the Atlantic Ocean.

Not all the non-English publications portrayed Nayler negatively. While the Quaker William Caton wrote to Margaret Fell about a nineteen-page book in the Dutch Republic that attacked the Quakers by giving the relation of Nayler's trial and the transcription of letters from his adherents that referred to him as Jesus,[42] a Dutch pamphlet entitled *Klachte der Quakers, Over Haren Niewen Martelaer, James Nailor* (1657) presented Nayler's actions and punishment in a surprisingly positive manner.

[41] Ibid.
[42] Brailsford, *A Quaker from Cromwell's Army,* 186: see LSF Swarthmore MS IV, 370.

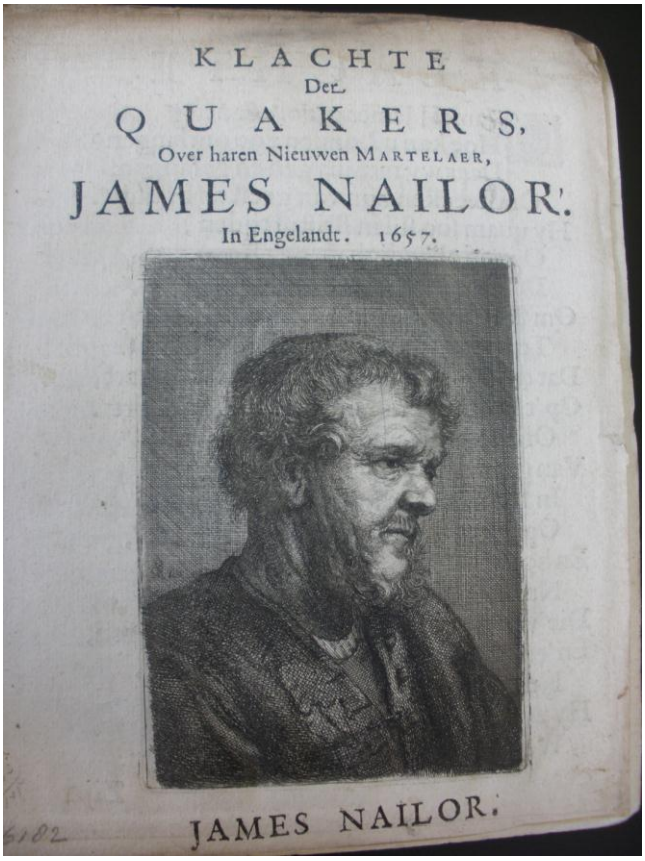

Figure 7: *Klachte der Quakers* (1657)

This pamphlet, whose front piece showed a somewhat stern and dejected 'Nailor', contained a 68-line poem that described Nayler as the Quaker's 'Nieuwen Martelaer' (New Martyr), 'groote Sant' (great Saint), and 'vrome Quakerbend' (the devout Quaker).[43] His ride into Bristol had made their spirits and feet dance. Although the branding of the letter 'B' on Nayler's forehead was supposed to permanently mark him as a blasphemer, this poem reframed the punishment: 'Zijn brantmerk strekke een heylig teeken' (He was branded with a holy sign).[44] Possibly picking up on the broad dissemination of news of Nayler's actions across Europe, the unknown author of *Klachte der Quakers* exclaimed, 'Zijn stem nu wijdt en verre klinkt' (now his voice is everywhere).[45]

By January, Nayler's story was also known of in France where an English traveller

[43] *Klachte der Quakers, Over haren Nieuwen Marterlaer, James Nailor In Engelandt* (1657), 2.
[44] Ibid., 4.
[45] Ibid., 4.

in Paris wrote to Joseph Williamson in London,

> We have now arrived at Paris, after being much cheated by the zealous reformists, under cloak of religion, especially at Montauban. I suppose you have the news of one Naylor, a Quaker in England, who pretended to be the Messiah, and carried about with him 12 apostles, and 2 sinful Magdalens; but that fancy will be jerked out of him by his sentence. I wish his apostles the same persecution. Two of that set lately passed by Paris, and were found starving in the streets, but some English gentleman, not knowing that religion, relieved them. They said they were ambassadors from the Lord to the Duke of Savoy, and despaired not of the gift of tongues, for the Lord had told them they should have success.[46]

While referencing Nayler's female followers as 'Magdalens' was not unprecedented, this letter told of Nayler's twelve apostles –figures not mentioned anywhere else and could be fictitious characters added to the story. After all, Nayler was seen to be mimicking Jesus and such details, which are found in the various versions of Jesus' life in the Bible, could have been appended to the account of Nayler during circulation. In other words, the seventeenth-century news was being informed by a biblical account.

To the Ottoman Empire?

James Nayler was not the only messianic figure that people thought that Joseph Williamson, the English undersecretary of state, would be interested in. A decade later, Williamson received numerous letters from English merchants and diplomats in the Ottoman Empire and the Italian peninsula about the Jewish messiah Sabbatai Sevi.

Sevi lived in the Levant where neither gazettes nor pamphlets were prevalent. So, unlike in Europe, there were no news sources in which he could have read about Nayler. Moreover, the Ottoman authorities did not have any representatives in England, which meant that there was no Ottoman diplomatic correspondence that transmitted the narrative across the Mediterranean. Finally, judging by their extant letters, the Europeans stationed in the Empire do not appear to have been informed of the messianic entrance of Nayler in

[46] CSPD: Chas. Perrott to Joseph Williamson, 7 January 1657, as quoted in *Calendar of State Papers Domestic: Interregnum* Vol. 153: *1656-1657*, 223-258.

these years. As we shall see, even though many knew about the Quakers, they did not mention Nayler. Thus, there is no evidence that proves that the story of Nayler reached the Levant in spite of the aforementioned remarks made by certain historians.

There were numerous networks that connected the European countries to the Ottoman Empire and, because the seventeenth-century historical record is incomplete and scholars have suggested that transmission and influence occurred, it is necessary to examine these networks in order to discuss both the possibility and the probability that the messianism associated with James Nayler was brought to the Levant where it could have affected Sabbatai Sevi, Nathan of Gaza, and the outbreak of the Sabbatian movement.

If the Quaker messianism came to the Ottoman lands with enough force to convince people of its veracity, the primary carriers would have been those involved in Nayler's messianic entrance into Bristol. Nayler, the charismatic leader considered the messiah, did not travel outside of the British Isles himself. He was imprisoned until 1659 and, upon his release, he settled into the home of his loyal follower Rebecca Travers in London. He died in 1660 in the north of England.[47]

Although Nayler did not spread the message eastwards, it has been alleged that his 'unrepentant followers fled to Holland and to the outposts of Quaker trading in the Levant, and in the western hemisphere, and they seemed to have carried their millenarian message with them'.[48] Nayler's leading follower was Martha Simmonds who has been described as the '*fons et origo mali*' of the messianic drama at Bristol.[49] Many of Nayler's contemporaries blamed the whole incident on her as well. Henry Starke chastised Nayler, 'James how have the two woman [Martha Simmonds and Hannah Stranger] deceived thee

[47] Moore, *The Light in their Consciences*, 43.
[48] Popkin, 'Seventeenth-Century Millenarianism,' 120.
[49] Brailsford, *A Quaker from Cromwell's Army,* 157: Kenneth Carroll (45) wrote, 'That Martha was the engineer of the whole episode appears very likely.'

for as the serpent beguiled eve so have they deceived thee'.[50] Likewise Ralph Farmer concluded, 'Thus you see here, this Martha Simonds is a considerable person, For her Husband (who tis like knoweth her) tells her, *she was the chief leader* in this action'.[51]

Even after Nayler's imprisonment, Simmonds continued to believe in him and could have been one of these 'unrepentant followers', except that she reconciled with the Friends and became quiet after reading the paper that Nayler produced in 1657, which condemned the spirit of disorder that had seized control of so many in 1656.[52] Giving up her messianic beliefs, Simmonds died en route to Maryland in 1665,[53] taking no part in transmitting these ideas to the Levant either.

Nayler's other leading adherent, Hannah Stranger, as well as her husband John Stranger repented of their actions and did not travel anywhere near the Ottoman lands. Neither did the "resurrected" Dorcas Erbury nor did Jane Woodcock who continued to hold meetings for Friends in London. Nayler's other followers at Bristol, Robert Crab, Timothy Wedlock and Samuel Cater, were discharged before Nayler was taken to London. Furthermore, Crab was later imprisoned and died shortly after his release whereas Wedlock fell back into obscurity after 1656.[54]

Cater, on the other hand, became a Quaker missionary who travelled to the Dutch Republic with Giles Barnardiston. While Cater could have spread the Quaker messianic spirit to the vibrant Dutch Jewry, he did not go to the Low Countries until 1669, which was years after the rise and fall of the Sabbatian movement. Moreover, Cater had a falling out with Nayler shortly after the Bristol affair. Cater had written to the former Quaker

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[50] LSF Box A/4, 143-145: Henry Starke to James Nayler, 10 October 1656. Richard Hubberthorne claimed, 'the women are exceedingly filthy in Acting in Imitations & singing, And that power of darkeness in them rules over him'. See LSF Caton MS 370: Richard Hubberthone to Margaret Fell, 25 November 1656.
[51] Ralph Farmer, *Sathan Inthron'd in his Chair of Pestilence*, 22.
[52] LSF Caton MS 391: Richard Hubberthorne to Margaret Fell, 1657.
[53] Kenneth Carroll, 'Martha Simmonds, A Quaker Enigma,' *Journal of the Friends Historical Society* Vol. 53 (1972), 51-52: another source says she was buried in Southwark. Regardless, she did not travel to the Ottoman Empire. For more on this elusive woman, see Carroll's article.
[54] LSF: *Joseph Joshua Green, Biography of Samuel Cater of Littleport in the Isle of Ely, Yeoman* (typewritten copy, 1914), 19, 20.

leader, 'Friend my soule is much burdened for thee...thou art departed', you are 'a stranger to the house of Christ'.[55] Considering this, it is highly unlikely that Cater would have shared the messianic message with others in England or abroad.

Ann Cargill was another of Nayler's most devoted supporters who went to the Low Countries. While there is no mention of Cargill preaching a messianic message, Quaker letters did move Nayler's story to Amsterdam. George Bishop wrote to Margaret Fell in the Dutch Republic,

> JN & his company (being released at Exeter) came into this Towne with full purpose and resolution to set up their Image & to breake the Truth in pieces & to bruise and tread towne, and beguile and devour the tender plants of the Lord in this his Vineyard as before was given forth; with which being overfilled and made drunk with the indignation of the lord they brought in JN on horseback, whoe rode with his hands before him; one reign of his bridle marth symds led and han string the other, and some went on his sides and Hannah's husband went bare before him & dorcas Erbury with a man of the Isle of Elyrod after, and thus they led him and thus he rode through the town, the women singing as they went holy, holy, holy, Hosannah and so past to the white hart a bad inne where they lay when they brought him first on the fifth month with hords following them (for the whole towne was mound) through the streets thither...[56]

Bishop's words highlight the predominant view of Quakers who were not followers of Nayler. Even though many had spent time with him and he had played an influential role in their lives, they looked down on the Bristol affair. William Edmondson, the founder of Irish Quakerism, had been convinced by Nayler himself in 1653 and owed much of his spiritual life to Nayler's preaching, but he was filled with despair upon hearing of Nayler's messianic act,

> But what added to my trouble, news was brought me of James Naylor's miscarriage. This came very near me, and brought me under great trouble of mind, so that I said in my heart, how shall I be able to stand through so many temptations and trials which attend me daily, since such an one as he is fallen under temptations? And I mourned in my spirit....[57]

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[55] LSF Box A/4: Samuel Cater to James Nayler, 3 November 1656.
[56] LSF Swarthmore MS I, 188: George Bishop to Margaret Fell, 27 August 1656.
[57] LSF: William Edmundson, *A Journal of the Life, Travels, Sufferings, and Labour of Love in the Work of the Ministry, of that Worthy Elder and Faithful Servant of Jesus Christ, William Edmundson* (Dublin: Printed by Christopher Bentham, 1820), 68.

Because Nayler's actions were often used as a weapon to attack Quakerism throughout Europe,[58] most Friends would have been unlikely to spread word of what had transpired at Bristol; it was seen as more damaging than beneficial to the Quaker movement.

While no one close to Nayler went to the Ottoman Empire, other Quakers travelled there with the explicit goal of sharing their doctrine. The first attempt to carry the Quaker message to the shores of the Mediterranean began in 1657, so all the missionaries would have been aware of Nayler's messianic entrance whether they agreed with what he had done or not. The earliest Quaker mission included John Perrot, John Luffe, Mary Fisher, Mary Prince and Patrice Beckley, all of whom left England in 1657 and arrived in Livorno by July.

From Livorno, they went in different directions. Some, such as Luffe and Fisher, went to the Ottoman realm where, it is said, the latter obtained an audience with the Sultan Mehmed IV in Adrianople in May or June 1658.[59] Afterwards, Mary Fisher travelled to Smyrna and Istanbul, cities with large Jewish populations. Although all accounts of her journey fail to mention any interaction with Jews, Fisher may have been in Istanbul at the same time as Sevi. The young Jew had completed his wanderings in Greece in 1658 and would stay in the Ottoman capital for eight months. It was apparently at this point that, at least according to one person, the Jewish messianic movement became 'truly revolutionary'.[60] While Fisher and Sevi may have been in the same city at around the same time, it is highly improbable that they ever met, had anything to do with each other, or even knew of each other's existence. Quite frankly, it would take a wild leap of the imagination to suggest that the messianism associated with Nayler reached Sevi through Fisher.

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[58] Brailsford, *A Quaker from Cromwell's Army,* 186.
[59] If Fisher did meet the sultan, she would have met his grand vizier, Mohammed Kiuprili, who played a role in Sabbatai's arrest and conversion.
[60] John Freely, *The Lost Messiah: In Search of the Mystical Rabbi Sabbatai Sevi* (Woodstock: The Overlook Press, 2003), 35.

John Luffe arrived in Smyrna in 1657 and spent time with Ottoman Muslims and Jews who saw him as their wonder and 'gazing stocke'.[61] His correspondence shows little success in proselytising and, even if he had any, Sevi was not in Smyrna in this period. He had been expelled from the port city and was on his way towards Salonika.

Daniel Baker and Richard Scosthrop were Quaker missionaries who followed Luffe to Smyrna in 1661, right in the middle of Sevi's return to his hometown between 1660 and 1662. Despite the wishes of the English colony, Baker and Scosthrop spoke to the Jewish, Muslim, and Greek Orthodox populations for three weeks. This provides the most conclusive evidence of the possibility of the Quaker message being spread amongst the Smyrnan Jewry and possibly to Sevi because, according to the missionaries, they were 'assured that their labour was not in vaine.'[62]

George Robinson was a Quaker who simply felt 'an internal Sense of religious Duty' to travel to Jerusalem and journeyed to the holy land in the autumn of 1657.[63] His harrowing pilgrimage put him in contact with Muslims, Catholics, and even a French merchant in Accra. It was at this time that the Nathan of Gaza was a student at a local yeshiva in Jerusalem. While it is very unlikely that they ever crossed paths, Nathan was in the city when Robinson delivered the Quaker message.[64] Because the Catholic friars in Jerusalem were made aware of Robinson's coming before he arrived, this Quaker was not a regular pilgrim. He would have attracted an unusual amount of attention, which means that it was more likely that Nathan would have heard about him.

John Stubbs and Henry Fell followed these Quakers eastward a few years later, setting out in the spring of 1661 in hopes of reaching China and Prester John's country. When a warrant from the king could not secure them passage with any of the East India

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[61] LSF Port MS 17.74: John Luffe to G.R., 10 October 1657.
[62] LSF Port MS 17.78. See Daniel Baker, *A Clear Voice of the Truth Sounded Forth* (1662).
[63] Joseph Besse (ed.), *A Collection of the Sufferings of the People called Quakers for the Testimony of a Good Conscience II* (London, 1753), 393.
[64] Goldish, *The Sabbatean Prophets*, 112.

Company's ships, they ended up in Alexandria instead.[65] Like the Quaker missionaries to Smyrna, Stubbs and Fell met with negative treatment from the English colony in Egypt. Richard Bendige, the English consul at 'Grand-Cairo', was so annoyed with them that he advised his colleagues in Livorno not to let any more Quakers board ships to Alexandria. The ones that had made it, he wrote, had disbursed '[p]amphlets about the Streets in Hebrew, Arabick, and Latin, and if they had staid a little longer, it might have set them a burning.'[66] Such a harsh reaction needs to be understood in its proper context: the printing of Arabic in the Empire was prohibited in order to protect the language of the Quran,[67] and the Quaker's material would have warranted severe punishment.

In the years that Stubbs and Fell were in Egypt, 1661 or 1662, Sevi was possibly passing through. The soon-to-be Jewish messiah had left Smyrna for Jerusalem in 1662, most likely travelling from Rhodes to Alexandria and arriving in Cairo in the late spring of 1662 where he stayed for some time.[68] In this case, the overlap between the Quakers and Sevi included Hebrew treatises left for circulation amongst the Egyptian Jewry.

In general, the Quakers wrote a considerable amount of material designed for the Jews. In the Italian peninsula and the Levant, missionaries carried the most potent tools for the conversion of the Jews: a Hebrew version of Margaret Fell's *A Loving Salutation to the Seed of Abraham,* which had been translated by Spinoza.[69] Other Quakers had more printed propaganda. When John Perrot was examined before the Inquisition, he showed them a book 'he had written to the Turke and Jew' entitled *Immanuel, the Salvation of Israel*.[70] In Italy, Perrot himself 'gave forth a shorte paper to the Jewes, which put them all in a flame' and went to a synagogue where the Lord gave him 'utterances to declare

[65] LSF Pamphlet Box L. 24: Bettina Lacock, *Quaker Missions to Europe and the Near East 1655-1665* (Birmingham University: undergraduate thesis, 1950).
[66] Besse, *A Collection of the Sufferings of the People called Quakers II*, 420.
[67] Matar, *Islam in Britain, 1558-1685*, 135.
[68] Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi*, 176-177.
[69] Goldish, *The Sabbatean Prophets*, 112.
[70] LSF Port MS 17.76-77: J[ohn] P[errot] to E[dward] B[urroughs], 7 July 1657.

amongst them in Latine, and at the same tyme I gave forth a little booke which I was moved to write in the town to all the scattered Jewes throughout the world'.[71] Considering the extensive Jewish connections between the Italian states and the Ottoman Empire, the Quaker message could have reached the Ottoman Jewry through this channel too.

After 1660, foreign missionary endeavours diminished due to concerns at home,[72] but a few Quakers continued to travel to the Levant. A 'John the Quaker' was known to have tried to convert the sultan in 1661,[73] and Charles Chillingworth, the English deputy consul in Livorno, wrote in 1666 that 'in the Sun from Constantinople came the worthy Mr Tho. Coke an English Gentleman, and John Filly of Dover an Emisary Quaker the latter intendeth for Florence and England'.[74] Such sparse references are a reminder of the possible importance of Quakers whose journeys we know little to nothing about.

Despite possible connections between the Quaker missionaries and the Sabbatian leadership, the English consul Thomas Bendish in Istanbul noted that the Quakers were generally 'censured and scoffed at, by Papist, Jew, and others of a strange faith'.[75] Although Bendish was not on the friendliest terms with the Friends, the majority of missionary reports from the Levant do not contradict his claims, suggesting that cross-religious influence was unlikely even amongst those who conversed freely with the Jews.

The overlap between the Quakers and Sabbatai or Nathan is only one half of the equation. The other half involves linking the missionaries to Nayler and his circle. None

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[71] LSF Port MS 17.76: J[ohn] P[errot] to E[dward] B[urroughs], 17 June 1657. The Jews conversed with him in a mixture of Latin, Italian, and through an interpreter. According to Perrot, 'one of them did openly confesse the truth, and many of them said they were much obliged to us in our travells and service.' Perrot 'had given forth many books, both English, Latine, and French,' including one to the governor of Livorno called 'the visitation of the Jewes written by G H' who said that since there was nothing in it against the pope, he would get it translated and printed in Florence.

[72] Barry Reay, *The Quakers and the English Revolution* (London: Temple Smith, 1985), 107.

[73] Matar, *Islam in Britain, 1558-1685*, 134: See J[ohn] P[errot], *The Blessed Openings of a Day of Good Things to the Turks* (1661).

[74] TNA SP 98/6: Charles Chillingworth to Lord Arlington, 29 January 1666. He added that Lord Arlington must have heard about it from 'his Excellence the Earle of Winchelsea' in Istanbul.

[75] 'Thomas Bendish's Report in the Calendar of State Papers,' *Journal of the Friends Historical Society* Vol. 8 (1911), 168.

of the Quakers who went to the Ottoman Empire were at Bristol or were followers of Nayler, so they would not have exhibited the intense messianism that would have more likely had an impact on people.

At most, some of the missionaries can be indirectly tied to Nayler's group. Fisher, for instance, was connected to Nayler through her husband, William Bayly, who was convinced in 1655 and became a preacher. Bayly was one of the 22 Friends imprisoned in Exeter with Nayler and many of his adherents. Not only was this where Erbury was "resurrected", but it was also Simmonds who showed up with a letter from Cromwell securing Bayly's and the other Quakers release.[76] Although Bayly was with Nayler and his entourage as their messianic spirit was reaching its crescendo, he did not marry Fisher until 1662, which was after her journey to the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, there is nothing to suggest that either Fisher or Bayly were followers of Nayler and, like most Friends, Bayly did not travel to the Levant himself. His voyages were centred in the Atlantic world, not the Mediterranean.

John Stubbs was actually Nayler's friend. He visited Nayler in Exeter on his way back from the Dutch Republic, wrote about Nayler's sufferings from Dublin, and told Margaret Fell that 'James is pretty and deare to the whole household of god for ever'.[77] Even after the entrance into Bristol, Stubbs acted as Nayler's intermediary, interceding on his behalf with the Quaker leadership.[78] Stubbs, however, neither did nor wrote anything that demonstrates a messianic devotion to Nayler.

While Stubbs never openly condemned the events in Bristol, his fellow missionary John Perrot wrote,

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[76] Brailsford, *A Quaker from Cromwell's Army,* 115: Bayly was mentioned alongside Samuel Cater, Robert Crab, and Nayler's other followers. See LSF Swarthmore MS I, 12.
[77] LSF Swarthmore MS IV, 32: J[ohn] Stubbs to M[argaret] F[ell], 2 July 1656.
[78] LSF Swarthmore MS III, 152: J[ohn] Stubbs to M[argaret] F[ell], 10 June 1657: 'I was adviced to send to she these enclosed, William Duesburyes letter to James Nay(ler) his Answere to his and the rest is James a gennerall Letter to friends, Wm Duesbury remembers his deare love to thee, J[ames] expected to have had some lines from G.F.'

> The Agents of J[ames] N[ayler] have come creeping on their Bellies to be owned yea: Martha their Misearable Mother, this day hath been at us, & all her witchery & filthy Enchantments is set at Naught, they are left for Miserable Examples, unto all that feare god.[79]

Like Perrot, most Quaker missionaries showed more antipathy towards Nayler and his circle than anything else.

It must be conceded that there were, technically, enough possible associations on both sides of the equation to grant the possibility that one or more of the missionaries were acquainted with Nayler and travelled to areas where they could have shared the story with the Ottoman Jews and maybe even Sabbatai or Nathan. The amount of overlap, however, was minimal. None of the Quakers were at Bristol, were counted among Nayler's followers, or spent a considerable amount of time with him or those closest to him. Although they were doubtless aware of what had transpired, the missionaries tended to view Nayler's actions negatively and would have avoided discussing the drama at Bristol. Even if they decided to tell the Jews about it, none of the missionaries spent a substantial period of time in close proximity to Sabbatai or Nathan. Furthermore, none of them mentioned meeting either the Jewish messiah or his prophet after the Sabbatian movement was well known in Europe. Therefore, while there were Quakers in the Levant shortly before the outbreak of Sabbatianism, there was a very little possibility of the dissemination of the messianism associated with Nayler and his circle by the Quaker missionaries.

The most extensive ties between England and the Ottoman Empire in the seventeenth century were mercantile one. If the messianic ideas were brought to the Levant from England, and not done so by Quaker missionaries, then they would have been most likely transmitted by merchants who were privileged carriers of news in the early modern period.

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[79] LSF Swarthmore MS V, 27: John Perrot, Humphrey Norton, and William Shaw to William and Margaret Blanch, 10 April 1657.

There were merchants among Nayler's followers, and it has been suggested that they dispersed to the outposts of the Quaker commercial world after his punishment.[80]

When Nayler was released from prison, he lived with Rebecca Travers who was known as a 'merchant's wife'.[81] While her husband, William Travers, was a merchant, he was only a tobacconist in London. Neither he nor his wife had connections to the Levant.

Robert Rich was another of Nayler's loyal followers who was also a merchant. Rich stood at the entrance to the English parliament protesting Nayler's arrest, was among those who submitted letters of petition to the government in support of the Quaker messiah, followed Nayler crying, 'Holy, Holy, Holy' during his punishment, and placed a piece of paper over Nayler's head at the pillory that read,

> It is written, Luke 23.38
> This is the King of the Jews.[82]

After Nayler's imprisonment, Rich continued to hold strong messianic beliefs in the Quaker leader, corresponding with him during the summer of 1657 and co-authoring *A True Narrative of the Examination, Tryall and Sufferings of James Nayler* with William Tomlinson.[83] As important, Rich was a merchant of conspicuous wealth and the owner of the ship named 'The Negro'. The combination of his devotion to Nayler and his mercantile prowess even earned him the nickname 'the mad merchant'.

In 1658, Rich fled to the outposts of the Quaker commercial world after breaking with the Quaker leadership, but he did not go to the Ottoman Empire. He went westward to Barbados where he did business with New England. Rich had no connections to the Levant, and his interaction with the Quakers who went there, such as Fisher, was not positive. A letter of his to her and her husband was published in London in 1669 and

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[80] Popkin, 'Three English Tellings of the Sabbatai Zevi Story,' 47.
[81] Rebecca Travers was also one of the most prolific female Quaker writers. See Fogelklou, *James Nayler*, 220.
[82] Nabil Matar, 'The Idea of the Restoration of the Jews in English Protestant Thought, 1661-1701,' *The Harvard Theological Review* Vol. 78, No. 1-2 (1985), 67, 80; Fogelklou, *James Nayler*, 216, 225.
[83] Matar, 'The Idea of the Restoration of the Jews', 85.

claimed that Bayly, Fisher, and the other Quakers were no longer real Christians because there had been an abomination among them since the founder of Quakerism, George Fox, had judged Nayler.[84] Indeed, based on the movement of Nayler's followers, such as Rich and Simmonds, as well as the regular contact between Quakers in Bristol and their co-religionists in Barbados, Bermuda and Maryland, one would expect the messianic spirit to have been spread westward across the Atlantic instead of eastward across the Mediterranean.

Multiple historians have argued that ideas percolating in the European merchant colonies influenced the young Sevi. It has recently been stated that Sevi's beliefs 'did not grow simply out of Jewish soil but were irrigated by the apocalyptic enthusiasm of Protestant merchants who had carried their ideas to Smyrna from England, Holland and central Europe.'[85] Sabbatai was linked to the English merchants in Smyrna through his father, Mordecai, who had moved to Smyrna from southern Greece sometime after 1614 and ended up working as a factor for English merchants –a profession common for the Jews at that time. Sabbatai's brothers followed in their father's footsteps and went into business with him, creating a channel in which news from England could have reached the young Jewish messiah.

In terms of the reports about Nayler, there was only a limited period of time for transmission to have occurred along this path because Nayler entered Bristol in 1656, Sabbatai's father died in 1663 and, in between these two dates, Sabbatai was away from Smyrna for multiple years. Word of Nayler's messianic actions could have come at a later date through Sabbatai's brothers, but Sabbatai engaged in frequent peregrination and, as

[84] LSF: *The Letter Sent by Robert Rych to William Bayly and Mary Fisher, called his Wife and To the rest of the Quakers Hearers and Followers* (London, 1669), 3.
[85] Abulafia, *The Great Sea*, 482-483. This statement was made in relation to the growth of apocalyptic thought among Fifth Monarchists, Quakers, and those Christians associated with the Rosicrucian movement.

time progressed, Nayler's actions became less and less newsworthy, especially after his death.

Scholars have postulated that Mordecai was employed by Quaker merchants,[86] although the specific sources proving this have not been provided. Furthermore, nothing in the historical record suggests that there were Quaker merchants in Smyrna. While Quaker missionaries often referred to merchants who helped them in their travels, such as John Perrot who wrote about a sympathetic French merchant in Livorno,[87] or George Robinson who spoke of a French merchant who aided him in Accra,[88] John Luffe noted that none of the English in Smyrna stood with him.[89] A few years later, Baker similarly declared, 'there was no small stirr among the men of their owne nation against them and their testimony and...that equity and truth might have no entrance among them.'[90] These were the very same merchants who had the English ambassador in Istanbul, the earl of Winchelsea, issue a warrant for the immediate removal of the Quaker missionaries from Smyrna. If these Englishmen were so adamant to expel the missionaries who were only there for a short time, surely a more permanent Quaker merchant who was sharing his messianic beliefs with his Jewish associates would have attracted their attention as well.

Even statistically it is implausible that there were Quaker merchants in Smyrna. By 1660, there were at most 60,000 Quakers, which was less than one percent of the total English population. Quaker recruits were found primarily among artisans and independent farmers whereas merchants and bankers were mostly against the Friends.[91] Considering the small English community in Smyrna had less than a hundred people, the likelihood of it including Quaker merchants was minimal.

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[86] Goldish, *The Sabbatean Prophets*, 111; Popkin, 'Christian Interest and Concerns about Sabbatai Zevi,' 94.
[87] LSF Port MS 17.76: J[ohn] P[errot] to E[dward] B[urroughs], 17 June 1657.
[88] Besse, *A Collection of the Sufferings of the People called Quakers II*, 393.
[89] LSF Port MS 17.74: John Luffe to G.R., 10 October 1657.
[90] LSF Port MS 17.78: Daniel Baker to unknown Quakers, 1661.
[91] Damrosch, *The Sorrows of the Quaker Jesus*, 30.

The only indirect evidence for a Quaker population in Smyrna surfaces in the writings of the Dutch chaplains in Smyrna. Thomas Coenen was the Dutch pastor who witnessed the rise and fall of the Sabbatian movement firsthand and wrote a reliable account of Sevi in early 1667. In his text, Coenen made the explicit comparison between the Sabbatians and the Quakers. In trying to figure out the source of the Sabbatian spiritual outpouring in Smyrna in December 1665, he said that the surface appearances were mixed with a lot of fraud; it would be easy to imagine that there was something artificial in it –like with the Quakers of England.[92]

Gerard Croes, who replaced Coenen as the Reformed pastor in Smyrna, wrote a book titled *Historia Quakerina* (1695), which presented both Nayler's actions and the Quaker missions to Smyrna. Although printed in Amsterdam at a significantly later date, the fact that two Dutch pastors in Smyrna published material that discussed the Quakers suggests one of three conclusions. The missionaries garnered their attention in a short period of time, there were Quakers in Smyrna more permanently, or both men acquired their knowledge of, and interest in, the Quakers in the Dutch Republic. After all, the Low Countries was the subject of the earliest Quaker missions and became home to large communities of Friends.

If, on the off chance, there were Quakers in Smyrna, the likelihood that they were followers of Nayler is even smaller based on demographics and the anti-Nayler views of many Quakers. Anyone with a serious devotion to Nayler would have been around him in the early 1650s, moving to the Levant most likely after his arrest in 1656. Extant diaries, correspondence, and records relating to both the Quakers and the Englishmen in the Empire provide no evidence of Nayler adherents in any of the cities in spite of the suggestion by at least one historian.

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[92] Goldish, *The Sabbatean Prophets*, 62: see Thomas Coenen, *Ydele Verwachtinge der Joden Getoont in den Persoon van Sabethai Zevi* (Amsterdam, 1669).

The closest connection between Nayler and the English colony in Smyrna comes through Samuel Cater, the man who led Nayler's horse into Bristol. Years later, Cater travelled to the Dutch Republic with his close friend Giles Barnardiston who was part of a prestigious family from Clare in Suffolk that may have included the Smyrnan merchant A. Barnadiston. In his mercantile letters from the Levant, A. Barnardiston stated that he had many discussions with the Jews, which means this would be a channel in which ideas circulating among the Quakers, and even among Nayler's own disciples, could have reached the Jews via the Barnardistons. There are, however, multiple problems with this line of reasoning: Cater had a falling out with Nayler after Bristol, Giles did not become a Quaker until 1661 so the transmission would have had to occur after the falling out, and no documentation including Giles Barnardiston's will mentioned an A. Barnardiston.[93]

It is possible that other members of the English colony in Smyrna who were interested in the events at Bristol, if only as observers, could have kept informed of the proceedings and told their Jewish associates about it. By 1646, there were at least 22 English merchants in Smyrna who normally conducted their trade through Jewish middlemen and made a point of entertaining English travellers. The merchants therefore were relatively knowledgeable about Jewish affairs through the local Jewry,[94] as well as the news from England through their frequent correspondence with associates back home and their dialogue with travellers from their country. But, once again, no surviving correspondence even hints at any communication about the Quaker messiah.

