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them. This may be a further, if less well-recognized, example to support what Mandelbrote and Weinberg have urged: that one needs to expand the notion of Christian Hebraism to give justice to a complex set of interactions that combined elements of appropriation, collaboration and competition, and that varied widely in different cultural settings.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ In the Introduction to their *Jewish Books and their Readers* (as n. 1), 1–11.

‘To the advantage of the Republic of Letters’?

Guilielmus Surenhusius’s Projects, Plans, and Collaborations Beyond the Mishnah

Dirk van Miert

Research into the work of Guilielmus Surenhusius has hitherto focused, for good reasons, on his monumental edition of the Mishnah.¹ Some attention in the literature has gone to Surenhusius’s inaugural address (1704). Other studies have focused on his activities as a professor and on portions of his correspondence.²

The surviving correspondence of Surenhusius is limited and patchy: of the sixty-four items whose existence is attested, only forty-one letters survive, all but one authored by Surenhusius himself.³ Apart from the dedicatory letters, eleven letters, addressed to Erik Benzelius junior (in Sweden but also in England) and to Johann Christoph Wolff (in Hamburg) have been printed in modern editions; but his correspondence with other Germans, Italians, and Englishmen has not yet been published. These letters reveal new facts about his contacts and working habits. The focus of this chapter is on Surenhusius’s interests in rabbinic

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¹ Peter van Rooden, ‘Wilhem Surenhuis’ opvatting van de Misjna, in *Driehonderd jaar oosterse talen in Amsterdam*, ed. Jan de Roos, Arie Schippers and Jan Wim Wesselius (Amsterdam: Juda Palache Instituut, 1986), 43–54; Peter van Rooden, ‘The Amsterdam Translation of the Mishnah’, in *Hebrew Study from Ezra to Ben-Yehuda*, ed. William Horbury (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1999), 257–67; David Ruderman, *Connecting the Covenants: Judaism and the Search for Christian Identity in Eighteenth-Century England* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), *passim*.

² Dirk van Miert, *Humanism in an Age of Science. The Amsterdam Athenaeum in the Golden Age, 1632–1704* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 212, 214, and 218; Alvar Erikson, ed., *Letters to Erik Benzelius the Younger From Learned Foreigners*, Volume 1: 1697–1722 (Gotheburg: Kungl. Vetenskaps- och Vitterhets-Samhället, 1979); Jan Wim Wesselius, ‘De briefwisseling tussen Johann Christoffer Wolf en Willem Surenhusen (1720–1727)’, *Studia Rosenthaliana* 26 (1992): 136–48.

³ For a more detailed overview of Surenhusius’s surviving correspondence, see the introduction to the inventory of his correspondence on Early Modern Letters Online: Dirk van Miert, with Milo van de Pol, ‘The Correspondence of Guilielmus Surenhusius’ (Oxford: EMLO, 2019), at: <http://emlo-portal.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/collections/?catalogue=guilielmus-surenhusius>

literature.⁴ I will concentrate on his Northern European contacts, and in particular on what these reveal about other projects Surenhusius was involved in while working on the Mishnah. His involvement in these projects has hitherto been overlooked since the printed editions fail to mention his name, as well as the fact that some projects never materialized.

For this essay, I will briefly treat what the letters teach us about these plans. A picture arises of a man who was, much more than has previously been acknowledged, engaged in the publication of Jewish learning for Jews and Christians alike: the Amsterdam edition of the *Mishneh Torah* (1702); an edition of a Talmudic commentary by Benjamin ben Immanuel Mussaphia; a complete Latin translation of the Talmud by Balthasar Scheidt; and a failed attempt to have published in Amsterdam Johann Friedrich Breithaupt's translation of Rashi's commentary on the Pentateuch.

Surenhusius's Involvement in the Edition of Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah* (1702)

One of the important contacts of Surenhusius was the Swedish theologian and librarian Erik Benzelius the younger (1675–1743), the dominant scholar of his generation in Sweden. On his tour through Germany and the Dutch Republic (1697–99), Benzelius stayed in Utrecht in June and July 1699.⁵ He must have met Surenhusius in Amsterdam in July; their epistolary contact began in September 1699.⁶ As is clear from Benzelius's correspondence with Surenhusius and others, he had developed an interest in Hebrew books.⁷ Surenhusius secured a number of books for him (including volumes of his own Mishnah edition), providing meticulous breakdowns of the cost. But the exchange also demonstrates that Surenhusius was in some way involved in the production of a four-volume folio edition of Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah*.

Mention of this project appears first in an autograph letter to Antonio Magliabechi in Florence, written on 22 October 1699. Surenhusius mentions an edition of the works of Maimonides in four volumes, in folio, prepared by himself:

I have inserted into the fascicle the conditions, written in Hebrew for the Jews who live in your place, and in Latin for the Christians, regarding the reprint of

the *Works* of Maimonides. I would like you to communicate these with those who take an interest in this field of learning. This is, to be sure, a very elegant work that will be printed shortly, due to my effort and care, in four large volumes in-folio. In the preface to the first volume of the Mishnah, I promised a translation of this work after finishing the Mishnah project.⁸

Surenhusius speaks of this edition of Maimonides as if it were almost finished. Two months later, a day before Christmas 1699, Surenhusius mentions this edition in a letter to Erik Benzelius, alongside another project:

I started on the works of Maimonides only this week, because of a long dispute with those who had taken up this work, and I now hope that the business will shortly be dealt with to my liking.⁹

A long time ago, a number of Rabbis asked me to help them in printing *Beit Joseph* [of Joseph Karo], an author almost as good as Maimonides. According to his judgement, a decision could be made regarding all the legal controversies between Polish and German Jews. Thus it will be of major use for the Jews, because he identifies his source every time he quotes something from another author.¹⁰

Apparently, then, the Amsterdam edition of Maimonides was no easy endeavour. Surenhusius also mentions an altogether different plan: the printing of *Beit Yosef*. This project is referenced only once more in the correspondence, when Surenhusius almost four years later recommended the book, which had just been published in Berlin, to Benzelius, noting that some Jews valued it more than

⁸ 'Conditiones Hebraicas pro Iudaeis vobiscum commorantibus, et Latinas pro Christianis de Operibus Maimonidis denuo excudendis fasciculo inserui, quas cum istius literaturae cultoribus communicés, volo. Opus enim hoc elegantissimum post breve tempus opera et cura mea imprimatur in quatuor magnis voluminibus in folio, cuius translationem ego opere Misnico absoluto, in praefatione ad primam Misnae partem promisi.' Guilielmus Surenhusius (Amsterdam) to Antonio Magliabechi (Florence), 22 October 1699 (autograph: Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze [hereafter BNCF], MS Magl. VIII, 1360, fols. 170r and 178r). For this promise, see Surenhusius *Mischna sive Totius Hebraeorum juris, rituum, antiquitatum, ac legum oraliu[m] systema*, 6 vols (Amsterdam, 1698–1703), vol. 1, Praefatio, sig. **3v: 'Animus est nobis, si Deus otium vitamque concesserit, haec aliquando ulterius persequi et librum תורה דתורה Latine reddere.'

⁹ The publishers Joseph Athias and Immanuel ben Joseph Athias, and the Amsterdam merchant Lazarus Schiller.

¹⁰ 'Maimonidis opera hac septimana demum incepimus propter longam altercationem eorum qui hoc negotium susceperant, et spero iam brevi rem ex voto successuram. Compellarunt me pridem aliquot rabbini ut illis opem ferrem in Bet Joseph excudendo, qui est auctor Maimonide non multum inferior, et iuxta cuius sententiam omnium controversiarum iuridicarum inter Iudaeos Polonos et Germanos decisio pronuncietur, adeoque maioris usus apud Iudaeos, quia locum indiget quoties ex alio quicquam hausit.' Surenhusius (Amsterdam) to Benzelius (London), 24 December 1699 (autograph: Linköping, Stiftsbiblioteket, Erik Benzelius den yngres arkiv (E005/Br 10), vol. 1, no. 87; ed. Erikson, *Letters to Benzelius*, 45–7). One of the main controversies over Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah* was that he had omitted all references to his sources, creating a need to identify these sources, which authors such as Karo supplied.

