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Cosmopolitan Ideas in Early Modern Europe and the Jewish Tradition

Abstract | This article aims to shed new light on Early Modern Jewish discourse on cosmopolitanism, by focusing on the works of Simone Luzzatto (ca. 1580–1663), a rabbi and prominent intellectual figure of Venice's Jewish community. I will reconstruct Luzzatto's theory of cosmopolitanism and address how he engages with Greek-Roman and European philosophical literature on this theme. I will also show that Luzzatto's discussion of cosmopolitan ideas is linked to the advocacy of religious tolerance towards the Jews and as a general philosophical position.

Keywords | Early Modern Jewish political thought – Cosmopolitanism – Simone Luzzatto – religious tolerance

Introduction

Recent years have seen a backlash against globalization and an upsurge in nationalism. In light of the traumatic experiences of World War II, cosmopolitanism has often been celebrated as being conducive to the creation of a global community. But in current debates, especially in Europe, about migration caused by military conflicts, economic devastation, and shrinking natural resources, it is often depicted as a sinister force threatening to erode national bonds and the religious and cultural values of the nation-state. Considerations of cosmopolitan ideas have a long lineage in European political and philosophical thinking, particularly in the Early Modern period, in connection with the Wars of Religion and a series of economic crises in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The objective of this article is to shed new light on Early Modern Jewish discourse on cosmopolitanism, by analyzing the works of Simone (Simḥa) Luzzatto (ca. 1580–1663), a rabbi and prominent intellectual figure of Venice's Jewish community, and a seminal theorist of religious tolerance and precursor of Spinoza.

Although Luzzatto's oeuvre has received increasing scholarly attention, in part thanks to the publication of the English translations of his major writings, there remains a need to situate his ideas in the history of European political thought. In this article, I will reconstruct Luzzatto's theory of cosmopolitanism and address how the Venetian rabbi engages with Greek-Roman and European philosophical literature on this theme. Additionally, I will demonstrate that his treatment of cosmopolitanism operates on two different levels, but that ultimately these two strains of his thought converge in the advocacy of religious tolerance towards the Jews and as a general philosophical position.

Luzzatto is at pains to show that the Jewish religion is not inimical to Christianity and that the Mosaic Law was promulgated for all of humankind. His apology for the Jewish presence in

Venice is premised on the notion that the Jews do not have their own state nor do they have a ruler that can protect them. For these reasons, they are usually loyal to the cities and countries that host them. Unlike other ancient nations that vanished over the course of history, the Jews lived scattered around the world and survived thanks to their commitment to preserving their rites and customs. Luzzatto considers this kind of Jewish "exceptionalism" as a source of strength, because it forced the Jewish nation to become more resilient and come to terms with the hardships and challenges associated with diasporic existence. At the same time, one of the most intriguing aspects of Luzzatto's thought is the treatment of cosmopolitanism beyond Jewish concerns and the emphasis on the importance of trade in terms of cultivating amicable relations between diverse societies and bridging religious differences.

The Observation of the Natural World and Cosmopolitanism

Information about Luzzatto's life is scarce. Some details about his family background and studies derive from his testament drawn up on June 20th, 1662, almost one year before his death. Luzzatto was born to a wealthy mercantile family and pursued rabbinic studies. He was appointed rabbi at the Scuola Grande Tedesca in 1606 and also served as head of the Talmudic Academy following Leon Modena's death in 1648.[1] Luzzatto's most famous work, the *Discorso circa il stato de gl'Hebrei et in particolar dimoranti nell'inclita città di Venetia* (*Discourse Regarding the Condition of the Jews and in Particular Those Residing in the Illustrious City of Venice*, Venice, 1638), was written in response to allegations about the involvement of Venetian Jews in a corruption scandal of Venice's judiciary.[2] The *Discorso* provides a set of general arguments about the advantages associated with the presence of the Jews in Venice. Luzzatto's second major work, the *Socrate overo dell'humano sapere* (*Socrates or on Human Knowledge*, Venice, 1651), is a fictional dialogue among various ancient Greek personages about human knowledge, which features three main characters: Socrates, Hippias of Elis, and Timon of Athens [Phlius].[3] The *Discorso* exudes agony about the fate of Venice's Jewish community in the seventeenth century and the modes of