Problems with a Cross-Religious Influence

Based on the prophecies in the New Testament, many English Protestants believed that the Jews must be converted before the kingdom of God could come in fullness. The Quakers

[93] See Giles Barnardiston, 'Abstract of Will of Giles Barnardiston,' *Journal of the Historical Society of Friends* Vol. 7 (1910), 43-44.
[94] Hill, 'Till the Conversion of the Jews,' 26.

were no different. In fact, Quaker interest in contemporary Jews surpassed many of their brethren; they provided the largest number of extant pamphlets, to, for, and about the Jews. Jewish-Quaker contact occurred across the Atlantic and Mediterranean worlds, and the Jews were largely positive in response to the Quaker overtures to meet and discuss religious matters.[95] In London, John Stubbs wrote of Dutch rabbi named Samuel Levi ben Asshur who attended Quaker meetings. In Barbados, the Jewish and Quaker cemetaries were side by side, and the Jewish synagogue was adjacent to the Quaker meeting house.[96] Robert Rich, who was later made responsible for collecting taxes from the Jews in Barbados, called himself a spokesperson for the Jews –both real Jews and English Christians. He signed his name on a petition, 'Petition of Robert Rich, surnamed Mordecai on behalf of the Jews in England, Scotland, and Ireland, to Parliament'.[97] Whether it was Quakers visiting Jewish synagogues in the Dutch Republic, the German lands, the Italian peninsula, England, and Barbados or the Jews attending Quaker worship services in London, Amsterdam and Boston, Quakers and Jews met frequently in public and private places between 1656 and 1666.[98]

Notwithstanding the strong Jewish-Quaker connections, there is no proof that the Ottoman Jews knew about Nayler. Even if they did, knowledge of does not imply belief in. There are two primary problems with claiming that Nayler's acts had a cross-religious influence on the outbreak of the Jewish Sabbatian movement.

The first relates to timing. Quakerism did not begin until the 1650s, Nayler did not ride into Bristol until 1656, and the messianic beliefs of Nayler's followers grew stronger closer to the Bristol affair. In short, Quaker messianism could not have affected Sevi

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[95] For more on the interactions between Quakers and Jews, see Higgins, *Radical Puritans and Jews in England* and Villani, *I Primi Quaccheri e gli Ebrei*.
[96] Higgins, *Radical Puritans and Jews in England*, 216-217.
[97] Ibid., 148, 213-215.
[98] Ibid., 224: there were also missions to the Jews by Baptists and other groups, which have not been thoroughly studied. For more on the Quaker missions to the Jews, see this doctoral thesis.

before 1650. Sevi, however, claimed to have his first messianic vision as early as 1648 and was banished from Smyrna for his bizarre and blasphemous behaviour sometime between 1651 and 1654.[99] If the young Sevi proclaimed himself the messiah in 1648, his messianic career began before both Nayler's and the advent of Quakerism. And why would we not accept this? Even the English merchants in Smyrna wrote in 1666 that Sevi had been 'pretending to bee their messiah' for 'neare 20 yeares'.[100]

Leaving aside from the problem of timing, there is still the issue of content. There are numerous topics in Sabbatianism that suggest cross-religious ties. Nathan of Gaza's theology took on a larger Christian dimension as time progressed, especially around 1666, when he emphasised pure faith as a religious value in a manner that is 'distinctly Christian in character'.[101] Meanwhile, Sabbatai's proclamation as '*l'unico figliolo, e primogenitor d'dio*' has conspicuously christiological overtones that cannot be explained phenomenologically: 'it must be seen as an important case of direct influence of Christology on Sabbatai himself'.[102]

In terms of the broader movement, the widespread emergence of Christian millenarianism at the same time as Sabbatianism 'would be a striking coincidence indeed' if they were not connected.[103] The prophetic enthusiasm sweeping through both the Catholic and Protestant worlds could have possibly influenced the Jews and contributed to the 'unqualified readiness, unprecedented in its scope, of the Sabbatian movement to recognize and confer full legitimacy on the prophetic spirituality of women.'[104] Even the seventeenth-century Englishmen in Smyrna blamed the support for Sabbatai on Christian impetuses. According to them, 'the Jews themselves say that nothing made them so

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[99] Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi*, 151.
[100] TNA SP 97/18/212: this unsigned letter dated 29 September 1666 to Thomas Dethick appears to be from S. Pentlow, J. Foley, and T. Laxton.
[101] Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi*, 83; Liebes, 'Sabbatean Messianism', 93-106.
[102] Idel, *Messianic Mystics*, 205-206.
[103] Katz, 'English Charity and Jewish Qualms,' 262.
[104] Rapoport-Albert, *Women and the Messianic Heresy of Sabbatai Zevi 1666-1816*, 76.

willing to believe as the Friar predictions on the yeere 1666'.[105] It was because 'the Xtians did foresee such strange revolutions which would happen in this yeare 1666 as likewise so that those Jewes in Xtian lande as with as other pls [places] were at one and the same time equally possessd with beliefe'.[106]

All of these factors suggest a Christian influence on the Jewish movement. It seems apparent that Jewish and Christian eschatological enthusiasm overlapped and mutually reinforced each other in Europe and possibly in the Levant. Christian prophecies about the coming end in 1666 dovetailed with similar Jewish expectations manifested in the Sabbatian ideology, bolstering the hopes of believers. But how does the messianic claims, actions, and ideas surrounding a lone Quaker in England a decade earlier affect the outbreak of Jewish messianism in the Ottoman Empire? Sevi was not trying to replicate Nayler's actions, he had his own messianic tradition to draw from. While the beliefs of the Fifth Monarchy Men about 1666 could have been used in tandem to support the Jewish saviour's ideas, there were no prophecies associated with Nayler that Sevi could have employed.

It is more logical to postulate that the Sabbatian leaders were influenced by another Christian source located much closer to them. Both the messiah and his prophet lived in cities with diverse populations of Christians. Furthermore, many of the Jews in Smyrna were former Conversos who had lingering Christian values and a long history of millenarianism. The impact of the Conversos on Sabbatai was notable. He spoke Spanish rather than Turkish, he sang Spanish *romanceros*, and knew a great deal about Christianity.[107] In regard to Nathan, his teacher in Jerusalem was the former Converso Jacob Hayyim Tzemah who wrote a book that contained visible echoes of Christian

[105] TNA SP 97/18/211: A. Barnardiston, J. Adderley, and N. Thurston to Thomas Dethick, 9 October 1666.
[106] TNA SP 97/18/212: S. Pentlow, J. Foley, and T. Laxton to Thomas Dethick, 29 September 1666.
[107] Goldish, *The Sabbatean Prophets*, 1-2. For more on Sabbatai singing Spanish *romanceros*, see Gad Nassi, 'Meliselda: The Sabbatean Metamorphosis of a Medieval Romance,' *Los Muestros* Vol. 48 (2002), 38-41.

kabbalah.[108] Even if it was a European Christian movement that stimulated the Jewish messianic outburst, there were other larger millenarian and prophetic movements that should be considered first.[109]

It was the similarities between Nayler and Sevi, not any sort of influence, that explains why their contemporaries grouped the two men together. Nayler's actions ran parallel to that of Sevi's; the Quaker leader was almost too similar to the Jewish messiah to have inspired him. With the failure of Sabbatianism, Christians used Sevi to attack the Quakers as a radical millenarian group and a serious political threat. The Quaker leader was just like the Jewish messiah. He was an impostor that led people astray. Quakerism was dangerous. The Jewish movement was a tool utilised by Christians against their fellow Christians.[110]

Linking Nayler and Sevi was part of a larger trend in which the opponents of Quakers tied the Friends to the Jews. They charged Quakers with secretly acquiring assistance from Jews, fraternising with Jews, using Hebrew in a suspicious manner, and being Judaisers.[111] Even in North America, Cotton Mather commented on the 'dubious nature' of Quaker-Jewish affiliation.[112] All of these sources, from the German pamphlets and woodcuts to the writings of English Protestants on both sides of the Atlantic, have played a role in informing the views of historians, such as Richard Popkin, who have

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[108] Idel, *Messianic Mystics*, 206.
[109] As Abulafia (482-483) notes, groups such as the Fifth Monarchists and Rosicrucians may have influenced Sevi.
[110] For more on the manner in which Christians connected Nayler to Sabbatai in order to criticise the behaviour of their fellow millenarian brethren, see Heyd, 'The "Jewish Quaker": Christian Perceptions of Sabbatai Zevi as an Enthusiast' as well as the subsection entitled 'Greate Hopes' in Chapter 6: A Jewish Messiah among Christians: The Evolution of European Perceptions of Sabbatai Sevi (1665-1666).
[111] Higgins, *Radical Puritans and Jews in England*, 188, 186.
[112] Higgins, *Radical Puritans and Jews in England*, 190: see Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana II* (London, 1702), 257.

remarked positively on the existence of 'Quaker Jews' and 'Jewish Quakers' as well as the possibility of ties between Nayler and Sevi.[113]

The opening woodcut of James Nayler and Sabbatai Sevi points to a cross-religious connection that looks good on paper, especially seventeenth-century paper, but it had and still has very little substance. By examining the networks surrounding Nayler, this chapter has reached two conclusions. The first half of the chapter had added to the historiography by employing recently discovered Italian and Dutch sources to prove that the Bristol affair was known about to a degree not previously recognised. The story surfaced in handwritten correspondence and publications from one side of Europe to the other.

Very few of the twenty biographies of Nayler discuss how he was understood and presented in other countries. It has been only recently that Stefano Villani, the authoritative historian of Quakers in Italy, has written about the Italian diplomatic dispatches on Nayler. But even Villani was not aware of the existence of Italian avvisi reports about the Quaker leader and, like the other historians, Villani limited his study to a single national framework. This chapter, on the other hand, has explored the movement of the English, Latin, Italian, and Dutch narratives about Nayler, comparing and connecting them across religious, national, and professional boundaries. Such an approach provides insight into cross-religious representations, transnational transmission, and the entangled relationship and disconnections between correspondence and publications in the dissemination of news.

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[113] See Richard Popkin, 'Christian Jews and Jewish Christians in the 17th Century,' *Jewish Christians and Christian Jews: From the Renaissance to the Enlightenment* (Dordecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1994), 64, 67: there were apparently many Quaker Jews, especially in Amsterdam where Menasseh ben Israel lived and William Caton distributed Margaret Fell's letter in a synagogue. For more, see Richard Popkin, *The Third Force in Seventeenth Century Thought* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992), 120-126 and Richard Popkin, 'Some Aspects of Jewish-Christian Theological Interchanges in Holland and England 1640-1700,' *Jewish-Christian Relations in the Seventeenth Century: Studies and Documents* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1988), 14.

Shifting away from the concrete, the second half of chapter has challenged the historiography by arguing that the messianism associated with Nayler did not make it to the Ottoman Empire and certainly not in a manner that affected the outbreak of the Sabbatian movement. While much of this thesis focuses on connecting people across religious, national, professional and continental divides, this chapter highlights another way that networks can be used: to demonstrate disconnections.

Although this chapter has reached a negative conclusion, this outcome has two broader implications.[114] First, it points to an asymmetrical relationship between the "East" and the "West". Stories from the Levant were disseminated broadly in gazettes and pamphlets across Europe whereas accounts of events in Europe may have been transmitted to the Ottoman realms in letters or by word of mouth by merchants, diplomats, or other travellers; however, the lack of both a news industry and a news culture in the Ottoman domains meant that the European reports never reached as large a population in the Empire.

Second, it highlights a similar asymmetrical relationship between the Jewish and Christian worlds. While the seventeenth-century Jewry may have been small and dispersed compared to the expanding Christian states, the transmission of the Nayler narrative proves that incidents in Christendom did not have as direct or as strong of an influence on Jewish religious thought compared to the impact that incidents in the Jewish world had on Christian perceptions of their own religious tradition. Indeed, as the next two chapters show, news and rumours related to the emergence of the Jewish Sabbatian movement in 1665 and 1666 would be spread quickly and broadly throughout Catholic and Protestant lands, affecting the hopes and expectations of Christians across Europe and beyond.

[114] Thanks to Howard Hotson for helping to formulate these closing thoughts.

Chapter 5

Who Sacked Mecca?

The Life of a Rumour (1665-1666)

Mischief shall come upon mischief, and rumour shall be upon rumour;
then shall they seek a vision of the prophet... –Ezekiel 7: 26

In the autumn of 1665, English readers received some extraordinary news through several channels simultaneously. Although specific details varied, all the reports contained the same basic story: the city of Mecca, Islam's holiest site, had been sacked. Moreover, some of the earliest versions added a second element of no less astonishing significance: the enormous army attacking Mecca, they claimed, was none other than the Lost Tribes of Israel.

As most seventeenth-century Jews and Christians were aware, ten of the tribes of Israel disappeared entirely from the biblical record after they were taken into captivity by the Assyrian King Salmanassar. Since many of the messianic promises of the Old Testament were addressed to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, prophetic exegetes had long speculated that these ten "Lost" Tribes must have been preserved in some distant corner of the globe, from which they would suddenly re-emerge to play a crucial role in ushering in the long-sought messianic period.[1] As Jewish messianic hopes intermingled with Christian millenarian ones, some seventeenth-century Christian millenarians entertained heightened expectations regarding the return of the Lost Tribes as

[1] For more on the Lost Tribes, see Chapter 3: The Lost Tribes in the Americas: Judeo-Christian Reciprocity across the Atlantic World (1648-1666).

well.[2] And since Islam had played a significant role in Christian apocalyptic beliefs since its advent in the seventh century,[3] the sack of Mecca pit two of the greatest eschatological agents against one another. Nor was it lost on contemporary observers that this momentous event was taking place in the last months of 1665, on the eve of the 1666 –the year that many people speculated would be the final one in history.

Such sensational news could only travel the long distance from Mecca to London by passing through numerous and very different networks. In each, this was a story of the greatest possible significance, though its interpretation altered radically as it passed from one cultural milieu to another. In the Muslim world, the destruction of the holiest place in Islam represented an enormous disaster, but one predicted in certain apocalyptic scenarios. Within the Jewish world, the sudden appearance of a great host of their long-lost brethren seemed to inaugurate the final phase of an age-old story of national redemption. Christians, although standing on the sidelines, could perceive in this conflict variously as the victory of one ancient eschatological adversary over another or, from a philo-Semitic millenarian perspective, as the triumph of a recently-acquired eschatological ally over the eastern antichrist. Despite all of these differences, this event had one thing in common for Jews, Christians, and Muslims: it was of such outstanding significance that, if proved true, must be part of God's divine plan for the imminent end of the world.

Given the power of these associations, it is scarcely surprising that the rumour of an attack on Mecca surfaced in correspondence, gazettes, and pamphlets written in Hebrew, Italian, German, French, Dutch, Latin, and English. Nor, perhaps, is it surprising that, in passing through so many cultural filters en route to England, this narrative was transformed almost beyond recognition. Indeed, one might claim that the least important

[2] See the numerous works by Richard Popkin, such as his 'Some Aspects of Jewish-Christian Theological Interchanges in Holland and England 1640-1700'.
[3] For more, see Paul Alexander, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

part of the legend is a proper historical account of what actually transpired in the Arabian Peninsula in or around 1665 –where the Lost Tribes did not, in fact, suddenly reappear at Mecca, and where the holy city of Islam was not utterly plundered and destroyed. Rather, this is the history of how the nightmare of one people was fused with the dreams of another, before arriving in a variety of Christian cultures predisposed to accept and elaborate it further by deep-seated hopes and fears of their own. The story about how this news was created cannot be disentangled from the story of how it was transmitted. In what follows, we shall therefore need to attend even more closely to the cultural prisms through which the tale passed as to its tenuous historical origins.

Conception and Birth of a Threat to Islam

Mecca's role in the history of Islam began with the biblical patriarch Abraham who is said to have built a structure known as the *Kaaba* with his first-born son Ishmael. The Kaaba was special right from the beginning; it was apparently designed to hold a black stone given to Abraham by angels. Centuries later, Muhammad kissed this very same stone. Muhammad too claimed to be visited by an angel who told him to recite the divine word of God.

When Muhammad shared his revelation with the people of Mecca, the city's leaders turned against him. Forced to flee to Medina, Muhammad gained a mass following and then returned to Mecca where he destroyed all the pagan idols and declared the city to be the holiest site in Islam. From that time onwards, only Muslims have been allowed to enter Mecca in order to protect it from outside religious influences. To this very day, Muslims are reminded of the importance of Mecca when they perform the daily *salat*, the

prayer facing the Kaaba. If they are able, all Muslims are also expected to undertake the *hajj*, a pilgrimage to Mecca, at least once in their lives.[4]

The centrality of Mecca has made it a point of vulnerability, and periodic threats have promoted fears of Mecca's destruction to resurface intermittently in the Islamic world. Even the Quran speaks of one such incident in the *sura*, or chapter, that reads,

> Hast thou not seen how thy Lord dealt with the army of the Elephant?
> Did he not cause their stratagem to miscarry?

The 'army of the Elephant' referred to a Christian king from Ethiopia who attacked Mecca in 570, the year that Muhammad was born. In the twelfth century, this *sura* was reinterpreted as a prophetic reference to another Christian who threatened Mecca, Reynald of Chatillon. Reynald was a French Christian who served in the second crusade and became the prince of Antioch during the years that Saladin was the protector of Mecca and Medina. In 1182, Reynald launched an attack on an oasis along the pilgrimage route to Mecca, which led to hostilities between the Islamic and Christian kingdoms. During this conflict, Reynald sent a raiding party against the two holy cities with plans to seize 'the Prophet's body'.[5] The Muslim forces captured Reynald's raiding party a day's march away from Medina, but Saladin was still criticized for failing to protect the *hajj*.[6]

Mecca was not only threatened by foreign Christians; it was also ravaged by Arab tribes. Two centuries before Reynald, in 930, the Qarmatians attacked Mecca, massacring the pilgrims and carrying away the black stone in the Kaaba.[7] Less than fifty years later, in 976, Mecca was besieged again, this time by the Fatimid *caliphate*. Then, in 1309, the Sultan Oljeytu converted to Shi'ism and planned to invade Mecca, exhume the remains of

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[4] See the articles on the *Salat*,the *Hadjdj*, and *Makka* in P. Bearman, T. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, and W.P. Heinrichs (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 2006).
[5] Bernard Hamilton, 'The Elephant of Christ: Reynald of Chatillon,' *Studies in Church History* Vol. 15 (1978), 97-104.
[6] Hamilton, 'The Elephant of Christ: Reynald of Chatillon,' 104n.
[7] Said Amir Arjomand, 'Islamic Apocalypticism in the Classic Period,' *The Encyclopaedia of Apocalypticism II* (New York: Continuum, 2000), 272.

the first two *caliphs* (Abu Bakr and Umar) and relocate them to a new shrine that he was building.[8]

While the region stabilised in the early modern period with the Ottoman conquest, Bedouin marauders posed a continued nuisance to both the city and pilgrims on hajj.[9] In 1632, a local dynasty re-established itself in Yemen and defeated the Ottoman troops who fled to Mecca where they ran amuck, mutinied, and occupied the city. Such havoc triggered more Bedouin raids.[10] The onslaught of the Ottoman army was the largest attack prior to 1665 when the rumour of Mecca's destruction appeared, which suggests that the story may not have been inspired by an actual event. One scholar has asked, 'Why do historians need a historical event as a peg to hang a legend on?'[11] Maybe this question should be posed in relation to the rumoured sack of Mecca, especially since there does not appear to be any historical basis to the tale.

If it was not based on a factual attack, then Islamic eschatological expectations growing in this period of instability may have been at the root of the rumour instead. Mecca's central role in Islamic thought coupled with a legacy of threats against the city meant that many Sunni and Shi'i apocalyptic sequences came to contain a seige on Mecca. It is not a coincidence that Mecca was really threatened by an Ethiopian Christian army and that a whole family of eschatological traditions exist about a Christian attack on Mecca and Medina that will include a two-pronged assault from the Ethiopians in the

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[8] Judith Pfeiffer, 'Confessional Polarization in the 17th Century Ottoman Empire and Yusuf Ibn Ebi Abdu'd-Deyyan's *Kesfu'l-Esrar fi Ilzami'l-Yehud ve'l-Ahbar*,' *Contacts and Controversies between Muslims, Jews, and Christians in the Ottoman Empire and Pre-Modern Iran* (Wurzburg: Ergon Verlag Wurzburg, 2010), 42, 54n.

[9] Suraiya Faroqhi, *Pilgrims and Sultans: The Hajj under the Ottomans 1517-1683* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1996), 22.

[10] Faroqhi, *Pilgrims and Sultans*, 67.

[11] C.F. Beckingham, 'The Achievements of Prester John,' *Prester John, the Mongols and the Ten Lost Tribes* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1996), 2.

south and the Byzantines in the north. According to these predictions, both holy cities of Islam will be sacked and, if not totally destroyed, at least seriously damaged.[12]

In the mid-1660s, there was a *mahdist* movement in Mecca.[13] The outbreak of a large following around a mahdi, an Islamic saviour figure expected to appear near the end of time, may have sparked apocalyptic tension that led to the resurgence of prophecies about the anticipated destruction of Mecca. Such conjecture could have been transformed into, what was perceived as, fact during transmission. It may have been one, all, or none of these factors that manifested themselves in the earliest written version of the rumour found in a Venetian avviso on the 25th of April 1665:

> It is written from Livorno that a ship arrived from Smyrna in a short number of days, which confirmed that there were uprisings in Babylon and that an army of numerous Arabs had gone to Mecca, robbed the place, and carried away the corpse of Muhammad together with the treasury of the city. This shocked all those of the country, and they desire to get the confirmation for the news.[14]

Based on reports from the Levant, the worst case scenario for Muslims had occurred. Mecca had been plundered, and Muhammad's body removed. The apocalyptic prophecies were being fulfilled.

This story, however, only involved Arabs. It was an 'Esercito numeroso d'Arabi' (numerous army of Arabs), not Christians, who had committed these heinous acts.[15] While this was a startling piece of news to all who heard it, a still more sensational version was yet to emerge.

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[12] David Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic* (Princeton: The Darwin Press Inc., 2002), 261. For more, see this book's subsection on 'Attitudes towards Cities', 254 -268.

[13] Goldish (37) notes that a mahdist movement occurred in Mecca at this time, but he does not elaborate upon it.

[14] BNCF Codd Magliabechiani XXV, 743, 81: Venice, 25 April 1665. The original read, 'Vien scritto da Livorno esser cosa capitata Nave da Smirne in pochi giorni, quale confermava, che in Babbillonia vi sussero delle sollevazioni, e che un'Esercito numeroso d'Arabi fosse andato alla Mecca, svaligiato quell luogo, portato via il Cadavere di Maeometto assieme col Tesoro, che cosa si trovava, e messo in costernazione tutto quell Paese, del che con desiderio se n'attende la confermazione.'

[15] Ibid.

Rebirth due to Jewish Prophecies

After the initial account of the Arab army sacking Mecca appeared in the Venetian press, the rumour went into a period of gestation; it was not mentioned again for almost half a year. It may have even died out completely if not for the prophecies of a Jew in Gaza named Nathan Benjamin Levi. Nathan was the Jewish scholar whose vision of Sabbatai Sevi as the messiah sparked the Sabbatian outburst. Nathan went on to become the primary prophet of Sabbatianism, formulating the theological foundations of the messianic movement that were disseminated broadly in letters circulated across the Jewish world.[16]

In many of their messianic scenarios, the Jews hoped that the Lost Tribes of Israel would return alongside the messiah to save them from their oppressors and accompany them to the holy land. At the beginning of the Sabbatian movement, the Lost Tribes did not play a major part in Nathan's imagination; he only indirectly spoke of them when he disclosed the course of future events. In one of his letters that was spread widely, Nathan claimed that Sabbatai would proceed to the river Sambatyon beyond which the Lost Tribes were believed to dwell. Then, in 1672, he would return 'mounted on a celestial lion; his bridle will be a seven-headed serpent and fire out of his mouth devoured.'[17] At this sight, all the nations and kings would bow before him and the 'ingathering of the dispersed shall take place.'[18]

While the Lost Tribes were only implied, popular imagination seized upon this one detail with a suddenness and enthusiasm unforeseen by the prophet. Instead of the relatively distant future of 1672 envisioned by Nathan, his followers stated that at least two

[16] Idel, *Messianic Mystics*, 198.
[17] Nathan of Gaza to Raphael Joseph, September 1665, as translated and quoted in Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi*, 273.
[18] Ibid., 274.

of the Lost Tribes, the 'Sons of Reuben and Gad', were to appear that year on the tenth or twentieth of *Shebat* (16 January 1666).[19]

Raphael Joseph, the head of the Egyptian Jewry in Cairo, heard about Nathan's prophecies and was curious to learn more so he sent a series of emissaries to investigate. One of the emissaries was Raphael's brother, Hayyim Joseph, who stayed in Gaza for some time and regularly reported the latest ongoings to Raphael. Hayyim's accounts were 'wrapped in clouds of legends'.[20] He stated that Nathan tried to board a ship to join Sabbatai, but after Nathan was stopped by a storm numerous times, an angel came to him in a pillar of fire and told him to remain in Gaza because the Jews' redemption was at hand. Then, when Nathan was in the wilderness, the prophet Jehu (the son of Hanani) appeared and confirmed the angel's message. He said that part of his tribe would soon arrive in Gaza.[21]

Raphael was excited by this news and passed along copies of Hayyim's letter with his own additions to their other brother Solomon in Livorno. One letter told the story of the rabbi Benjamin of Jerusalem who had accompanied Nathan into the wilderness where 'Jehu b. Hanani' appeared to them and announced that two emissaries from the Lost Tribes would come from beyond the river Sambatyon within two months.[22] Nathan's distant prophecies were therefore given tangible form with immediate dates by the Jews who moved them along their familial and mercantile networks from Gaza to Egypt and across the Mediterranean. From Italy, the correspondence was spread across Europe, prompting excitement about the imminent arrival of the Israelites among the European Jewries.

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[19] Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi*, 352. Emanuel Frances, in a note about one of his poems in *Sevi Muddah*, stated that Nathan prophesied that the tribes of Gad and Ruben would conquer Palestine that year. See Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi*, 353n.
[20] Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi*, 353.
[21] Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi*, 353. This prophecy was repeated twice in letters from Raphael Joseph to his brother Solomon Joseph in Livorno, which Frances apparently drew upon.
[22] Ibid., 353.

The prophecies about the Lost Tribes became so important to the Sabbatian believers that at least three editions of Nathan's prayerbooks printed in Europe had full-copperplate engravings on the front piece that referenced the ancient Hebrews. The cover contained two pictures. The top half showed Sabbatai as a king seated on his thrown. The bottom half portrayed twelve bearded men and an oversized thirteenth. The entire episode was portrayed, in other words, as the twelve tribes of Israel joining forces with the messiah.[23]

Neither Nathan nor those close to him were concerned with Mecca or even aware of its rumoured destruction. But the prophecies of the Lost Tribes emanating from their circle were conflated with the account of the sack of Mecca when these stories reached Alexandria. This port city was central to pilgrimage routes to Mecca, overland trade routes to Gaza, and shipping routes to Livorno and Venice. It is therefore not surprising that the first traceable instance in which the Jews' hoped-for return of their brethren came together with the Muslim fear of an attack on their holiest city occurred in Alexandria, from which it then entered Europe via Livorno. A Jew from the Egyptian port city told the Jewish scholar Raphael Supino in the Italian port city in June that the *bassa* of Alexandria and a 'king of Arabia' had made a journey to Mecca with 60,000 men. When the Arabs got closer, they 'learned that the city was besieged and partly conquered by unknown people who called themselves Israelites.'[24] The Arabs engaged the Israelites in battle but were soundly defeated. Upon hearing this news, the Jews in Alexandria sent emissaries to Mecca to find out the truth, and the emissaries returned with confirmation that the Israelite army was indeed comprised of the long-lost Hebrews.[25]

[23] Ibid., 526.
[24] Ibid., 345.
[25] Ibid., 344-347.

The Jews were wrong. There was not a massive army of Israelites in the Arabian Peninsula. There may, however, have been a large, armed population in the desert because the yearly pilgrimage from Egypt to Mecca included at least 50,000 participants who were protected by a detachment of 300 janissaries, 100 cavalrymen, and as many as 6 cannons.[26] This raises an interesting question. Could Nathan's prophecies have affected Sabbatian believers to such an extent that they were ready to interpret any news, possibly even a report about the pilgirmage to Mecca, twisted and changed during transmission, as proof that their salvation was at hand?

In Livorno, Raphael Supino accepted the truthfulness of the story of the Israelites at Mecca and quickly shared it with his friends and correspondents in Tuscany and abroad, including Jacob Sasportas, the rabbi of the Sephardic community in London.[27] After all, news of the re-emergence of the Lost Tribes held great significance for all the Jews.

As the rumour spread throughout the European Jewries, it took on more layers. In Casale, it was reported that the Jewish army had conquered Mecca and now planned to march against the Germans and Poles who had persecuted their brethren.[28] This particular version of the attack on Mecca was influenced by the following prophecy made by Nathan in a letter that was disseminated across the Jewish world,

> A year and a few months from today, he [Sabbatai] will take the dominion from the Turkish king without war...and all the kings shall be tributary unto him, but only the Turkish king will be his servant. There will be no slaughter among the uncircumcised, except in the Ashkenazi lands.[29]

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[26] Faroqhi, *Pilgrims and Sultans*, 46, 54, 69.
[27] Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi*, 344-347, 336.
[28] There was a long history of beliefs in the Lost Tribes returning to punish Christians for years of Jewish oppression, and such expectations prepared the minds of Jews to accept this story. For more on earlier Jewish beliefs, see Micha Perry, 'The Imaginary War Between Prester John and Eldad the Danite and its Real Implications,' *Viator: Medieval and Renaissance Studies* Vol. 41, No. 1 (2010), 21, 18.
[29] Letter from Nathan of Gaza to Raphael Joseph as translated and quoted in Goldish, *The Sabbatean Prophets*, 76-77.

Popular imagination, it seems, seized upon Nathan's prophecy and mixed it with the rumour to create the next objective for the mythological army.[30] In Egypt, the Jews reconfigured the Arab army into a Jewish army. In Italy, the Jews gave the mythological army another mission: the Israelites who had defeated the Muslims would now wage war against the Christians.

In the summer of 1665, the tale proliferated and grew increasingly fantastical. Letters spread amongst the Jews soon spoke of Mecca's total destruction. Because the Lost Tribes were expected to return with the advent of the messiah, these stories confirmed and bolstered the Jewish eschatological beliefs, especially when they were followed by reports of Sabbatai Sevi's messiahship. Surely things were going to get better for the Jews. Everything was unfolding just as their messianic prophecies predicted. The ancient Hebrews had returned from their hidden dwelling and now their messiah had appeared too.

By the end of 1665, the letters dispatched from the Egyptian Jewry were more careful; they claimed that no more news was coming from Mecca.[31] But it was too late. Jews throughout Europe had heard the news, and it had caused great excitement. The Jews of Vienna, for instance, had made 'a publick Jubile' for the 'success of their Brethren in *Asia* against the Turk'.[32]

Circulation Among Christians

Although the rumour only referred to populations of Jews and Muslims in the Ottoman Empire, it was disseminated most broadly by Christians in Europe due to their advances in

[30] Liebes, *Studies in Jewish Myth and Jewish Messianism*, 96. Scholem (347-351) relied on Hebrew and German sources, which encouraged him to see the version in Casale as coming to Italy from the Balkans through Vienna. Considering the origins of the Venetian avvisi reports and the strong Jewish connections between the Italian peninsula and the Levant, it seems just as likely that it came from the Ottoman Empire across the eastern Mediterranean through Venice. This is more plausible because the accounts from Vienna stated that the leader of the military force was Jeroboam whereas, like the Casale rumour, the Venetian news items did not supply a name.
[31] Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi*, 347.
[32] *London Gazette*, 5 March 1666.

printing, the heritage shared with the Jews, and the history of conflict between the Islamic lands and Christendom. With the incorporation of the sacred Hebrew texts into the Christian canon, the belief in the return of the Lost Tribes had passed effortlessly into the Christian eschatological sequence ages earlier, and many seventeenth-century Christians also expected the Israelites to re-emerge shortly before the end of the world.