⁴ Surenhusius's contacts with Italy are discussed in the Introductory chapter to this volume.

⁵ Erik Benzelius, *Album amicorum*: Linköping, Stiftsbiblioteket, MS B.59.

⁶ Surenhusius (Amsterdam) to Benzelius (London), 18 December 1699 (autograph: Linköping, Stiftsbiblioteket, Erik Benzelius den yngres arkiv (E005/Br 10), vol. 1, no. 86; ed. Erikson, *Letters to Benzelius*, 43–4). Surenhusius wrote that he had not received a letter from Benzelius 'over the last three months' (*trium mensium spatio nullas prorsus ad me dedit literas*).

⁷ Erikson, *Letters to Benzelius*, *passim*.

Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah*.¹¹ Karo's *Beit Yosef* (published 1550–59) was an authoritative commentary on the code of Jacob ben Asher, the Tur. Whether or not Surenhusius contributed in some way to the production of this Berlin edition of 1703 is not known. He did own a copy of it.¹²

It was only two years later, at the beginning of December 1701, that Surenhusius could announce that the first volume of the Maimonides edition had been published just days before: 'primum volumen operis Maimonidis ante aliquot dies etiam evulgatum est'.¹³ It took almost two years, until October 1703, for Surenhusius to charge Benzelius five and a half guilders for two volumes of the edition, which he bought from the printer and bookseller Gerardus Borstius. This was the same Borstius who published Surenhusius's *Mishnah*. In this case, Borstius was not the actual printer, but acted only as a bookseller. Surenhusius noted that the remainder of Benzelius's account with Surenhusius, twelve guilders and sixteen stuivers, would suffice to purchase the last two volumes:

To these [books] I have added the second volume of Maimonides, for which I paid Borstius....I have spent...already 5 guilders and 10 stuivers for 2 volumes of Maimonides, leaving 12 guilders and 16 stuivers, with which I will pay next year the remaining two volumes of Maimonides.¹⁴

Although Surenhusius charges five guilders and ten stuivers for *two* volumes, he must have meant only volume 2, for Benzelius had already paid for volume 1, as appears from a letter Surenhusius wrote eleven months later. From this letter, it turns out, to Surenhusius's surprise, that in fact Benzelius had never received a copy of this first volume. After all, Benzelius had indeed already paid and

¹¹ Surenhusius (Amsterdam) to Benzelius (Stockholm), October 1703 (autograph: Linköping, Stiftsbiblioteket, Erik Benzelius den yngres arkiv (E005/Br 10), vol. 1, no. 181; ed. Erikson, *Letters to Benzelius*, 85–7): 'Berolini nuper denuo excusum est, et locuplete commentario auctum, ארבע טורים sive בית יוסף, quatuor voluminibus in folio, quod olim 60, iam vero 24 florenis venditur. Hic auctor Maimoni a Iudaeis praeferri solet, et secundum ipsum omnes controversiae decidi solent ab ipsis. Complectitur enim omnia iura Hebraica, tam vetera quam recentia.'

¹² See *Bibliotheca Surenhusiana sive Catalogus variorum in quavis facultate ac lingua exquisitissimo-rum nitidissimeque compactorum librorum, inter quos excellent quampurimi insignes raroque occurrentes libri hebraici* (Amsterdam, 1730), 86, no. 75: 'בית יוסף' Beth Ioseph i.e. *Domus Iosephi*. R. Iosephi Karo opus aestimatissimum, complectens ritus consuetudinis, iura et iudicia Iudaeorum, cum additionibus. Beroli. A. 463. Chr. 1703, 4 vol. M[ore] G[allico] Comp[actum].'

¹³ Surenhusius (Amsterdam) to Benzelius (Stockholm), 1 December 1701 (autograph: Linköping, Stiftsbiblioteket, Erik Benzelius den yngres arkiv (E005/Br 10), vol. 1, no. 123; MS copy: Copenhagen, Det Kongelige Bibliotek [hereafter DKB], NKS 1435 2° 216–17; ed. Erikson, *Letters to Benzelius*, 68–9). The autograph in Linköping has 'opus', as in Erikson's edition. The Copenhagen copy omits this word altogether. 'Operis' is my own correction.

¹⁴ 'Hisce additi tomum secundum operis Maimonidis, quem ego Borstio solvi...[E]xpendi...iam 5 florenos cum 10 stufferis pro 2 voluminibus Maimonidis,...restant 12 floreni et 16 stufferi, quibus ego anno futuro solvam pro reliquis duobus voluminibus Maimonidis.' Surenhusius (Amsterdam) to Benzelius (Stockholm), October 1703 (autograph: Linköping, Stiftsbiblioteket, Erik Benzelius den yngres arkiv (E005/Br 10), vol. 1, no. 181; ed. Erikson, *Letters to Benzelius*, 85–7).

Surenhusius reports on the misunderstandings between Borstius and the printer, Immanuel ben Ioseph Athias:

I am surprised that you still have not received the first volume of Maimonides, because I learned earlier on that you paid the money to Borstius. I went to Borstius, asking for clarification, and he answered me that he would pay the money back to me. But when I had gone to Athias to purchase the first volume directly from him, Athias told me he could not sell it, because Borstius had already bought it. I returned to Borstius again, and asked him to hand that volume over to me. But he said he had already handed this very copy over to someone else. Hence I: what is someone else supposed to do with this volume, for in this way two people are deceived: Benzelius and that other person, whoever that may be. Because you cannot obtain from Athias the remaining tomes.¹⁵ Then he again: I don't care at all what the consequence is. And thus it came to many disputes, and we have not yet come to an agreement. I'll do whatever I can in your interest, my dearest Benzelius. Do reproach him for his impoliteness, for he does understand Latin.¹⁶

It took more than four years before things were set straight. In April 1708 Surenhusius sent Benzelius a breakdown of the costs. He counted five and a half guilders for volume 2 and ten guilders for volumes 3 and 4.¹⁷ Surenhusius, in his letter of October 1703, anticipated that he could use the remaining twelve guilders and sixteen stuivers on these two last volumes of Maimonides. They turned out to be somewhat cheaper, at five guilders each. This was roughly equal to the price of the volumes of the *Mishnah* edition. The printers Gerardus and Jacob Borstius in 1697 offered unbound copies of Surenhusius's *Mishnah* for four guilders per volume, raising the price in 1704 to five guilders, or thirty guilders for the whole

¹⁵ Apparently, Athias did not want to sell single volumes.

¹⁶ 'Miror sane quod primum tomum Maimonidis nondum acceperis, quia te Borstio pecuniam solvisse antea cognoveram. Adivi Borstium, causam rogavi, respondit se mihi pecuniam redditurum; conditionem accepi; sed postea quam ad Athiam me contulisses, ut ab ipso primum tomum emerem, is dixit se mihi eum vendere non posse, quia Borstius ipsum iam emerat. Iterum adivi Borstium, et ab ipso petii ut mihi istud volumen traderet. Is vero dixit se id ipsum alicui alii tradidisse; hinc ego, quid alius quispiam faciet cum isto volumine, nam hoc pacto duo decipiuntur, nempe Benzelius et ille alter quisquis ille sit, nam tu reliquos tomos ab Athia nancisci non poteris. Denuo ille, nihil refert quicquid inde fiet. Et sic res ad multas altercationes devenit, et decisio litis nondum pronunciata est. Faciam in tua re quicquid poteram, amicissime Benzeli. Exprobres ei quae importunitatem suam, nam Latina intelligit.' Surenhusius (Amsterdam) to Benzelius (Uppsala), 28 September 1704 (autograph: Linköping, Stiftsbiblioteket, Erik Benzelius den yngres arkiv (E005/Br 10), vol. 1, no. 213; ed. Erikson, *Letters to Benzelius*, 98–9).