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[1] For further details about Luzzatto's life and works, see the volume Giuseppe Veltri, ed., *Filosofo e Rabbino nella Venezia del Seicento: Studi su Simone Luzzatto con documenti inediti dall'Archivio di Stato di Venezia* (Rome: Aracne, 2015).

[2] Simone Luzzatto, *Discourse on the State of the Jews*, bilingual edition, eds., trans., and comm. Giuseppe Veltri and Anna Lissa (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019) (henceforth cited as Luzzatto, *Discourse on the State of the Jews*). I have also consulted the English translation of certain portions in Lester W. Roubey, "The *Discorso circa il stato degli Hebrei* (1638) of the Italian Rabbi Simone (Simha ben Isaac) Luzzatto with an Introduction on the Life and Works of the Author" (Rabbinical thesis, Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion, 1947).

[3] Simone Luzzatto, *Socrates, Or On Human Knowledge*, bilingual edition, eds., trans., and comm. Giuseppe Veltri and Michela Torbidoni (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019) (henceforth cited as Luzzatto, *Socrates*). Luzzatto has conflated the notorious fifth-century misanthrope and Socrates' contemporary Timon of Athens with the sceptic philosopher Timon of Phlius (ca. 325–ca. 235 BC), who was a disciple of Pyrrho of Elis. In the *Socrate*, the biographical information about Timon points to Timon of Athens' life, but the philosophical ideas he expresses in the dialogue derive from Timon of Phlius' teachings.

accommodating religious differences in a period of political, economic and societal tribulations. The *Socrate*, by contrast, is driven by the quest for social harmony and personal constancy and stability, and is colored by the endeavor to mitigate the anxiety resulting from the insight that human learning is inherently limited.

In the *Socrate*, Luzzatto presents the sophist Hippias as a polymath, incorporating or reworking a variety of ancient sources, notably, Plato's *Hippias Major* and *Hippias Minor*, and Xenophon's *Memorabilia*.[4] A crucial feature ascribed to Hippias, as pictured by Luzzatto, is the philosophical justification of cosmopolitanism, which points to Plato's *Protagoras*: there Hippias appears as a proponent of cosmopolitan sentiments and addresses his interlocutors as fellow citizens whose bonds are sustained by nature and not by human laws.[5] Hippias, in Luzzatto's *Socrate*, notes that someone who has observed the inevitable concatenation of the causes and workings of fatality (*fatalità*) and opts to be dragged by them instead of obeying them by willingly following them, creates due to his tergiversation trouble for himself and inflicts self-punishment. Similarly, the examination of the universal caducity (*caducità universale*) in the sublunary world induces humans to become contemptuous of life and keen to sacrifice their lives for their homeland. The world changes its appearance, and the things that exist in it perish, come back to life, and are at our service. Humans, by witnessing this process of metamorphosis, become eager to sacrifice their lives and confront death head-on for the sake of their homeland. Human arrogance can be tempered so long as man observes the breadth of the skies and the greatness of the stars; man recognizes that, by comparison, the earth is as small as a grain of sand.[6]

Hippias echoes ideas about cosmopolitanism, which derive from ancient Greek philosophy, especially Stoic teachings, and reverberate in a number of Early Modern authors.[7] The vision of Socrates as the archetype of a world citizen is central to the Cynic teachings exemplified by Diogenes of Sinope (ca. 405 – ca. 320 BC), who renounced allegiance to a specific city or a homeland.[8] Some of these views were incorporated in Stoic philosophy and served as the fulcrum for a variety of approaches to cosmopolitanism. As with Early Modern discoveries, Alexander the Great's conquests and encounters with new societies gave a powerful impetus to reflection on the unity of humankind, the limitations of the model of the city-state, and, most importantly, the need to redefine one's position and identity in the new heterogeneous political formations. Zeno of Citium (ca. 335–ca. 263) formulated a plan for a utopia that would span the entire

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[4] On the following, see [Plato], *The Hippias Major Attributed to Plato*, intro. and comm. Dorothy Tarrant (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1928), xx–xxii.