As early as the seventh century, the conflict between Christians and Muslims led a significant number of Catholics to believe in the advent of a saviour figure who would avenge their losses. The Syriac apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius told the story of the rise of Islam and interpreted the Muslim military victories as a sign of the coming end. When there was no hope left, a Christian king would come forth, deliver the Christians, punish the Muslims, and devastate Egypt, Hebron, and Arabia.[33] The Toledo Letter, circulated five centuries later in 1186, claimed that one day a great conquest of the Islamic world would take place in which Mecca, Basara, Baghdad, and Babylonia would be 'utterly destroyed'.[34]

As the crusades became less and less successful, the circulation of prophecies about the 'imminent end of Muslim rule' found a larger audience in Christendom.[35] In 1219, the pope's legate, Cardinal Pelagius, had a Latin translation made of the prophecy of Hannan, son of Agip, which stated that an army would come from the west and conquer Egypt. At the same time, the king of the Abbisi would invade Arabia, attack Mecca, and scatter the bones of Muhammad.[36] The two-pronged attack from Europe on one hand and Abbisi or Abyssinia (modern-day Ethiopia) on the other has obvious parallels to the Islamic eschatological scenario mentioned above. Could these Christian and Islamic

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[33] Alexander, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*, 20-21.
[34] Bernard McGinn, *Visions of the End: Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), 152.
[35] McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 154.
[36] Bernard Hamilton, 'Continental Drift: Prester John's Progress though the Indies,' *Prester John, the Mongols and the Ten Lost Tribes* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1996), 243-244.

apocalyptic expectations have intertwined and then formed the basis of the rumour of the sack of Mecca that included the removal of Muhammad's body? At the very least, these beliefs foreshadowed it, preparing Christians and Muslims to anticipate the occurrence of such events.

The Ottoman domination of the Middle East led to a new round of prophecies that incorporated the changing geo-political environment. Some Christians believed the sultan was the antichrist and the Ottoman Empire was the biggest threat to the spread of Christianity across the entire globe: it was an obstacle that needed to be removed before the second coming of Jesus.[37] While Martin Luther tied the end of history to the rise of the 'Turk',[38] the English chiliast Thomas Brightman specifically stated that the 'obliteration of the Turks' would begin in 1650 and be accomplished by 1695 or 1696.[39]

European Christians therefore saw the destruction of Ottoman power as a vital step in the eschatological sequence, and early modern millenarians developed detailed military scenarios in which they played out their apocalyptic fantasies. In *The Worlds Great Restauration* (1621), Henry Finch wrote that the twelve tribes of Israel would defeat the Ottomans in battle before converting to Christianity and returning to the holy land.[40] In *Iewes in America* (1650), John Dury proclaimed,

> 'God [will] call the ten Tribes to march toward the place of their inheritance: the Caraits their brethren will be leaders of them on their way, and so their march may be, as *Manasseh Ben Israel* saith, to make their Rendezvous in *Assyria;* and on the other side, the Jewes that are Pharisees, may make their Rendezvous from *Arabia* and other neighbouring places, and out of all *Europe* into *Egypt* [in]… *the company of two Armies,* which both shall look towards *Jerusalem.* Then will the great battaile of Harmageddon be fought'.[41]

[37] Hill, 'Till the Conversion of the Jews,' 14.
[38] See Gordon Rupp, 'Luther Against "The Turk, the Pope, and The Devil",' *Seven-Headed Luther: Essays in Commemoration of a Quincentenary 1483-1983* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 255-273.
[39] Paul Christianson, *Reformers and Babylon: English Apocalyptic Visions from the Reformation to the Eve of the Civil War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978), 105.
[40] See Henry Finch, *The Worlds Great Restauration* (London, 1621).
[41] Thorowgood, *Iewes in America*, 'An Epistolicall Discourse of Mr. Iohn Dury'.

Eschatological hopes such as these set the stage for the ready acceptance and propagation of tales about the Lost Tribes among Christians, especially Protestants, in Europe.

Unlike these earlier stories, those in the gazette were not based on biblical exegesis. They were news. They were proof that the ancient prophecies were coming true. As early as 1645, the *London Post* reported that the Jews were collecting themselves into one body to return to Palestine. Two years later, a news pamphlet entitled *Doomes-Day; or the Great Day of the Lords Judgement proved by Scripture* (1647) announced that the Jews were assembling in Asia under the leadership of Josias Catzius for the final overthrow of the antichrist.[42] There were similar reports in 1648.[43]

Although these accounts would have heightened messianic and millenarian excitement, the fact that they were printed so regularly may have made people skeptical. In 1645, for example, Ralph Josselin wondered doubtfully if the story in the *London Post* could be true. The regularity with which such news items had been proven false should have soured Christian views about the tale of the sack of Mecca by the Lost Tribes in 1665; but this rumour was so widespread and so close to the predictions of some theologians that many were evidently inclined to believe it. Certain as they were that it was only a matter of time before the biblical prophecies would be fulfilled, they found these expectations validated by the news that the Israelites had returned and attacked their Muslim enemy. The end times were finally upon them, and they shared the story in haste.[44]

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[42] Katz, *Philo-Semitism and the Readmission of the Jews to England 1603-1655*, 102.
[43] Hill, 'Till the Conversion of the Jews,' 27.
[44] Because the rumour aligned so closely with these Christian hopes and the extant evidence is predominantly written by Christians, one may want to argue that this was a purely Christian phenomenon, created and spread by them. It is true that there is no proof that Ottoman Muslims knew of the rumour (most likely because there are not many sources from this period that would contain such information), and there is only circumstantial evidence that the Ottoman Jews did (in the form of Supino's report that he heard the story from a Jew from Alexandria). However, avvisi and gazettes tended to be reliable in their claims of where their information originated, and Scholem and van der Wall both rightly stated that the evidence suggests that the European Christians may have exaggerated the stories about the Israelites in their letters, but they did not make them up. Thus, past scholarship and analysis make it safe to conclude that the rumour emerged

Italian Catholics at Home and Abroad

Due to the numerous networks that connected the Ottoman Empire to the Italian peninsula, the tale of Mecca's destruction first entered Christendom through Catholic Italy. The Venetian avvisi editor acquired his information from the Levant; Raphael Supino in Livorno heard about the attack from an informant from Alexandria; and the Venetian senators found out about it from their representative in Istanbul, the bailo Giavarina Ballarino.

On the 18th of March 1666, Ballarino closed his weekly diplomatic report by stating that, although the report he was about to relate might seem fictitious or exaggerated, it was essential to understanding the manner in which the power of the inhabitants of Barbary was growing due to something new that was emerging there. For some months, a Jew 'di assai bella apparenza, ma di proffonda dottina' (of beautiful appearance, but [also] of great learning) in Arabia had given himself the 'titolo di messia' (title of messiah) and gained a considerable number of Jewish followers.[45] While the rest of Ballarino's dispatch was dedicated to Sabbatai Sevi who had recently been imprisoned near Istanbul, Ballarino's comment about Barbary and Arabia is noteworthy because it suggests ties to the army of the Lost Tribes, which was supposed to be active in this region. All the other sources that incorrectly located Sabbatai in these places only did so when they claimed that he was leading a Jewish military force that was comprised of the Israelites. One therefore wonders if Ballarino was hearing a version of Sabbatai's history that mixed the Jewish messiah's biography with elements of the fictitious attack on Mecca.

Ballarino was the only European in the Levant to even indirectly reference the rumour. Although many European merchants and diplomats in the Ottoman Empire

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somewhere in the Ottoman Empire and the new evidence proves that it did so independent of the Sabbatian movement.

[45] ASV Senato Dispacci Ambasciatori Constantinopoli, F. 150, 19b-21: Giovarina Ballarino to the Venetian doge and senate, 18 March 1666.

thought that Sabbatai and his followers were important enough to discuss in their regular correspondence, none of them told the tale of Mecca's destruction even though it was published widely in sources throughout Europe. Diplomatic and mercantile letters were considered fairly reliable, and the fact that neither contained references to the sack of Mecca suggests one of two situations: either the merchants and diplomats were more poorly informed about a supposed event in their state of residency than their countrymen back home or they were much better informed and knew it was completely fantastical and did not warrant any attention. But if the latter was the case, why did not a single European stationed in the Levant simply say so in one of their dispatches sent to places where the rumour ran rampant?

The narrative of the plundering of Mecca first appeared in a Venetian avviso long before both Ballarino's report and Nathan's prophecies. Yet the rise of the Sabbatian movement inspired a wave of messianic excitement that ultimately led the same avviso to reprint the story four months later, this time with a significant addition. On the 8th of August 1665, the avviso stated that the Arabs at Mecca were now joined by a 'numero grandissimo' of Jews from the surrounding region who had appointed a leader they called their king.[46] A few weeks after that, another news item in the avviso confirmed the account. The Arabs at Mecca were with a 'numero infinito' of Jews.[47] They had robbed and burnt Mecca and then returned back to their country with their rich booty.[48]

[46] BNCF Codd Magliabechiani XXV, 743, 84: Venice, 8 August 1665. The original stated, 'Viene ancora replicato, e sene parla costantemente dell'invasione fatta, come si scrisse, da gli Arabi nel luogo della Mecca, e che voltatasi anco dal loro partito gli Ebrei abitanti in quelle parti, che sono di numero grandissimo, abbino costituito un Capo, & intitolatolo con nome di Re, godendo in tanto degli avantaggi, che riportano con l'incursioni, che andavano facendo per quei luoghi.'

[47] BNCF Codd Magliabechiani XXV, 743, 93: Venice, 29 August 1665. The original read, 'Nè quì cessano spaventi, e timori di què Popoli, essendo in quel tempo dell'incendio pervenuta da piu parti la confermazione, che gli Arabi, congiunti con un numero infinito d'Ebrei, nazionali dell'Arabie, avessero come fu scritto, spogliata la Mecca, e svaligiato, & abbruciato tutto quell luogo, e con un ricco bottino ritornati alle lor Patrie.'

[48] Ibid.

The addition of the Jews to the rumour reflects the influence of the Sabbatian movement: the story of an Arab army attacking Mecca resurfaced with a contingent of Jews during the period in which the Venetian Jewry were hearing similar tales about the Israelites from their brethren. Not only do the descriptions of the Jews as a *numero grandissimo* and *numero infinito* resonate with the Lost Tribes' boundless image, but a great number of Jews following a man they called king also contains aspects of the Sabbatian believers' views of Sabbatai. The Jews of Venice would have put the reports from the Venetian avvisi together with the letters from the Egyptian Jewry in a manner that furthered the belief that the ancient Hebrews had indeed returned. In other words, the Catholic press was indirectly confirming the unbelievable news from the Ottoman Jews that their messianic hopes were coming true.

People, especially Catholics, may have been skeptical about the items in the Venetian avvisi because they were based on hearsay. When news did not have a specific origin, avvisi editors described their sources as oral communication.[49] The accounts of the Jewish army were full of such references, including 'viene ancora replicato' (it is still repeated), 'parla costantamente dell'invasione fatta' (the invasion is constantly spoken about) and 'pervenuta da piu parti la confermazione' (to be confirmed from many quarters), which suggests that they came from overheard conversations in Venice rather than from the Ottoman Empire or elsewhere.[50]

The following month, the rumour regressed back to its original form *sans* Jews. On September 5th, the Venetian avviso editor acquired letters from the Levant which confirmed that, alongside the rebellion in Babylon, 'un corpo d'Armata d'Arabi' (troops of an Arab army) sacked Mecca and took Muhammad's body away along with the city's

[49] Villani, 'Conscience and Convention,' 81-82.
[50] BNCF Codd Magliabechiani XXV, 743, 84: Venice, 8 August 1665 and BNCF Codd Magliabechiani XXV, 743, 93: Venice, 29 August 1665.

treasure.[51] Like the original report and unlike the other two that followed, this one only mentioned an Arab force, listed its sources, and referred to a rebellion in Babylon. These similarities substantiate the argument that the middle versions, containing an enormous Jewish contingent, came from oral sources influenced by the increased attention to Sabbatian prophecies because the two avvisi that did not mention the Jews actually provided the origins of their reports.

The treatment of the rumour in the Venetian avvisi sheds light onto the relationship between rumour, knowledge, and credibility during this period. There was no standard progression in the stories in the avvisi: the Arab force gained a Jewish element before returning to its original form. There was also no discussion of this incongruity. The editor was not concerned with discrepancies; he just printed the news items without comment, listing the sources or lack thereof to allow the readers to judge each one for themselves.

The changing nature in the Venetian accounts dovetailed with a similar process in the Jewish transmission. Among the Jews, there was no logical progression or development in the rumours of the Lost Tribes. The amount of tribesmen grew with every version. Tens of thousands of men became hundreds of thousands, and several sources gave the exact number of one million one hundred thousand. Moreover, very few of the early narratives referenced the standard Jewish belief that the Israelites would converge upon the holy land.[52] There were direct parallels in the Venetian avvisi: the number of Jews increased from great to infinite, there was no logical sequence in the army's composition, and they merely went home after conquering Mecca –there was no mention of Jerusalem or the holy land.

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[51] BNCF Codd Magliabechiani XXV, 743, 94b: Venice, 5 September 1665. The original stated, 'Di Marsilia poi con un Vascello venuto di Levante, e con lettere accreditate s'era inteso una general ribellione in Babillonia; e che un corpo d'Armata d'Arabi assendo andato alla Mecca, ove è la sepoltura di Maometto, l'avevon levata con tutto il Tesoro, & appresso messa il fuoco alla Citta, e saccheggiato il tutto.'
[52] Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi*, 343.

It is likely that these similarities were more than just coincidence. If the rumour of the Lost Tribes conquering Mecca resulted from a cross-religious conflation, then the original report in the Venetian avvisi explains why the early stories spread amongst the Jews did not refer to the Israelites regaining possession of the holy land, which was supposed to be one of their primary roles in the eschatological sequence. Based on news of a military force attacking Mecca and returning home, the earliest change to the tale was a simple substitution of the populations; the storyline remained the same. This shows a complex interaction between the developments of the two sets of narratives. On the one hand, rumours about the Lost Tribes circulating among the Jews were combined with a story of an Arab sack of Mecca to create a mixed Jewish-Arab force in the later Venetian avvisi. On the other hand, the lack of eschatology in the original version that only spoke of an Arab attack caused the tales about the Lost Tribes at Mecca disseminated amongst the Jews to leave out the end time's mission of restoring the holy land, which might have been expected had the story simply been invented.

The rumour turned up in the Turin press as well, although at a significantly later date. On the 25th of February 1666, an avvisi editor in Turin printed information contained in letters from Istanbul 'ricevutesi da buona mano' (received from a good hand), which stated that the sultan had sent the bassa of Aleppo to the Arabian Peninsula.[53] The Jewish and Arab peasants united in revolt against the bassa, creating a force of 140,000 combatants who slaughtered the 'Turks'.[54]

[53] SA Segreteria di Stato, Avvisi, 148: Turin, 25 February 1666. The original read, 'Si è sempre tenuta per un favoloso ritrovamento di qualche capriccioso ingegno la sollevatione degli Hebrei, & Arabi cò lo sualiggio della Città della Mecca, & altri danni; mà hora viene confermata con lettere di Costantinopoli delli 31. Di Decembre ricevutesi da buona mano, quali di più dicono, c'havendo il gran Sultano spedito un Bassà in Aleppo per ivi risiedere, non vollero quei Popoli accettarlo, e volendo il Bassa' far forza con genti, si sollevarono li Paesani, & unitisi con gl'Hebrei, & Arabi formarono un numero di 140. Milla combattenti, quali andavano facendo gran straggi de'Turchi, e non ostante tuttavia s'ingrossastero, la Porta non vi pensava, mostrandosi più inclinata a gl'apparecchi contro Christiani.'

[54] Ibid.

While the Venetian avvisi provided abstract figures, such as a *numero grandissimo* and a *numero infinito,* the Turin avviso gave the army an actual number: there were 140,000, in this case, militiamen. The Italian press was not generally concerned with the possible millenarian ramifications of this news; however, the figure of 140,000 could be drawn from two sources of apocalyptic significance. First, it could be related to the 144,000 Jews mentioned in the book of Revelation, a clear connection to the Christian eschatological expectations. Second, and far more unlikely, it could be the faint echoes of the rumour's Islamic origin. The fourteenth-century Muslim scholar Ibn Kathir summarized the Islamic apocalyptic scenario as follows:

> The Antichrist will be allowed to appear at the end of times after the conquest of Constantinople by the Muslims. He will appear first of all in the Jewish quarter of Isfahan, followed by 70,000 Jews, all armed, as well as 70,000 Tartars and people from Khurasan.[55]

The first part of the prophecy had come true. Constantinople had fallen to the Muslims. Now the Turin avviso was telling of the emergence of 140,000 attackers, half of whom were Jewish and half of whom were not –just like those spoken of by Ibn Kathir. These parallels could of course merely be coincidence, or these details found in the Italian avviso could be the last visible traces of the Islamic root of the rumour. Even if they were not coincidental, such a narrative would have at least partially conformed to Muslim hopes regarding the coming end circulated amongst populations in the Islamic world.

Unike its Venetian counterpart, the Turin avviso added that 'la sollevatione degli Hebrei, & Arabi' (the uprising of the Jews and Arabs) had always been held to be fantastical until the letters from Istanbul confirmed it.[56] The editor in Turin was obviously aware of the story for quite some time but had been skeptical. He was waiting for a reliable account before printing it.

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[55] As translated by Filiu, *Apocalypse in Islam*, 39. In *Les Signes due Jour Dernier*, Ibn Kathir stated that Medina and Mecca would escape harm –unlike many other prophecies.
[56] SA Segreteria di Stato, Avvisi, 148: Turin, 25 February 1666.

As the rumour travelled around Italy, it also continued to change in Venice. A year after it first appeared, on the 10th of April 1666, a Venetian avviso stated that letters from Ragusa (modern-day Dubrovnik) had no more information '[d]el progresso dell'Armi Ebraiche nella Palestina' (of the progress of the Jewish army in Palestine).[57] Then it shifted to letters from Istanbul: no one was certain of where Sabbatai was on his journey from Alexandria, but his imminent arrival was worrying the Jews of the Ottoman capital.[58] Even though the avviso had no information about either, it still deemed both newsworthy. Furthermore, it placed the two reports, containing drastically different truth values, together. The former was about a fictitious military force; the latter was about a real person. The new army in Palestine was most likely believed to be the same one from Mecca because the avviso noted that there was no more was known about the army, an obvious continuation of a previous report.[59] The growth of the Sabbatian movement was therefore continuing to affect the rumour's content in the Venetian press: the army was now completely devoid of any Arabs, it was moving towards the holy land, and it was discussed in relation to the Jewish messiah. The news items in the Catholic press were clearly becoming more eschatological in nature.

The stories in the Italian avvisi were supplemented by at least one pamphlet. In 1666, a short Italian publication known as 'A Christian Report from Constantinople regarding Shabbetai Sevi' presented the history of the Jews' messiah and his followers.

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[57] SA Segreteria di Stato, Avvisi, 148: Venice, 10 April 1666. The original read, 'Più mano di lettere di Venezia si sono ricevute in quest'Ordinario, dale quali si ricava quanto appresso… [/]E pure degli affari di Levant…[/]Del progresso dell'Armi Ebraiche nella Palestina non se ne ha per via di Ragusi alcun ragguaglio, onde fa credere, che queste poco profittino; e si sarà vero, come comunemente si tiene, che all'armi manchino i profitti, i Profeti resterano nell lor moderne profezie molto delusi. Anzi vi sono lettere di Costantinopoli, che asseriscono, che vedendo gli Ebrei di quella Città il pericolo evidente, che a loro era per sovrastare dalla venuta ivi dell'accennato Sabbadai, avessero essi trovato modo di rimuoverlo da quell disegno, mentre del suo viaggio da Alessandria in Costantinopoli non se n'era con certezza risaputo cosa veruna.'

[58] Ibid.

[59] A letter from Jews in Alexandria to their brethren in London claimed that the Lost Tribes had come through Prester John's country in Africa, marched for a year and a half to take Mecca, and were currently believed to be on the borders of Canaan. This shows that another source in circulation provided similar routing for the army. See JTS: *The Congregating of the Dispersed Jews* (1666).

During its discussion of the messianic movement in the Levant, the pamphlet spoke of 'the mysterious army on the march from the East' to assist the messiah in his mission.[60] Although not central to the storyline, the unnamed army of the Lost Tribes still featured as part of the Sabbatian plot.

The Jews valued the tales of the return of their long-lost brethren because it supported their messianic hopes. It did not matter where the Lost Tribes were; it mattered that they had finally appeared to save the Jews. This explains why the Jews were primarily interested in the Israelites, and why their letters told of sightings of the ancient Hebrews in numerous places besides Mecca.

The Italian Catholics, on the other hand, never mentioned the Lost Tribes in any of their writings. Their understanding of the rumour was in direct opposition to the Jews. They valued it more for its claims about the destruction of the Muslims' holy city. For them, it did not matter who had sacked Mecca; it mattered that Mecca had been sacked. Such an event would have had political and religious significance considering the history of Venetian-Ottoman conflict. Avvisi were important sources of news and, in them, the rumour was simply placed among other items of a political and military nature. In Venice, it was put next to a story about a rebellion in Babylon. In Turin, it was said that the Ottoman authorities were ignoring the threat against Islam's holiest site because they were 'più inclinata a gl'apparecchi contro Christiani' (more focused on their preparations [for war] against the Christians).[61]

Since this was a period of decline for the Ottoman Empire in which they were constantly losing land to their enemies and Istanbul was almost starved by the Venetians, the propagation of this tale among the Italians points to the role that Mecca played in their

[60] S. Simonsohn, 'A Christian Report from Constantinople regarding Shabbethai Sevi (1666),' *Journal of Jewish Studies* Vol. 12, Nos. 1-2 (1961), 36. For more on this pamphlet as well a copy of it in its original Italian, see this article.
[61] SA Segreteria di Stato, Avvisi, 148: Turin, 25 February 1666.

imagination. The Christians may not have had accurate knowledge about the city because Muhammad was not buried there; however, the Venetian navy had shown that the Ottoman's political and economic capital was vulnerable, and the decimation of Mecca would have demonstrated that Islam's religious heart on the far side of the Empire was not invulnerable either.[62] On the contrary: the destruction of the Muhammad's tomb in Mecca was believed by some to signal the imminent demise of the Ottoman Empire.[63]

In the Multi-Religious Dutch Republic

While the siege of Mecca was seen by Catholics in Italy as a political and military victory, Protestants interpreted this news in a predominately apocalyptic manner. In the Dutch Republic, the rumour first appeared in cheap, throw-away pamphlets that told of the miraculous return of the Lost Tribes alongside other wondrous tidings: the walls of the second temple were slowly rising from the ground in Jerusalem too. As early as July 1665, barely a month after Nathan had anointed Sabbatai in Gaza, the *Herstelling van de Joden* (1665) elaborated the story with all manner of corroborative detail. The Ottoman janissaries, it reported, had been slaughtered by miraculous intervention: after firing their weapons, they had watched in horror as their projectiles turned around in mid-flight and came down upon them instead. The Lost Tribes killed two-thirds of the Ottoman force, took control of the road to Mecca, and allowed none to pass. It was even said that the sultan dreamt that an Israelite had taken the crown from his head –a passing reference to Nathan's prophecy about the sultan becoming Sabbatai's servant perhaps. The

[62] As far as Venetian-Ottoman warfare was concerned, the years between 1661 and 1666 were quite peaceful so at most it was the legacy of conflict and the proximity of the looming Ottoman military threat that made this story newsworthy in Catholic Italy. For a political history between Venice and the Ottomans, see the chapters on 'The Turco-Venetian War (1646-1653) and the Turmoil in Istanbul' in Kenneth Setton, *Venice, Austria, and the Turks in the Seventeenth Century* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1991). Thanks to Judith Pfeiffer for her thoughts on this section.

[63] Ingrid Maier and Daniel Waugh, '"The Blowing of the Messiah's Trumpet": Reports about Sabbatai Sevi and Jewish Unrest in 1665-67,' *The Dissemination of News and the Emergence of Contemporaneity in Early Modern Europe* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 144.

Wahrahfftes Contersey (1665), printed a short time later, claimed that 300,000 tribesmen killed all the non-Jewish inhabitants of Mecca, put the tomb of Muhammad on a cart, and left the city in ruins.[64]

The number 300,000 requires further comment, since it was the same figure found in a similar narrative about a sixteenth-century Jew named David Reubeni. A century before Sabbatai's birth, Reubeni arrived in Europe, saying that he was sent by his brother Joseph, the king of the Lost Tribe of Reuben in Arabia. Joseph, who was in command of 300,000 Israelite warriors,[65] wanted his emissary to forge an alliance with the pope to 'overcome all Muslims in war and subjugate Mecca.'[66] Reubeni's story was taken seriously: he was granted an audience with the pope and his story was recounted across Christendom. One wonders if this version of the rumour, swirling around Mecca did not incorporate the reference to the 300,000 tribesmen from Reubeni's sixteenth-century claims, reframing it in terms of other material that was circulating in 1665.

While sources, such as the *Wahrahfftes Contersey* and the *Herstelling van de Joden*, confirmed the news that the Jews of Amsterdam were receiving in letters from their brethren across Europe and the Levant, the Dutch Sephardim may have been skeptical of the reports because similar pamphlets often contained accounts of Jewish women giving birth to pigs and elephants. '[S]keptics such as Sasportas who first heard the rumours about the Jewish unrest from manuscript propaganda or possibly the printed broadsides demanded confirmation from more reliable sources. The newspapers were considered to be such a source.'[67]

Dutch Christians were similarly skeptical. The Protestant scholar Petrus Serrarius had been interested in the Lost Tribes for twenty years, ever since his friend Menasseh ben

[64] Van Wijk, 'The Rise and Fall of Shabbatai Zevi as Reflected in Contemporary Press Reports,' 15, 17.
[65] Parfitt, *The Lost Tribes of Israel*, 208.
[66] Benite, *The Ten Lost Tribes*, 114.
[67] Maier and Waugh, '"The Blowing of the Messiah's Trumpet",' 150.

Israel had become excited over Antonio de Montezinos' discovery of the Israelites in the jungles of South America. Yet Serrarius did not initially believe the story of the Lost Tribes sacking Mecca either. He wrote in September that he refused to believe that Mecca had been beseiged because he had read nothing about it in the Dutch gazettes.[68] Like Sasportas, he did not think that the pamphlets were sufficiently trustworthy.

But Serrarius did not have to wait long for the confirmation he desired. In January 1666, two prominent Dutch gazettes, the *Oprechte Haerlemse Saterdaegse Courant* and the *Oprechte Haerlemse Dingsdaegse Courant*, presented the following news item,

> The Jews and Arabs have sacked the grave of Mohammed in Mecca/ and conquered many places; so that the Turkish Court had offered/ to vacate Alezandria/ Tunis and other Places; but they desired the whole Holy Land.[69]

The Dutch gazettes followed the Italian avvisi, not the pamphlets, and claimed that it was an Arab-Jewish force in the Arabian Peninsula. Eschatological expectations, rarely found in the Italian press, infiltrated the gazettes in the form of the comment that the army 'desired the whole Holy Land'. Even the most secular Dutch version of the rumour, although containing strictly Arab and Jewish combatants, already had an implicit apocalyptic component.

The items in the Dutch gazettes were printed at around the same time as the one in the Turin avviso, which was at a significantly later date than the reception of letters about the sack of Mecca by the Amsterdam Jewry as well as the publishing of the tale in the Dutch pamphlets and the Venetian avvisi. The varying paths and speeds of the rumour demonstrates a complex interaction between distance and skepticism: even if the story

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[68] Van Wijk, 'The Rise and Fall of Shabbatai Zevi as Reflected in Contemporary Press Reports,' 15, 17.
[69] *Oprechte Haerlemse Saterdaegse Courant* and the *Oprechte Haerlemse Dingsdaegse Courant*, 23 and 26 January 1666, as translated and quoted in van Wijk, 'Shabbatai Zevi as Reflected in Contemporary Press Reports,' 21, 21n. The original stated, 'gewisse narichtinge/ dat de Joden en Arabiers het graf van Mahomen tot Meccha hadden gespoilieert/ en veel oorden in-genomen; deswegen het Turckse Hof haer hadde aengepresenteert/ Alezandria/ Tunis en andere Plaetsen in te ruymen; maer sy begeerden het gantse Heylige Landt.'

arrived sooner along some channels, certain people refused to print it and others refused to believe it until they heard it from the sources they trusted.

The *Hollandtze Mercurius* was a Dutch newsbook considered a reliable news provider similar to the Dutch gazettes. Like them, it published numerous items about the sack of Mecca, which provided many details and explicitly connected the destruction of Mecca to the Sabbatian movement. Even in the register, the newsbook grouped the two together, placing the account of the 'Jootze gepretendeerde Messias Nathan Levi' (the Jews supposed messiah Nathan Levi) next to that of the 'Joodtze op-tocht in Arabien' (the Jews marching across Arabia).[70]

In October 1665, the *Hollandtze Mercurius* conflated the two stories by making Sabbatai the leader of the attack: a Smyrnan native (that is, from the same city as Sabbatai himself) was followed by thousands of Jews who went along the Red Sea to Mecca where they intended to destroy Muhammad's tomb. From there, they were going to Jerusalem where he was to be crowned king. They would then go triumphantly to Istanbul.[71] Thus, the rumour was continuing to evolve during transmission: the key figure of the Sabbatian movement, not the hopes or prophecies relating to it, was now part of the storyline.

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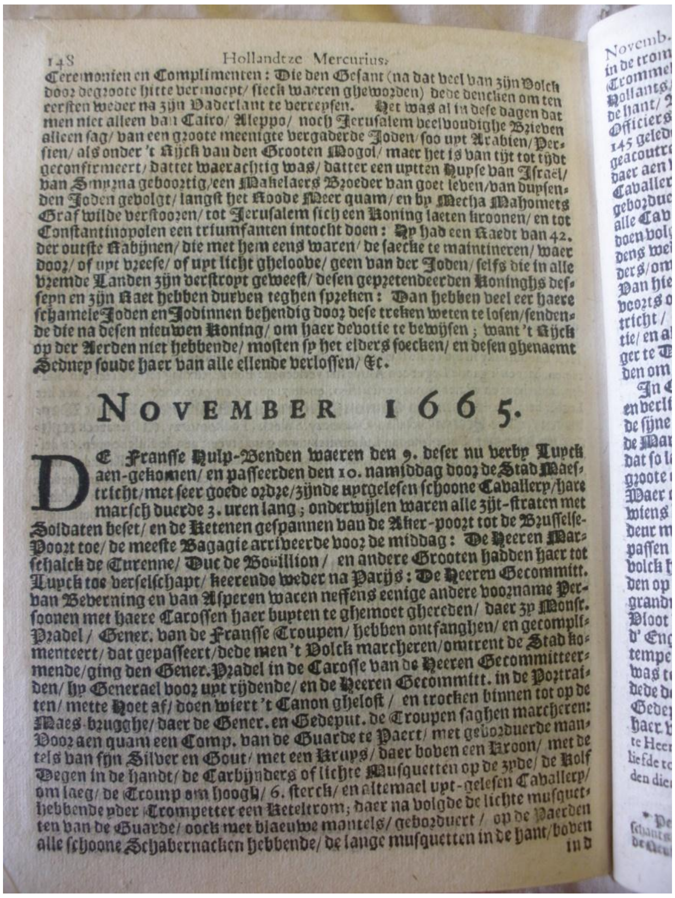
[70] ULL: Pieter Castelyn (ed.), *Hollandtze Mercurius, Vervatende het Gepasseerde in Europa: Voornamentlijck in den Engelze ende Nederlantschen Oorlog, in 't Jaer 1666* (Haarlem, 1667), Register I.

[71] ULL: Pieter Castelyn (ed.), *Hollandtze Mercurius, Behelzende de Gedenckweerdichste Voorvallen in 't Jaer 1665* (Haarlem, 1666), 148: October 1665. The original read, 'Het was al in dese dagen dat men niet allen ban Cairo/Aleppo/noch Jerusalem veel boudighe Brieven alien sag/ van een groote meenigte vergaderde Joden/ soo uyt Arabian/ Persien als onder 't Rijck van der Grooten Mogol/ maer het is van tijt tot tijdt geconfirmeert/ dattet waerarljtig was/ datter een uytten Noyse van Israel/ van Smyrna geboortig/ een Makelaers Broeder van goet leven, van duysenden Joden gevolgt/ langst het Roode Meer quam /en by Mecha Mahomets Graf wilde verstooren/ tot Jerusalem sich een Koning lateen kroonen/ en tot Constantinopolen een triumfanten intocht doen.'


148 Hollandtze Mercurius,
Ceremonien en Complimenten: Die den Gesant (na dat veel van zijn Volck door de groote hitte vermoeyt/ sieck waeren ghewonden) dede dencken om ten eersten weder na zijn Vaderlant te verreysen. Het was al in dese dagen dat men niet alleen van Cairo/ Aleppo/ noch Jerusalem veelvoudighe Brieven alleen sag/ van een groote meenigte vergaderde Joden/ soo uyt Arabien/ Persien/ als onder 't Rijck van den Grooten Mogol/ maer het is van tijt tot tijdt geconfirmeert/ dattet waerachtig was/ datter een uytten Huyse van Israël/ van Smyrna geboortig/ een Makelaers Broeder van goet leven/ van duysenden Joden gevolgt/ langst het Roode Meer quam/ en by Mecha Mahomets Graf wilde verstooren/ tot Jerusalem sich een Koning laeten kroonen/ en tot Constantinopolen een triumfanten intocht doen: Hy had een Raedt van 42. der outste Rabijnen/ die met hem eens waren/ de saecke te maintineren/ waer door/ of uyt vreese/ of uyt licht gheloove/ geen van der Joden/ selfs die in alle vremde Landen zijn verstroyt geweest/ desen gepretendeerden Koninghs desseyn en zijn Raet hebben durven teghen spreken: Van hebben veel eer haere schamele Joden en Jodinnen behendig door dese treken weten te losen/ sendende die na desen nieuwen Koning/ om haer devotie te bewijsen; want 't Rijck op der Aerden niet hebbende/ mosten sy het elders soecken/ en desen ghenaemt Sedney soude haer van alle ellende verlossen/ &c.