¹⁷ Surenhusius (Amsterdam) to Benzelius (Uppsala), 7 April 1708 (autograph: Linköping, Stiftsbiblioteket, Erik Benzelius den yngres arkiv (E005/Br 10), vol. 2, no. 117; ed. Erikson, *Letters to Benzelius*, 123–4): '5 florenos cum 10 stufferis pro secundo volumine Maimonidis iad Chasaca. Tandem 10 florenos pro duobus tomis posterioribus.' *Yad ha-Chasaka* ('Book of the Strong Hand') is another designation for the *Mishneh Torah*.

set. Surenhusius himself charged Benzelius a couple of *stuivers* more per volume.¹⁸ A second-hand copy of the six volumes was sold in 1705 for twenty-one guilders and another one in 1706 for twenty-five guilders.¹⁹ This may be compared to the price of Jacob Abendana's *Mikhlah Yofi* that was sold for five and a half guilders to subscribers, and three and a half guilders at an auction.²⁰ This was a folio of two hundred and twenty pages; Surenhusius's Mishnah volumes were twice as large. Surenhusius was appointed in 1704 as professor in Amsterdam on an annual salary of three hundred guilders, with thirty guilders extra to pay for his robe. This was a relatively low salary: a skilled labourer in Amsterdam at the time would earn the same. Surenhusius's salary was doubled in 1709 and raised to one thousand guilders in 1714. Hence, in 1704, the price of each volume of the *Mishneh Torah* and of the Mishnah still equalled the weekly salary of Surenhusius himself, as well as that of a skilled worker, and about ten times as much as a poor seamstress's weekly income of ten *stuivers*.²¹ The full Mishnah set cost as much as what Surenhusius was supposed to spend yearly on his professorial attire.

It is clear from these records that these volumes of the edition of Maimonides were in fact printed, and that Borstius and Athias cooperated in the production process, together with Surenhusius. In identifying this book one can come to no other conclusion than that it concerns the edition in four volumes of Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah*, printed in Amsterdam in folio in 1702 by Immanuel ben Joseph Athias, whose name appears on the title page alongside the name of the corrector of the work, Rabbi David Nunes Torres. But there is no apparent involvement from Borstius or Surenhusius. Fuks and Fuks-Mansfeld tell us that the book was financed by Joseph Athias (who died in 1700) and his son Immanuel, in

¹⁸ In October 1703, Surenhusius charged his Swedish correspondent Erik Benzelius for the first three volumes: sixteen guilders and four *stuivers* (Surenhusius to Benzelius, October 1703, cited above, n. 14) and five years later, when he drew up his bill anew to Benzelius, he charged slightly more: sixteen guilders and ten *stuivers* (ten *stuivers* is half a guilder) (Surenhusius to Benzelius, 7 April 1708, cited above, n. 17).

¹⁹ In 1705, the library of Surenhusius's former colleague Petrus Francius was auctioned off. His copy of the full set went away for twenty-one guilders. See *Catalogus selectissimorum librorum... Petri Francii... quorum plurimi manuscripti antiqui bonæ notæ tam Græci quam Latini, alii virorum doctrina illustrium manu & annotatis ornati: Una cum indice iconum pictarum illustrium eruditorum quibus Musæum Francianum superbit: Horum omnium fiet auctio a. d. XIV aprilis MDCCV. & seqq.* (Amsterdam, 1705), 40, no. 173. According to a handwritten price in the margin of the copy held by the Bodleian Library, Oxford (shelfmark Mus. Bibl. III, 395), it was sold for twenty-one florins (guilders). Another copy is mentioned in the *Bibliotheca Triglandiana sive Catalogus elegantissimus rarissimorum in omni studiorum genere et lingua librorum... quos... collegit... Jacobus Triglandius I[acobi] F[ilius] I[acobi] N[epos]* (Leiden, 1706), 26, no. 416. The copy in Ghent University Library (shelfmark BIB.VC.001706/10/11) has a handwritten price in the margin according to which the set was sold for '25 guilders and 0 *stuivers*'.

²⁰ Three guilders and eleven *stuivers*, to be precise; see Van Rooden and Wesselius, 'Two Early Cases of Publication', 117.

²¹ See Maarten Prak, *The Dutch Republic in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 136 and 139.

cooperation with the Amsterdam merchant Lazarus Schiller who was to receive five hundred of the total print run of 1,150 copies.²²

Surenhusius was obviously keen on advertising this project: he sent to Magliabechi two sets of prospectuses for subscriptions, one targeted at Jewish readers, and another one for Christians (supposedly the one was in Hebrew and the other in Latin). But what exactly Surenhusius's role in this huge project was remains unclear.²³

Be this as it may, the correspondence teaches us that Surenhusius was somehow involved in the printing of the Amsterdam Hebrew edition and also that he wanted to prepare a Latin translation after finishing his Mishnah project. Christian study of the *Mishneh Torah* was invigorated in Surenhusius's Amsterdam from the 1640s onward by such figures as Dionysius Vossius, and Surenhusius was evidently part of a circle studying the mainstream of Jewish tradition and making it widely accessible to a Christian readership.²⁴ Part of this development in the second half of the seventeenth century was an expanding field of research into the material and legal conditions of historical Jewish life.²⁵ Evidently, more was going on behind the scenes of the printing of rabbinic literature in Amsterdam than transpires from the printed editions themselves. This is confirmed by a second project that Surenhusius engaged in, but that was never realized.

Mussaphia's Lost Commentary on the Palestinian Talmud

In 1701, Surenhusius reported that he had managed to buy, in exchange for a number of books (or perhaps manuscripts), the handwritten commentary on the whole of the Palestinian Talmud, compiled by the physician, Kabbalist and linguist Benjamin ben Immanuel Mussaphia (c. 1606–1675):

Sixteen years ago, a doctor of medicine died in our city, called Benjamin Mussaphia. He was a Portuguese Jew who left behind commentaries on the whole of the Palestinian Talmud. They are very rich and of excellent quality. I purchased them from his heirs in exchange for a number of copies [of books],

²² L. Fuks and R. G. Fuks-Mansfeld, *Hebrew Typography in the Northern Netherlands, 1585–1815: Historical Evaluation and Descriptive Bibliography*, 2 vols (Leiden: Brill, 1984–7), 2:331–2, no. 418.

²³ In passing, it should be observed that Surenhusius's student Joannes Esgers dedicated his translation of Maimonides' commentary on Shekalim to Surenhusius. See his dedicatory letter to Surenhusius, 1 July 1718, in: Rabbi Moshen bar Maymon, הלכות שקלים [*hilhot shekalim*], *id est r. Mosi Maimonidis Constitutiones de Siclis, quas Latinitate donavit & notis illustravit Joannes Esgers* (Leiden: Petrus vander Aa, 1718), sigs *2^r–*2^v.

²⁴ A process described for the first half of the seventeenth century in Amsterdam by Aaron Katchen, *Christian Hebraists and Dutch Rabbis. Seventeenth-Century Apologetics and the Study of Maimonides' Mishneh Torah* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984).

²⁵ For the second half of the century, see Marcello Cattaneo's chapter in this volume.

because I have the plan for next year to publish these things together in two volumes, typeset in the most splendid way. Professor Trigland will help in carrying the costs. May God favour our projects, so that this hitherto obscure book will finally be explained.²⁶

With this desire to print 'these things' (*illa*), Surenhusius seems to be referring to the text of the Palestinian Talmud with Mussaphia's commentary. Mussaphia had previously published a versified retelling of the Creation in which all Hebrew roots are used only once, a work that was extremely popular. He had also published a discussion of medical quotations from the Bible, an alchemical work, and a treatise on tidal motion. Mussaphia harboured alchemical interests. He became an important figure in the Sephardic community in Amsterdam.²⁷ Why was Surenhusius, who focused his studies on traditional rabbinical literature, so interested in this extraordinary and almost contemporary Jewish scholar?