[5] Plato, *Laches, Protagoras, Meno, Euthydemus*, trans. Walter R. M. Lamb (London/Cambridge, MA: W. Heinemann/Harvard University Press, 1914), 337C–D, 178–181.

[6] Luzzatto, *Socrates*, 420–23.

[7] The following account is based on Thomas J. Schlereth, *The Cosmopolitan Ideal in Enlightenment Thought: Its Form and Function in the Ideas of Franklin, Hume, and Voltaire, 1694–1790* (Notre Dame, IN and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977), xvii–xx. On Greek and Roman cosmopolitan ideas, see, e. g., Daniel S. Richter, *Cosmopolis: Imagining Community in Late Classical Athens and the Early Roman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Greg R. Stanton, "The Cosmopolitan Ideas of Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius," *Phronesis* 13 (1968): 183–95; Harold C. Baldry, *The Unity of Mankind in Greek Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965); Moses Hadas, "From Nationalism to Cosmopolitanism in the Greco-Roman World," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 4 (1943): 105–11; William W. Tarn, *Alexander the Great and the Unity of Mankind* (London: Milford, 1933); and Hugh Harris, "Greek Origins of the Idea of Cosmopolitanism," *The International Journal of Ethics* 38 (1927): 1–10.

[8] John L. Moles, "Cynic Cosmopolitanism," in *The Cynics: The Cynic Movement in Antiquity and Its Legacy*, eds. R. Bracht Branham and Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996), 105–20. See also Malcolm Schofield, *The Stoic Idea of the City* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 64–65, 141–45.

world.[9] Philo of Alexandria, in his work *De opificio mundi* (*On the Creation*), contends that the first man and original forefather of humankind should be declared the only citizen of the world (*kosmopolitēs*). For the entire world was his home, city, and country, where he lived without any fear and enjoyed absolute peace and safety. Given that every well-ordered city has a set of laws in place, the citizen of the world conformed to the same laws as the whole world, which are nature's right reason (*orthos logos*), a divine law, according to which all living creatures received what rightly pertained to them.[10]

For ancient thinkers who were inspired by Stoic ideas as well as for Luzzatto and Early Modern Libertines, involvement in civic affairs was a vehicle to expose and combat deep-rooted conventions, superstitions, and bigotry, all of which led to divisions and discord. Panaetius of Rhodes prefigures this tendency in his portrayal of the philosophers as proponents of cosmopolitan ideals. The seeds of early modern ideas about religious tolerance can be found in the teachings of Posidonius, Panaetius' disciple and Cicero's teacher. Cicero argues that all humans have shared interests; as such, they are all obliged to follow the same law of nature.[11] Cicero's *Tusculanae Disputationes* (*Tusculan Disputations*) includes an account of Socrates as the embodiment of cosmopolitan values, which was reproduced by a number of Early Modern authors: when Socrates was asked about the country to which he belonged, he responded that he considered himself a native and citizen of the world.[12]

Pietro Pomponazzi (1462–1525), in his *De immortalitate animae* (*On the Immortality of the Soul*, 1516), visualizes all of humankind as a single body consisting of different members and parts: their functions differ, but they are all ordered to the general welfare. In Pomponazzi's view, the various members of humankind are interrelated and complement one another. Although they do not have the same degree of perfection, these arrangements guarantee the perpetuation of humankind. But, for all their differences, they all share some common characteristics and qualities – otherwise they would not belong to the same genus, and they would not all foster the common good like the bodily members and organs of a single person.[13]