NOVEMBER 1665.

DE Fransse Hulp-Benden waeren den 9. deser nu verby Luyck aen-gekomen/ en passeerden den 10. namiddag door de Stad Maestricht/ met seer goede ordre/ zijnde uytgelesen schoone Cavallery/ hare marsch duerde 3. uren lang; onderwijlen waren alle zijt-straten met Soldaten beset/ en de Ketenen gespannen van de Aker-poort tot de Brusselse-Poort toe/ de meeste Bagagie arriveerde voor de middag: De Heeren Marschalck de Turenne/ Duc de Bouillion/ en andere Grooten hadden haer tot Luyck toe verselschapt/ keerende weder na Parijs: De Heeren Gecommitt. van Beverning en van Asperen waren neffens eenige andere voorname Persoonen met haere Carossen haer buyten te ghemoet ghereden/ daer zy Monsr. Pradel/ Gener. van de Fransse Troupen/ hebben ontfanghen/ en gecomplimenteert/ dat gepasseert/ dede men 't Volck marcheren/ omtrent de Stad komende/ ging den Gener. Pradel in de Carosse van de Heeren Gecommitteerden/ hy Generael voor uyt rijdende/ en de Heeren Gecommitt. in de Portraiten/ mette Hoet af/ doen wiert 't Canon ghelost/ en trocken binnen tot op de Maes-brugghe/ daer de Gener. en Gedeput. de Troupen saghen marcheren: Voor aen quam een Comp. van de Guarde te Paert/ met geborduerde mantels van fijn Silver en Gout/ met een Kruys/ daer boven een Kroon/ met de Degen in de handt/ de Carbijnders of lichte Musquetten op de zyde/ de Kolf om laeg/ de Tromp om hoogh/ 6. sterck/ en altemael uyt-gelesen Cavallery/ hebbende yder Trompetter een Keteltrom; daer na volgde de lichte musquetten van de Guarde/ oock met blaeuwe mantels/ geborduert/ op de Paerden alle schoone Schabernacken hebbende/ de lange musquetten in de hant/ boven in d

Figure 8: The Sack of Mecca as Presented in the *Hollandtze Mercurius* in October 1665

Six months later, the siege of Mecca was once again front and centre in the *Hollandtze Mercurius*. Similar to the developments in the Venetian avviso, the time elapsing between the printing of the two stories facilitated the development of the rumour in the Dutch newsbook. In these new accounts, the mythical army was no longer led by Sabbatai, but by a Jew named Giorobaon. The newsbook proceeded to tell of his rise to power. In the kingdom of Elal in the state of Aden in Arabia, a man named Giorobaon had gained mass support and, with the assistance of his followers, taken Medina and Mecca.[72]

[72] ULL: Castelyn (ed.), *Hollandtze Mercurius*, 52-53: March 1666. The original stated, 'Daer leyt in Arabia felir een Coninckrijck van Elal en in de selfde de populeuse Stad Aden/ vol van Jootse Cooplieden/ in dese Stadt was een Jode Giorobaon geheeten/ die door zijn krachtige welsprekentheyt seer wel jaw el de meeste der Ingesetenen bracht tot sijne Devotie/ die haeren Bassa ter nederslaende/ oock het Guarnisoen tot hunnen dienst dwonghen: Luttel tijts daer aen/ haer Creaturen aenwassende/ wiert aen Giorobaon de absolute Regeeringe op-gedragen/ en sy noemden hem garen Profeet/ 't welck al meer en meer toenam door de Assistentie van Porti d'Aguffo en Lifra/ welcke oock daer toe drongen alle de Arabers uytte gebergten van

The name Giorobaon would resurface in connection with the rumoured attack on Mecca in numerous Dutch and English sources. Who was this man? Although the prefix 'Gio' sounds Italian, the Italian press only stated that the Jews and Arabs were following a man 'intitolatolo con nome di Re' (they called their king).[73] The avvisi never mentioned his name. Jewish letters, however, spread throughout Europe from Vienna claimed that a Jew from Aden named Jeroboam had risen up against the Ottomans, defeated them with a mighty army of Jews and Arabs, and taken over at least seventy cities.[74] The name 'Jeroboam' therefore seems to have been added to the tale by Jews somewhere east of Vienna but not south from Italy. Shared with Christians, the name was then changed into 'Giorobaon' in the Low Countries where it lost an 'o' and became 'Giorbaon'. This path of transmission seems to have had an oral component because, although 'Jeroboam' and 'Giorobaon' are spelt very differently, they sound similar. This suggests that 'Giorobaon' was a mishearing of 'Jeroboam'.[75] While both names were used in Dutch pamphlets and newsbooks, only 'Giorbaon' is found in the English sources; it was solely the final version of the name that made it across the English Channel.

Like the army he supposedly led, the man named Jeroboam, Giorobaon, or Giorbaon was completely fictitious; yet the choice of this name was not random. It was probably based on the biblical figure Jeroboam whose story is found in the books of Kings and Chronicles. According to these texts, Jeroboam was a mighty man of valour whom God promised to make king of Israel. After Solomon's death, the ten northern tribes revolted and invited Jeroboam to become their ruler. Jeroboam accepted, and his new kingdom waged numerous wars against Rehoboam, his successors, and the kingdom of

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Arzira ofte Cobuburra: Dan hier nu dus gesterckt zijn sy opgetogen near de Cape van Zibil/ sonder eenige tegenweer te binden/ in nemende de Stadt Ziden: Dan hier zijn sij in 3. Maenden tijts opgetogen in 't steenachtige Arabien/ daerse de Stadt Medina veroverden/ en daer op oock Mecca'.

[73] BNCF Codd Magliabechiani XXV, 743, 84: Venice, 8 August 1665.

[74] Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi*, 347.

[75] Many thanks to Howard Hotson for suggesting this possibility.

Judah. Jeroboam even brought an army of 800,000 men against them. Due to Jeroboam's sins, God told him that his house would be destroyed, and Israel would be rooted out of the land and scattered beyond the river –the events that gave rise to the creation of the Lost Tribes of Israel.

In seventeenth-century Europe, the biblical account of Jeroboam was known to be linked to Jewish eschatological expectations due to the writings of Menasseh ben Israel. The *Hope of Israel* stated, 'Observe, that sometime they call Messiah the son of Ephraim, sometime of Joseph; for he shall come out of the Tribe of Ephraim, and shall be Captaine of all the ten Tribes, who gave their name to Ephraim, because that their first King Jeroboam was of that Tribe'.[76] All this points to one conclusion: Jeroboam, Giorobaon, or Giorbaon was a fictitious person based on a biblical character, which means that the Bible was informing a rumour that was perceived throughout 1665 and 1666 as a current event.

Although Giorbaon was mentioned in many of the Dutch sources, the *Wahrahfftes Contersey* and the *Wathafftige Abilding Josuae Helcams* (1666) provided a competing army commander named Iosua Helcam. Originally based on a German work, the *Wahrahfftes Contersey* tied the sack of Mecca to the Sabbatian movement, noting that the prophet Nathan Levi had anointed a certain young man named 'Sobeza' (read Sabbatai) as king and renamed him 'Iosua Helcam.'[77] Iosua Helcam was the supreme leader of the army of the Lost Tribes in Arabia, and his exploits were plentiful. While the name 'Giorbaon' came from the Jews and was derived from a story in the shared Judeo-Christian biblical books, 'Iosua Helcam' came from a German broadsheet of 1642 and was a pure Christian construction. 'Iosua' is related to 'Jesus' and 'Helcam' in Hebrew means 'God

[76] See ben Israel, *The Hope of Israel*, 33, 15, 24.
[77] Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi*, 354.

rose' (*hel* or *el* for God and *cam* or *qam* for rose).[78] The different versions of the rumour were taking on contrasting forms based on their routings across Europe from the Levant.

It was the multitude of Dutch sources, be they pamphlets, newsbooks or gazettes, that kept the rumoured sack of Mecca in the news and convinced readers like Serrarius of its veracity. The Dutch Republic's tolerant policy allowed cross-religious interactions and the promotion of millenarianism and messianism that gave rise to an environment in which the rumour found new life. Multiple versions of it proliferated to an extent not witnessed anywhere else.

The rumour had developed to such a degree by the time it reached Amsterdam that Serrarius told of a letter from Florence which claimed that 'the Court of Florence was much amazed at the news of the Israelites, because they said that the Emperor had written to the great duke, that he was drawing his Army from Germany, and had raised a great army, and was going to fight with this people: In Florence they say, there are about 50000...'[79] In Casale, the Jews conflated Nathan's prophecy of the Lost Tribes only slaughtering Christians in the Ashkenazi lands of Germany and Poland with the rumoured siege of Mecca to claim that the ancient Hebrews were soon to leave the holy city of Islam and march against the Germans and Poles. In Amsterdam, supposed German diplomatic correspondence written to the Tuscan authorities reaffirmed this addition to the rumour, corroborating the Lost Tribes' intended invasion of Germany from the Germans themselves.

With all these handwritten and published documents presenting the same narrative, Serrarius accepted the truthfulness of the story and repeated it in letters to his friends and associates. Citing what appears to be Raphael Supino in Livorno, Serrarius wrote to John Dury,

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[78] Ibid., 557-558.
[79] Peter Serrarius, *The Restauration of the Jews* (1665), 5: Scholem (335-336) correctly argued these letters were compiled by Serrarius.

> I shall inform you of what seems to be incredible. The city of mecca, the seat of the Mohammedan superstition, is now besieged by a people calling themselves the children of Israel and saying that they were merely the vanguard of the army of their brethren who were following them. The news, which arrived here from Leghorn three weeks ago, was sent by a Jew who says that he heard it from a Jew who had come from Alexandria in Egypt.[80]

Serrarius was not a passive transmitter. He understood the rumour within the context of his previous millenarian activities with Samuel Hartlib, John Dury, and Menasseh ben Israel. Utilising his past knowledge, Serrarius created an entire back-story for the rumour, and the more the back-story developed, the more inaccurate it became. First, he combined the account of the Lost Tribes sacking Mecca with information that originated in a widely circulated letter from a Christian in Morocco,

> The tidings of the 15 of *July*, concerning the March of our Brethren, the *Ten Tribes of Israel*, is now from several places confirmed to Us, all *Things* being so full of wonder, that for some few days we could scarcely believe, or give credit to it, from the City of *Sus*, otherwise called *Santa-Crew*. But now We have certain Information, that they are on the side of the Desert, and move from several places to the said Desert Goth of *Morocco*, being not far from *Cape de Ver*, but more within the Land. And they appear daily more and more in great Multitudes, having suddenly and unexpectedly manifested themselves, covering a vast *Tract* of Ground, and consisting of about eight thousand Companies or *Troops*, each of which containing from one hundred to a thousand Men.[81]

Although this account had nothing to do with the one about Mecca, Serrarius saw both as part of a single storyline even though they came from opposite corners of the Mediterranean world.

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[80] Peter Serrarius to John Dury as translated and quoted in Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi*, 344-346. Dury then spread this news onward. He wrote to a correspondent from Bern on 28 October 1665, 'Mr. Serrarius, in letters from Amsterdam of September 15 and October 1, tells marvellous news of the Ten Tribes of Israel...They have already made their appearance at the borders of Arabia, conquered Mecca, where the tomb of Mohammed is, and other cities, and put to death all the inhabitants except the Jews.'

[81] This was found in the Dutch *Historis Verhael van den Nieuwen Gemeynden Koning der Joden; Sabatha Sebi, als Mede sijn by Hebbende Propheet Nathan Levi* (1665) as well as in the English *The Last Letters To the London-Merchants and Faithful Ministers* (1665). This report may or may not have been linked to the outbreak of the Sabbatian movement because intermittent stories of the re-emergence of the Lost Tribes occurred throughout the seventeenth century and, aside from the description of the leader of the Lost Tribes in a manner that combined features of Sabbatai and Nathan (he had Sabbatai's stature, obesity, and complexion and Nathan's gift of discernment), there is nothing in it that suggests a connection between this account and the Sabbatian movement. For more, see Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi*, 350.

Serrarius was not the only Christian to weave these two narratives together. As early as September 1665, an English correspondent asked Serrarius about a report that the Jews were encamped before Mecca, awaiting the arrival of the main body of the army that had appeared in Morocco.[82] The *Herstellinge van de Joden* printed in Amsterdam, the *Ydele Verwachtinge der Joden* (1669) written in Smyrna, and the *The Last Letters To the London-Merchants and Faithful Ministers* (1665) published in London all discussed these stories side by side too. The *Historis Verhael* (1665) even spoke of the leaders of the Sabbatian movement in combination with the army in from Morocco: the 'Koning der Joden; Sabatha Sebi' (king of the Jews: Sabbatai Sevi) and his 'Propheet Nathan Levi' (prophet Nathan Levi) had gathered a large following of Jews 'In't Landt van Sus, zijn 8000 troupen...In Barbaryen, in de Woestijne van Theophileta, zijn ongevaer hondert duysent Joden' (In the Land of Sus, there are 8000 troops...In Barbary, in the desert of Theophileta, there are about 100000 Jews).[83]

Figure 9: Sabbatai Sevi and Nathan of Gaza as Pictured in *Historis Verhael* (1665)

[82] Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi*, 334.
[83] ULL: *Historis Verhael*, 5-6.

Serrarius had a broader outlook than most Christian readers and writers. He placed both rumours in a global context. In *The Restauration of the Jews* (1665), Serrarius wrote,

> Those [Jews] in Arabia are of the same company with them that appear south of Morocco, and all of them seem to lye hid in the Inland Countrey of Africa, extending themselves over the vast Tract of Land comprehending all between the two Tropicks, almost as far as the Cape of Good Hope...such as went from them are one half of the way to Meka; he thinketh they possessed the Arabians Countrey, and went out of Africa into America by the strait of the entry into the Red-Sea; but whether by Boat or Miracle, he knows not...[84]

Serrarius then turned to the itinerary outlined by Menasseh ben Israel in *The Hope of Israel* (1650) to explain how the Lost Tribes travelled from Africa to the Americas, tying the rumoured sack of Mecca to a theory postulated over a decade before in which the ten tribes of Israel were part of a single body spread across the world from the Americas to China.[85]

After describing what had happened, Serrarius told his audience what would happen. The Lost Tribes were currently in the first part of their two-stage religious evolution. First, they would turn away from idolatry to proper Judaism. Then they would convert to Christianity,[86] which would lead to a period of universal worship among all peoples of the world in 1672.[87]

Serrarius' choice of 1672 is significant because this was also the year that Nathan prophesied that Sabbatai would return from beyond the river Sambayton with the Lost Tribes. Considering Serrarius' close friendships with Jews in Amsterdam who were aware of this prophecy, the Protestant scholar would have most likely known about it too, and it could have affected Serrarius' choice of 1672 as the year of coming bliss –a clear cross-religious influence.

Serrarius shared his ideas with numerous correspondents, and some of his letters were printed in English and Dutch pamphlets. The editors, however, perceived Serrarius'

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[84] *The Restauration of the Jews*, 2-3.
[85] Ibid.
[86] Goldish, *The Sabbatean Prophets*, 157.
[87] Peter Serrarius to John Dury as translated and quoted in Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi*, 344-346.

universalism as unacceptable for the English Christian audience. In a published letter that relayed the abovementioned story to Nathaniel Homes, Serrarius supposedly claimed that in 1672, 'there will be a full Communion and Restitution of the Apostolistic worship, And then will the Gospel be preached throughout the whole world.'[88] Since Serrarius' original letter spoke in more general terms of universal worship and peace, not 'Apostolistic Worship' or the 'Gospel', the printed letter to Homes demonstrates how Serrarius' universal religious ideas were re-Christianised before being disseminated among the larger English population.[89]

'Meccha-news' in the Royal Society

Petrus Serrarius' correspondents in England included Henry Oldenburg, the secretary of the Royal Society. While Serrarius acted as Oldenburg's intermediary in his ongoing academic communication with Baruch Spinoza, Serrarius also supplied Oldenburg with European news relating to their common political, intellectual, and religious concerns. For at least one of these reasons, Serrarius thought Oldenburg would be interested in the siege of Mecca.

The earliest reference to the rumoured sack of Mecca in Oldenburg's correspondence occurred in July 1665, which was before the majority of the reports were printed in the news sources in Italy, the Dutch Republic, and England. This means that Serrarius must have told Oldenburg about the attack on Mecca as soon as he heard about it, not waiting until he received the confirmation he desired in the Dutch gazettes. Oldenburg

[88] *The Last Letters To the London-Merchants and Faithful Ministers*, 3.
[89] Serrarius' teleological vision of religious evolution resulting in universal worship is markedly similar to that of Maimonides whose work had been published in Latin and was known by seventeenth-century Christian scholars. It was the students of Serrarius' friend Menasseh ben Israel who were often responsible for translating Maimonides, and one wonders if Serrarius was influenced by Maimonides' ideas. Thanks to Joanna Weinberg for pointing out this possibility. For more on Christian interest in the Maimonides, see Aaron Katchen, *Christian Hebraists and Dutch Rabbis: Seventeenth Century Apologetics and the Study of Maimonides' Mishneh Torah* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984).

shared it at an equally fast rate, showing the movement of information through multiple correspondence networks from the Ottoman Empire to England before it was published in places much closer to the Levant.

Oldenburg destroyed almost all of the letters from Serrarius during this period, most likely due to fear of punishment for consorting with the enemy during the Anglo-Dutch conflict, which makes the exact nature and content of the connection impossible to know. Oldenburg only subtly indicated that Serrarius informed him about Mecca's destruction in his correspondence with Robert Boyle. Boyle, one of the key figures in the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century, engaged in profuse exchanges with Oldenburg in the 1650s and 1660s, focusing primarily on Boyle's scholarly work.[90]

Like the letters he received from Serrarius, the ones that Oldenburg sent to Boyle often included the latest news that was circulating. At the end of September 1665, Oldenburg wrote to Boyle, 'Yt ye French letters assure ye death of the K. of Spain; and ye Dutch ye Meccha-news. M. Serrarius tells me, yt ye transcribing of Mr. Borrels manuscript goes on a pace…'[91] A week later, Oldenburg continued, 'I cannot adde any more, yn to intimate in a word, yt the Meccha-news grows stronger…I know not, Sr, whether I mentioned to you in my last Mr. Serrarius, his desire, about the disbursing of some mony for the transcribing of Mr. Borrels papers.'[92]

In the Royal Society circles, the rumour gained broader oral dissemination in part because of skepticism towards it. Boyle originally replied to Oldenburg,

> You had reason to think I would looke upon your News about ye siege of Meccha as very strang& soe do's Dr Pocock to whom I imparted it, though he suspects it

[90] Michael Hunter, *Boyle Between God and Science* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 192, 1-2.
[91] Henry Oldenburg to Robert Boyle, 28 September 1665, as quoted in Rupert Hall and Marie Boas Hall (eds.), *The Correspondence of Henry Oldenburg: Volume II 1663-1665* (Madison, Milwaukee, and London: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1966), 534.
[92] Henry Oldenburg to Robert Boyle, 5 October 1665, as quoted in Hall and Hall (eds.), *The Correspondence of Henry Oldenburg II*, 545.

> may be some other of the neigbouring people, who have formerly both attaqu'd & plunderd Mecca.…'[93]

In trying to verify or develop his opinions, Boyle had sought advice from Edward Pococke, the professor of Hebrew and Arabic studies at Oxford who had been the chaplain of the English colonies in Aleppo and Istanbul. After his return home, Pococke maintained correspondents in Aleppo and was probably one of the few people in England who had sufficient knowledge of the Ottoman Empire to form an educated opinion on this matter.[94] But his remark that it was probably some other neighbouring tribe that had plundered Mecca suggests that even he thought that the city had been pillaged. Although Pococke and Boyle believed the story was exaggerated and tried to determine the truth by analytically dissecting what they had been told based on their other knowledge, they did not question its overall authenticity. Like all the other approaches, this too was ineffective in deciphering what had really transpired in the Arabian Peninsula, which was most likely nothing at all.

Unlike most other sources, Oldenburg's extant correspondence did not supply any details. There was no mention of a leader's name or a description of the population that attacked Mecca even though his information came from Amsterdam where more developed narratives circulated freely. Boyle's comment that it was probably a neighbouring tribe instead of the people Oldenburg suggested means that Oldenburg most likely provided Boyle with a fantastical account. Considering the versions known at the time as well as Oldenburg's connection to Serrarius, it was probably one that at least included the Jews if not the Lost Tribes. Coming from Serrarius, one would expect there to be an apocalyptic element to the story, but Oldenburg only framed the rumour in

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[93] Robert Boyle to Henry Oldenburg, 23 July 1665, as quoted in Hall and Hall (eds.), *The Correspondence of Henry Oldenburg II,* 444.

[94] Pococke had approximately a hundred Jewish manuscripts, including three on the kabbalah. He continued to receive texts from the Ottoman Empire after his return through Levant Company merchants. Some of Pococke's letters from his friends in the Ottoman realms are found in MS Pococke 432 Fol. 11/12 in the Bodleian Library at Oxford.

relation to the larger "Christian-Islamic conflict". Like the Italians, Oldenburg dwelt on the rumour's political, not eschatological, consequences: the Christians no longer needed to fear the 'Turks', he wrote, because they had 'work enough cut out for ym at Meccha.'[95]

The rumour was so widespread by this point that Oldenburg himself was informed of it from multiple European correspondents. Such corroboration, however, failed to allay his doubts. He finished one of his letters by adding that his faith in the story of Mecca's destruction was growing weaker because it was not being confirmed with its original vigour.[96]

The English Press

Alongside his obligations to the Royal Society, Henry Oldenburg was employed by Joseph Williamson to work on the *Gazette*, England's preeminent news source. Because Oldenburg's job included supplying Williamson with newsworthy information, he could have facilitated the publishing of the rumoured sack of Mecca in the English press. The news items in the gazettes, however, did not match those in Oldenburg's correspondence. Moreover, Oldenburg was aware of the rumour in the summer of 1665, and the story did not appear in the *Gazette* until the middle of December when it quoted a proclamation from the Dutch Jews from three months earlier,

> It is now about three month since the *Jews* gave out that near 600000 men were arrived at *Mecha,* professing themselves to be of the lost Tribes. Since which it is affirmed, that a new Prophet is arisen in *Jerusalem*…This Prophet (say they) foretells the Restauration of the House of *Israel*, and to that purpose have invited a young man of the Tribe of *David,* called *Sabbatai Levi*, for their King, who was

[95] Henry Oldenburg to Robert Boyle, 24 August 1665, as quoted in Hall and Hall (eds.), *The Correspondence of Henry Oldenburg II,* 481.
[96] Henry Oldenburg to Robert Boyle, 24 August 1665, as quoted in Rupert Hall and Marie Boas Hall (eds.), *The Correspondence of Henry Oldenburg: Volume III 1666-1667* (Madison, Milwaukee, and London: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1966), 481.

> followed by thousands of people, and that he intended for *Constantinople*, to demand the Empire.[97]

The editor of the *Gazette* realised his error and issued a retraction within a week. It was not the Lost Tribes that conquered Mecca; recent letters from Aleppo to Amsterdam told a different story, the 'Bassa of Bissery had revolted against the *Grand Signior*, which is supposed to be the ground of the story of the *Jewes.*'[98]

Since news editors in different countries often "borrowed" stories from each other,[99] it should not be surprising that one of the Dutch gazettes printed an almost identical item as the English *Gazette* in the same week. Presented as a new report, the *Oprechte Haerlemse Saterdaegse Courant* noted that, according to new letters from Aleppo that arrived in Amsterdam, 'the Bassa [Pasha] of Bassary has risen up against the ruler', which 'must really be something, since the Jews are making such a noise about it'.[100]

The 'Bassa of Bissery' or 'Bassa of Bassary' mentioned in the English and Dutch gazettes most likely referred to the pasha of Basra. Since the Venetian avvisi discussed the sack of Mecca alongside a rebellion in Babylon, the news about the pasha of Basra in the England and the Low Countries could have been be a version of that uprising. Although originally identified as parallel events in Italy, the rebellion in Babylon was construed into the basis of the rumoured sack of Mecca in northern Europe. Months later, the *Gazette* itself reported that the 'Bassa of *Baslara* in the *Persian* Gulf, who has been so long in Rebellion, and so stoutly disputed it with four Baassaes, wherein he of *Babylon* fell, has at

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[97] *Oxford Gazette*, 11 December 1665. The number 600,000 is a biblical figure that is found in other sources, including German pamphlets in 1508 and 1523. For more, see Andrew Gow, *The Red Jews: Antisemitism in an Apocalyptic Age 1200-1600* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995), 136.
[98] *Oxford Gazette*, 18 December 1665.
[99] Brendan Dooley, 'Introduction,' *The Dissemination of News and the Emergence of Contemporaneity in Early Modern Europe* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 11.
[100] *Oprechte Haerlemse Saterdaegse Courant*, 19 December 1665, as quoted in van Wijk, 'The Rise and Fall of Shabbatai Zevi as Reflected in Contemporary Press Reports', 21, 21n. Meanwhile, the reports in the *Oprechte Haerlemse Courant* were disseminated across Europe to Russia where several of them were printed in the Muscovite *kuranty*. For more on Sabbatai in the Russian press, see Maier and Waugh, '"The Blowing of the Messiah's Trumpet",' 136-152.

the last submitted'.[101] Could the length of time that the story of the pasha of Basra took to reach the English and Dutch press have facilitated its transformation into the supposed foundation of the rumoured attack on Mecca only to reach England at a much later date in its original form where it would then be seen as a separate event?

Despite the *Gazette's* retraction, the rumour's ability to mutate allowed it to resurface a month later in England's most reliable news source. In January 1666, the *Gazette* published multiple items about a Jewish-Arab force laying siege to Mecca, not making any connection to their previous article about the Lost Tribes attacking the very same city. It stated, 'the *Jews* and *Arabs* had destroyed the Tomb of *Mahomet* at *Mecca*' and had taken several places.[102] A Jew named Giorbaon in Aden had gained mass support through his oratory skills and, under his guidance, his followers killed their pasha, forced the garrison to submit, and began calling Giorbaon their prophet. Within three months, they had conquered numerous cities, including Mecca and Medina. They now wrote their Jewish brethren that they would soon be free from 'the slavery of the Turk'.[103]

The different versions of the rumour were printed in England in the reverse order that they were created. While the narrative of the revolt in Babylon appeared chronologically before both accounts of the sack of Mecca, the English press told of the Lost Tribes attack on Mecca then the rebellion in Babylon and finally the Jewish-Arab army's sack of Mecca. This occurred because the stories moved along contrasting networks, which affected their dissemination. The report of the Israelites conquering Mecca fit into Protestant millenarian beliefs so it would have been understood to be more important and shared with greater haste, explaining why one of the latest versions to appear was published first in the *Gazette.*

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[101] *London Gazette*, 9 July 1666.
[102] *Oxford Gazette*, 22 January 1666.
[103] *London Gazette* 30 January 1666.

One of the *Gazette'*s last news items about the violence in the Levant included none of the previous parties. No longer the Lost Tribes or Giorbaon, now it was the Jewish messiah himself who was leading an extremely large and violent military campaign against the Ottomans,

> *Constantinople, Feb. 19.* We have no small apprehension of these frequent Intelligences we receive, all of them bigg with relations of great Tumults in *Palestine; Sabadai,* their pretended Prophet, growing every day more powerfull; insomuch, as we have reports, that he leads no less then a hundred thousand after him, and is very severe against all Turks killing all they meet with…There arrived yesterday a Vessel from *Ragusa,* who tells, that the two Ambassadors, sent by their Governor, with the usual Presents to the Grand Siginor, were returned thither; and that the Bassa of *Jerusalem* had sent an Envoye, who was upon his way hither, with an Account of the many, and great Insurrections of the Jews in those Parts.[104]

In spite of the constant changes to the plot, English millenarians would not have been concerned with the name of the leader or the specific composition of the population. What mattered to them was that the Jews were helping the Protestants destroy the Muslim danger and liberate the land of Jesus. Soon enough they would all convert to Christianity and the end would come.

Because the rumour surfaced over and over again in reliable sources such as the *Gazette*,[105] most people would have at least had to wonder if something had not happened at Mecca. But not all people. The outspoken opponent of the Sabbatian movement, the Jewish rabbi Jacob Sasportas, refused to accept the reports of the Lost Tribes he heard from his correspondent Raphael Supino in Livorno. Moreover, the mathematician Sir Robert Moray told Oldenburg, 'The stories concerning the Jewes you find in our Oxford Gazette fid.credit Judeus &c'.[106] In other words, 'Let a Jew believe them'.[107] Moray's

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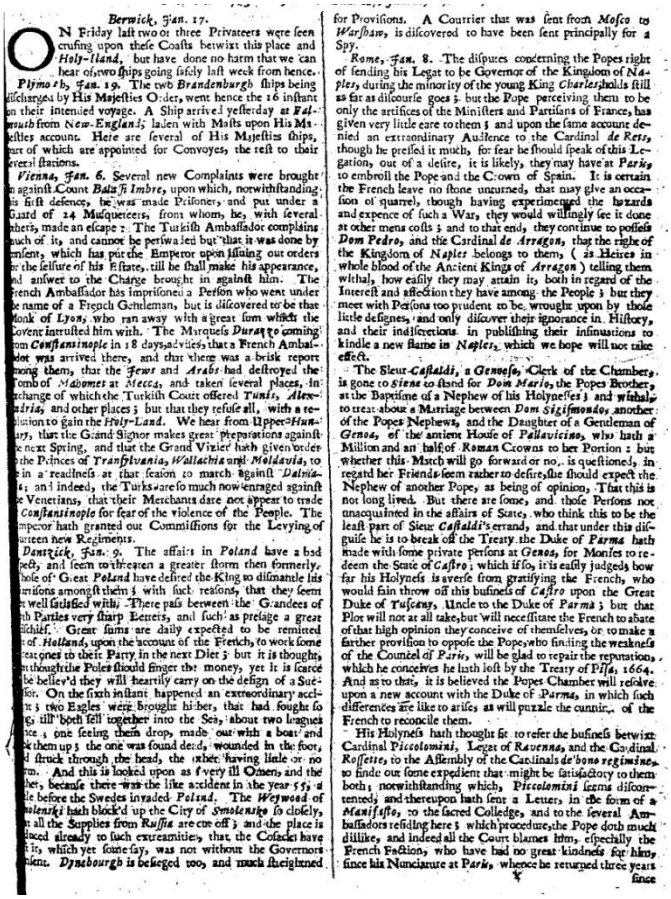
[104] *London Gazette*, 8 March 1666.
[105] According to O'Malley, the *Gazette* itself was regarded as a reliable source of information by its readership. See Thomas O'Malley, 'Religion and the Newspaper Press, 1660-1685: A Study of the *London Gazette*,' *The Press in English Society from the Seventeenth to Nineteenth Centuries* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1986), 33.
[106] Robert Moray to Henry Oldenburg, 15 December 1665, as quoted in Hall and Hall (eds.), *The Correspondence of Henry Oldenburg II*, 642.
[107] Hall and Hall (eds.), *The Correspondence of Henry Oldenburg II*, 643n.

blunt assertion provides a counterweight to the responses of Christians such as Serrarius. While Serrarius would not believe the news until he read it in the gazette, Moray did not believe it when he did.



Berwick, Jan. 17.

ON Friday last two or three Privateers were seen cruising upon these Coasts betwixt this place and *Holy-Island*, but have done no harm that we can hear of, two ships going safely last week from hence.

Plymouth, Jan. 19. The two *Brandenburgh* ships being discharged by His Majesties Order, went hence the 16 instant on their intended voyage. A Ship arrived yesterday at *Falmouth* from *New-England*; laden with Masts upon His Majesties account. Here are several of His Majesties ships, part of which are appointed for Convoyes, the rest to their several stations.

Vienna, Jan. 6. Several new Complaints were brought in against Count *Batasi Imbre*, upon which, notwithstanding his first defence, he was made Prisoner, and put under a Guard of 24 Musqueteers, from whom, he, with several others, made an escape: The Turkish Ambassador complains much of it, and cannot be perswaded but that it was done by consent, which has put the Emperor upon issuing out orders for the seisure of his Estate, till he shall make his appearance, and answer to the Charge brought in against him. The French Ambassador has imprisoned a Person who went under the name of a French Gentleman, but is discovered to be that Monk of *Lyons*, who ran away with a great sum which the Convent intrusted him with. The Marquess *Duras* coming from *Constantinople* in 18 days, advises, that a French Ambassador was arrived there, and that there was a brisk report among them, that the *Jews* and *Arabs* had destroyed the Tomb of *Mahomet* at *Mecca*, and taken several places, in exchange of which the Turkish Court offered *Tunis*, *Alexandria*, and other places; but that they refuse all, with a resolution to gain the *Holy-Land*. We hear from Upper-*Hungary*, that the Grand Signior makes great preparations against the next Spring, and that the Grand Vizier hath given order to the Princes of *Transylvania*, *Wallachia* and *Moldavia*, to be in a readiness at that season to march against *Dalmatia*; and indeed, the Turks are so much now enraged against the Venetians, that their Merchants dare not appear to trade at *Constantinople* for fear of the violence of the People. The Emperor hath granted out Commissions for the Levying of thirteen new Regiments.