Perhaps Surenhusius was attracted to Mussaphia's philological approach, as evidenced by Mussaphia's preface to his edition of the lexicographical *Arukh* by Nathan ben Jehiel (c. 1035–1106), printed in Amsterdam in 1655. In this edition, retitled *Musaf he-arukh*, he incorporated the kind of antiquarian knowledge about Jewish daily life that would have appealed to Surenhusius, who, naturally, owned a copy of the book, described in the sale catalogue as 'enlarged and enriched with various observations and additions of more difficult words, seeking also to explain the Greek and Latin words', something that would have interested Surenhusius as a trilinguist.²⁸

Why exactly Mussaphia's commentary on the Palestinian Talmud was important to Surenhusius is difficult to establish. It may have been a work that explained the Palestinian Talmud in such a way that Christian readers could be led to the conclusion that the Jews were much closer to Christianity than the Jews themselves were prepared to admit. An adversary of Mussaphia, the authoritative rabbi Jacob Sasportas, ridiculed in print Mussaphia's inability to interpret the Mishnah and

²⁶ 'Ante sedecim annos apud nos obiit medicinae doctor, nomine Benjamin Musaphia Iudaeus Lusitanus, qui commentarios in totum Talmud Ierusalymitanum reliquit, locupletissimos et optimaе notae, quos ego mihi pro aliquot exemplaribus ab haeredibus comparavi, quia animus est anno instanti illa simul edere cum splendidissimis tjiptis in folio 2 voluminibus. Professor Triglandius in sumptibus ferendis iuvabit. Deus annuat coeptis nostris, ut liber hactenus obscurus tandem aliquando illustretur.' Surenhusius (Amsterdam) to Benzelius (Stockholm), 1 December 1701 (autograph: Linköping, Stiftsbiblioteket, Erik Benzelius den yngres arkiv (E005/Br 10), vol. 1, no. 123; MS copy: DKB, NKS 1435 2° 216–17; ed. Erikson, *Letters to Benzelius*, 68–9).

²⁷ Marvin J. Heller, 'Benjamin ben Immanuel Mussafia. A Study in Contrasts', *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* 89 (2014): 208–18, at 211–13.

²⁸ *Bibliotheca Surenhusiana*, 91, no. 113 מוסף הארוך *Musaph Haaruch*, i.e. *Accessiones Aruch*. Ita vocatur R. nathanis Lexicon Talmudicum Aruch a R. Benjamine Musapphi variis animadversionibus et accessionibus vocum difficiliorum auctum et locupletatum. Amstel. A. 415, Chr. 1655.

the Palestinian Talmud correctly, but Sasportas was negatively biased towards Mussaphia on account of a private legal dispute.²⁹

Second, there is the question as to why Jacobus Trigland (1652–1705), grandson of his famous namesake, would be willing to pay for a publication of the commentary in two volumes in-folio. Trigland, who was already professor of theology in Leiden and privately lectured on Hebrew antiquities, inaugurated his professorship of 'Hebrew antiquities' less than two months after Surenhusius reported on his plans for the edition of Mussaphia's commentary. On 23 January 1702, Trigland in his inaugural address, *On the Origin and Causes of the Mosaic Rites*, asserted that it was compulsory for anyone who aspired to understand the early history of the Church, the histories of the patriarchs, the rites and ceremonies of the Levites, the history of the Hebrews, and the text of the Old Testament, conceived in an alien world, to study Hebrew antiquities.³⁰ 'Believe me when I say the rabbis do not always sell nonsense', Trigland assured his audience.³¹ The Leiden professor did own a copy of Surenhusius's Mishnah edition, as well as Mussaphia's *Arukh*.³² Trigland's library of over five thousand books was primarily devoted to Hebrew learning: it was about four times larger than Surenhusius's library, but the latter owned twice as many Hebrew books (337) as Trigland (165). It is only natural that they should have owned the same books (perhaps Surenhusius even bought some of Trigland's), but Trigland obviously had more purchasing power than Surenhusius (albeit many of Trigland's books he would have inherited from his grandfather). Considering Trigland's profile, it was only natural for Surenhusius to expect Trigland to be interested in the publication of a commentary on the Palestinian Talmud.

Surenhusius's interest in Mussaphia might also reflect Christian interest in Jewish theology on belief and doctrine. Like many other members of the Portuguese community in Amsterdam, Mussaphia became an enthusiast of the self-proclaimed Jewish Messiah Shabbetai Zevi, on account of which he was attacked in 1673, although Mussaphia by then had abandoned his Sabbatianism.³³ Surenhusius always underscored the links between Jewish and Christian thought. In 1712, Surenhusius ruled, as a supposedly neutral Christian arbiter, that Jewish law allowed *parnasim* to terminate the contract of Hakham Tsevi, the chief Ashkenazi rabbi. This was shortly before the rabbi called for a ban on the work of

²⁹ Yaacob Dweck, *Dissident Rabbi. The Life of Jacob Sasportas* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019), 279–80.

³⁰ Jacob Trigland, J[acobi F]ilius J[acobi] N[epos], *Dissertatio de origine et causis rituum Mosaicorum, habita in Academia Lugd. Batava, cum hebraicis antiquitates docendi provincia ipsi fuit demandata, a[n]te diem XXIII Jan. A[n]no C[hristi] MDCCII* (Leiden, 1702), 4; at p. 5 he refers to his extra-curricular private lessons.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 20–21: 'nec semper, mihi credite, ineptiunt Rabbini.'

³² *Bibliotheca Triglandiana*, 26, no. 416 and [third page numbering]: 8, no. 62.

³³ Heller, 'Mussafia', 215–16.

the itinerant Sabbatian and Kabbalist Nehemiah Hiyya Hayon.³⁴ Surenhusius favourably discussed Hayon's work in 1719 in a congratulatory letter to Norrelius that was printed in the latter's *Phosphorus orthodoxae fidei*, a book that argued that the Trinity is confirmed by the mystical Zohar. According to Surenhusius, Hayon had used the Zohar to teach the truthfulness of the Trinity and other Christian doctrines.³⁵ Even Maimonides, Surenhusius remarks, admitted near the end of his life that he would have changed many things in his writings had he known the Zohar earlier. It seems as if Surenhusius sought to align his philological and his theological interests more as he grew older: philological and antiquarian interest in the *halakhah* eventually paved the way for belief.³⁶

The Mussaphia project is mentioned nowhere else in the surviving correspondence, and I have found no other traces of it. Since the sale catalogues of Surenhusius's library contain only printed material, we do not know what became of Mussaphia's manuscript. According to Heller, fragments of the manuscript were printed in the edition of the Palestinian Talmud of 1922, but those fragments appear to have been taken from the *Musaf he-arukh*.³⁷ Naturally, there would have been overlap between the *Musaf he-arukh* and the handwritten commentary on the Palestinian Talmud. Mussaphia died over a decade before Surenhusius came to Amsterdam, c. 1686, and the manuscript must have lingered in the possession of the heirs for over a quarter of a century before they were prepared to part with it. Surenhusius apparently built up a great deal of trust with the heirs for them to entrust to him what apparently been the result of many years of Mussaphia's labour. Perhaps they trusted that Surenhusius could pull strings that Jewish leaders in the community could not. The edition of the Mishnah would have given them this confidence.

Given Surenhusius's obvious fascination with Mussaphia's commentary, it is worthwhile pointing out that according to the eighteenth-century Ashkenazi-Dutch historian Menahem Man ben Solomon ha-Levi ('Amelander'), in chapter 33 of his Yiddish chronicle *She'erit Yisra'el*, Mussaphia authored an 'excellent explanation of the Jerusalem Talmud'.³⁸ He went on to remark that, 'this work would

³⁴ For Surenhusius's involvement in the adviceregarding the removal of Hakham Tsevi, see M. Sluys, 'Beelden uit het leven der Hoogduitsch-Joodsche gemeente te Amsterdam in het begin der 18^e eeuw VIII: De klacht en de verdediging & IX: Een nieuw bondgenoot van de parnassijns', in *De Vrijdagavond: Joodsch weekblad* 1, issue 45 (30 January 1925): 291-7.