The correlation established by Luzzatto's Hippias between the observation of natural phenomena and cosmopolitanism is strongly reminiscent of Erasmus' (1466–1536) use of celestial imagery in his discussion of cosmopolitan ideas in his *Querela pacis* (*The Complaint of Peace*, 1517). Erasmus notes that, although the motions of the celestial bodies differ and their force is not equal, they are and have always been in constant motion, in perfect harmony, without colliding. The elements, although they repel each other, are in a state of equilibrium and ensure eternal peace in the natural world. Despite the disparity of the constituent principles they enjoy,

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[9] Alfred C. Pearson, *The Fragments of Zeno and Cleanthes* (London: C. J. Clay, 1891; New York: Arno Press, 1973). For further discussion, see Robert Bees, *Zenons Politeia* (Leiden and Boston, MA: Brill, 2011); Anton-Hermann Chroust, "The Ideal Polity of the Early Stoics: Zeno's Republic," *Review of Politics* 27 (1965): 173–83; Harold C. Baldry, "Zeno's Ideal State," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 79 (1959): 3–15.

[10] Philo, *Philo in Eleven Volumes*, vol. 1, trans. Francis H. Colson and George H. Whitaker (London/Cambridge, MA: W. Heinemann/Harvard University Press, 1929), 142–43, 112–15.

[11] Cicero, *De Officiis*, trans. Walter Miller (London/New York: W. Heinemann/Macmillan, 1913), III.28, 295.

[12] Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, trans. John E. King (London and New York: W. Heinemann and G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1927), V.xxxvii.108, 532–35.

[13] Pietro Pomponazzi, *Traité de l'immortalité de l'âme = Tractatus de immortalitate animae*, ed. and trans. Thierry Gontier (Paris: Les Belles Letres, 2012), 162–63; Ernst Cassirer, Paul Oskar Kristeller, and John Herman Randall, Jr., eds., *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man* (Chicago, IL and London: University of Chicago Press, 1948), 352–53. On the following, see Derek Heater, *World Citizenship and Government: Cosmopolitan Ideas in the History of Western Political Thought* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 48–51; as well as Luca Scuccimarra, *I confini del mondo: Storia del cosmopolitismo dall' Antichità al Settecento* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2006).

through friendly intercourse and union, continuous concord.[14] The entire earth is, in Erasmus' eyes, the shared habitat of all those who live and breathe on it. All humans, notwithstanding their political or accidental differences, originate from the same parents.[15] Human life is afflicted by countless calamities, but a great part of human misery can be mitigated by mutual affection and friendship.[16] Similar sentiments are expressed by Étienne de la Boétie (1530–63), in his *Discours de la servitude volontaire* (*Discourse on Voluntary Servitude*, written ca. 1550; published in 1570), who grounds the argument that all humans are naturally free in the idea that nature has created all human beings from the same mold, so that each person can recognize others as companions, or rather, brothers. Nature has offered humans the entire earth as their common abode, and has endowed them with the great capacity of speech so they can communicate with each other, build trust, and forge fraternal bonds. The common and mutual expression of thoughts generates a communion of wills, and nature enhances the ties among human beings and within human society.[17]

Michel de Montaigne (1533–92), in his *Essais* (*Essays*, 1580–88), writes that frequent interaction with the world can be a source of light for human judgment, since all human beings are confined within themselves. Montaigne reiterates Socrates' statement that he (Socrates) did not come from Athens, but from the world. Socrates saw the entire world as his city, and he expanded his circle of acquaintances, his fellowship and affections to all of humankind.[18] Montaigne further asserts that he considers all men his fellow-citizens, that he would embrace a Pole in the same way as he would a Frenchman, and that he upholds the primacy of a common, universal bond over national ties.[19]