Dantzick, Jan. 9. The affairs in *Poland* have a bad aspect, and seem to threaten a greater storm then formerly, those of Great *Poland* have desired the King to dismantle his Garrisons amongst them; with such reasons, that they seem not well satisfied with. There pass between the Grandees of both Parties very sharp Letters, and such as presage a great mischief. Great sums are daily expected to be remitted out of *Holland*, upon the account of the French, to work some great ones to their Party in the next Diet: but it is thought, although the Poles should finger the money, yet it is scarce to be believ'd they will heartily carry on the design of a Succession. On the sixth instant happened an extraordinary accident; two Eagles were brought hither, that had fought so long, till both fell together into the Sea, about two leagues from hence; one seeing them drop, made out with a boat and took them up; the one was found dead, wounded in the foot, and struck through the head, the other having little or no harm. And this is looked upon as a very ill Omen, and the like, because there was the like accident in the year 55, a little before the Swedes invaded *Poland*. The *Woywood* of *Smolenski* hath block'd up the City of *Smolensko* so closely, that all the Supplies from *Russia* are cut off; and the place is reduced already to such extremities, that the Cossacks have left it, which yet some say, was not without the Governors consent. *Dynaburgh* is besieged too, and much straightned for Provisions. A Courrier that was sent from *Mosco* to *Warshaw*, is discovered to have been sent principally for a Spy.

Rome, Jan. 8. The disputes concerning the Popes right of sending his Legat to be Governor of the Kingdom of *Naples*, during the minority of the young King *Charles*, holds still as far as discourse goes; but the Pope perceiving them to be only the artifices of the Ministers and Partisans of France, has given very little care to them; and upon the same account denied an extraordinary Audience to the Cardinal *de Retz*, though he presst it much, for fear he should speak of this Legation, out of a desire, it is likely, they may have at *Paris*, to embroil the Pope and the Crown of Spain. It is certain the French leave no stone unturned, that may give an occasion of quarrel, though having experimented the hazards and expence of such a War, they would willingly see it done at other mens costs; and to that end, they continue to possess *Dom Pedro*, and the Cardinal *de Arragon*, that the right of the Kingdom of *Naples* belongs to them, (as Heires in whole blood of the Ancient Kings of *Arragon*) telling them withal, how easily they may attain it, both in regard of the Interest and affection they have among the People; but they meet with Persons too prudent to be wrought upon by those little designes, and only discover their ignorance in History, and their indiscretions in publishing their insinuations to kindle a new flame in *Naples*, which we hope will not take effect.

The Sieur *Castaldi*, a *Genoese*, Clerk of the Chamber, is gone to *Siena* to stand for *Dom Mario*, the Popes Brother, at the Baptisme of a Nephew of his Holynesses; and withal to treat about a Marriage between *Dom Sigismondo*, another of the Popes Nephews, and the Daughter of a Gentleman of *Genoa*, of the antient House of *Pallavicino*, who hath a Million and an half of *Roman* Crowns to her Portion: but whether this Match will go forward or no, is questioned, in regard her Friends seem rather to desire, she should expect the Nephew of another Pope, as being of opinion, That this is not long lived. But there are some, and those Persons not unacquainted in the affairs of State, who think this to be the least part of Sieur *Castaldi's* errand, and that under this disguise he is to break off the Treaty the Duke of *Parma* hath made with some private persons at *Genoa*, for Monies to redeem the State of *Castro*; which if so, it is easily judged, how far his Holyness is averse from gratifying the French, who would fain throw off this business of *Castro* upon the Great Duke of *Tuscany*, Uncle to the Duke of *Parma*; but that Plot will not at all take, but will necessitate the French to abate of that high opinion they conceive of themselves, or to make a farther provision to oppose the Pope, who finding the weakness of the Councel of *Paris*, will be glad to repair the reputation, which he conceives he hath lost by the Treaty of *Pisa*, 1664. And as to that, it is believed the Popes Chamber will resolve upon a new account with the Duke of *Parma*, in which such differences are like to arise, as will puzzle the cunning of the French to reconcile them.

His Holyness hath thought fit to refer the business betwixt Cardinal *Piccolomini*, Leger of *Ravenna*, and the Cardinal *Rossetto*, to the Assembly of the Cardinals *de bono regimine*, to finde out some expedient that might be satisfactory to them both; notwithstanding which, *Piccolomini* seems discontented, and thereupon hath sent a Letter, in the form of a *Manifesto*, to the sacred Colledge, and to the several Ambassadors residing here; which procedure, the Pope doth much dislike, and indeed all the Court blames him, especially the French Faction, who have had no great kindness for him, since his Nunciature at *Paris*, whence he returned three years since

Figure 10: The Sack of Mecca in the *London Gazette* in January 1666

The reports in the English gazettes were supplemented by pamphlets, including the *Last Letters to the London Merchants* (1665), *The Congregating of the Dispersed Jews* (1666), *God's Love to His People Israel* (1666), and *The Restauration of the Jews* (1665), which all stated that the Lost Tribes had sacked the Muslims' holiest city. Unlike the *Gazette*, these pamphlets focused on the eschatological ramifications of this event. It was proof that the final days of history were at hand, and Jesus' return was imminent. The hopes of the

editors were obvious from title pages that began, 'Lift up your Heads, this is the Wonderful Year! 26th February, 1666'.[108]

Many of these works relayed the well-known narrative penned by 'Rapheck Supi', the Jewish scholar Raphael Supino in Livorno. By the time that Supino's correspondence, which contained one of the earliest written accounts of the Israelites' plundering of Mecca, reached London, the rumour had become so pervasive that the pamphlets which printed Supino's letter did so alongside many other letters from Italy and the Dutch Republic that confirmed its claims.[109] The tale had multipled to such an extent that it was being used to corroborate itself.

Published one after another, each pamphlet validated the previous one. *A Correspondent to Benjamin Levi* told of how Nathan of Gaza had said that 'on the 20th of this month Sebat [part of Jan and Feb] Reuben as the first-born of Jacob, will be at Gaza: but before that time, two men would come to order how the Redemption of Israel should be effected.'[110] A short time later, *A New Letter Concerning the Jews* reported that the prophecy had just been fulfilled: 'our Jews yesterday received from Alcaire, Livorno and Venice, so many letters, and of so great credit, that all of them publickly in their Synagogues do now believe, that the Tribes of Ruben, Gad and half of Manasseh are come to Gaza, as the Prophet Nathan foretold.'[111] Indeed, the rumour had infiltrated such a breadth of sources in so many different forms that it would have been difficult not to at least consider it possible that something unbelievable was happening.

The stories of the Lost Tribes reappearing, first in Arabia and then in Morocco, sparked more and more reports of sightings of the ancient Hebrews. A pamphlet entitled *A*

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[108] *A New Letter Concerning the Jewes* (1666) as quoted in Cecil Roth (ed.), *Anglo-Jewish Letters (1158-1917)* (London: The Soncino Press, 1938), 70-72.
[109] *The Restauration of the Jews* (1665), 6.
[110] *A Correspondent to Benjamin Levi* as quoted in Cecil Roth (ed.), *Anglo-Jewish Letters (1158-1917)* (London: The Soncino Press, 1938), 72-74.
[111] *A New Letter Concerning the Jewes* as quoted in Roth, *Anglo-Jewish Letters*, 70-72. This pamphlet appears to have been written by Serrarius.

Brief Relation of Several remarkable Passages of the Jevves (1666) elaborated upon the latest miracle. According to a letter 'very lately sent into England by a worthy man to his good Friend in London', ten venerable men entered the king of Persia's court in October 1665 and professed themselves to be sent from Israelites that had been preserved in 'the remote parts of Tartaria'.[112] The men told the king that God had sent a prophet to gather his people together and lead them back to the holy land. After a brief struggle, the king allowed his Jewish subjects to leave and, with 'an Angel for their Conductor', they made their 'Plain-Way through the Mountains and Rivers' back to Palestine.[113]

At the same time, in October 1665, a letter from Aberdeen was printed in London under the title *A New Letter from Aberdeen in Scotland, Sent to a Person of Quality* (1665). This pamphlet told of the arrival of a ship in the harbour of Aberdeen that had sails made of 'white branched Sattin' that bore the inscription 'THESE ARE OF THE TEN TRIBES OF ISRAEL'.[114] The passengers were all Jews who wore black and blue clothing, ate only rice and honey, and spoke broken Hebrew. These mysterious people carried a letter, written in high Dutch for their brethren in Amsterdam, which related the stories already known to the English. There were sixteen-hundred thousand Israelites in Arabia, and another sixty thousand had come into Europe. Their forces had slain great numbers of Ottomans. None had been able to stand up against them. The Christians, however, had no need to fear. The Lost Tribes 'give liberty of Conscience to all, except the Turks, endeavouring the utter Ruine and Extirpation of them.'[115] The English editor of this text was well aware of the broad dissemination of these rumours. He ended, 'I suppose you have not been ignorant of the Letters from several parts, the noise of them

[112] NYPL *KC 1666: Lira Marashalack, *A Brief Relation of Several Remarkable Passages of the Jevves* (1666).
[113] Ibid.
[114] R.R., *A New Letter from Aberdeen in Scotland* as quoted in Cecil Roth (ed.), *Anglo-Jewish Letters (1158-1917)* (London: The Soncino Press, 1938).
[115] Ibid.

being communicated to most parts of Christendom', and he assured his readers that there is 'not a tittle in it but what is truth.[116]

As the plethora of stories demonstrates, the original tale of the Lost Tribes at Mecca gave rise to the proliferation of reports about the reappearances of the Israelites throughout the world. Not only seen in Arabia and North Africa, they appeared in Persia and even in Scotland. After all, if the ancient Hebrews were showing up across the globe, should they not also be present on the islands of the country in which the news of their return was most widely documented?

'That of the Jewes' in the Puritan Atlantic

From England, at least one of these narratives was moved across the Atlantic along Puritan channels. At the beginning of September 1665, John Davenport wrote to William Goodwin,

> If that of the Jewes be true wee may easily see what god is bringing about in the world even the greatest changes that have beene since the 1st coming of Christ. The witnesses that are now killed, shall arise shortly. Rome shall be ere long ruined. Christ will take vnto himself his kingdome, which hath been vsurped by Brutish men the vileness of whose spirits hath appeared in scattering the churches unto Christ in silencing the faithfull ministers, in imprisoning and banishing the innocent in corrupting Religion with Antechristian superstitions.[117]

These words were written in America a mere four months after Sabbatai had publicly announced that he was the messiah, at a time when the Sabbatian movement was only known about among a select few in England. Even though the rumours of the Lost Tribes preceded the more concrete news of the messiah and his prophet, how would Davenport in North America find out about them so quickly?

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[116] Ibid. Even in a city as close as Aberdeen, there were no known witnesses. It was only an unnamed professor who spoke to them.
[117] John Davenport to William Goodwin, 2 September 1665, as quoted in Calder (ed.), *Letters of John Davenport*, 257.

While there are no extant sources that prove transatlantic transmission, the tales were first spread among Protestants in letters from Serrarius to Oldenburg and Dury who were men that Davenport had been in contact with for years. He wrote to John Winthrop in 1659 that he 'received letters and books, and written papers from my ancient and Honour friends Mr. Hartlib, and Mr. Durie'.[118] Davenport's sparse reference was clearly significant news that pertained to his eschatological expectations and, considering his transatlantic connections and the stories about the Jews that were circulating among his correspondents, it seems that the Puritans in the American colonies received word of the return of the Israelites through this channel before most Christians in Europe read about it in the pamphlets –a startling demonstration of the speed in which news spread through correspondence across the Mediterranean and Atlantic worlds before it was printed in publications much closer to the Levant.

Years later, Davenport confirmed his knowledge of the rumours of the Lost Tribes in the preface to Increase Mather's *The Mystery of Israel's Salvation* (1669) where he remarked that Mather preached several sermons late in 1665,

> 'in a time when constant reports from sundry places and lands gave out to the world, that the Israelites were upon their journey towards Jerusalem, from sundry foreign parts in great multitudes, and that they were carryed on with great signs and wonders by a high and mighty hand of extraordinary providence, to the... astonishment of all that heard it, and that they had written to others in their Nation, in Europe and America, to encourage and invite them to hasten to them, this seemed to many godly and judicious [people] to be a beginning of that Prophesie [Ezekiel 37:7].'[119]

Mather was obviously influenced by, what Davenport had termed, 'that of the Jewes'. It inspired both sermons and his text, *The Mystery of Israel's Salvation*, which anticipated a dual armageddon battle between the 'Israelites and Turks' in Asia and between the

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[118] John Davenport to John Winthrop Junior, 19 June 1659, as quoted in Calder (ed.), *Letters of John Davenport*, 142.
[119] Increase Mather, *The Mystery of Israel's Salvation* (London, 1669) as quoted in Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi*, 549.

'followers of the Lamb and the followers of the beast' in Europe.[120] Like other Protestants with philo-Semitic and Judeocentric millenarian leanings, Mather believed that the contemporary Jews and ancient Hebrews would help the Protestants destroy both the Islamic Ottoman Empire and the Catholic Church. This would then be followed by the conversion of the Jews and the Lost Tribes to Christianity as well as their restoration to Israel, which would bring about the advent of Jesus' thousand year reign on earth.[121]

Meanwhile, these stories were spread around New England where they came to the attention of the Puritan missionary John Eliot. While Eliot had withdrawn his endorsement of the Lost Tribes theory in the mid-1650s,[122] these narratives re-invigorated his interest in his earlier study of the ancient Hebrews, and he would remain intrigued by the Lost Tribes for the rest of his life.[123] The effects of the stories on these three Englishmen in the American colonies highlight the far-flung cross-religious impact of the rumour: beginning among Ottomans in the Middle East, it spawned more and more versions that transcended the Mediterranean and Atlantic worlds, influencing the beliefs of Puritans as far away as the east coast of North America.[124]

Returning to the Ottoman Empire

The rumour did not simply travel westward from its origin in the Ottoman Empire; as it gained momentum it was transmitted back to the Levant. In 1667, the Dutch chaplain in Smyrna, Thomas Coenen, decided to write a pamphlet about Sabbatai Sevi after he

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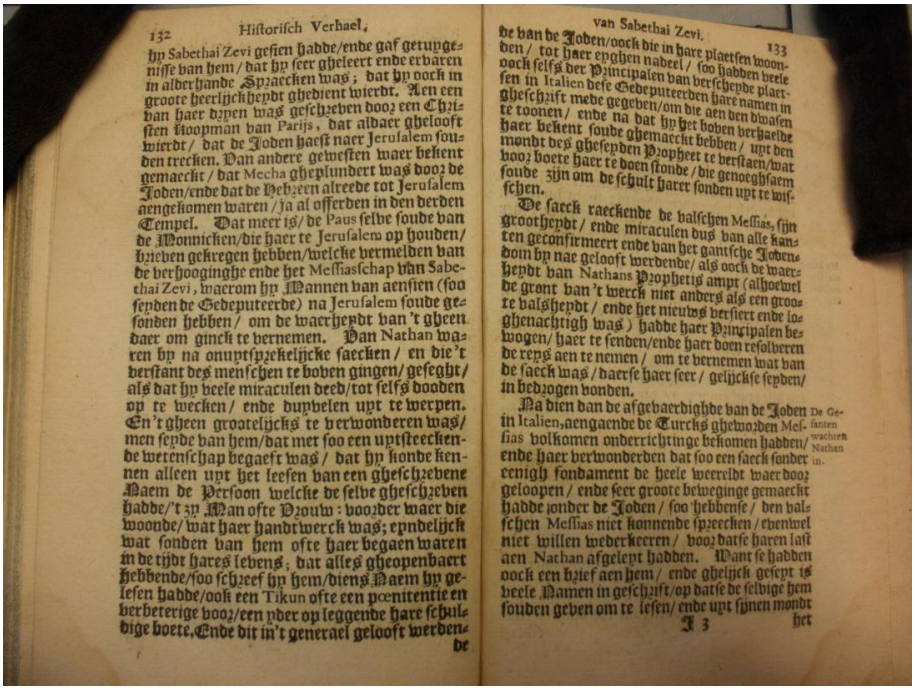
[120] Ibid.
[121] This Judeocentric Puritan millenarian vision was also found in the writings of other English and American Protestants, including Thomas Brightman. For more on these ideas, see Cogley, 'The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Restoration of Israel in the "Judeo-Centric" Strand of Puritan Millenarianism,' 304-332.
[122] Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission to the Indians before King Philip's War*, 96.
[123] Cogley, 'John Eliot and the Origins of the American Indians,' 221-222; Katz, *Philo-Semitism and the Readmission of the Jews to England 1603-1655*, 157.
[124] Despite proof of dissemination to at least three English Christians in North America, there is no evidence that the Sabbatian movement or even the Jewish restoration was known about in the Dutch American colonies, which had a long history of Jewish settlements as well as numerous networks connecting it to the Low Countries where these stories were shared broadly –an unexpected disjuncture in transmission.

witnessed the rise and fall of the Jewish messianic movement firsthand. Although Coenen's text, *Ydele Verwachtinge der Joden Getoont in den Persoon van Sabethai Zevi* (1669), was centred on the Sabbatian movement, it contained references to the attack on Mecca and the sightings of the Lost Tribes in Africa. Coenen quoted letters from the resident of the duke of Savoy in Lisbon, a Christian merchant from Paris, and a German nobleman that discussed the Jewish army in Africa, the Israelites plundering of Mecca, and a description of Sabbatai Sevi respectively.[125] The manner in which Coenen mixed letters from not only different people and places, but also the different storylines within the letters, shows that he had access to a variety of European correspondence and too saw connections between the Jewish force in Africa, Mecca's destruction, and the Sabbatian movement from his vantage point in the Empire.

[125] Coenen, *Ydele Verwachtinge der Joden Getoont in den Persoon van Sabethai Zevi*, 131-132. The original read, 'De Resident van den Hertogh van Savoyen tot Lisbon hadde daer van daen een brief aen sijn Meester ghesonden/ daer in eenigh nieuws ten besten der Joden was/ welcke die Hoogheydt aen verscheyde Joden van Turin hadde mede gedeelt/ naementlijck/ dat'er in Africa een Heyzleger van 800000 man marcheerde: welcke waren Mannen van middelbare lenghte/ blanc van Del; hare Daendels warenswart/ tot Napenen haddense boogh ende pijl. Die gantsche weeck door vierdense; maer 't Saterdaeghs sagh men onder haer geen vyer/ waer uyt vastelijck beslooten wierdt dat her Joden waren. // In Duytslandt hadde een aensienlijck Heer geschreven aen een Edelman van Matua, dat Hy Sabethai Zevi gesien hadde/ ende gaf getuygenisse van hem/ dat hy seer gheleert ende ervaren in alderhande Spraecken was; dat hy oock in groote heerlijck heydt ghedient wierdt. Aen een van haer dryen was geschreven door een Christen koopman van Parijs, dat aldaer ghelooft wierdt/ dat de Joden haest near Jerusalem souden trecken. Dan andere gewesten waer bekent gemaeckt/ dat Mecha gheplundert was door de Joden/ ended at de Hebreen alreede tot Jerusalem aengekomenn waren/ ja al offerden in den derden Tempel. Dat meer is/ de Paus selve soude van de Monnicken/ die haer te Jerusalem op houden/ brieven gekregen hebben/ welcke vermelden van de verhooginghe ende het Messiashcap van Sabethai Zevi.'



132 Hiſtoriſch Verhael,

hy Sabethai Zevi geſien hadde/ende gaf getuyge-niſſe van hem/ dat hy ſeer gheleert ende erbaren in alderhande Spraecken was; dat hy oock in groote heerlijckheydt ghedient wierdt. Aen een van haer dyen was geſchreven door een Chriſten koopman van Parijs, dat aldaer ghelooft wierdt/ dat de Joden haeſt naer Jeruſalem ſouden trecken. Van andere geweſten waer bekent gemaeckt/ dat Mecha gheplundert was door de Joden/ende dat de Hebreen alreede tot Jeruſalem aengekomen waren/ja al offerden in den derden Tempel. Dat meer is/ de Paus ſelve ſoude van de Monnicken/die haer te Jeruſalem op houden/ hebben gekregen hebben/welcke vermelden van de verhooginghe ende het Meſſiasſchap van Sabethai Zevi, waerom hy Mannen van aenſien (ſoo ſenden de Gedeputeerde) na Jeruſalem ſoude geſonden hebben/ om de waerheydt van 't gheen daer om gingh te vernemen. Van Nathan waren hy na onuytſprekelijcke saecken/ en die 't verſtant des menſchen te boven gingen/ geſeght/ als dat hy veele miraculen deed/tot ſelfs dooden op te wecken/ ende duyvelen uyt te werpen. En't gheen grootelijcks te verwonderen was/ men ſeyde van hem/dat met ſoo een uytſtreckende wetenſchap begaeft was/ dat hy konde kennen alleen uyt het leeſen van een geſchreven Naem de Perſoon welcke de ſelve geſchreven hadde/'t zy Man ofte Vrouw: voorder waer die woonde/ wat haer handtwerck was; ende voorts wat ſonden van hem ofte haer begaen waren in de tijdt hares lebens; dat alles gheopenbaert hebbende/ſoo ſchreef hy hem/dien Naem hy geleſen hadde/ook een Tikun ofte een pœnitentie en verbeterige voor/een yder op leggende hare ſchuldige boete. Ende dit in't generael gelooft werden-

de

van Sabethai Zevi. 133

de van de Joden/ook die in hare plaetſen woonden/ tot haer eyghen nadeel/ ſoo hadden veele ook ſelfs der Principalen van verſcheyde plaetſen in Italien deſe Gedeputeerden hare namen in gheſchrift mede gegeven/om die aen den dwaſen te toonen/ ende na dat hy het boven verhaelde haer bekent ſoude ghemaeckt hebben/ uyt den mondt des gheſeyden Prophеet te verſtaen/wat voor boete haer te doen ſtonde/die genoeghſaem ſoude zijn om de ſchuld harer ſonden uyt te wiſſchen.

De ſaeck raeckende de valſchen Meſſias, ſijn grootheydt/ ende miraculen dus van alle kanten geconfirmeert ende van het gantſche Jodendom hy nae gelooft werdende/ als oock de waerheydt van Nathans Prophetis ampt (alhoewel de gront van 't werck niet anders als een groote valſcheydt/ ende het nieuws verſiert ende loghenachtigh was) hadde haer Principalen bewogen/ haer te ſenden/ende haer doen reſolveren de reys aen te nemen/ om te vernemen wat van de ſaeck was/ daerſe haer ſeer/ gelijckſe ſeyden/ in bedrogen vonden.

Na dien dan de afgevaerdighde van de Joden in Italien, aengaende de Turcks ghewroden Meſſias volkomen onderrichtinge bekomen hadden/ ende haer verwonderden dat ſoo een ſaeck ſonder eenigh fondament de heele weereldt waer door gelooven/ ende ſeer groote beweginge gemaeckt hadde ionder de Joden/ ſoo 't hebbenſe/ den valſchen Meſſias niet konnende ſpreecken/ ebenwel niet willen wederkeeren/ voor datſe haren laſt aen Nathan afgelept hadden. Want ſe hadden oock een brief aen hem/ ende gheljck geſept is veele Namen in geſchrift/op datſe de ſelvige hem ſouden geven om te leſen/ ende uyt ſynen mondt

De Gesanten wachten Nathan in.

I 3 het

Figure 11: Mecca's Rumoured Destruction in Thomas Coenen's *Ydele Verwachtinge der Joden* (1669)

The Red Jews in Germany: A Counterweight

While Protestants in England, the Dutch Republic, and the American colonies looked forward to the return of the Lost Tribes, the situation in Germany was much different. Instead of seeing the Israelites as a force that would aid Christians in their battle against the Ottoman Muslims, the Germans understood these rumours in relation to another tradition –that of the Red Jews.

In the twelfth century, Godfrey of Viterbo stated Alexander the Great walled up both the Lost Tribes and Gog and Magog. The latter was an evil people spoken of in the book of Revelation who are expected to return near the end of time to fight against God's chosen people. Early modern German scholars conflated the Lost Tribes with Gog and Magog, creating a new population which came to be described in the German-speaking world as the Red Jews.[126]

[126] For more on the Red Jews, see Gow, *The Red Jews*.

After the Reformation, the Catholic position, as asserted by the Dominican Tomaso Malvenda and others, was that the antichrist would be a circumcised descendant of the Jewish tribe of Dan who would rebuild the temple in Jerusalem, re-establish the Jewish state, and be accepted by the Jews as the messiah.[127] He would work false miracles, have false prophets, and conquer Egypt, Libya, and Ethiopia.[128]

Both the story of the antichrist and the legend of the Red Jews were popular and influential in early modern Germany, and scholars assigned the Red Jews to the ranks of the antichrist; one day they would break out from their prison and follow him. In the sixteenth and early seventeenth century, the Red Jews were described negatively in various German pamphlets as an army that would free the Jews from their servitude under Christians and liberate Jerusalem by sword.[129]

Although reports of the Red Jews disappeared by the end of the Thirty Years' War, this legend had a lasting effect: it shaped the manner in which the Sabbatian movement was portrayed in the German lands. During the height of the messianic excitement in 1666, a tale from Augsburg in 1642 resurfaced in Nuremberg and told of the coming of the Jewish messiah whose plan was to conquer the holy land with his military force. Unlike among the other Protestants, the advent of the messiah was not advertised in Germany as an imminent Christian triumph. It was the birth of the antichrist. This Jew had a neck that was 'thick-set, his head pointed, his face like that of a Turk, his brow wrinkled, his eyes terrible, his ears long, his penis large, and his teeth sharp.'[130] He was even said to be able to raise and equip an army of fifty thousand soldiers from all over the world.

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[127] Hotson, 'Anti-Semitism, Philo-Semitism, Apocalypticism and Millenarianism in Early Modern Europe,' 104, 102.
[128] Richard Kenneth Emmerson, *Antichrist in the Middle Ages: A Study of Medieval Apocalypticism, Art, and Literature* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1981), 214-215.
[129] Gow, *The Red Jews*, 78, 128.
[130] See Leigh Penman's lecture at Oxford entitled 'Newes From the East'. In numerous stories spread among Christians, the Jews' sexual character is highlighted. Some legends about Prester John state that he had to castrate the young Jewish slaves he captured because of their highly sexual nature.

The German view provides a counterweight to the generally positive reception of these rumours by Christians. Even the term 'Red Jews' is manifestly opposed to that of Serrarius and others who thought these mysterious Jews were the 'white people whom the Inhabitants of Guiny use to speak'.[131] These "whitened" Jews were expected to provide a Christian victory for the English and Dutch Protestants, this was a far cry from the way the Germans understood them.

Death

Immediate unequivocal disproof from an authoritative source is the most effective way to stop a rumour.[132] But where was this to come from when the story of Mecca's destruction was found in such a variety of documents, and Mecca was one of the most difficult cities in Asia for Europeans to visit? The great distance between Mecca and northern Europe coupled with the lack of readily available communication to the Muslim's holiest city made disproving this tale incredibly difficult at best.

European Christians did not even have basic knowledge of Mecca. The majority of Protestant and Catholic writers incorrectly believed that Muhammad was buried there. The Ottoman Jews too lacked accurate information regarding the political situation in the Arabian Peninsula. The Jew from Alexandria who first shared the rumour with Raphael Supino in Livorno spoke of a 'king of Arabia', a non-existent figure who fought against a non-existent Jewish military corps. Indeed, Arabia was so far removed from the regular networks of communication that the Muslim authorities in Yemen did not discover the first

[131] *The Restauration of the Jews*, 2. The Lost Tribes were often described as white. Twenty years earlier, Menasseh ben Israel (17) had thought he found the Lost Tribes after a Dutch mariner told him he had met a group of white, bearded, rich men in America.
[132] Ralph Rosnow and Gary Alan Fine, *Rumour and Gossip: The Social Psychology of Hearsay* (New York: Elsevier, 1976), 108.

signs of the Jewish messianic movement until December 1666.[133] This was a full year after John Davenport in North America knew of 'that of the Jews', which means that the news travelled across both the Altantic and Mediterranean worlds before it reached the more remote parts of the Ottoman state. The infrastructure of the early modern world allowed for the vast dissemination of information across two massive bodies of water before it went across a single desert. The implication of this was that the rumour could spread freely because of the inability to check its veracity.

The cause of the rumour's rebirth, ironically, was also the root of its demise. The ubiquitous reports of the plundering of Mecca were eventually displaced by stories regarding Sabbatai, Nathan, and the Jewish restoration. People grew weary of the news of Mecca's destruction; it ceased to be noteworthy and was replaced by more detailed, more exciting, and more pertinent accounts of the Sabbatian movement. If rumours continue until the underlying collective needs are fulfilled, or at least filled with something else,[134] then the growing messianic movement did just that, pushing the sack of Mecca to the periphery and then out of public discourse.

The rumour would not die that easily. Threads of it lingered on long after Sabbatai's conversion to Islam and the demise of widespread support for his messiahship. Six years after the apostasy, the remaining Sabbatian believers who had gone underground still anticipated the fulfilment of Nathan's prophecy about the retribution against the Ashkenazi Christians for their persecution of the Jews. In 1672, the year that Nathan predicted great events would happen, the Ottomans were victorious over the Polish army. The Sabbatians attached special significance to this battle. According to them, 'the Turkish Sultan sent him [Sabbatai] at the head of 200,000 men to go to war against Poland

[133] P.S. van Koningsveld, J. Sadan and Q. Al-Samarrai, *Yemenite Authorities and Jewish Messianism: Ahmad ibn Nasir al-Zaydi's Account of the Sabbathian Movement in Seventeenth Century Yemen and its Aftermath* (Leiden: Documentatiebureau Islam-Christendom, 1990), 80. For more on the Sabbatian movement's reception in Yemen, see this text.
[134] Rosnow and Fine, *Rumour and Gossip*, 108.

in accordance with Nathan Ashkenazi's prophecy in Gaza that he would revenge the martyrs of Poland'.[135] Thus, parts of the rumour were adapted to the changing political circumstances in order to meet the needs of those who refused to believe that the messianic moment had ended. The Lost Tribes may not have returned, Mecca may not have been destroyed, but Sabbatai was still in command of a massive army. And this time, he was attacking the Christians, not the Muslims.

In 1709, over forty years after the Venetian avviso first reported that Mecca had been sacked, the *Annals of the Universe* (1709) summarized the history of the rumour, 'the Jews reported at all places, that near 600,000 men were arriv'd at Mecha, professing themselves to be of [the] ten tribes and a half that had been lost for so many ages, but the story was false.'[136] The *Annals of the Universe* was correct, the story was false. Yet it failed to add that the rumour was most broadly disseminated by Christians, not Jews.

Even though the plundering of Islam's holiest city was clearly a rumour from our vantage point, not one seventeenth-century writer called it that. The sack of Mecca was usually referred to as news whereas other events were considered rumours. The English traveller William Hammond, for instance, wrote to his father, 'We have no News here, only great Rumours of the French over-running the State of Milan'.[137] Thus, even if they were not ready to accept the return of the Lost Tribes, the overwhelming evidence suggests many Jews and Christians were ready to believe that Mecca had at least been attacked – many, not all.

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[135] Paul Fenton, 'Shabbetay Sebi and His Muslim Contemporary Muhammed an-Niyazi,' *Approaches to Judaism in Medieval Times III* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 86.
[136] Benite, *The Lost Tribes*, 71.
[137] William Hammond to his father, 6 September 1658, as quoted in Michael Brennan (ed.), *The Origins of the Grand Tour: The Travels of Robert Montagu, Lord Manderville 1649-1654; William Hammond, 1655-1658; Banaster Maynard, 1660-1663* (London: The Hakluyt Society, 2004), 219.

While previous chapters have demonstrated how theories and news about real people tied individuals together across national, religious, and continental divides, this chapter has shown that misinformation was as pervasive and acted in a similar manner. If the diffusion of an intellectual construct is connected to its news value,[138] then this rumour was perceived as more important than many of the true stories and intellectual theories already discussed. The sack of Mecca was written about in at least five languages in a variety of early modern communities on multiple continents within a single year. It surfaced in oral, handwritten, and printed sources among travellers, newspapermen, natural philosophers, and politicians.[139] A nightmare scenario for some, an event of political significance for others, and a sign of the coming end to many more, the rumour took on different meanings for different people.