³⁵ Surenhusius (Amsterdam) to Andreas Norrelius (Amsterdam), 26 June 1719, in Andreas Norrelius, *Phosphorus orthodoxae fidei, seu Testimonia de sacro sancta Trinitate et Messia Deo et Homine ex pervetusto libro Sohar deprompta, quae nunc primum latine reddita suisque et R. Iohannis Kemperi Iudaeo-Christiani animadversionibus concinne explicata Iudaeis aequae ac Christianis, speciminis loco edidit Andreas Norrelius Suecus, qui item commentarios Kemperianos suis illustravit notis* (Amsterdam, 1720), sigs. ****[1]^v****2^r.

³⁶ For Surenhusius and the Zohar, see the Introductory chapter to this volume.

³⁷ Heller, 'Mussafia', 218. *Talmud Yerushalmi*, 9 vols (Vilnius: Romm, 1922).

³⁸ This book was printed for the first time in *Keter kehunah ve-hu sefer Yosifon bi-leshon ashkenaz* (Amsterdam, 1743).

have been printed in 1741, but problems arose and it has not been printed until this present day'.³⁹ Amelander apparently had inside-knowledge of the vicissitudes of Mussaphia's manuscript work. Did he know Surenhusius? Since Surenhusius was well acquainted with the Amsterdam rabbis, he is likely to have known Amelander, who did the proofreading of the biblical text for Moses Frankfurter's well-known Amsterdam edition of the Hebrew Bible (with the Targum) in four volumes (1724-7), a book owned by Surenhusius.⁴⁰ This is not the only case of Surenhusius actively collecting manuscripts of deceased scholars. A third example will serve to demonstrate this.

The Lost Latin Translation of the Babylonian Talmud by Balthasar Scheidt

In 1700, Johann Friedrich Mayer (1650-1712) pastor of St James' church in Hamburg, sent Surenhusius a manuscript with a Latin translation of Mishnah tractate Shabbat, prepared by Balthasar Scheidt (1614-1670). This handwritten translation came too late for Surenhusius, for tractate Shabbat (the first tractate of Mo'ed) was already printed in volume 2 of the Mishnah edition, in May 1699. Surenhusius wrote to Scheidt's son Johann Valentin (1651-1731) that Mayer claimed to have bought it at an auction. Johann Valentin Scheidt's brother, however, who lived in Amsterdam, assured Surenhusius that such an auction had never taken place.⁴¹

Other scholars in Germany told Surenhusius that Mayer also owned Balthasar Scheidt's translation of the whole Talmud. Surenhusius then wrote to Mayer for further information, but Mayer failed to respond. Scheidt's brother told Surenhusius that their father had indeed prepared a Latin translation of the whole Talmud in thirty-five or thirty-six volumes in quarto. Surenhusius responded that if that were true, it would be regrettable for the translation to be lost or published by others under their own name. Surenhusius let Johann Valentin Scheidt know that he wanted to publish it under Balthasar Scheidt's own name. Whatever Mayer paid for the manuscript, Surenhusius offered to pay the same, promising to

³⁹ I consulted the Dutch translation of this work, Menachem Man ben Salomo Halevi, שארית ישראל, *of Lotgevallen der Joden in alle Werelddeelen, van af de Verwoesting des Tweeden Tempels tot het jaar 1770*, ed. L. Goudsmit Azn (trans.) and G. I. Polak (notes) (Amsterdam: M. Coster Jz, 1855), 551. It is referred to in Heimann Joseph Michael, *Or ha-hayyim: hakhme Yisrael ve-sifrehem*, ed. Solomon Joachim Halberstam, notes by S. Z. H. Halberstam, 2nd ed. (Jerusalem: s.n., 1965), 285.

⁴⁰ *Sefer kehillot Moshah* (Amsterdam, [1724-7]); see *Bibliotheca Surenhusiana*, 1, no. 3.

⁴¹ Surenhusius (Amsterdam) to Johann Valentinus Scheidius (Strassburg), 7 August 1700 (autograph: DKB, Thott 1273. - 4^o): '...doctissimus et clarissimus Iohannes Fridericus Majerus, apud Hamburgenses S.S. Theologiae doctor, et verbi divini minister, qui ad me nuper transmisit reverendi patris tui beatae memoriae manuscriptum in codicem Misnicum de Sabbato, quod auctionis iure ad ipsum pervenisse scribit. Quod tamen carissimus frater tuus falsum esse affirmat, cum paternae bibliothecae secundum ipsum nunquam auctio aliqua habita sit.'

provide presentation copies for Scheidt's family. He asserted that Mayer should be treated with caution, because he might not be willing to part with a manuscript with which he had preened himself for so many years. The manuscript needed to be examined in Mayer's own house, to check if it was complete. Surenhusius asked to be informed what and how much of the Talmud Balthasar Scheidt had translated: the Mishnah together with the Gemara and Tosafot and other commentators, or just the Mishnah and Gemara.⁴²

Of Scheidt's Talmud translation, the Orders Zera'im and Toharot are still kept in the Stadtbibliothek of Hamburg. They provide an answer to Surenhusius's question about their content in that they contain a translation of the Mishnah and the Gemara without the Tosafot. In addition, the library also holds a copy of the Mishnah of the Order of Zera'im.⁴³ A translation of tractate Eruvin is mentioned by Erich Bischoff.⁴⁴

According to Balthasar Scheidt's biographer in his entry to the *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, Scheidt left behind a large number of unprinted works, in particular about the Talmud, one of which was published by Johannes Gerhardus Meuschen under the title "Praeterita praeteritorum" in his *Novum Testamentum ex Talmude et antiquitatibus Ebraeorum illustratum* (1736).⁴⁵ This appears to be a different work from the translation in thirty-five volumes that Surenhusius

⁴² Ibid.: 'Interea temporis a quibusdam viris in Germania doctis ad me delatum est, extare apud clarissimum Maijerum opus Talmudicum Latine redditum a beato patre tuo. Ibi ego statim ad Maijerum literas misi, sed nihil quicquam respondit—quamobrem, nescio. Quapropter ut me fluctuantem ab hocce dubio liberet, te etiam atque etiam rogo. Frater tuus et noster civis mihi narravit opus paternum conficere quinque vel sex et triginta volumina in quarto, et totam Gemaram Latine versam. Quod si verum esset, sane deplorandum foret ut excellentissimum illud et nunquam satis laudandum opus aeternis tenebris contegeretur, vel alii se eo iniquissimo iure exornarent. Meus itaque scopus est clarissimi patris tui opera e tenebris in lucem revocare et nomine ipsius edere, ad vestrae familiae ornamentum et gloriam, si illius operis aliquando compos fiam. Pecuniam istam quam Maijerus expendit, libenter restituam, et exemplaria quaedam impressa in familia vestra distribuam. Sed caute admodum hac in parte cum Maijere agendum est, ne is quicquam suboleat, nam forsitan non libenter deponet vestimentum quo se iam tot annos exornavit. Oportet ut omnia manuscripta accurate examinentur in aedibus ipsius, ne quid deficiat. Non dubito, clarissime vir, quum tu omnium tuarum rerum plenam habeas cognitionem, ut te decipere nequeat. Rogo itaque, optime Schejdii, si quid tibi paterna bona cordi sint, ut me de iis proxima occasione certiore facias, quid et quantum doctissimus parens de Talmude transtulit, an Misnas cum Gemara, Tosephot, et omnibus aliis commentatoribus transtulerit, an vero Misnam et Gemaram dumtaxat, quemadmodum ex iis quae possideo, constat. Manuscripto meo tria capita deficiunt, cuius defectus ratio me latet, si totum opus versum sit. Hoc volumen anno 1670 a beato patre inchoatum esse scribit, et frater tuus mihi retulit eodem anno patrem obiisse.'