Finally, cosmopolitanism, loyalty, and dedication to one's homeland are important themes in Justus Lipsius' (1547–1606) *De constantia* (*On Constancy*, 1584), a philosophical dialogue aimed at the revival of Stoic ethics which the Flemish humanist saw as a remedy for the religious divisions that gripped Europe in the sixteenth century. One of Lipsius' main arguments in favor of cosmopolitanism is that all human beings are made of the same stock and seed, and that they live under the vault of heaven and on the same globe. Therefore, one's homeland should be the entire world, and not just a small part of it. The *De constantia* also mentions that Socrates proclaimed himself a citizen of the world. Lipsius concludes that most humans commit the folly of being attached to a specific part of the earth, while an affable and circumspect person defies common opinion, and through reflection he embraces the entire world as his own.[20]

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[14] Desiderius Erasmus, *The Complaint of Peace: Translated from the Querela Pacis (A.D. 1521)* (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1917; repr. 1974), 3. The reception of Erasmus' works in Early Modern Italy is traced in Reinier Leushuis, "Antonio Brucioli and the Italian Reception of Erasmus: The *Praise of Folly* in Dialogue," in *The Reception of Erasmus in the Early Modern Period*, ed. Karl A. E. Enenkel (Leiden and Boston, MA: Brill, 2013), 237–59; Silvana Seidel Menchi, *Erasmo in Italia: 1520–1580* (Turin: B. Boringhieri, 1987; repr. 2001); and Augustin Renaudet, *Erasme et l'Italie* (Geneva: Droz, 1954; repr. 1998).

[15] Erasmus, *The Complaint of Peace*, 60.

[16] Ibid., 74.

[17] Estienne de La Boëtie, *De la servitude volontaire ou contr'un*, ed. Malcolm Smith (Geneva: Droz, 2001), 42; Étienne de la Boétie and Paul Bonnefon, *The Politics of Obedience and Étienne de La Boétie*, trans. Harry Kurz (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 2007), 119–20.

[18] Michel de Montaigne, *The Complete Essays*, trans. Michael A. Screech (London: Penguin Books, 1993), 176.

[19] Ibid., 1100.

[20] Justus Lipsius, *Justus Lipsius' "Concerning Constancy,"* ed. and trans. Robert V. Young (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2011), 42–45.

The Jews and Cosmopolitanism

Luzzatto's Hippias suggests that humans ought to follow the path of nature in their actions, and that each man should not only seek his own profit or that of his country, but also that of the "universal country," that is, of all of humankind. In his treatment of cosmopolitanism, Hippias employs the imagery of rivers flowing with force into the sea, whereby they lose not only the sweetness of their waters, but also their names. In doing so, they assist the ocean as their shared homeland and ensure that it does not diminish or dry out due to the vapors which are produced continuously either by the subterranean fire, which pushes them, or by the celestial superior, which pulls them.[21]

Borrowing a similar metaphor, Luzzatto contends in the *Discorso* that the Jews are dispersed around the world and resemble a river that flows through a large territory. Its waters receive an impression of the quality of the various lands through which they flow. Analogously, the Jews are exposed to and adopt diverse lifestyles and habits from the countries, in which they live. As a result, the manners of the Venetian Jews are different from the Jews who live in Constantinople, Damascus, and Cagliari. All these differ from the Jews who live in Germany or Poland.[22] Luzzatto associates, in this connection, the river metaphor with the Jewish exile and movement of population and circulation in general. In his regard, he intersects with the Portuguese Marrano Duarte Gomes Solis (1561–1630), who maintains that the silver in circulation in the Spanish Empire, Europe, Africa, and Asia is like a fast-flowing river that originates from the Indies, flows through Castile, from there runs through various veins and other rivers, and discharges in China, which is its center.[23]