Considering the various versions of the tale together complicates previous historical understandings of the Sabbatian movement. No other scholar has identified the rumour's origins, realised its scope, or recognised its complex relationship with the Jewish messianic movement. Abraham Gross wrote that the stories of the Lost Tribes 'came after the appearance of a Messiah in order to supply an answer to the anticipated need for Jewish military forces associated with redemption'.[140] Zvi Ben-Dor Benite offered another hypothesis: behind the news of the Lost Tribes sacking Mecca was the history of Jewish tribes in seventh-century Arabia. In Muhammad's day, the city of Khaybar was 'the great Jewish centre in the north of the Hajez', and legends abounded that the men of Khaybar were great warriors who belonged to the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh.[141] According to Benite, the persistent story 'of the Hijazi ten tribes' was at the basis of the

[138] Rosnow and Fine, *Rumour and Gossip*, 32.
[139] Although the rumour was spread amongst such diverse populations, there was a notable absence of women either as transmitters or as part of the population that comprised the Lost Tribes. This is odd considering that women were part of the biblical population that disappeared, and women would seem necessary for their survival for thousands of years.
[140] Gross, 'The Expulsion and the Search for the Ten Tribes,' 143.
[141] Benite, *The Lost Tribes*, 75.

rumours of the army of the Lost Tribes at the gates of Mecca in 1665 and 1666.[142] Matt Goldish, on the other hand, repeated and reaffirmed Gershom Scholem's opinion that it is 'by no means inconceivable' that reports of the Israelites spontaneously appeared with or without the input of rumours about Sabbatai.[143] None of these historians, however, were aware of the news items in the Italian avvisi, which means that none of them realised the original version only mentioned Arabs attacking Mecca and had nothing to do with the Jews.

It has recently been stated that medieval Jews and Christians sometimes shared apocalyptic beliefs, but understood them in inverse manners.[144] While this appears true in relation to the German understanding of the rumour, it was not at all the case for most other Dutch and English Protestants who, like the Jews, believed that the return of the Lost Tribes signalled their redemption. If anything, this Judeo-Christian hope was inversely understood by Muslims as a catastrophe; however, it was a catastrophe anticipated in many Islamic eschatological sequences. Thus, the re-emergence of the Israelites and their sacking of Mecca was a rumour that was thought to be much more than that, and it had the potential to appeal to Jewish, Christian, and Muslim apocalyptic expectations.[145]

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[142] Ibid., 71.
[143] Goldish, *The Sabbatean Prophets,* 152.
[144] The Christian antichrist, for instance, could be seen as the Jewish messiah. Furthermore, both Christians and Jews used the story of Prester John and the Lost Tribes to their advantage. For more, see Perry, 'The Imaginary War Between Prester John and Eldad the Danite and its Real Implications'.
[145] Filiu (47) has claimed that early modern Christian apocalyptic tradition inhabited a parallel world to its Muslim counterpart. They only shared a parallel register of images; 'there was no exchange, either positive or negative, between them.' The rumoured sack of Mecca calls this into question.

Chapter 6

A Jewish Messiah among Christians

The Evolution of European Perceptions of Sabbatai Sevi (1665-1666)

I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh:
There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel...
–Numbers 24:17

Sabbatai Sevi was born and raised in the Jewish community of Smyrna where he attended a traditional Jewish educational institution known as a *yeshiva*. While he became proficient in Jewish law, ethics, philosophy and history, none of these topics appealed to the young Sabbatai. It was mysticism that truly enthralled him. Many rabbis believed it was dangerous to study the kabbalah before the age of forty, but Sabbatai began to study Jewish esoteric thought by himself and, by the age of twenty, he had developed some unusual habits. His mood alternated between states of depression and ecstasy, he ate non-kosher food, and he even uttered the forbidden name of God.

During the years of Sabbatai's youth, certain Jewish kabbalists predicted the appearance of the messiah in 1648. They had dedicated their lives to the study of the famous mystical text known as the *Zohar* and had come to the conclusion that Israel's redemption was nigh. As an educated rabbi knowledgeable in the kabbalah, Sabbatai was undoubtedly aware of these expectations and, already acting in a strange fashion, he declared himself the long-awaited messiah in this year.

At first, the heads of the Jewish community ignored Sabbatai's odd behavior; however, his actions were blasphemous so when he would not stop, they banished him from Smyrna sometime between 1651 and 1654. Forced out of his hometown, Sabbatai

wandered throughout the Ottoman Empire. He went to Istanbul, Salonika, Alexandria, Cairo, and then Jerusalem. It was there, in the spiritual center of the Jewish world, that Sabbatai re-invented himself as a pious leader with a small circle of followers.

In 1663, the Jewish leaders of Jerusalem asked Sabbatai to serve as an envoy to Raphael Joseph, the head of the community in Cairo, in hopes of collecting money for the Jews of the holy land. Sabbatai accepted and, after staying with Joseph a significant period of time, he set off back towards Jerusalem in 1665. On his way, Sabbatai passed through Gaza where he met Nathan Benjamin Levi, a man who would play a prominent role in his subsequent messianic career. Indeed, it was at this time that Nathan claimed to have an extraordinary vision: Sabbatai Sevi was the true messiah. Nathan had never experienced such an intense vision before so he tracked down Sabbatai and told him what he had seen. An earnest discussion ensued and, shortly thereafter, Sabbatai publicly proclaimed himself the messiah.

Although Sabbatai's earlier messianic claims in Smyrna had been dismissed, Nathan was a respected member of his community so many people took his vision seriously and embraced Sabbatai's messiahship. With Nathan formulating an extensive proselytising campaign, Sabbatai travelled throughout the major centers of the Ottoman Empire accumulating more and more followers. By the time that Sabbatai reached Aleppo, the Jews of that city had heard the news and welcomed him enthusiastically. Even in his hometown of Smyrna, Sabbatai's triumphant return as the messiah was celebrated for three weeks.

The Jewish world was in an agitated state as Sabbatai left Smyrna for Istanbul. Nathan had prophesied that the sultan would be so awestruck by the messiah that the head of the Ottoman Empire would relinquish his crown and give Sabbatai dominion over the holy land. The actual events did not unfold according to Nathan's prophecy. The Ottoman

authorities were aware of the messianic movement spreading throughout their territory and ordered Sabbatai's ship to be intercepted. The messiah was immediately arrested, brought ashore in chains, and placed in a prison cell in early 1666.

Sabbatai's imprisonment did not diminish the Jews' enthusiasm. Visitors flocked to his prison cell, bribing the guards simply to kneel before their messiah and present him with gifts. Expectations were at their peak when Sabbatai was finally called before the Ottoman *divan* or court. In spite of everything that had occurred, his adherents still thought that the sultan would willingly yield his crown and become the messiah's servant.

As the messianic movement took root in cities across the Levant, word of it reached the European Jewries through correspondence sent along trans-Mediterranean Jewish familial and mercantile networks. Most letters first entered Europe through the Italian port cities of Livorno and Venice where the majority of Jews, including scholars, accepted Sabbatai as their messiah. Almost all the Sephardic families in Europe had relatives in the Ottoman Empire who kept them informed of the latest events, so many were aware of the messianic outbreak even before Nathan's letters announcing the appearance of the messiah arrived in their communities.

When the correspondence sent to Italy was passed along to Amsterdam, 'people were almost crushed in their eagerness to hear the most recent news' about Sabbatai.[1] In the Ottoman Empire, the Sabbatian movement was tantamount to rebellion; in Catholic Italy, there was the constant danger of provoking the antagonism of either the church or the state; but in the Dutch Republic, there was no need for dissimulation or disguise. The Jews' 'almost unanimous shouts of triumph were audible far and wide'.[2]

The continued arrival of letters from the Levant fanned the flames of the Jews' devotion, and the Dutch Sephardim tried to work out their restoration to the holy land in a

[1] Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi,* 532-533.
[2] Ibid., 519.

practical manner. Due to the ongoing Anglo-Dutch war, Jean d'Yllan, wrote to the king of England for a pass for a Dutch ship to sail peacefully to Jerusalem because 'God in his mercy has begun to gather in his scattered people and has raised up a prophet for us, therefore I and several of my Jewish brethren, together with fifty poor families desire to hire a ship to bring us to Jerusalem.'[3] In return, d'Yllan promised to 'pray for His Majesty's success.'[4]

Other Jews did not worry about such petitions; they set out towards Jerusalem themselves. The wealthy industrialist Abraham Pereira, the former patron of Menasseh ben Israel and a correspondent of Antonio de Montezinos, was in regular communication with the rabbi Meir Rofe, the head of a yeshiva in Hebron. With such connections, Pereira heard the wondrous tidings before almost anyone else did and, upon learning that Rofe wished that Pereira would join them to await the coming of the messianic age, Pereira left immediately for the holy land.

The small Jewish population in seventeenth-century London heard about Sabbatai from Jews throughout Europe, including Raphael Supino in Livorno who had been the companion of both Menasseh ben Israel and Jacob Sasportas on their journeys to London.[5] From northern Europe, the Sabbatian movement spread westward across the Atlantic. Many former Conversos had settled in the West Indies where their brethren in Amsterdam must have kept them informed. As the Sabbatian prophet Abraham Cardoso wrote, 'his [Sabbatai's] name was known as far as the Spanish Indies.'[6] From the Middle East to the

[3] CSPD: Jean d'Yllan to the King of England, 5 February 1666, as translated and summarised in *Calendar of State Papers Domestic: Charles II 1665-1666*, 228-245. The French original is found in The National Archives at the Kew.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi,* 547.
[6] Ibid., 549n.

Americas, Sabbatianism became 'the largest and most significant messianic outburst in Jewish history'.[7]

Christian Perspectives of the Jews' New Saviour

The story of the Sabbatian movement among the Jews has been documented. Far less is known about how the Jewish messiah was understood and represented across Christendom. This chapter addresses the lacuna by providing well-known and newly-uncovered letters, gazettes, and pamphlets written in English, Italian, Dutch, and Latin by Protestant and Catholic authors from the Ottoman Empire to the American colonies. An examination of the multitude of responses to the Jewish messianic outburst reveals that Sabbatai and his followers were a serious concern to many Christians for both spiritual and material reasons. In some cases, the Jewish movement led Christians to reconsider their own religious expectations, changing them to incorporate the Jewish messiah in a manner that blurred the boundary between the Abrahamic faiths.

The Sabbatian movement affected the day-to-day business among the Jews that was of vital importance to European trade, so Christians became concerned with what was happening and sought to understand it. In Smyrna, the English merchants turned to their Jewish associates to find out more about Sabbatai and his adherents. A. Barnardiston, J. Adderley, and N. Thurston 'had many discourses with the Jewes about this man [Sabbatai Sevi] from the Beginninge'.[8] In Amsterdam too, Christians noticed the change in the Jews' behaviour and started talking about it. After all, the Sephardim had significant investments in both the East India Company and the West India Company; their activities were of consequence to the Dutch economy. When the Sabbatian millionaire Abraham

[7] Sharot, *Messianism, Mysticism, and Magic*, 86.
[8] TNA SP 97/18/211: A. Barnardiston, J. Adderley, and N. Thurston to Thomas Dethick, 9 October 1666.

Pereira decided to leave for the holy land, Christians even reported the event in a newsletter,

> Abraham Perena, a rich Jew of this town parted on Monday last with his family for Jerusalem, after he had taken leave of our Magistrate, and acknowledged his thankfulness for the favour he and his Nation in their dispersion had received here etc. It's said he offered to sell a Countrey-house of his worth Three thousand pound Sterling, at much loss, and on this Condition, That the Buyer should not pay one farthing till he be convinced in his own Conscience, That the Jews have a King.[9]

Witnessing such whole-hearted devotion to this new cause, Christians started to take the Jews' messiah seriously. But what were they supposed to make of him? The Lost Tribes of Israel had been incorporated into the Christian eschatological sequence and therefore the stories of their re-emergence in 1665 were understood as proof that Jesus was soon to return. The reports of the Lost Tribes, however, were soon followed by news of the advent of a Jewish messiah, a person who had no role in any Christian apocalyptic scenario. The only messiah that was expected was Jesus, not an Ottoman Jew named Sabbatai. This was clearly a wrinkle in the plan. So how did Christians react?

Dismissing the 'False Messiah'

In every Christian community that received word of Sabbatai Sevi, there were those, possibly even the majority, who immediately dismissed the Jewish messiah as an impostor. All across Christendom, Catholics and Protestants saw him as another false messiah in an already long list of Jewish messianic pretenders, and they mocked the Jews for being incredibly gullible and easily fooled.[10]

[9] Untitled Christian newsletter from Amsterdam as quoted in Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi,* 529-530.
[10] Van der Wall, *De Mystieke Chiliast Petrus Serrarius (1600-1669) en Zijn Wereld*, 405.

Such vehement reactions came from English merchants and diplomats stationed in London, Livorno, and Smyrna who described Sabbatai as a 'pretended Messiah',[11] 'an Imposture',[12] and one 'who pretends to be the Messias; for which [he is an] imposture'.[13] For them, the Sabbatian movement was merely a 'delusion'.[14] Editors of newsbooks and gazettes in the Dutch Republic similarly referred to Sabbatai as the 'pretended' or 'so-called' Jewish messiah, using terms like 'Den gepretendeerde Joodse Messias',[15] and 'genaemde Joodse Messias'.[16] Meanwhile, Italian diplomats and avvisi editors frequently labelled him a 'falso messia',[17] and a 'pseudo Proffetta' too.[18]

If these Christians dismissed Sabbatai outright, then why did they waste their time reporting on his actions? The Sabbatian movement's negative impact on trade often inspired comments of disdain from the European merchants who depended upon the Jews as middlemen in commerce and trade. For the Englishmen in Smyrna who witnessed the return of Sabbatai to his hometown as the messiah, they were painfully aware of the harmful effects of the messianic outbreak on their livelihoods: Jews closed their businesses to celebrate and spoke of leaving Smyrna permanently for Jerusalem. This caused such great concern for the English merchants that, in their regular letters to their business associate in Livorno, they wrote about the '[d]istraction amongst the Jewwes nation…which is no small detriment to trade'.[19]

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[11] *London Gazette*, 15 October 1666. The English deputy in Livorno, Charles Chillingworth similarly described him as 'the Jews pretended messia Sabata Sevi'. See TNA SP 97/18/233: although this is unsigned and undated, the handwriting appears to be that of Charles Chillingworth.
[12] TNA SP 97/18/156: A. Barnardiston, J. Adderley, and N. Thurston to Thomas Dethick, 17 February 1666.
[13] *London Gazette*, 1 February 1666.
[14] Ibid.
[15] ULL: Castelyn (ed.), *Hollandtze Mercurius*, 134: August 1666 as well as ULL: Castelyn (ed.), *Hollandtze Mercurius*, 33: March 1667.
[16] *Oprechte Haerlemse Saterdaegse Courant*, 4 September 1666, as quoted in van Wijk, *Wachtend op de Wolk naar Jeruzalem*, 62.
[17] SA Segreteria di Stato, Avvisi 148: Turin, 17 June 1666.
[18] ASV Senato Dispacci Ambasciatori Constantinopoli F. 150, 19b-21: Giavarina Ballarino to the Venetian doge and senate, 18 March 1666.
[19] TNA SP 97/18/156: A. Barnardiston, J. Adderley, and N. Thurston to Thomas Dethick, 17 February 1666.

Although the merchants' primary concern was economic, they were curious to learn more about the theological foundations of the Jewish 'delusion' so they went to their minister, John Luke, in hopes that he could explain the Jews' beliefs. Luke was an educated pastor and told them that the Jews' claims relied upon God's promises in Zachariah –promises that Jesus had fulfilled when he entered the second temple. Because the temple was destroyed shortly afterwards, the Jews would have to invent new scriptures in order to prove the authenticity of Sabbatai's messiahship.[20] With this knowledge in hand, the merchants had both theological and mercantile reasons to portray the Sabbatian movement negatively in their continued updates to their partners in Europe.

Much of the news from the Ottoman Empire came to England through merchant letters, such as these, that were passed along to English intermediaries in Tuscany who forwarded them to the secretary of state's office in London. There, Joseph Williamson, the undersecretary of state and editor of England's official news source, would print the information from the letters in the *London Gazette*. Considering this, it should not be surprising that the items about Sabbatai in the English press were from Smyrna and repeated the merchants' concerns,

> *Smyrna, Jan. 18.* Our trade has been of late much obstructed in these parts, all the Jews being in a kinde of distraction upon the arrival of *Sabadai,* a Prophetical Jew, a *Smirnaite* born, lately come from *Jerusalem,* who in few days has preached such opinions into these people; that having perswaded them the number of years is accomplisht, all of them are big with expectation of their *Messias,* and the full restauration of the Jews.[21]

The Sabbatian movement's effect on trade similarly inspired negative portrayals in the Low Countries. While Dutch pamphlets published reports about Sabbatai from an early date because there was money to be made in doing so, the editors of the two prominent gazettes, the *Oprechte Haerlemse Saterdaegse Courant* (OHSC) and the

[20] Ibid.
[21] *London Gazette*, 12 March 1666.

Oprechte Haerlemse Dingsdaegse Courant (OHDC), did not care about Sabbatai until his messianic following started to have an impact on the economy late in 1665. Then, between the 19th of December 1665 and the 2nd of January 1667, the *Oprechte Haerlemse Courants* published 39 items relating to the Jewish messianic outbreak in thirty editions. Previously, they had rarely devoted more than five lines a year to Jewish subjects, so the large amount of material about Sabbatianism is truly astounding.[22]

These sources were renowned for their objective reporting, and the readership of a 'sensible newspaper such as the Haerlemse Courant' would have been interested in the Sabbatian movement for its mercantile effects.[23] Yet the gazettes lost all sense of perspective in their presentation of the Jewish messianic hopes. Sabbatai's mission was a sad tragedy; the stories of his actions were mere fables. The gazettes only wished Sabbatai ill will.[24]

Jewish foreign trade was so important to the Dutch economy that multiple foreigners noted the concerns that were brought about by the Sabbatian believers' hoped-for restoration to the holy land. G. Willoughby wrote to Sir George Oxenden, the president of the East India Company at Surat, that the Jews were leaving Amsterdam for Jerusalem with expectations of their king, which would affect trade in the Dutch Republic.[25] Henry Oldenburg similarly told Lord William Brereton,

> 'The Holland letters continue their stories of the Jewes, and now tell us, yt they have appointed their Rendezvous at Jerusalem by ye first of Aprill, and yt the Jews at Amsterdam as well, as in other places, doe resigne their house, resolved to repaire for Palestina with the first conveniency. It may be, they will doe for so want of trade in Holland'.[26]

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[22] Van Wijk, 'The Rise and Fall of Shabbatai Zevi as Reflected in Contemporary Press Reports,' 24, 22.
[23] Maier and Waugh, '"The Blowing of the Messiah's Trumpet",' 152.
[24] Van Wijk, 'The Rise and Fall of Shabbatai Zevi as Reflected in Contemporary Press Reports,' 23.
[25] G. Willoughby to George Oxenden, 5 March 1666, as quoted in McKeon, 'Sabbatai Sevi in England,' 152.
[26] Henry Oldenburg to Lord Brereton, 16 January 1666, as quoted in Hall and Hall (eds.), *The Correspondence of Henry Oldenburg III*, 23.

While these men all wrote about the Sabbatian movement for mercantile reasons, the Venetian bailo in Istanbul, Giavarina Ballarino, thought Sabbatai was notable for the political implications of his following. No longer a religious impostor, Ballarino spoke of Sabbatai as if he was a leader of a rebellion against the Ottoman authorities: the Jewish messiah had forfeited his life as a 'auttor seditioso di comotione' (seditious author of a rebellion).[27] It was only Sabbatai's intelligence, sensible deportment, and eloquent Arabic that saved his life since the vizier, a lover of languages, took a liking to him.[28]

Although Ballarino described Sabbatai negatively as a 'falso messia', he made numerous concessions, including that the Jewish leader was 'di assai bella apparenza, ma di proffonda dottina' (of beautiful appearance, but [also] of great learning) who, after completing his severe penitential exercises, could make beams of light appear by his kabbalistic conjuration. An Italian avvisi from Turin agreed with Ballarino's assessment of Sabbatai's magical powers: it was 'con gl'effetti della sua eloquenza, e dell'Artemagica che possedeva, si era acquistato appresso i suoi il Titolo di Messia' (with the effects of his eloquence and the art of magic he possessed that he acquired for himself the title of messiah).[29]

Political and economic considerations were not the only reasons that Christians looked down on the Jewish messiah. Whether Catholic or Protestant, they also attacked Sabbatai in print in an attempt to defend their faith. Members of the Jesuit mission in

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[27] ASV Senato Dispacci Ambasciatori Constantinopoli F. 150, 19b-21: Giavarina Ballarino to the Venetian doge and senate, 18 March 1666.

[28] Ibid. Sabbatai's knowledge of Arabic is highly unlikely since his Turkish was poor, which suggests that Ballarino was ill informed and was only passing along news he had heard secondhand. Europeans in the Empire, however, tended to speak highly of Sabbatai's linguistic abilities. An unnamed English correspondent in Smyrna, for example, wrote that Sabbatai spoke Turkish with the *cadi*. See TNA SP 98/6: unnamed author, 20 February 1666.

[29] See SA Segreteria di Stato, Avvisi, 148: Turin, 17 June 1666. The original read: 'Alli 2. D'Aprile si cavò di prigione l'Hebreo, che con gl'effetti della sua eloquenza, e dell'Artemagica che possedeva, si era acquistato appresso i suoi il Titolo di Messia, e fù imbarcato sopra un Caico con un Campigi, e due altri Turchi, quali si ritornarono due giorni doppo la partenza; cosa che faceva credere ch'il falso Messia sia stato gittato nel Mare, quantonque sembrasse che con molti milla Reali gli havessero gli Hebrei stessi importata la Gratia della vita, e con l'offerta di cento milla ne cercassero la totale liberatione contro la sua voglia, mentre egli vantavasi di star in prigione per suo piacere, e di potersi liberare à sua posta.'

Istanbul sent letters about Sabbatai back to Italy where they were distributed to 'uphold the Christian faith, and to ridicule the Jews as being an infidel.'[30] Meanwhile, at the height of the messianic excitement in Amsterdam, a Reformed Christian penned a treatise of 'sijn grondigh Bewijs, dat Iesus is de Ware messias, in den Paradyse belooft, ende van alle de H. Propheten voorseght, tot waerschouwinge der Ioden' (his thorough proof that Jesus is the true messiah, promised in paradise and proclaimed by all the prophets to the sight of the Jews).[31] Not content to simply prove that Jesus was the messiah, the author appended a short educational pamphlet against the Jews in order to counter their new beliefs.

Even as far away as the American colonies, the Puritan minister Increase Mather responded to the Jewish messianic excitement by delving into the biblical scriptures, theological exegesis, and political texts about the Middle East in order to better defend the Christian position. His diary is full of references to reading the apocalyptic works on Revelation, Daniel, and Ezekiel by John Cotton, Thomas Brightman, Joseph Mede as well Henry Finch's *The Worlds Great Restauration or the Calling of the Jews*, 'Hornbeck contra Judaeos', 'Grovey of Turkish Empire', and 'Modern History of Turks, and Interest of Ctndome'.[32] All of his newly-acquired knowledge then came to the fore when he had '3 Jews with me whom I labored to convince that Messias is come'.[33]

Thus, many Christians across Europe and beyond simply dismissed the Jewish messiah's claims. Some attacked the Sabbatian movement because of its economic or political implications, others in order to defend Christianity. Regardless of their reasons, they reached the same conclusion. Sabbatai was nothing more than an impostor. His followers were clearly deluded.

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[30] Simonsohn, 'A Christian Report from Constantinople regarding Shabbethai Sevi (1666),' 32.
[31] *Oprechte Haerlemse Saterdaegse Courant*, 14 August 1666, as quoted in van Wijk, *Wachtend op de Wolk naar Jeruzalem*, 62.
[32] See AAS Mather Family Papers Box 3, Folder 1: Increase Mather's diary.
[33] Ibid.

Towards Objective Reporting

Other Christians were not as eager to reject the Jewish messiah outright. The letters of many Europeans reflected a more 'ambivalent attitude'.[34] They portrayed the Sabbatian movement in a semi-objective manner to inform or amuse their audience. An unnamed English correspondent in Smyrna, who witnessed the messianic movement firsthand, decided to write a multi-page report solely on Sabbatai in order to provide his associates in Tuscany and at home with a proper account of what was occurring in the Levant. This dispatch was a rare exception to the regular mercantile correspondence that dedicated no more than a paragraph or two to the Sabbatian movement in passing. This letter, which only survives amongst the papers of the Englishmen in Tuscany, presented (what appears to be) the closest known association between any European and the Jewish messiah.[35]

The unnamed author did not even remember Sabbatai's name. He began, 'his name I have forgott, but he was borne in Smyrna, & two of his brothers live there, & his father was a broker'.[36] He knew that some Jews believed Sabbatai 'was a great prophet, others that he said he was Elias, others that he was the Messia'.[37] Even the Englishman accepted that it was 'certaine, he was ever a man very much honored, & beloved for his upright conversation, fasting, & greate learning, having spent his time in study, from his youth.'[38]

Unlike the other Europeans, this man was not content to take the Jewish informants at their word. He went to see Sabbatai himself,

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[34] Goldish, *The Sabbatean Prophets,* 159.
[35] Although it is necessary to note that, according to Simonshon, the French ambassador M. La Haye and some French gentlemen visited Sabbatai in prison. For more on this interaction, see Simonsohn, 'A Christian Report from Constantinople regarding Shabbethai Sevi (1666),' 37.
[36] TNA SP 98/6: unnamed author, 20 February 1666.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid.

> I found him in Mr. Penning brokers house; he satt according to the Custome of Turkey, upon a Sapria covered with Carpetts, leaning upon a cloath of Gold cushin, with a Fan in one hand, & a small glob in th' other being a very proper, comely man some small books lying before him, to all that came to doe him reverence he gave a little nodd with his head, he had likwise before him, all sortes of Fish, Flesh, and sweet meates, they that were admitted to the feast, satt all upon their knees, of each side of him, stood men in humble posture, houlding downe their heads, with one hand upon their brest, in y-e other, one houlding a glasse of wine, an other water, an other a silver pott, w-th sweete water, to cool his face or hands, an other a Pott of Incense, an other a Fann, but none offred to touch either meate or drink, for himself they sayeth but once in 3 dayes, all kept silence, except those that sang & plaied on all sortes of Turkish Instruments of Musick, all that attended him were richly clothed.[39]

Realising the cross-religious significance of Sabbatai's appearance in 1666 for Jews, Christians and Muslims, the author once again provided competing views of the Jewish messiah,

> He [Sabbatai] must be a very cunning fellow, that finding not only that its the greate expectation of all Christendome, something miraculous should be produced this yeare, drawne from scripture, but also the Jewes & Turkes themselves are possest of the same, hath taken this fit time to shew himself, when the world is disposd to receive any novelty, but others give their judgment, that he may be only a fit instrument in Gods hand to punish ye Jewes for their sins.[40]

The unnamed correspondent wrote that it was others, not he, who judged Sabbatai as only fit to be God's instrument to punish the Jews, but his own Christian background lurked just below the surface for he added, 'it was reported by severall, that some Jewes (though secretly for feare of ye rest) had confessed, that he [Sabbatai] tould them, he had found by dilligent search, & study of ye Prophetts, that ye Messia was certenly come, & that was return'd to heaven againe'.[41] Sabbatai therefore apparently told the Jews that the messiah had already come and gone, a view that nicely coincides with the Christian position.

The Englishmen in Tuscany received many letters about the Jewish messiah from their associates in Smyrna, and some of them too withheld their immediate judgement in

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[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid. At another point, he added that 'so strangely are the people possessd with prodigious appearances in 1666'.
[41] Ibid.

their own reports. The English deputy consul in Livorno, Charles Chillingworth, told Lord Arlington in London of the news he heard from 'fresh letters this weeke from Constantinople' about the arrival of 'the Jewish Prophet'.[42] Chillingworth's boss, the English consul John Finch in Florence, similarly referred to Sabbatai as the 'Jews Messiah',[43] not a pretended messiah or an impostor.

Finch, however, took the news less seriously. He passed on 'the rumor of the Jews messiah…desiring my Lord Arlington might have some divergent after his weighty affayrs are dispatchd'.[44] The English consul thought the story of Sabbatai was not news of significance, it was only important for its entertainment value. When the Sabbatian movement was still a topic of discussion among the Englishmen in Tuscany six months later, Finch continued to mention it in his regular dispatches to London. His outlook had not changed. After presenting the latest political and military events in the Mediterranean world, he added,

> And since I have mentioned the Levant I cannot but acquaint your Lordship with the Table talke of the Jew's messiah: no less than 8000 people in one day go to visit Sabbatai in the castle where he is treated like a king, given a daily allowance, and is allowed to go abroad whenever he pleases.[45]

Unlike the merchants and diplomats in the Ottoman Empire, Finch considered the Sabbatian movement mere 'Table talke'. It was a popular topic of conversation, not a grave concern. Regardless, the information from Finch's letter was printed in the *London Gazette* a month later when it reported, 'Fresh news is every day brought us of the great zeal of the *Jews* in the *Levant,* to the pretended *Messiah* who flock in such numbers to him,

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[42] TNA SP 98/6: Charles Chillingworth to Lord Arlington, 12 April 1666.
[43] TNA SP 98/6: John Finch to Lord Arlington, 22 February 1666.
[44] TNA SP 98/6: John Finch to Joseph Williamson, 12 February 1666. Ten days later, Finch reported to Lord Arlington that he had 'sent a relation of the Jews Messiah to Mr Williamson' in the same letter that he noted that 'Yesterday by the convenience of my Lord of Winchelsea's chaplyn returnd the whole factory at my House heard the Common Prayer and a Sermon'. This suggests that the relation about Sabbatai possibly came to Tuscany with Winchelsea's chaplain. See TNA SP 98/6: John Finch to Lord Arlington, 22 February 1666.
[45] TNA SP 98/7: John Finch to Lord Arlington, 18 September 1666. Finch too enclosed a copy of the notice he received about Sabbatai, another source no longer extant.

that in one day no less then 8000 strangers were in the Castle, where he is prisoner, to see him; that when he goes abroad (which is as oft as he pleases) he is always attended as a King, to the admiration of all sober men.'[46]

Although Finch did not take the messianic movement seriously, the secretary of state was collecting accounts of the Jewish messiah –possibly because he thought they were newsworthy. Sir William Temple wrote to the earl of Carlingford from Brussels in December of 1665,

> In my Lord Arlingtons last hee sent mee in payment of a fanatick relation I gave him of the Jews and their new Messias, and old prophecy w-ch hee read himself in an old manuscript at Oxford writ about Harry the 6th time, w-ch begins with the prediction of our loss of all wee had in France and God knows what it ends with but the Eagle having so much share in it, I thought it might entertain you at Vienna, for in these matters God knows I have not faith like a grain of mustard seed, though I censure none that has.[47]

Temple, a skeptic himself, did not 'censure' any who believed and forwarded the relation to the secretary of state without any critical remarks.

Alongside the letters from the English diplomats, at least one Italian avviso gave a more objective account of the Sabbatian movement. While the Turin avvisi, the English *Gazette* and the Dutch *Oprechte Haerlemse Courants* all frequently described Sabbatai as a false messiah, an Italian avviso (which appears to be) from Genoa called Sabbatai the 'nuovo Principe degli Ebrei' (new Prince of the Jews).[48] It also told of how the letters from the Egyptian Jewry to their European brethren urged the Jews to leave their homelands in order to go and bow down before their new prophet. Simply repeating the story and referring to Nathan of Gaza as the Jews' awaited prophet, the avvisi editor did

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[46] *London Gazette*, 15 October 1666.
[47] BRB Carlingford Papers Box 2, Folder 64, Series II: William Temple to Theobald Taaffe, 3 December 1665.
[48] The original stated, 'Sopra l'avviso di prigionia al nuovo Principe degli Ebrei in Costantinopoli venuta la passata settimana, un tal Ebreo quì ditto Naso si pose a predicare nella Moschea, disendo che questo non poteva essere, che un Seduttore del Popolo d'Israele, & un Furbo, perche se veramente fusse Profeta, saprebbe uscir di carcare, e fare altri miracoli, e volendo avanzarsi troppo offesa di costui, se gli voltantono contro molti Ebrei, che lo maltrattorno con percosse e feriste: onde ricorso all Giustizia faranno gastigati severamente i deliquenti.' SA Segreteria di Stato, Avvisi, 148: Genoa, 15 May 1666.

not judge the Jewish movement; he only labelled the news a 'curiosita'.[49] As a curiosity, for entertainment, or as information that was sought after or believed to be relevant, the reasons that these Christians wrote about the Sabbatian movement varied. Yet none of them openly condemned Sabbatai and his followers. These sources were more objective.

Fear, Millenarianism, and the Co-optation of Jewish Expectations

As Christians across Europe were informed of the Sabbatian movement in letters, pamphlets and gazettes, some became seriously concerned with the Jewish messiah. Could the Jews be right? Had the messiah that they had spoken about for centuries actually come and, if so, what did this mean for Christians?