⁴³ See Moritz Steinschneider, *Catalog der hebräischen Handschriften in der Stadtbibliothek zu Hamburg und der sich anschliessenden in anderen Sprachen* (Hamburg, 1878), 61, no. 159, and 163, no. 337. Johann Heinrich Zedler mistakenly claimed that these two Orders had been kept in the library of Strasbourg and got lost when the library burnt down in 1870; see his *Grosses vollständiges Universallexicon aller Wissenschaften und Künste* (Munich: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, 2003) vol. 34, s.v., cols 1129–30.

⁴⁴ Erich Bischoff, *Kritische Geschichte der Talmud-Übersetzungen aller Zeiten und Zungen* (Frankfurt am Main, 1899), 17. Bischoff's hesitation to attribute to Scheidt a translation of the Talmud is disproved by Surenhusius's letter to Johann Valentine Scheidt; see n. 42.

⁴⁵ Richard Zoepffel, 'Scheidt, Balthasar', in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, 56 vols (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1875–1912), 30:709–10.

describes. In the preface of his edition of Talmudic sources bearing on the New Testament, Meuschen states that Balthasar Scheidt's manuscript contained ten volumes in quarto (not thirty-five or thirty-six).⁴⁶ He also says that he reorganized the Mishnah and the Gemara 'juxta librorum Biblicorum seriem in unum corpus'. Apparently, this was not a full translation of the Talmud. The first nine volumes, entitled *Nuclei Talmudici*, elucidated the Old Testament by means of the tractates of the Talmud. The tenth volume was devoted to the New Testament. The work was to be published by Johannes Fridericus Meyer—so Meuschen continues—a brilliant student of Scheidt's. Meyer failed to deliver, despite insistent letters from Scheidt's heirs to him. One of Scheidt's sons told Meuschen at the Court of Hanau (probably during the reign of Count Johann Reinhard III) that Meyer died in Stettin in 1712 and his library transferred to the royal seat in Berlin. The king of Prussia, however, allowed the manuscript to be returned to Scheidt's son, Johann Valentin.⁴⁷ Meuschen could not stop thinking about inspecting this work, hitherto unknown to him. Scheidt junior showed it to him, giving him the opportunity to describe it. He had volume 10 transcribed by his amanuensis, Georgius Jacobus Kehrius. Meuschen does regret that he only adds the 'nuda latina versio' and not the original Talmudic texts, in the way John Lightfoot (1602–1665) and Johann Christian Schöttgen (1687–1751) printed their texts.⁴⁸

All this leaves open numerous questions, that for the time being cannot be answered: where are Scheidt's other nine volumes? Or where does this manuscript of volume 10 currently linger, both the autograph and the apograph by Kehrius? And where are the many missing volumes of Scheidt's translation of the Talmud?

Be this as it may, that Surenhusius stimulated the translation of Talmudic tracts emerges also in the fragment of a letter that he addressed to Magnus Rönnow, a Swedish scholar. Rönnow is mentioned nowhere else in Surenhusius' correspondence; we only have this small fragment:

I ask you time and again to heed the example of those men who have sent me their writings. Please share your most learned writings with me, for the

⁴⁶ Joh. Ger. Meuschen, ed., *Novum Testamentum ex Talmude et antiquitatibus Hebraeorum illustratum, curis clarissimorum virorum Balth. Scheidii, Jo. Andr. Danzii, et Jac. Rhenferdi, editumque una cum suis propriis dissertationibus de Nasi seu Praeside Synedrii M. et de directoribus scholarum hebraeorum* (Leipzig, 1736).

⁴⁷ Meuschen, *Novum Testamentum ex Talmude illustratum*, sigs. (c)1^r–(c)2^v.

⁴⁸ Meuschen, *Novum Testamentum ex Talmude illustratum*, sig. (c)2^{r-v}: 'Saliva mihi de hoc inspiciendo mihi hactenus incognito opere nimium mota, hanc Argentorati restrinxit humanissima eiusdem exhibitione, cum simul concessa illud describendi potestate... Orientalium professori Georgio Jacobo Kehrio, eo tempore meo amanuensi, describendum dabam, idque eum in finem ut ex fide etiam laudato Scheidiano illustri filio data, illud prelo aliquando submitterem. Sed variis hactenus impeditis gravissimis negotiis aliisque fatis, coactus fui illud usque in hoc, in quo tandem comparet, tempus differre. Quid B. Scheidius in hoc opere praestiterit aliis diiudicandum relinquo, hoc tamen addo me dolere quod non originalis Talmudis textus, erudito Ligfoetiano et Schoettgeniano more sit simul additus, sed nuda tantum appareat latina versio.'

advantage of learning and for your own everlasting memory. I myself have seen, at Van Halma's, who is now a bookseller in Amsterdam, and learned that what you commented on Erachim was very elegantly phrased.⁴⁹ If you would want it thus, it will be an easy business to print other manuscripts as well. I therefore insist that you let me know as soon as possible how you would like to go about this.

As far as I am concerned, rest assured that I will take all care to have your work printed as elegantly as possible, if you don't want to deny the learned world your profitable work, just as I don't withhold mine.⁵⁰

This was yet another Talmudic project that never materialized. What is important to note, however, is that Surenhusius time and again took a very proactive stance in his attempts to persuade people, Jews and Christians alike, to have their Talmudic studies printed, offering to act as a broker with the Amsterdam printers. The attempt to bring to light a Latin translation of the Babylonian Talmud, moreover, aligns perfectly with Surenhusius's Latin translation of the Mishnah together with its main Jewish and Christian commentaries, as well as the plan to have a Latin *Mishneh Torah* printed.

Breithaupt's Latin Translation of Rashi

That Surenhusius liked to act as a broker is a detail that also transpires from the lost exchange he must have had with the Gotha-based orientalist Johann Friedrich Breithaupt (1639–1713), who contacted him in 1699 on the advice of Benzelius. Breithaupt asked Surenhusius to negotiate the printing in Amsterdam of his translation of Rashi's commentary on the Pentateuch:

When you had left from here, my best Benzelius, you promised me to write to Breithaupt, which you did, as Breithaupt noted in a letter he sent me.⁵¹ I am

⁴⁹ The poet and learned printer François (or Franciscus van/von) Halma (1653–1723), was previously based in Utrecht as an academic printer, before he set up in Amsterdam from 1699 to 1710 to sell (and print) books.

⁵⁰ 'Te etiam atque etiam rogo, ut exemplum eorum virorum qui sua scripta ad me miserunt, imitari velis et in rei literariae commodum tuamque memoriam sempiternam doctissima tua scripta mecum communicare velis. Vidi ego ipse apud Von Halma, qui iam bibliopola Amstelodamensis est, et comperi illa quae in Erachim commentatus es, nitidissime conscripta esse, ut facili negotio excudi possint etiam coeteri codices quoque, si ita tibi visum fuerit. Quamobrem enixe peto ut quamprimum me certiore reddas quid hac in parte fieri velis. Me quod attinet, credas, volo me omnem curam adhibiturum ut tua quam eleganter excudantur, si tu ipse orbi literato non invidias tuum commodum, sicuti ego nec meum.' Surenhusius (Amsterdam) to Magnus Rönnow, 24 April 1700 (place unknown) (printed fragment: *Holmia literata* (Stockholm, 1701), 41–2). I am indebted to Marcello Cattaneo for bringing this fragment to my attention. Wolf referred to this quotation in his *Bibliotheca hebraea*.