The use of the river motif is a prominent feature of Niccolò Machiavelli's (1469–1527) idea that fortune resembles a powerful river, which, when angry, floods the plains, destroys the trees and buildings, and lifts soil from a certain land and moves it to another (*The Prince*, ch. XXV). More broadly, Luzzatto's invocation of this image is redolent of Gabiel Naudé's (1600–1653) discussion of the parallels between the river Nile and the secrets of the state, in his *Considérations politiques sur les coups d'Estat* (*Political Considerations on Coups d'Etat*, 1639): just as those located near the source of the Nile derive many commodities without necessarily being cognizant of its origin, in likewise manner, the people value and profit from the salutary effects of state secrets without having any knowledge of their sources.[24] An analog to this passage can be found in Luzzatto's *Socrate*: Socrates refers to the Nile to argue that if knowledge is contingent upon identifying the causes, then this process would either go on to infinity, which, by its nature, is incomprehensible and can never be penetrated by human reason; or it should end at a certain point without searching for further causes. Like Naudé, Luzzatto's Socrates mentions that in the case of the Egyptians, locating the rivers and canals, which irrigate and fertilize their land and derive from the Nile, would not satisfy their curiosity, since the first origin and source of the Nile itself would still remain unknown to them.[25] Similarly, Giovanni Botero (1544–1617) employs river imagery in the context of his discussion of utility: states and dominions acquired through force and violence cannot endure. For they resemble torrents that can suddenly rise and fall, because, unlike rivers, they do not have a spring which could provide a continuous supply

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[21] Luzzatto, *Socrates*, 424–27.

[22] Luzzatto, *Discourse on the State of the Jews*, 100–01.

[23] Duarte Gomes Solis, *Alegación en favor de la Compañia de la India Oriental: Comercios ultramarinos, que de nuevo se instituyó en el reyno de Portugal*, ed. Moses Bensabat Amzalak (Lisbon: Editorial Império, 1955), 104.

[24] Gabriel Naudé, *Considérations politiques sur les coups d'État*, eds. Frédérique Marin and Marie-Odile Perulli (Paris: Éditions de Paris, 1988), 90.

[25] Luzzatto, *Socrates*, 328–29.

of water. In their spates, they can be dangerous to travelers, and then they dwindle to such an extent and dry up that one can walk through them without getting wet.[26]

Luzzatto stresses that, like all other living beings, the life span of peoples and nations is fixed. After reaching the apex of their growth and grandeur, they fall into oblivion. Their destruction can occur in two ways: through complete corruption, or through transformation, i. e., a thing can preserve its essence, or its shape is deformed due a dissolution of its continuity, as is the case with broken glass or separated water. The Chaldeans, the Persians, the Greeks, the Romans, and all other Gentile nations vanished or were transformed so radically that in certain cases only their names survived. In other cases, only relics of their memories were preserved, like planks left behind after a shipwreck. But the Jews (the Hebrew nation) did not experience any profound alterations. Although it was fragmented and divided into an infinite number of groups and lived dispersed around the world, its essence remained largely intact. Given that it would not have had sufficient strength to resist the passage of time and protect itself from the misfortunes that occurred over the course of 1,600 years, its survival is dictated by the divine will. Captivity and dispersion are the worst scourges that can afflict a people or a nation: they make it vile, abject, and the object of the scorn and derision of other nations. Such conditions can, however, also be an effective means of preserving a nation. For they remove jealousy and suspicion from the rulers; and they make the nation that is subjected to dispersion humble and pliant.[27]

Luzzatto's references to the Jewish exile point to the political ideas of another great author who emerged from the Venetian ghetto, Isaac Cardoso (ca. 1603–1684). In his work *Las Excelencias des los Hebreos* (*The Excellences of the Jews*, Amsterdam, 1679), Cardoso, like Luzzatto, refutes several accusations made against the Jews and elaborates upon some of their distinctive qualities. In Cardoso's view, dispersion has been a persistent phenomenon in the history of the Jewish people since the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar. In order to atone for their violations of the Holy Law, the Jews had to suffer misfortunes and attacks on their lives and property in every kingdom, in which they lived. Cardoso declares the Jewish people to be the only truly universal nation that constituted a "separate republic," a "republic apart." The Jews were dispersed and entrusted by God with the mandate to transmit knowledge of God, while remaining loyal to the lands and sovereigns that hosted them. [28]