With the large number of English publications about Sabbatai constantly circulating, the 'news of the messianic claimant and his followers made a greater impact on Christians in London than on Jews'.[50] Some Christians were worried. Henry Oldenburg told Robert Boyle about two letters which highlight Christian fear that the Jewish hopes may prove true. One was from the French ambassador in Istanbul who wrote, 'Here there is great news about the King of the Jews, who is expected here soon; and it is said that the Sultan will be happy to yield him the Crown of Palestine. Most of the Jews have abandoned business, preparing themselves to go to Jerusalem. At first Mr. Legendre and I made fun of them, paying little heed to all this; but now appearances make us fear that all is not well.'[51] The other was from the French consul in Smyrna, 'Important news has reached here with the arrival of a King of the Jews in this city, a person of great

[49] The original read, 'Con Nave venuta d'Alessandria d'Egitto si sono intese alcune curiosita, cioè che gli Ebrei di quelle Provincie avessero scritto a tutti gli Ebrei dell'Europa, fusse venuto in quelle parti il loro aspettato Profeta, esortando ciascuno ad abbandonar le proprie Patrie per andar colà a vederlo, & inchinarlo, e gia intendevasi, che molti di quelli di diversi Stati altro non attendevano, ch'un replicaro avviso, per intraprender sì lungo peregrinaggio' BNCF Codd Magliabechiani XXV, 743, 151b*:* Genoa, 9 January 1666.
[50] Endelman, *The Jews of Britain, 1656 to 2000*, 32.
[51] See Henry Oldenburg to Robert Boyle, 6 March 1666, as quoted in Hall and Hall (eds.), *The Correspondence of Henry Oldenburg III*, 49-51.

consequence and wisdom; even the Turks hold him in esteem. Our nation lives in some fear. God grant that he will cause us no harm.'[52] Even the English *Gazette* remarked with apprehension about the advancing Jewish movement, '*Constantinople, Feb. 19.* We have no small apprehension of these frequent Intelligences we receive, all of them bigg with relations of great Tumults in *Palestine; Sabadai,* their pretended Prophet, growing every day more powerfull'.[53]

After hearing all the reports about Sabbatai, Nathan and their Jewish followers, one Protestant author summarised the problematic implications of the stories, 'Being in a spirit of Judaism, in great power, led by a holy man, doing great miracles, and all things answering the description of the Messias, they may expect that it would be a testimony that the Christians and other people and Nations should be gathered in to the Jews, and not the Jews into Christ.'[54] The Jewish messiah was causing some Christians to question their own faith.

While Sabbatai's claims were generally frowned upon in Catholic circles, the rise of philo-Semitism in certain Protestant circles meant that an assortment of English and Dutch millenarians were ready to entertain news of the Jewish messiah with at least some enthusiasm because they made the obvious connection between the Jewish messianic hopes and their own great expectations for the year 1666.[55] Some Protestants anticipated the return of Jesus, others the start of the millennium, and more expected the conversion of the Jews to occur. As John Sparrow noted in his diary in this year, 'Mr Jekyll said ye

[52] Ibid.
[53] *London Gazette*, 8 March 1666.
[54] See *The Restauration of the Jews* (1665).
[55] McKeon, 'Sabbatai Sevi in England,' 161.

More had no News of the Jewes, but they must certainly be called before the Beast be donne at 666'.[56]

Philo-Semitism gave way to Judeocentric millenarianism, which led a few Protestants to accept and co-opt the Jewish expectations, reframing them in terms of their Christian eschatological beliefs. Not sure what to make of the Jewish messiah, the Protestants were hopeful that the stories of the Jewish restoration would prove true. After all, the Christian apocalyptic sequence had long ago incorporated the Jews' return to the holy land, so this event could be understood as proof that Jesus' millennial kingdom was at hand. Upon hearing of the Jewish restoration, Oldenburg wrote, 'Here everyone spreads a rumor that the Jews having been dispersed for more than two thousand years are to return to their country. Few in this place believe it, but many wish for it.'[57] Around the same time, a report from Amsterdam that was printed in the English *Gazette* expressed bewilderment over the Christian interest in this news, 'It is strange, not onely the *Jews* here, but some hundreds that own the name of Christians among us, think themselves concerned in it'. [58]

Meanwhile, the Dutch *Haeghsche Post-Tydingen* featured a '[l]etter from a Catholic from Rome regarding the End of the World and the Jewish Messiah or King.'[59] Interpreting the letter in relation to his own beliefs, the author stated that the Jews were 'speared like a harpooned Whale' and would 'embrace true Christianity/ which will be the end of their blindness: and the end of the World.'[60] He was certain that this must happen

[56] MS Rawlinson Essex 23: John Sparrow's diary, 1666. An annotated edition of this journal will be released by Leigh Penman and Ariel Hessayon next year. Many thanks to Leigh Penman for providing a copy of the manuscript.
[57] Henry Oldenburg to Baruch Spinoza, 8 December 1665, as translated and quoted in Hall and Hall (eds.), *The Correspondence of Henry Oldenburg III*, 637.
[58] *Oxford Gazette*, 7 December 1665.
[59] *Haeghsche Post-Tydingen*, 14 July 1665, as translated and quoted in van Wijk, 'The Rise and Fall of Shabbatai Zevi as Reflected in Contemporary Press Reports,' 18: the front focused on the Anglo-Dutch war.
[60] Ibid.

because the 'end of the World must as many say/ be nigh now...that is, the year sixteen-hundred and sixty-six'.[61]

In the American colonies, the Puritans focused on the Jewish restoration that dovetailed with their beliefs and ignored the Jewish messiah. While none of their extant diaries or correspondence specifically referred to Sabbatai, many of them mentioned the hoped-for Jews' return to Jerusalem. John Davenport wrote from New Haven, 'If that of the Jewes be true wee may easily see what god is bringing about in the world even the greatest changes that have beene since the 1st coming of Christ.'[62] Then, turning to the book of Revelation, he placed this news in terms of his Christian expectations. For him, it meant that '[t]he witnesses that are now killed, shall arise shortly'[63] –a necessary step in the apocalyptic sequence.

When Cotton Mather heard that the Jews were beginning to flock to Jerusalem with great signs and wonders, he thought that the vision of Ezekiel was on the verge of fulfilment: the dry bones of the whole house of Israel were being gathered to their home. Based on this report, he too concluded that the return of Jesus was imminent, and he wanted to hasten that day by converting the Jews to the 'true religion'.[64] Increase Mather also understood the stories of the Jews flocking to Jerusalem in a similar manner. It seemed to him, like it 'seemed to many godly and judicious [people] to be a beginning of that Prophesie [Ezekiel 37:7].'[65] All of this, of course, was expected to bring about the conversion of the Jews and then the millennial kingdom of Jesus.[66]

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[61] Ibid.
[62] John Davenport to William Goodwin, 2 September 1665, as quoted in Calder (ed.) *Letters of John Davenport*, 257.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Marcus, *The Colonial American Jew 1492-1776*, 1140: see Increase Mather, *The Mystery of Israel's Salvation* (1669).
[65] Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi*, 549.
[66] This Judeocentric Puritan millenarian vision was also found in the writings of other English and American Protestants, including Thomas Brightman. For more on this idea, see Cogley, 'The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Restoration of Israel in the "Judeo-Centric" Strand of Puritan Millenarianism,' 304-332.

In sum, both Catholics and Protestants feared that the Jewish messianic hopes might prove true; however, the rise of philo-Semitism and Judeocentric millenarianism led certain Protestants to co-opt the Jewish beliefs, understanding them in terms of their own Christian eschatological expectations. They chose to ignore the messiah at the same time that they accepted the Jewish restoration which they too perceived as necessary before the end would come.

Cross-Religious Fusion

The co-optation of the Jewish messianic excitement by Protestants took its most extreme form among those Christians, like Petrus Serrarius, who mixed the Jewish beliefs with their Christian ones to such an extent that they blurred the boundary between the two faiths. The first statement by a Christian about the Jewish messiah is found in a letter from Serrarius to John Dury,[67] and Serrarius became the source of much of the Sabbatian news that reached the broader Dutch and English populations. In the Low Countries, his letters about the Jewish movement were printed in pamphlets such as *Herstelling van de Joden* (1665) and *Translaet uyt een Brief van Sale in Barbaryeen, in Dato den 6 Augusti 1665* (1665).[68] In England, they appeared in *The Jewes Message to their Brethren in Holland* (1665), *The Restauration of the Jewes* (1665), *The Last Letters to the London Merchants* (1665), *Several New Letters concerning the Jews* (1666), *A New Letter* (1666), *Gods Love to His People Israel* (1666), and *The Wonder of All Christendom* (1666).

Like many Protestant millenarians, Serrarius was fascinated with the stories from the Levant because they reaffirmed his belief that the world was about to end. He too focused on the Jewish restoration to the holy land, which he believed was necessary before

[67] Van der Wall, 'The Amsterdam Millenarian Petrus Serrarius (1600-1669) and the Anglo-Dutch Circle of Philo-Judaists,' 90.
[68] Van der Wall, *De Mystieke Chiliast Petrus Serrarius (1600-1669) en Zijn Wereld*, 415. The latter is reproduced in Adri Offenberg, 'Uit de Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana,' *Studia Rosenthaliana* Vol. 29, No. 1 (1995), 91-99.

Jesus would return. Unlike most millenarians, Serrarius took this belief one step further. He argued that the Christians should support the Jews and join them rejoicing in the holy land. In fact, he planned to travel there himself.[69]

Serrarius displayed an incredible sympathy for Jewish messianism unrivalled by any of his chiliastic brethren. He did not ignore the news of the Jews' messiah. Instead, he followed the Sabbatian movement keenly, persistently supported the messiah's adherents in Amsterdam, and interpreted Sabbatai's actions as a prelude to the messianic age.[70] As a Protestant scholar, how could he incorporate a Jewish messiah into his Christian millenarian beliefs?

It was his friend, the Jewish rabbi Menasseh ben Israel, who had supplied Serrarius with the intellectual theory that allowed him to give the Jews' new saviour a role within his Protestant apocalyptic scenario, and Serrarius meshed the growing Jewish messianic spirit with the established Christian millenarian tradition. Years earlier, Menasseh told Serrarius about the two-messiah theory, a Jewish development in which the character of the messiah was split into a messiah of the house of David and a messiah of the house of Joseph.[71] This theory was not widely known until Isaac La Peyrere used it, in his *Du Rappel des Juifs* (1643), to solve the biggest problem in Jewish-Christian reconciliation, namely the Christian claim that the Jewish messiah had already come. Queen Christian of Sweden was so enchanted with La Peyrere's ideas that she kept a copy of his treatise in her library and showed it to Menasseh when he came to visit her.[72] Menasseh too was captivated with the two-messiah theory and introduced it to the Christian community in

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[69] Van der Wall, *De Mystieke Chiliast Petrus Serrarius (1600-1669) en Zijn Wereld*, 409-410.
[70] Ibid., 627. Serrarius provided his perspective of Sabbatai in the prologue to his *Verklaringe over des Propheten Jesaia Veertien Eerste Capittelen* (1666).
[71] Scholem, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism*, 18.
[72] For more on La Peyrere, see Richard Popkin, 'Millenarianism and Nationalism –A case Study: Isaac La Peyrere,' *The Millenarianism and Messianism in Early Modern European Culture IV* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001), 77-84 and Richard Popkin (ed.), *Isaac La Peyrere (1596-1676): His Life, Work and Influence* (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 1987). For more on Menasseh ben Israel's relationship with Queen Christina of Sweden, see David Katz, 'Menasseh ben Israel's Mission to Queen Christina of Sweden, 1651-1655,' *Jewish Social Studies* Vol. 45, No. 1 (Winter, 1983), 57-72.

1654. Then, in *Vindicae Judaeorum* (1656), the Jewish rabbi transformed La Peyrere's conversionist discourse and proposed the two-messiah theory as the solution to the conflict between Judaism and Christianity,

> For, as a most learned Christian of our time hath written, in a French book, which he calleth the Rappel of the Iewes (in which he makes the King of France to be their leader, when they shall return to their country,) the Iewes, saith he, shall be saved, for yet we expect a second coming of the same Messias; and the Iewes believe that the coming is the first, and not the second, and by that faith they shall be saved; for the difference consists onely in the circumstance of the time.[73]

This theory enabled Serrarius to accept Sabbatai's messiahship without diminishing his faith in Jesus, and he wove the two religious traditions together in a manner that led him down the path of universalism. Like Menasseh and La Peyrere, Serrarius believed that the approaching end of history would be accompanied by a period of universal peace for all people. He was a keen follower of the Jewish messiah because he thought that both Jews and Christians were partially blind; the truth was to be found in synthesising the knowledge that each had appropriated. Indeed, the complementary nature of Christianity and Judaism was at the heart of Serrarius' millenarianism.[74]

Serrarius grounded his acceptance of both the Jewish restoration and Sabbatai's messiahship upon this theological foundation. Serrarius anticipated the redemption and restoration of all twelve tribes of Israel long before 1665, so the stories of the return of the Lost Tribes that emerged in this year and were tied to the Jewish messianic movement prepared Serrarius to recognise Sabbatai as the messiah. Serrarius attacked his opponents who called the reports of the Israelites fables because, according to him, they did not believe in the Lost Tribes and therefore would not accept the truth of the Jewish king and

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[73] Menasseh ben Israel, *Vindicae Judaeorum* (1656), 18.
[74] Ernestine van der Wall, 'Mystical Millenarianism in the Early Modern Dutch Republic,' *The Millenarianism and Messianism in Early Modern European Culture IV* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001), 41-43.

prophet either.[75] The Dutch scholar compared his Christian brethrens' rejection of Sabbatai to the Jews' rejection of Jesus and, turning to the words of Paul in the Bible, he stated that the Christians needed to show mercy to the Jews so that the Jews would then find the mercy (read salvation) of the Christians.[76]

Serrarius' correspondent, John Dury, was similarly intrigued with the Jewish messiah and tried to determine how Sabbatai fitted into the coming eschatological sequence. Compared to Serrarius' unrestrained belief in the Sabbatian movement as the beginning of the Christian millennium, Dury's support was more moderate: Sabbatai was only the king of the Jews for the Jewish state. God was rewarding the Jews by giving them their messiah first because the Christians were not sufficiently reformed. The Protestants should support the Jews and work towards Jewish-Christian reconciliation.[77]

Although these Christian intellectuals tried to define and defend their beliefs, the 'distinct divisions that scholars and theologians, both Christian and Muslim drew between their respective faiths, in practice were much more flexible and overlapped in the minds of the masses'.[78] Such a perspective explains one of the most unbridled Christian responses to the Jewish messiah. During the height of the Sabbatian movement, an unnamed Christian girl in Smyrna proclaimed that Sabbatai was the messiah in an ecstatic outburst. She later said that she did not remember what had happened but then went on to confirm her faith in Sabbatai before a priest and other people. While it is not known what type of Christian she was, she was a 'real Christian' who became a Sabbatian prophetess.[79]

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[75] For more on Serrarius' beliefs in the Lost Tribes and the Sabbatian movement, see 'Hoofstuck X: Sabbatai Sevi, Nathan van Gaza en de Terugkeer van de Tien Verloren Stammen' in Van der Wall, *De Mystieke Chiliast Petrus Serrarius (1600-1669) en Zijn Wereld*, 399-464.
[76] Van der Wall, *De Mystieke Chiliast Petrus Serrarius (1600-1669) en Zijn Wereld*, 408-412.
[77] For more on John Dury, see J. Minton Batten, *John Dury: Advocate of Christian Reunion* (Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 1944).
[78] Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople*, 183.
[79] Goldish, *The Sabbatean Prophets*, 159-160.

Thus, the rise of the Jewish messianic movement triggered a broad spectrum of Christian responses. Some simply dismissed Sabbatai outright. Others were more cautious and withheld judgement. They repeated the stories that they heard to inform or entertain their audience. While both Catholics and Protestants feared that the Jewish messiah may actually prove authentic, the growth of philo-Semitism and Judeocentric millenarianism led certain Protestants to co-opt the Jewish hopes. Most of these people only accepted the Jewish restoration to the holy land, which was part of the anticipated Christian apocalyptic scenario; however, a few of them fused the Jewish and Christian beliefs together to create new ones that blurred the boundaries between Judaism and Christianity.

The Islamic *Dajjal* or Antichrist

Although some Christians accepted the Jewish messiah's ability to perform miracles, none of them, not even his harshest critics, considered Sabbatai the antichrist –the legendary person who is expected to have miraculous powers, gain power for a limited period of time, and wage war on God's chosen people before Jesus returns and rules earth in his millennial kingdom.

Unlike the Christians, Muslims saw Sabbatai as their apocalyptic enemy. In the Islamic eschatological sequence, Muslims anticipate the arrival of a figure similar to the Christian antichrist known as the *dajjal* (in Arabic). Considering the shared nature of the Abrahamic faiths, it should not be surprising that Muslims' believe the dajjal will have miraculous powers, raise an army of deceivers, gain dominion for a limited period of time that is either 40 days or 40 years, and allow impurity and tyranny to rule the world. In some traditions, Muslims even anticipate the return of Jesus who will fight and defeat the

dajjal, ushering in a period of bliss in which Islam will be universally accepted by all people.

The appearance of the dajjal is one of the proofs that the end times is upon humanity, and more than one Muslim believed that Sabbatai was the dajjal. In Yemen, Arabic writers represented Sabbatai and his supporters, whose movement expected the end of Islamic power, as the dajjal and his evil forces.[80] In Istanbul, the Bektashi leader Muhammad Niyazi was a friend of Sabbatai and was seen by his Muslim followers as the messiah too. It 'seems obvious that his [Niyazi's] eschatological effervescence contributed in no small measure to similar frenzied reactions within the Jewish camp. Conversely, the appearance of a Jewish *daggal* [dajjal] and the excitement which attended it could only but have heightened this Muslim messianic fever'.[81] In short, the dovetailing Jewish and Islamic messianic movements coupled with the Islamic interpretation of Sabbatai as the dajjal created a reciprocal cross-religious influence that contributed to the growth of eschatological excitement among members of both faiths.

The Turning Point

Returning to Christendom, stories about the Lost Tribes and the Jews' messiah had circulated in correspondences, pamphlets and gazettes across Europe for over a year, so Christians were well aware of the messianic excitement that had continued uninterrupted through Sabbatai's arrest and imprisonment. Anticipation was at its peak across the Jewish world when Sabbatai was finally called before the Ottoman divan. Nathan had claimed that Sabbatai 'will take the dominion from the Turkish king without war...and all the kings shall be tributary unto him, but only the Turkish king will be his servant.'[82] Because this prophecy had been spread in letters to Jewish communities across the Levant

[80] Van Koningsveld, Sadan and Al-Samarrai, *Yemenite Authorities and Jewish Messianism*, 14.
[81] Fenton, 'Shabbetay Sebi and His Muslim Contemporary Muhammed an-Niyazi', 87.
[82] Nathan of Gaza to Raphael Joseph as translated and quoted in Goldish, *The Sabbatean Prophets*, 76-77.

and Europe, the Sabbatian believers all expected the sultan to grant Sabbatai authority over the holy land and offer to become his servant at their meeting. One Jew in London was so certain that this would occur that he was willing to bet, with ten to one odds, that Sabbatai would be named by the Ottoman sultan and other political authorities as the 'King of the World and True Messiah'.[83] Not only did the Sabbatians believe that the Muslims would be overwhelmed by their new messiah but, as the aforementioned correspondences attest, some Christians were worried that the Jews would indeed be right.

Much to his followers' dismay, Sabbatai's examination in the divan did not unfold according to Nathan's prophecy. Standing in front of the highest members of the Ottoman government, Sabbatai was given an ultimatum. The choice, he was told, was simple: convert to Islam or die. The executioner was ready if he wanted to die a martyr. Although Sabbatai was shocked, he relented. He had no other options. Agreeing to convert, he walked out of the interview not with the sultan as his servant, but as the new Muslim servant of the sultan.

Word of the apostasy spread like wildfire and stunned all who heard it. Despite their location far away from the Ottoman court, the English merchants in Smyrna knew about Sabbatai's conversion within three weeks.[84] In fact, multiple versions of the event had already proliferated by this time. Relaying the account that they had heard to their business associate in Livorno, the merchants wrote that everything began when one of Sabbatai's disciples, a 'polonese Jew', apostatised to Islam and claimed Sabbatai was a 'greate Impostor' who would lead the Jews into rebellion against the Ottoman authorities if they did not respond quickly. The Ottoman government convened and decided to massacre all the Jews above the age of three to solve the problem. While the heads of the Jewish community could not get the sentence revoked, when Sabbatai was called before

[83] Freely, *The Lost Messiah*, 117.
[84] McKeon, 'Sabbatai Sevi in England,' 155.

the divan and asked of 'which religion was of, hee readily replyed that hee had searched into all but found none so right the truth as that of Mahomett which hee willingly entertain'd, relinquishing the law of Moses and by that means hath obtained the Jewes deliverance from the sword.'[85]

Transmitted along mercantile and political channels via the English colony in Tuscany, this narrative came to England in a slightly altered form and was printed in the *London Gazette*,

> [A] learned Jew from *Germany* (others say *Poland*) had seven or eight days conference with him [Sabbatai], who finding much vanity and weakness in his pretences and arguments, left him with much dissatisfaction and repairing to the Turkish Mosque turned Turk, declaring *Sabadai* to be an Impostor, and if care were not taken, he might draw the Jews into a Rebellion: of which, advice being sent to the Grand Signior, *Sabadai* was by order carried to *Adrianople*, where being examined by the *Chaymacham* and *Muftee*, he was by them sent to the Grand Signior in whose presence, He, with one of his Fellows, freely exchanged the Law of *Moses* for that of *Mahomet*, and was by the Grand Signior made a Cappegee Baffa, and called *Mahomet:* The same Letters tell us that the Grand Signior upon consideration of the great expectations and endeavors of the Jews to promote the interest of their new pretended King, has given command for cutting off all that Nation from seven years old and upwards, which upon their humiliation and intercession of the new Proselite was revoked...[86]

Although it is not certain if genocide was actually threatened, this story bares a strong resemblance to that of Queen Esther in the Bible who saved the Jewish nation from imminent slaughter through her intercession with the king. This similarity was noticed by the Englishmen in Smyrna who noted that the Jews 'look on this deliverance not Inferior to that procured by Q[ueen] Ester',[87] and that the Jews believe it was 'Equal with that of Haman & Mordecai.'[88] Once again, the story of Esther was serving as a vital reference

[85] TNA SP 97/18/212: S. Pentlow, J. Foley, and T. Laxton to Thomas Dethick, 29 September 1666.
[86] *London Gazette*, 26 November 1666.
[87] TNA SP 97/18/214: S. Pentlow, J. Foley, and T. Laxton to Thomas Dethick, 9 October 1666. This comparison found its way into the London *Gazette* which reported that Sabbatai 'freely exchanged the Law of *Moses* for that of *Mahomet*', and with that, the Jews escaped severe punishment, which they 'look upon as a deliverance not inferior to that procured by Queen *Esther*'. See the *London Gazette*, 26 November 1666.
[88] TNA SP 97/18/211: A. Barnardiston, J. Adderley, and N. Thurston to Thomas Dethick, 9 October 1666.

point for the Jewish Sabbatian believers. In this case, it may have even informed the story of Sabbatai's conversion in a manner that justified and glorified his actions.

An English pamphlet by Serrarius titled *Gods Love to His People Israel* provided a competing account of the apostasy. Face to face with the Jewish messiah, the sultan asked him if could perform miracles. When Sabbatai only answered, 'Sometimes,' the sultan told him that he could either convert to Islam or be stripped naked and have arrows shot at him to determine if he was invincible. Not liking the latter option, Sabbatai chose to become a Muslim.[89]

An avviso in Torino similarly told of how the sultan wanted Sabbatai to perform a miracle; however, it claimed that the head of the Ottoman Empire warned the Jewish messiah that if he did not then he would be burnt to death. When Sabbatai saw them kindling a fire before him, he converted to Islam and the sultan assigned him a pension of forty *soldi* a day to be his captain of the gate.[90]

One of the most unique descriptions of the apostasy that was distributed across Europe provided a version of the event that upheld Christian values. This narrative first appeared in a newsletter from Rome entitled the *Lettera Mandata da Costantinopoli a Roma Intorno al Nuovo Messia de gli Ebrei* (1667). Told by the sultan that he must convert to Islam to 'remove the scandal' he had created, Sabbatai replied that 'he was more pleased in his noble company, in front of which he found himself to say in a loud voice that he was a Turk, and that he wanted to persevere to the end of his life in the laws

[89] Serrarius, *Gods Love to His People Israel*.
[90] The original stated, 'Accertano da Constantinopoli, che il falso Messia, che si supponeva annegato, era stato tramutato in altra prigione per difficoltare la commodità alli Hebrei di potergli parlare, com'era loro stato concesso, e che poi saltò in capriccio al Gran Sultano di far sperimento del di lui potere con proporgli di fare alcuni miracoli, quali non riuscendo voleva, nonostante la contributione di tanti Reali fattasi da suoi per liberarlo dalla morte, farlo abbruggiare, mà sgombratogli ogni vano errore dal capo alla vista del fuoco si fece Renegato per evitare il supplicio in ricompensa di che soggiungono (come per altre è Huomo di gran sapere) ch' il medemo Gran Sultano gli assignò una pensione di quaranta soldi per giono, e l'honorò d'una Carica di Capitano della Porta con scorno del suo sciocco Hebraismo, che da lungi concorreva per adorarlo, come il suo vero Profeta.' SA Segreteria di Stato, Avvisi, 148: Turin, 16 December 1666.

of Muhammad.'[91] That is not enough, Sabbatai was told. He was ordered to 'confess here aloud that there is no other messiah than Jesus Christ Son of Mary' who came along time ago.[92] Sabbatai responded that 'Jesus Christ is the only messiah' and that it was mad and ignorant for the Jews to expect another.[93]

Protestant millenarians in Amsterdam and London knew about this story too. John Sparrow remarked in his diary, 'Serrarius has a Letter from a Protestant at Constantinople who wrote that Sabbathai was turned Turk having p[ro]fessedly declared yt Jesus Xt was the true messiah.'[94] Thus, the letter from a Dutch Protestant in Istanbul that was printed in the heart of the Catholic world and spread throughout northern Europe claimed that the Muslim Ottoman authorities forced the Jewish messiah to confess that Jesus was the true messiah when he converted to Islam –a narrative that blurred the religious boundaries between all three Abrahamic faiths.

Despite of, and probably due to, the proliferation of so many versions of the apostasy, some European Jews refused to believe that Sabbatai had converted. Surely it cannot be true, they thought. Sabbatai was supposed to redeem them, not become a Muslim. According to a letter from Serrarius to Oldenburg, the Sephardim in Amsterdam remained in denial for quite some time,

> As for the Jews their hope revives more and more. Those of Vienna having sent an Expres to Adrianopolis, do writ, that their Man doth affirm, to have spoken with Sabithai Sebi and found him, not turned Turck, but a Jew as ever in the same hope and expectation as before. Yea, from Smyrna by way of Marcelles we have, that at Constantinople the Jews return to their fasting and praying as before: and so doe some here likewise.[95]

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[91] TNA SP 120/116: *Lettera Mandata da Costantinopoli a Roma Intorno al Nuovo Messia de gli Ebrei* (Rome, 1667).
[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid.
[94] MS Rawlinson Essex 23: John Sparrow's diary, 1666.
[95] P[eter] S[errarius] to Henry Oldenburg, 5 July 1667, as quoted in Hall and Hall (eds.), *The Correspondence of Henry Oldenburg III*, 446-447.

Even the editor of the Dutch gazette thought that the Jews' refusal to believe the news was worth reporting. After telling of the messiah's apostasy, a news item in the *Oprechte Haerlemse Saterdaegse Courant* simply stated, 'De Joden gelooven noch niet de Tydinghe van haren Messias' (The Jews do not believe the tidings of their messiah).[96] Then, when confirmation of the apostasy came from multiple sources, first in a ship from Smyrna[97] and then in letters from Italy, the gazette eloquently summarised the conclusion of the messianic drama, 'soo wordt men van dromen wacker' (it is as if one awakes from dreams).[98]

'Greate Hopes'

When the Jews finally came to the realisation that their messiah had actually converted to Islam, most cursed Sabbatai and never wanted to hear his name mentioned again. Some even destroyed the letters, prayerbooks, and records associated with Sabbatai's messiahship and denied ever believing in him in the first place.

As the Jewish world reeled in anger and dismay, the Christians who had always considered Sabbatai a 'pretended messiah' found vindication. Almost all the positive and objective reports about the messiah and his former followers disappeared; they were quickly replaced by an overwhelming majority of letters, gazettes, and pamphlets penned by Christians that lambasted Sabbatai as an impostor and his adherents as gullible and easily deceived.

Christian disdain, however, was accompanied by great hopes for the Jews. First and foremost, Christians hoped that the Jews would return to the business and trade that

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[96] *Oprechte Haerlemse Saterdaegse Courant*, 13 November 1666, as quoted in van Wijk, *Wachtend op de Wolk naar Jeruzalem*, 66

[97] Ibid. The original stated, 'Het Schip de St. Victor, van Smirne komende, is alhier gearriveert, ende met de selve Brieven van daer van den 13 October, confirmerende, de genaemde Ioodse Messias Turckx geworden was.'

[98] *Oprechte Haerlemse Saterdaegse Courant*, 27 November 1666, as quoted in van Wijk, *Wachtend op de Wolk naar Jeruzalem*, 67.

they had neglected during the messianic outburst. While the English merchants in Smyrna accused Sabbatai of working with Nathan of Gaza for 'neare 20 yeares' to cause 'greate disturbances amongst the Jewes pretending to bee their Messiah',[99] they added that there 'is now greate hopes trade will suddenly much amend the Jews returning very eagerly again to their calling now willingly confessing their grosse errour'.[100] Because trade was the livelihood of the merchants, they soon wrote with excitement that the Jews 'now begin to selle and promise to follow trading as before which they had totally neglected'.[101] Even in the Low Countries, a Dutch gazette commented on the economic impact of Sabbatai's apostasy, 'sijn Religie verlochent, en die van de Turcken aengenomen, om 't leven te behouden, waer mede nu de Joden weder tot stilte ghebracht zijn, en beginnen te Negotieren als te vooren' (his religion he betrayed, he adopted the Turk to preserve his life, wherefore also now the Jews are brought again to silence, and begin to trade as before).[102]

The most popular account of the Sabbatian movement,[103] written by the English consul in Smyrna Paul Rycaut after the apostasy, presented the messiah and his supporters negatively and focused on the commercial effects as well. Rycaut referred to Sabbatai as 'their False messiah' and his followers as 'this Deceived People'.[104] Sabbatianism was 'a strange height of madness amongst the Jews' in which they fasted until they died, gave themselves lashes, and buried themselves naked in their gardens.[105] For Rycaut, it was

[99] TNA SP 97/18/212: S. Pentlow, J. Foley, and T. Laxton to Thomas Dethick, 29 September 1666.
[100] TNA SP 97/18/212: S. Pentlow, J. Foley, and T. Laxton to Thomas Dethick, 29 September 1666. Meanwhile, the other merchants in Smyrna also spoke of their hopes that 'trade will revive for tis not to be expressed how farr they were gone in delusion for amongst themselves shown out all degrees of officers to sit in Jerusalem at their Restauration'. See TNA SP 97/18/210: A. Barnardiston, J. Adderley, and N. Thurston to Thomas Dethick, 25 September 1666.
[101] TNA SP 97/18/211: A. Barnardiston, J. Adderley, and N. Thurston to Thomas Dethick, 9 October 1666.
[102] *Oprechte Haerlemse Saterdaegse Courant*, 13 November 1666, as quoted in van Wijk, *Wachtend op de Wolk naar Jeruzalem* , 66.
[103] Anderson, *An English Consul in Turkey*, 44, 215. It would be printed in at least twenty-seven editions in English, French, German, Dutch, Polish, Russian, and Welsh.
[104] Evelyn, *A History of the Three Late Impostors*, 48, 52, 99.
[105] Ibid., 78.