⁵¹ This is not the theologian Johann Justus Breithaupt (1658–1732) who signed the *Album amicorum* of Erik Benzelius on 8 August 1698 in Halle, wishing him luck on all his journeys. See Erik Benzelius,

grateful that you won the learned man over for me, and I will feel that way every time this happens, for nothing is more pleasing than the exchange with learned men; nothing is more useful for a learned man than to promote learning. I have secured here the services of a bookseller who will commit Breithaupt's elaborate work on the Pentateuch to print as soon as he has put the finishing touch to it. A number of things remain yet to be done by him in finalizing the notes, but he has finished the translation of Jarchi [i.e. Rashi].⁵² For the rest, in Amsterdam the German translation of Jarchi's commentary on the first and latter books of the Prophets has been finished, and after a few months these will be joined by the same translation of the notes on the five books of Moses.⁵³

Two years later, in 1701, Breithaupt sent his handwritten translation of Rashi's commentary on the Pentateuch, but Surenhusius responded that printing could only start in March 1702. As he reported to Benzelius, 'the eminent Breithaupt sent me his Jarchi on the entire Pentateuch. But printing will only start on the first of March in the coming year.'⁵⁴ A year later, the situation had changed for the worse, however:

I still have manuscripts of the eminent Breithaupt, which contain the Latin translation of Salomon Jarchi's commentaries with notes. I showed them more than once to booksellers, but they dare not take on the costs, due to the extreme violence of the war, that forces the Muses into exile;⁵⁵ there would be no

Album amicorum (Linköping, Stiftsbiblioteket, MS B 59, fol. 7r). It is not clear if the two Breithauptii were related.

⁵² Jarchi is a name for Rashi, or Rabbi Shlomo Yitzhaki, that fell out of use in the nineteenth century due to recognition of its mistaken etymology.

⁵³ 'Cum tu hinc discesseras, optime Benzeli, promissa dederas mihi te ad doctissimum Breijthauptium scripturum, quod factum est sicuti ex epistola ad me data insignivit Breijthauptius. Habeo gratiam quod mihi doctum virum conciliaveris, et habeo semper quoties id factum fuerit, nihil enim virorum doctorum commercio gratius, nihil homini literato ad literas promovendas utilius. Nactus sum hic bibliopolam qui Breijthauptii elaborationes in quinque libros Mosis praelo committet simulac ille suis extremam manum adhibuerit. Nam quaedam adhuc restant ipsi in notis perficiendis, sed translatio Iarchii ab ipso finita est. Caeterum translatio Germanica Iarchii Amsteladaemi fere absoluta est ad priores et posteriores libros propheticos, et post aliquot menses his accedet eadem translatio in quinque libros Mosis.' Surenhusius (Amsterdam) to Benzelius (London), 24 December 1699 (autograph: Linköping, Stiftsbiblioteket, Erik Benzelius den yngres arkiv (E005/Br 10), vol. 1, no. 87; ed. Erikson, *Letters to Benzelius*, 45–7).

⁵⁴ 'Clarissimus Breijthautius [sic] suum Iarchium in integrum Pentateuchum ad nos transmisit; sed excudendi initium primo Martii anni instantis demum incipiet.' Surenhusius (Amsterdam) to Benzelius (Stockholm), 1 December 1701 (autograph: Linköping, Stiftsbiblioteket, Erik Benzelius den yngres arkiv (E005/Br 10), vol. 1, no. 123; MS copy: DKB, NKS 1435 2° 216–17; ed. Erikson, *Letters to Benzelius*, 68–9).

⁵⁵ Perhaps a reference to the fighting that had taken place in Flanders from the spring to September 1703 between the troops of England, France, and the Dutch Republic (with a major defeat of the Dutch on 29 June); see John A. Lynn, *The Wars of Louis XIV, 1667–1714* (London: Longman, 1999), 280.

opportunity to sell them. I am sorry for the unlucky fate of this very learned man, that the first bookseller,⁵⁶ who had printed a sample, passed away.⁵⁷

Breithaupt's work was eventually printed ten years later in Gotha, in three volumes, the last one posthumously.⁵⁸ Surenhusius purchased a copy.⁵⁹

Conclusions

In August 1700, Surenhusius wrote to the Strasbourg professor of medicine Johann Valentin Scheidt that he planned to publish an appendix to his edition of the Mishnah, 'in which the manuscripts are to be collected of a number of learned men who communicated these to me for the advantage of the republic of letters.'⁶⁰ Surenhusius here repeats something he had promised earlier that year at the end of his *Preface to the Reader* in the third volume of his Mishnah edition.⁶¹

⁵⁶ This may be Joseph Athias, who died in 1700. He was the father of Immanuel ben Joseph Athias. Father and son were involved in the printing of Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah*. It should be noted that more than just a 'specimen' had been printed: almost all commentaries on the Prophets were typeset. In the eventual edition (Gotha, 1714; see the next footnote) these filled the entire third volume.

⁵⁷ 'Clarissimi Breijthauptii manuscripta, quae Salomonis Iarchi commentarios Latine redditos cum notis continent, etiamnum possideo. Obtuli eos aliquoties bibliopoli, verum ii propter infensissimum Martem quo Musae exulare debent, non audent sumptus in se suscipere, cum nulla sit distrahendi occasio. Doleo infelicia viri doctissimi fata, quod primus bibliopola qui specimen aliquod excuderat, fortuna exciderit.' Surenhusius (Amsterdam) to Benzelius (Stockholm), October 1703 (autograph: Linköping, Stiftsbiblioteket, Erik Benzelius den yngres arkiv (E005/Br 10), vol. 1, no. 181; ed. Erikson, *Letters to Benzelius*, 85–7).

⁵⁸ Johann Friederich Breithaupt, *R. Salomonis Iarchi Commentarius Hebraicus in Pentateuchum Mosis, Latine versus, cum duobus vetustissimis codicibus m[anu]s[crip]tis membranaceis collatus, multis in locis auctus et emendatus atque notis illustratus* (Gotha, 1710); *R. Salomonis Iarchi ꝛꝛ dicti, Commentarius Hebraicus in Quinque Libros Mosis, ... latine versus, cum duobus vetustissimis codicibus m[anu]s[crip]tis membranaceis collatus, multis in locis auctus et emendatus atque notis criticis ac philologicis illustratus* (Gotha, 1713); *R. Salomonis Iarchi ꝛꝛ dicti, Commentarius Hebraicus in libros Josuae, Judicum, Ruth, Samuelis, Regum, Chronicorum, Esrae, Nehemiae, et Estherae, item in Salomonis Proverbia, Ecclesiasten et Canticum Canticorum, Latine versus, cum duobus vetustissimis codicibus m[anu]s[crip]tis membranaceis collatus, multis in locis auctus et emendatus atque notis criticis ac philologicis illustratus* (Gotha, 1714).

⁵⁹ *Bibliotheca Surenhusiana*, 29, nos 65–7.

⁶⁰ Surenhusius (Amsterdam) to Johann Valentinus Scheijdius (Strassbourg), 7 August 1700 (autograph: DKB, Thott 1273. – 4): 'Iam adhuc tres tomi restant a me edendi Misnici, et tandem appendix quaedam Misnica, in qua virorum aliquot doctorum manuscriptorum recolligenda erunt, quae illi in reipublicae literariae commodum mecum communicarunt.'

⁶¹ Surenhusius, *Seder Nashim sive Legum mischnicarum liber qui inscribitur de re uxoria*, vol. 3 (Amsterdam, 1700), sig. ****[4]^r (last page of prefatory material before p. 1): 'Sed antequam a nobis vela contrahantur, lector, non possum quin tibi paucis significem quod ab altero volumine Misnico in lucem edito ad hunc usque diem messis nostra mirum quantum accrevit, et adhuc indies accrescat, cum aliquot viri docti qui de hac literatura bene mereri voluerunt, manuscriptorum sua liberalissime ad nos transmiserunt, quae eo usque aucta sunt ut iustum aliquod volumen conficere possint. Quare in animum induximus ea omnia seorsim in uno volumine edere, eademque plane forma qua tria iam edita sunt, quod APPENDIX MISNICA inscribendum erit, atque simul cum sexta Misnae parte prodibit. [...] Amstelaeami, ipsis Calendis Maii, MDCC.'

The surviving correspondence of Surenhusius shows that he was a broker between scholars and Amsterdam printers, and an avid collector of books and manuscripts. His favourite expression is *in commercium* (or *commodum*) *rei literariae* ('for the exchange/advantage of learning'). He evidently liked to pose as a scholar in service to the republic of letters.

Surenhusius was an enthusiastic champion of the concept of a Republic of Letters: he mentions the phrase four times in his surviving forty-one letters, and that of the 'World of Learning' (*orbis literatus*) also four times. To put these figures into perspective, in the entirety of the 20,020 letters assembled in the digital corpus of the *ePistolarium* (which letters date from between 1594 and 1707), the concept occurs thirty-nine times.⁶² In the correspondence of Scaliger (1540–1609), 1,670 letters, the republic of letters is mentioned fifty-eight times.⁶³ In the surviving five hundred letters of the correspondence of the Utrecht antiquarian Arnold Buchelius (1565–1641), the concept of a republic of letters is mentioned six times.⁶⁴ The common good of learning was a central explicit characteristic of Surenhusius's discourse, much more than the correspondences of these other eminent scholars. For Surenhusius, this service entailed making available for Latin readers the Mishnah, the Talmud, Maimonides, and Rashi, all in Latin. He was involved in the bringing of a Hebrew edition of Maimonides to Italy, and even ventured to print a Hebrew commentary on the Palestinian Talmud from a near contemporary Jewish scholar. That its author was not unanimously praised by the rabbis of his time may not have bothered Surenhusius: for all his passion for Jewish learning, Surenhusius was a devout Christian who thought that the Rabbis were misguided in persisting in their faith.

However, the deeds did not match up with the words. The edition of the Mishnah was a *tour de force*, but however much Surenhusius wanted to serve the republic of letters with additional projects, his correspondence shows that he failed most of the time and that the majority of his lofty plans came to naught. On the one hand, he took an active part in collecting unpublished Rabbinic materials, and on the other, he almost never managed to publish them. Even his manuscript list of unpublished manuscripts was never published.⁶⁵

If we take Surenhusius's ambition as a context for characterizing his work on the Mishnah, this edition comes across as an encyclopaedic service to the community. Surenhusius was bent on making a name for himself by facilitating

⁶² <http://ckcc.huylgens.knaw.nl/epistolarium/>. See Dirk van Miert, 'Regulating the Exchange of Knowledge: Invoking the "Republic of Letters" as a Speech Act', in *Regulating Knowledge in an Entangled World*, ed. Fokko Jan Dijksterhuis (Abingdon: Routledge, 2022).

⁶³ Karen Hollewand and Dirk van Miert, 'Mapping the Use of the "Republic of Letters" in The Correspondences of Casaubon and of Scaliger', *Bibliothèque d'humanisme et renaissance* 84 (2022) [forthcoming].

⁶⁴ Kees Smit, 'Brieven van en aan Arnoldus Buchelius, complete verzameling, versie 1.1', unpublished transcription.

⁶⁵ Of course, we would like to know what happened to all these manuscripts that Surenhusius owned. They are not listed in the auction catalogue of his library.

research. At a time that numerous projects were undertaken to vernacularize the Bible, and to Latinize rabbinic literature, the value of Surenhusius's Mishnah was that it gave a non-specialist, even non-Hebraist, audience, including his students, finally a complete overview of what the Mishnah was—not just by translating it, but also positioning it between Jewish and Christian commentary. Surenhusius domesticated the Mishnah for Christian students by bringing together bits and pieces of specialized translations and commentaries and providing a bird's eye overview as well as a detailed *vademecum*. That he had this broad overview is demonstrated by the 339 Hebrew books in the sale catalogue of his library, but also by his correspondence. His desire to print Scheidt's translation of the Babylonian Talmud and Breithaupts's translation of Rashi shows that he aimed to Latinize rabbinic learning. Surenhusius probably dreamt that the Jewish community, too, would find his work helpful. But the lasting value of his edition is that it is the one large project that succeeded and that every Christian interested in Hebrew and Jewish tradition found useful.

Surenhusius was relatively young when he sacrificed his energy to the Mishnah. As Conrad Samuel Schurzfleisch in 1699 reported to Johann Christoph Mehlführer: 'Surenhusius at youthful age is concentrating on a huge work and triumphs over the ordinary teachers of the Hebrews and is editing the monuments of the ancients and translates them into Latin, as one who is the most accomplished among the many.'⁶⁶

Perhaps only a young scholar with no further teaching commitments, living on a shoestring, could have accomplished a project of such magnitude, and perhaps it is the very success of the Mishnah that helped him to obtain a position at the Amsterdam Athenaeum that, ironically, hampered his remaining plans. All the other projects he dreamt of completing afterwards became stranded in the treadmill of day-to-day business that he also complains of in his letters: his private teaching, the travellers who knocked on his door, the recommendation letters he had to write, the lectures he had to give four times a week. In a rare instance of personal news, Surenhusius wrote to Benzelius in 1703:

I congratulate you on landing the post of librarian, which you deservedly obtained, as the most honourable Schutz has confirmed. But I also congratulate you on your happily officiated marriage. I myself am still not tied to any agreement, save to the instruction and to the writings of others. Since the famous Wagenseil died [*he died actually two years later*], and since my Mishnah has come out, every year numerous students tend to flock from all sorts of place to

⁶⁶ Schurzfleisch to Mehlführer, 1699, printed in Konrad Samuel Schurzfleisch, *Epistolae arcanae, varii, politici in primis, historici, antiquarii et litterarii argumenti, ad fidem ms. auctoris accurate diligenterque collatae*, ed. H. L. Schurzfleisch, 2 vols (Halle, 1711 and 1712), vol. 2, p. 235, no. 158: 'Surenhusius aetate iuvenili magnum opus molitur, et vulgares Ebraeorum magistros longissime superat, veterumque monumenta edit, et in Latinum convertit unus omnium aptissime.'

me, to dedicate their minds to learning Hebrew, such that because of my daily business there has hitherto been no opportunity for me to contemplate the imperative 'Be fruitful and multiply' [Gen. 1:28].⁶⁷

Surenhusius's only children were his volumes of the Mishnah: he speaks of them as his 'filiolae'.⁶⁸ All the other Talmudic projects of this first period of his career were still-born, only to be followed by one other brain child, the *Sefer ha-Mashveh*.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ 'Gratulor tibi de munere bibliothecarii, quod tibi merito obtigisse affirmavit ornatissimus Schutz, tum etiam de coniugio satis feliciter contracto. Ego hactenus nullae conditioni alligatus sum, praeterquam scriptioni et institutioni aliorum. Etenim ex quo clarissimus Wagenseilius obiit et Misnica mea prodierunt, quotannis hinc inde multi ad me advolare solent studiosi qui ad professionem Hebraicam animos applicare solent, ita ut propter quotidiana negotia hactenus nihil loci fuerit de praecepto פריה ורביה cogitare.' Surenhusius (Amsterdam) to Benzelius (Stockholm), October 1703 (autograph: Linköping, Stiftsbiblioteket, Erik Benzelius den yngres arkiv (E005/Br 10), vol. 1, no. 181; ed. Erikson, *Letters to Benzelius*, 85–7).

⁶⁸ Surenhusius (Amsterdam) to Antonio Magliabechi (Florence), 1 July 1700 (autograph: BNCF, MS Magl. VIII, 1219, fol. 79r, no. 38): 'et hac in parte tibi fido, excellentissime patrone, fore ut tuo patrocinio haec mea filiola Hebraica non minore favore nec viliori hospitio excepturam iri'. The construction is grammatically unsound, since 'filiola' is a nominative and the corresponding 'excepturam' is not. Furthermore, 'excepturam' cannot be a supine, because the ending would have to be in -um and it should form an accusative with infinitive clause. Better would have been 'fido fore ut tuo patrocinio filiola exceptetur' or 'fido filiolum exceptum iri'. With 'Regia Celsitudo', Surenhusius refers to the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Cosimo III de' Medici, the elder brother of the Prince-Cardinal Francesco Maria de' Medici.

⁶⁹ For this work, see its treatment in this volume by Kirsten Macfarlane.