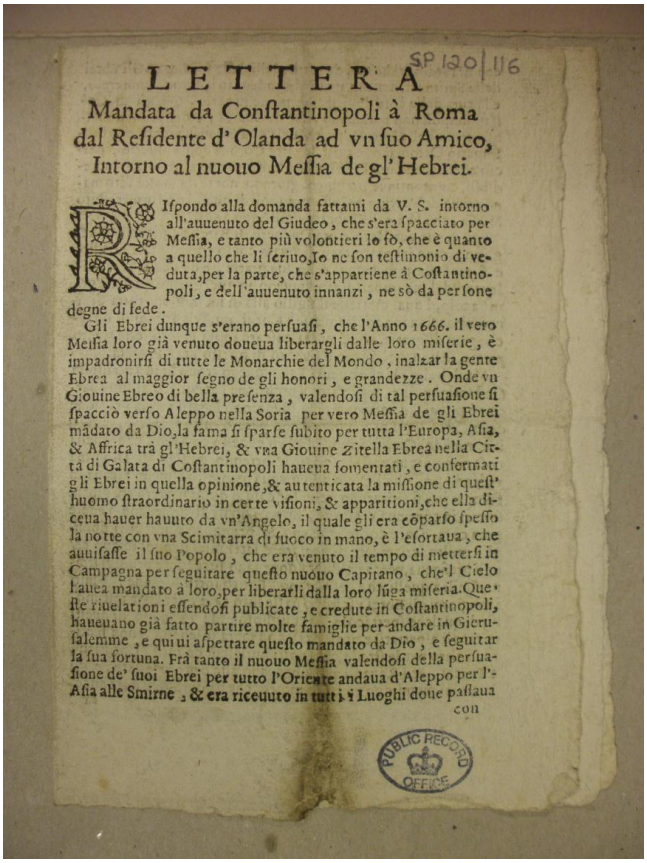
problematic that the Sabbatian believers buried themselves naked in their gardens because of the mercantile consequences of their actions: he pointed out that when the Jews were performing ritual mortification, their shops were closed. Even in reference to the Jewish restoration to the holy land that many Christian millenarians longed for, Rycaut wrote, 'I perciev'd a strange transport in the Jewes, none of them attending to any business unless to winde up former negotiations, and to prepare themselves and Families for a Journey to Jerusalem.'[106]

With the apostasy, Christians also hoped that the Jews would convert to Christianity. Christians saw the failure of the Sabbatian movement as a prime moment to push for conversion. Now that Sabbatai was proven a deceiver, surely the Jews would realise the folly in their ways and embrace the true faith. The conversionist agenda was most pronounced in an Italian broadsheet entitled *Lettera Mandata da Costantinopoli a Roma Intorno al Nuovo Messia de gli Ebrei* (1667). Unlike Rycaut who wrote that 'God permitted the devil to delude this people',[107] the author of this letter did not ascribe diabolical origins to the Jewish movement. The Jews were just easily fooled by Sabbatai's cheap tricks. When Sabbatai was having his clothes changed to be dressed more appropriately as a "Turk", they found three pounds of biscuits in his trousers that the Jewish messiah used to convince his followers that he could go for days without eating.[108] From the apostasy, the author turned to his hoped-for outcome of the messianic movement,

> Without doubt, that the stubbornness of the Jews was not in part an effect of the maledictions which God had given to that race, they would find a very reasonable motive to convert to Christianity perhaps which those who lived among you in Rome, and who have more comfort in easy education, than those of this country will obtain of the confusion that take of receiving in this case a powerful argument to open their eyes to truth; to come out of this deceits once after they have been deceived many times with vain hope, in which they persist to see being born for

[106] Ibid., 78.
[107] Ibid., 62-63.
[108] *Lettera Mandata da Costantinopoli a Roma Intorno al Nuovo Messia de gli Ebrei* (1667).

them some other liberator and messiah than the one whom we know in the venerable person of Jesus Christ.[109]



LETTERA

Mandata da Conſtantinopoli à Roma dal Reſidente d' Olanda ad vn ſuo Amico, Intorno al nuouo Meſſia de gl' Hebrei.

Riſpondo alla domanda fattami da V. S. intorno all'auuenuto del Giudeo, che s'era ſpacciato per Meſſia, e tanto più volontieri lo fò, che è quanto a quello che li ſcriuo, Io ne ſon teſtimonio di veduta, per la parte, che s'appartiene à Coſtantinopoli, e dell'auuenuto innanzi, ne sò da perſone degne di fede.

Gli Ebrei dunque s'erano perſuaſi, che l'Anno 1666. il vero Meſſia loro già venuto douea liberargli dalle loro miſerie, è impadroniſi di tutte le Monarchie del Mondo, inalzar la gente Ebrea al maggior ſegno de gli honori, e grandezze. Onde vn Giouine Ebreo di bella preſenza, valendoſi di tal perſuaſione ſi ſpacciò verſo Aleppo nella Soria per vero Meſſia de gli Ebrei mãdato da Dio, la fama ſi ſparſe ſubito per tutta l'Europa, Aſia, & Affrica trà gl'Hebrei, & vna Giouine Zitella Ebrea nella Città di Galata di Coſtantinopoli haueua fomentati, e confermati gli Ebrei in quella opinione, & autenticata la miſſione di queſt' huomo ſtraordinario in certe viſioni, & apparitioni, che ella diceua hauer hauuto da vn'Angelo, il quale gli era cõparſo ſpeſſo la notte con vna Scimitarra di fuoco in mano, è l'eſortaua, che auuiſaſſe il ſuo Popolo, che era venuto il tempo di metterſi in Campagna per ſeguitare queſto nuouo Capitano, che'l Cielo hauea mandato à loro, per liberarli dalla loro fuga miſeria. Queſte riuelationi eſſendoſi publicate, e credute in Coſtantinopoli, haueuano già fatto partire molte famiglie per andare in Gieruſalemme, e qui ui aſpettare queſto mandato da Dio, e ſeguitar la ſua fortuna. Frà tanto il nuouo Meſſia valendoſi della perſuaſione de' ſuoi Ebrei per tutto l'Oriente andaua d'Aleppo per l'Aſia alle Smirne, & era riceuuto in tutti i Luoghi doue paſſaua con

Figure 12: The *Lettera Mandata da Constantinopoli a Roma* (1667)

Sabbatai's apostasy afforded Christians with another opportunity not directed at the Jews. The failure of the Jewish messianic movement was used as a tool to attack their Protestant millenarian brethren. The Dutch Reformed pastor in Smyrna, Thomas Coenen, witnessed the Sabbatian excitement firsthand and wrote a 140-page manuscript titled *Ydele Verwachtinge der Joden Getoont in den Persoon van Sabethai Zevi, Haren Laesten Vermeynden Messias* (1669) or 'The Idle Expectations of the Jews, Shown in the Person of

[109] Ibid. The original stated, 'Non è dubbio, che se l'ostinatione de gl'Ebrei, non era in parte un'effetto della maledittione, che Dio hà dato à quella razza, trovarebbero quì un motivo molto ragionevole per pigliare il partito del Christianesimo forse, che quei che vivono trà di voi in Roma, e che hanno più commodità di essere instruiti, che quegli di questi paesi, caveranno della confusione, che tengono di ricevere in questo caso un'argomento potentissmo, per aprire gli occhi alla verità; e disingannarsi una volta dopo esser stati ingannati tante volte con la vana speranza, nella quale persistono di veder nascere per loro qualch altro Liberatore, e Messia, che quello, che noi riconosciamo nella persona adorabile di Giesu Christo. Con che & c.'

Sabethai Zevi their Last So-called Messiah'. While Coenen attacked Sabbatai as the last seducer in a long line of Jewish pseudo-messiahs who have only brought misfortune to the stiff-necked Jews who refuse to believe in Jesus,[110] he utilised the Jewish movement to indirectly criticize Christian enthusiasts. Eschatological excitement, whether Jewish or Christian, would have the same result: failure and disappointment. He pointed to their similarities, citing verse such as Joel 2: 2-9 that were used in the prophecies of both Jewish Sabbatians and Christian Fifth Monarchists,[111] and he compared the Sabbatian prophetic outbursts to that of the Quakers. He only mentioned English movements because he did not want to engage Dutch millenarians in explicit debate, but his readership would have made the connection to the Protestant groups closer to home.[112]

Christians also subtly attacked millenarians by blaming the Jewish movement on Christian prophecies. The English merchants in Smyrna wrote that the Sabbatian messianic outbreak occurred because 'the Xtians did foresee such strange revolutions which would happen in this yeare 1666 as likewise so that those Jewes in Xtian lande as with as other pls [places] were at one and the same time equally possessd with beliefe'.[113] According to them, 'the Jews themselves say that nothing made them so willing to believe as the Friar predictions on the yeere 1666'.[114]

Even Paul Rycaut stated that the Jews, 'this subtle people judged this Year [1666] the time to stir, and to fit their Motion according to the season of the Modern

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[110] Oegema, 'Thomas Coenen's "Ydele Verwachtinge Der Joden",' 334. Coenen also briefly wrote about Sabbatai in two of his letters that are found in the NA R.A. Lev. H. 39 Port. 1.03.01.
[111] Rapoport-Albert, *Women and the Messianic Heresy of Sabbatai Zevi 1666-1816*, 16n.
[112] Heyd, 'The "Jewish Quaker": Christian Perceptions of Sabbatai Zevi as an Enthusiast,' 242.
[113] TNA SP 97/18/212: S. Pentlow, J. Foley, and T. Laxton to Thomas Dethick, 29 September 1666.
[114] TNA SP 97/18/211: S. Barnardiston, J. Adderley, and N. Thurston to Thomas Dethick, 9 October 1666. While they had been led astray by Christian beliefs, the Jews of Smyrna were apparently indebted to the Europeans because 'they [the Jews] of this citye doe now confess to be beholding to the franks conversation, whose dissuading arguments have kept them from proving as mad as those have been at Salonica and other pls [places]'. See TNA SP 97/18/212: S. Pentlow, J. Foley, and T. Laxton to Thomas Dethick, 29 September 1666.

Prophecies.'[115] Rycaut did not blame the false messiah or his Jewish supporters. It was the fanatical Protestant enthusiasts who dreamed of the restoration of the Jews, the inauguration of the fifth monarchy, and the downfall of the pope in the year 1666 that was at the heart of the Jewish "delusion".[116]

For this reason, it should not be surprising that Rycaut's pamphlet about the Sabbatian movement would be reprinted time and time again in Christian states that witnessed a rise of millenarianism. It served as a reminder and a warning of the dangers of millenarian and messianic excitement.[117] Thus, the apostasy of Sabbatai was seen by Christians in a fundamentally different light than the Jews. For them, it was the end of a sad tragedy that offered hope that the Jews would once again return to their economic livelihoods and convert to Christianity. At the same time, it gave Christians a tool in their battle against millenarianism.

The Twist after the Twist

Although the disarray of Sabbatai's followers was indescribable, the messianic excitement had been so great that the apostasy could not quash it entirely. Sabbatai himself vacillated in his behaviour after the conversion. On one hand, he continued to write letters to Jewish communities, signing his name, 'Messiah of the God of Israel and Judah, Sabbatai Sevi'.[118] On the other, he would sometimes act as a pious Muslim and revile Judaism. In these years, Sabbatai became close to a Bektashi Sufi leader, Muhammad Niyazi, who had himself developed a belief system that merged Bektashi, Jewish, Christian, Gnostic, and Shiite concepts. Sabbatai most likely met the Sufi leader in 1666 when they attended some

[115] This quote, which appears in numerous sources, such as Evelyn, *A History of the Three Late Impostors* and Rycaut, *Turkish History*, has been quoted numerous times including in Anderson, *An English Consul*, 24.
[116] McKeon, 'Sabbatai Sevi in England,' 135.
[117] For more on this argument, see Popkin, 'Christian Interest and Concerns about Sabbatai Zevi'.
[118] Ben Zvi Institute facsimile of MS 2262/79: Sabbatai Sevi to the Jewish community of Berat, August 1676.

of the same dervish monasteries and prayer cells or in 1669 when Niyazi stayed for forty days at the court in Adrianople where Sabbatai was officially posted to meet Muslim dignitaries.[119] As Sabbatai made friends with Muslims, some of his Jewish followers copied his example and embraced Islam at either Sabbatai's insistence or of their own volition. These people founded a small sect of Muslims, called the *Donmeh*, who secretly await the return of Sabbatai to this very day.[120]

Among the Jews, Sabbatianism went underground. Some of Sabbatai's followers persisted in their Jewish faith and their belief in the messiah. In particular, post-apostasy Sabbatianism found a particularly strong response among former Conversos who had been among the most committed followers and saw a repetition of their own families' histories in the messiah's action. As such, they were ready to accept the necessity of the messiah's conversion and came up with ingenious interpretations to convince themselves that the religious writings in the biblical, rabbinic, and kabbalistic literature foretold his apostasy.[121] They came to the conclusion that the messiah must be a Converso to Islam in order to redeem the world.[122] As the Sabbatian prophet Abraham Cardoso exclaimed in 1668,

> it was also two years ago that it was told me that the king messiah was destined to wear the clothes of a *converso* [anus], because of which the Jews would not recognize him; and in fine, that he was destined to be a *converso* like me.[123]

In Amsterdam, the Christian chiliast Petrus Serrarius supported the few Jews who remained faithful to Sabbatai. Serrarius was Sabbatai's 'first and leading' Christian

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[119] Fenton, 'Shabbetay Sebi and His Muslim Contemporary Muhammed an-Niyazi', 82-83.
[120] For more on the Donmeh, see Marc Baer, *The Donme Jewish Converts, Muslim Revolutionaries, and Secular Turks* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009) and the chapter entitled 'The Crypto-Jewish Sect of the Donmeh (Sabbatians) in Turkey,' in Scholem, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism*.
[121] Sharot, *Messianism, Mysticism, and Magic,* 117, 119.
[122] Goldish, *The Sabbatean Prophets,* 58.
[123] Abraham Cardoso to Isaac Cardoso in 1668, as translated and quoted in Goldish, *The Sabbatean Prophets*, 99.

supporter both before and after the apostasy.[124] While one may think that 'a believing Christian could hardly be a fully believing Sabbatian',[125] Serrarius accepted both Sabbatai's messiahship (with the two-messiah theory) and the rationalisation of the apostasy. God works in mysterious ways, Serrarius quipped, repeating the famous bible verse.

Two years later, the Protestant scholar proved his dedication when he set out from the Dutch Republic towards the Ottoman Empire in hopes of meeting the Jewish messianic convert to Islam. Although Serrarius died en route to Adrianople, never meeting the man who had captivated his attention for the last few years, his beliefs came to include both Sabbatai and the universal redemption of Jews, Christians, and Muslims. Indeed, Serrarius was one of the proponents of Jewish-Christian-Islamic unity that became increasingly common among 'Menasseh's most famous interlocutors'.[126]

It has been claimed that, in seventeenth-century Europe, the 'false messiah had traumatic effects on Jews everywhere, but this passed unnoticed among their Christian neighbours.'[127] Yet the sheer variety of European sources about the Sabbatian movement testifies to the widespread Christian interest in the Jewish messiah. Sabbatai was discussed in letters, newsletters, pamphlets, gazettes, newsbooks, and full-length publications written by merchants, diplomats, pastors, natural philosophers, and newspapermen in Italian, Dutch, Latin, English, French, and German.

Studying these narratives adds a vital dimension to our knowledge because the authoritative historian, Gershom Scholem, only briefly provided Christian views of the Jewish messiah in his thousand-page book. He was only aware of the published

[124] Van der Wall, 'The Amsterdam Millenarian Petrus Serrarius (1600-1669) and the Anglo-Dutch Circle of Philo-Judaists,' 90.
[125] Goldish, *The Sabbatean Prophets*, 155.
[126] Katchen, *Christian Hebraists and Dutch Rabbis*, 104.
[127] Monter, 'Religion and Cultural Exchange, 1400-1700,' 20.

pamphlets; he knew very little about the other news sources that regularly published reports about Sabbatai.[128] Although his work has been supplemented by Michael McKeon's article on perceptions of Sabbatai in English gazettes, Jetteke van Wijk's thesis on Sabbatai in the Dutch gazettes, Ingrid Maier and Daniel Waugh's book chapter on the same Dutch sources, Ernestine van der Wall's text on Petrus Serrarius and numerous articles by Richard Popkin about Serrarius' philo-Judaic circle, none of these historians were aware of the Italian avvisi or the correspondence of English merchants and diplomats in Tuscany.

Moreover, all of the scholars in this field have only examined individuals or small groups of people within a single national or religious framework. Moving past these divisions and studying the wide-ranging transmission of these letters and publications demonstrates that Christians understood and represented the Jewish messiah in contrasting ways due to their specific positions and beliefs. At the same time, comparing and connecting them show that these writings constitute an assortment of documents that travelled along different paths across the early modern Abrahamic world, often intersecting and changing in the process.

Despite the variety and fluidity of Christian attitudes towards the Jewish messiah, academics have homogenised this diversity and tended towards extremes. On one hand, some have argued that Jewish messianists and Christian millenarians shared in their hopes towards Sabbatai for entirely different reasons –even if the Christian views inevitably reinforced the Jewish beliefs.[129] On the other hand, some have made claims about cross-religious influences that are unfounded and have gone too far by declaring that Comenius, Oldenburg, Labadie, and Serrarius were all complete Sabbatian believers or 'Jewish

[128] Maier and Waugh, '"The Blowing of the Messiah's Trumpet",'140.
[129] Kochan, *The Making of Western Jewry, 1600-1819,* 144.

Christians'.[130] In reality, these men held differing perspectives, and we do not know enough about Comenius' beliefs to say such things.[131]

This chapter has sought to respond to these problems as well as the general lack of knowledge about Christian interest in the Jewish movement by presenting the wealth of Catholic and Protestant reactions in a more nuanced manner and, specifically, in the way that they evolved. Upon first hearing of the Jewish messianic outburst, Christians responded in multiple ways. Some dismissed it outright. Others were more objective. While both Catholics and Protestants feared that the claims of the Jews' messiah could prove true, the growth of philo-Semitism and Judeocentric millenarianism meant that some Protestants hoped that the Jewish restoration would actually occur; they co-opted this element of the Jews' beliefs and placed it within their Christian eschatological schema. A select few, such as Serrarius, went further. They accepted Sabbatai's messiahship, utilising the two-messiah theory to mesh the advancing Jewish messianic spirit with their Christian millenarian one.

With the messiah's conversion to Islam at the height of his popularity most of the Jews abandoned their faith in Sabbatai as quickly as they had embraced him. Meanwhile, Christians predominately looked down on the Jewish movement after the apostasy, hoping that its failure would lead the Jews to convert to Christianity and return to their business and trade. But for Serrarius and others like him, Sabbatai's mission was not yet finished. They accepted the rationalisation of his conversion to Islam, incorporating Jews, Christians, and now Muslims into their eschatological expectations. Thus, Christians across Europe were aware and concerned with the Sabbatian movement. For some, the Jewish messianic outburst even made them reconsider their own religious expectations,

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[130] Popkin, 'Christian Jews and Jewish Christians in the 17th Century,' 68-69.
[131] Van der Wall, *De Mystieke Chiliast Petrus Serrarius (1600-1669) en Zijn Wereld*, 407.

which they reformulated in a manner that blurred the boundary between the Abrahamic faiths.

Conclusion

Coming full circle to conclude where we began, Petrus Serrarius was setting out on a journey from the Dutch Republic to the Ottoman Empire in hopes of meeting Sabbatai Sevi. To understand why this Protestant scholar was travelling across an entire continent to meet a Jewish convert to Islam that he had neither met nor corresponded with before, one must discuss Serrarius within his broader intellectual and geographical environment.

Serrarius' attempted pilgrimage to Adrianople in 1669 was the direct result of the rise of the Jewish Sabbatian movement in 1666 that captivated the attention of Christians across the Mediterranean and Atlantic worlds. Catholics and Protestants of a variety of occupational, religious, and national backgrounds sought to comprehend the Jews' beliefs in their new messiah when they began abandoning their businesses and planning to return to the holy land. The letters, newsletters, pamphlets, gazettes, newsbooks, and full-length publications about Sabbatai that they wrote in Italian, Dutch, Latin, English, French, and German informed populations across Christendom of the latest news of the messianic movement. While many Christians were against Sabbatai and his followers from the start, the growth of philo-Semitism and Judeocentric millenarianism meant that some Protestants were ready to accept and co-opt the Jews' messianic hope, reframing it in terms of their own Christian views. A few of these people, such as Serrarius, used the two-messiah theory to fuse elements of Jewish messianism together with Christian millenarianism.

After Sabbatai apostatised to Islam at the height of his popularity, most Christians and Jews considered him as nothing more than an impostor. Serrarius, on the other hand, remained Sabbatai's leading Christian supporter, accepting the rationalisation of the messiah's conversion. Although Serrarius died en route to Adrianople, the momentary Jewish messianic outburst had a substantial impact on the development of the Dutch

chiliast's religious expectations. By the time he died, Serrarius believed in universal redemption that included Jews, Christians, and Muslims.

Serrarius was willing to embrace the news of Sabbatai's messiahship because it was tied to the rumours of the re-emergence of the Lost Tribes of Israel in 1665. The Jewish messiah did not have a place in the standard Christian apocalyptic scenario, but the Lost Tribes had been incorporated into the Christian eschatological sequence, so many millenarians thought that the reappearance of the ancient Hebrews was imminent. Thus, when the stories of their return reached Europe, they stimulated Christian millenarian hopes and reinforced the belief that the second coming of Jesus was at hand. At the same time, the tales inspired Jewish messianic excitement and set the stage for Sabbatianism. In sum, the widespread transmission of the narratives about the Israelites demonstrated the intertwining of Jewish, Christian, and Islamic eschatological beliefs against the background of an increasingly global exchange of news and rumours.

Although the messianic excitement originating amongst the Levantine Jews was felt in European Christian circles, this relationship was far from reciprocal. Judaism was part of the Christian heritage, but not vice versa. As such, incidents in Christendom did not affect the Jews to the same extent that Jewish movements influenced Christians, and the dissemination of the messianism associated with Quaker James Nayler highlights the other side of the asymmetrical relationship. The development of news media at opposite ends of this chain of transmission was also assymetrical. While Protestants and Catholics across Europe knew of Nayler's messianic entrance into Bristol in 1656, the lack of a news industry and news culture in the Ottoman lands meant that news of events in Europe that was transmitted to the Empire by merchants, diplomats, and other travellers was only disseminated orally amongst smaller populations. There were no avvisi, gazettes, pamphlets, and newsbooks to spread this information to a larger audience. In short, neither

accounts of the Nayler affair nor the messianism associated with the Quaker leader made it to the Levant. They did not reach Sabbatai, Nathan, or the Ottoman Jews and did not serve as the impetus for the Sabbatian movement.

The actions of Nayler were not influential on Sabbatai; but the writings of the Dutch rabbi Menasseh ben Israel probably were. Republished in Smyrna by Sabbatai's friends in the years of his youth, Menasseh's *Hope of Israel* most likely informed Sabbatai's messianic yearnings. This treatise told the account of the Converso Antonio de Montezinos who arrived in Amsterdam from South America in the middle of the 1640s with an incredible tale: he had discovered the Lost Tribes in the jungles of modern-day Peru. Menasseh shared Montezinos' narrative with the Sephardic community he belonged to and taught as well as his philo-Semitic friends in England. The Conversos' testimony was then used as a tool to promote Jewish messianism, Christian millenarianism, and the readmission of the Jews to England. It was a stimulus for the growth of apocalyptic interpretations of the American aboriginals' history and affected the beliefs of John Eliot, the Puritan missionary in New England. Indeed, to understand how Eliot's views of the Lost Tribes changed multiple times between 1648 and 1666, one must consider the stories and theories about the Israelites that were spread back and forth between Christians and Jews from the Americas through Europe to the Levant.

The three-stage process in which eschatological ideas originating in the American colonies in the 1640s were transmitted throughout the European states to the Ottoman Empire in the 1650s, preparing the minds of Jews and Christians for the return of such narratives from the Middle East in the 1660s, had an intellectual legacy that stretched back to 1492. The traumatic experience of exile, persecution, and relocation associated with the expulsion of the Jews from Spain, the forced conversions in Portugal, the splintering of Christendom with the Reformation, and the European discovery of the Americas were

interpreted as the birth pangs of the messianic age and signalled the coming end. The very same historical events and process that encouraged this apocalyptic tension spawned migration that created an infrastructure of networks and nodes, which facilitated the transnational and cross-religious transmission that was vital in the movement of eschatological constructs between 1648 and 1666.

Specifically, the 1492 expulsion and 1497 forced conversions had implications that would come to the fore in 1666. The dispersion of the Sephardim in 1492 not only created eschatological excitement and networks of communication that would be employed in the Sabbatian outburst, but it also brought the Spanish Jewry to the Ottoman Empire where their rich tradition of messianism intersected with Islamic mysticism. The Jewish kabbalah developed primarily in Muslim lands after the Spanish expulsion,[1] and 'a certain factor within the Islamic context' shaped the development of Sabbatianism in both Muslim and Christian lands.[2] Although Nathan of Gaza's theology took on a larger Christian dimension as time progressed, he also drew upon a Jewish legacy of self-induced visions, which had intertwined with a corresponding Muslim tradition. Sufi techniques had interacted with the Abulafian method (especially in Palestine and Anatolia) over the centuries, and a 'striking connection' can be made between the Sufi ecstatic methods and the home of Luria, Vital, and other sixteenth-century Safed kabbalists who were influential on Nathan: a Sufi prayer cave designed to foment ecstatic states was used in this period by the Safed kabbalists. Whether through the Abulafian literature that reflects an Islamic impact, the sixteenth century kabbalists, or direct local contact with Sufis, Nathan was influenced by Islamic mysticism.[3]

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[1] Fenton, 'Shabbetay Sebi and His Muslim Contemporary Muhammed an-Niyazi', 81.
[2] Ada Rapoport-Albert, *Women and the Messianic Heresy of Sabbatai Zevi 1666-1816* (Oxford: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2011), 77. For more, see the Hebrew text by Gershom Scholem (ed.), *Studies and Texts Concerning the History of Sabbatianism and its Metamorpheses* (Jerusalem, 1982), 100-120.
[3] Goldish, *The Sabbatean Prophets*, 34, 110, 61-62.

The forced conversions in Portugal in 1497 blurred religious boundaries and identities in a manner conducive to the history of Sabbatianism. Abraham Cardoso, in particular, was an ideal propagandist for the apostate Sabbatai because of his own experience as a Converso. Cardoso had studied Christian theology in Spain and became a rabbi who understood Judaism in light of his Converso heritage. He never fully divorced his new Jewish beliefs in Sabbatai from his Christian background and developed a theology that synthesised Jewish and Christian messianic ideas. He applied the same biblical verses to Sabbatai that Christians cited for Jesus,[4] believing that the suffering servant of Isaiah referred to the messiah (as Christians claimed) at the same time that he harnessed the two-messiah theory to state that it referred to the messiah of the house of Joseph.[5]

The expulsion from Spain and the forced conversions in Portugal spread the Sephardim across the Mediterranean world and affected their religious identities in a manner that would be conducive to the history of Sabbatianism. The messianic tension created within the diaspora, Sabbatai's contacts with Conversos in Smyrna, and the receptivity of the Conversos to Sabbatai's messiahship and apostasy all highlight the impact of these earlier historical events on the messianism that reached its peak in 1666. In sum, one cannot understand Serrarius' 1669 journey as well as the increase of eschatological excitement in 1666 without this broad intellectual and geographical background that stretches across the Mediterranean and Atlantic worlds back to 1492.

The growth of messianism and millenarianism in this period occurred at the same time as the advent of trends, industries, and institutions associated with the rise of

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[4] Yerushalmi, *From Spanish Court to Italian Ghetto Isaac Cardoso*, 338-339; Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, 309-310.

[5] Goldish, *The Sabbatean Prophets*, 44, 49. For more on Cardoso's messianism, see Bruce Rosenstock, 'Abraham Miguel Cardoso's Messianism: A Reappraisal,' *Association of Jewish Studies Review* Vol. 23, No. 1 (1998), 63-104. For more on Cardoso in general, see Yerushalmi, *From Spanish Court to Italian Ghetto Isaac Cardoso*.

modernity. As this thesis has sought to prove, these two processes were intimately connected: the so-called modern advancements in these years promoted apocalyptic tension across the Abrahamic world. Improvements in transportation, especially in sea travel, gave rise to the migration of more and more people who built transnational networks that tied them together over vast distances of space, allowing them to imagine themselves as part of broader communities and facilitating exchanges between individuals of diverse cultural, religious, and national backgrounds. If globalisation is the process in which humanity becomes more integrated through greater interconnections between people and places then the mass migrations of this period brought about a form of early modern globalisation.

The very same migrations were interpreted by some as proof that the end was imminent. After the Spanish expulsion, the Jewish settlers to the Ottoman Empire hoped to hasten the coming of the messiah by repopulating the holy cities in Palestine.[6] Centuries later, in the *Hope of Israel*, Menasseh ben Israel argued that the scattering of the Jews throughout the world was a necessary precondition to their redemption. He used the recent migrations as evidence to prove that the dispersion of the Jews was becoming universal at a rapid rate, which could only mean one thing: the messiah was soon to appear.

The networks that were formed through migration were used to move more people, goods, and ideas –all of which further incorporated distant communities into an overarching web of communication. Some of these networks emerged with the rise of systems, such as modern diplomacy and the postal service, which would come to be imperative in the modern world. Others came about through the expansion of age-old occupations, such as foreign trade, which would come to be a crucial element of the modern economy. These networks reinforced the globalising trend of the early modern

[6] Abulafia, *The Great Sea*, 445.

period and facilitated the movement of eschatological narratives that influenced the beliefs of Jews, Christians, and Muslims.

Apocalyptic constructs were also transmitted along scientific networks that made their appearance in this period with the inauguration of institutions such as the Royal Society. The founders of the Royal Society were serious scholars, working on scientific projects, who were fascinated with the stories about the end of the world. The Society was an arena in which academic and eschatological ideas were disseminated. In fact, many people understood the growth of science in an apocalyptic manner. The 'hopeful messianic attitude of science' that had been dampened by the Thirty Years' War was slowly reviving around this time.[7] Scientific thought and messianic beliefs were deeply integrated in the minds of many seventeenth-century thinkers who believed that God was at last revealing the meaning of his two books, nature and scripture, in preparation for the coming end.[8] The increase of knowledge was a clear providential sign that the climax of history was near, and these natural philosophers saw themselves as helping in God's work.[9]

Meanwhile, the advent of the news industry and news culture enabled the spread of the stories about the messiah and the Lost Tribes in many forms to broader populations, encouraging the rise of messianic and millenarian excitement. Many people, especially those with messianic and millenarian inclinations, read the news that they received in the gazettes, avvisi, pamphlets, and correspondence in relation to their sacred books. We may see information in letters from friends, in newspapers, in academic dialogue, and in religious texts as belonging to different categories of knowledge, but they believed that the scriptures outlined the entire course of history; events were expected to fit into the timeline

[7] Goldish, *The Sabbatean Prophets,* 26.
[8] Ibid., 27.
[9] Popkin, 'Seventeenth-Century Millenarianism,' 124.

presented in the biblical books. In their minds, science, news, and religious beliefs came together in a manner that promoted eschatological excitement.

Even the geography of the early modern world was conducive to the growth of messianism and millenarianism. The expansion of exploration and migration associated with the age of discovery created the right combination of hidden space to promote eschatological excitement. Unlike the medieval and modern periods, the early modern period had enough unknown areas where the Lost Tribes could be hiding as well as enough people going towards these locations and enough communication coming back from them to allow for the proliferation of rumours about the Israelites that could not be readily disproven. In the medieval period, no European knew of South America. In the modern age, satellites and global positioning systems could pinpoint the places where people claimed the ancient Hebrews were dwelling.

The emerging global communication infrastructure facilitated the circulation of reports, but it did not provide a ready means for people to check their veracity. This meant that rumours, including those of an apocalyptic nature, reached new heights and had a greater impact than ever before. Interest in the Lost Tribes would probably never have reached the intensity that it did if it were not for the vast distances separating Europe from both South America and the Arabian Peninsula that led to minimal reports and facilitated the spread of claims that could rarely be either substantiated or disproved. The religious constructs that transcended these spaces, connecting people and shrinking their perceptions of the world, were more readily accepted because of the long way that they travelled. The early modern world was so full of new claims –about new continents, people unmentioned in the scriptural record, whole civilizations unknown to classical philosophers, and astounding new kinds of plants, animals, artefacts, and technologies –that it seemed impossible to determine what was possible, what was unlikely, and what was true. These

distances also forced people who wanted to accept the truth of what they heard to do so relying primarily on hearsay. Even Eliot who lived in Boston had to rely on the supposed claims of a dead man in America for corroborating evidence for the Lost Tribes theory.

The size of the Atlantic and Mediterranean was palpable, especially for people in Europe. Thorowgood's eagerness to publish Eliot's firsthand report demonstrates that he saw the gap between the two places as too large to cross it and verify the information for himself. Although the space of the Atlantic was perceived as vast from a European vantage point, the same men did not perceive distances on the other side of the Atlantic as large at all. Eliot was seen as a source on aboriginals who lived far away from him, and Menasseh and Thorowgood cited examples of aboriginal practices throughout the Americas, conflating both the peoples and the distances that separated them. In the Mediterranean world, Mecca was one of the hardest cities for the Europeans to visit and they knew so little about it that most incorrectly thought that Muhammad was buried there. There was even a disconnect between Egypt and the Hijaz. Jews in Egypt were not aware of the political structure in the Arabian Peninsula, which was in their own state. Therefore, the very space of the early modern world coupled with the manner in which people were crossing it created an environment in which apocalyptic excitement thrived.

All this points to one conclusion: the early modern processes associated with the rise of modernity gave rise to an atmosphere ripe for the growth of eschatological beliefs that reached their peak in 1666. In order to understand the increase in messianism and millenarianism in this year, one must examine thoughts and actions of Jews, Christians, and Muslims from the Americas through Europe to the Levant that began with the end of the great age of toleration in Iberia in 1492.

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