Whereas most Medieval and Early Modern Jewish writers lament the exile and expulsion from Spain,[29] Luzzatto and Cardoso exemplify a different line of interpretation and emphasize,

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[26] Giovanni Botero, *On the Causes of the Greatness and Magnificence of Cities*, trans. and intro. Geoffrey Symcox (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), I.7, 16. The different uses of the river metaphor in Early Modern political thought are explored in Katherine Ibbett, "Productive Perfection: The Trope of the River in Early Modern Political Writing," in *Perfection*, ed. Anne L. Birberick (Charlottesville, VA: Rookwood Press, 2008), 44–57 (on Botero's deployment of river imagery in the broader context of the growth of cities and trade, ibid., 50–52).

[27] Luzzatto, *Discourse on the State of the Jews*, 232–03. See also Vasileios Syros, "*Mercati ex Machina*: Prosperity and Economic Decline in Early Modern Jewish Political Thought," *Republics of Letters* 6 (2018): 12–13, https://arcade.stanford.edu/rofl/mercati-ex-machina-economic-prosperity-and-decline-early-modern-jewish-thought-0 (last accessed January 5, 2021).

[28] On the following, see Claude B. Stuczynski, "Ex-*Converso* Sephardi New Jews as Agents, Victims, and Thinkers of Empire: Isaac Cardoso Once Again," in *Paths to Modernity: A Tribute to Yosef Kaplan*, eds. Avriel Bar-Levav et al. (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center, 2018), 209–31, esp. 221–22, and 230–31.

[29] Vasileios Syros, "All Roads Lead to Florence: Renaissance Jewish Thinkers and Machiavelli on Civil Strife," *Viator* 47 (2016): 349–63; idem, "Conflict and Political Decline in Machiavelli and Renaissance Jewish Historiography," in *Гвиччардини и Макиавелли у истоков исторической науки Нового времени. Материалы международной научной конференции, 23–24 сентября 2019 г.* (= *Machiavelli e Guicciardini alle origini della scienza storica dei tempi moderni. Materiali del Convegno Internazionale, 23–24 settembre 2019*), ed. Mark Youssim (Moscow: Institute of World History, Russian Academy of Sciences, 2020), 374–99.

from different angles, the salutary effects of diasporic existence. A similar endeavor to rehabilitate Jewish exile was articulated by the Portuguese historian João de Barros (1496–1570) in his *Ropica pnefma* (*Spiritual Goods*, 1532), a fictional dialogue between will and reason: although exile was originally intended as a retribution and a source of suffering, the dispersion of the Jews among various countries and nations enabled them to eventually reach a level of economic growth and prosperity, higher than the one they had enjoyed earlier.[30] These interpretations are prefigured in Isaac (Yitzḥak) Polqar's ʿEzer ha-Dat (*The Support of Religion*) in Medieval Spain. Polqar (fl. first half of the fourteenth century) embraces a naturalistic approach and depicts the Jewish exile as a favorable condition, because it gave the Jews an edge, in ethical terms, over other nations. It also allowed them to dedicate themselves to the study of the Torah and the theoretical sciences, which Polqar envisioned as the path to attaining human perfection. If, however, the Jews had been able to recover and return to their homeland, they would have lost their ethical advantage and been compelled to focus on cultivating the arts and strategies of war and turn away from the study of the Torah and the sciences.[31]

Trade and Cosmopolitanism

A salient facet of Luzzatto's apology for Venice's Jewish community is the connection between cosmopolitanism and trade. For Luzzatto, commerce yields five benefits for the *Serenissima*: the increase in duties and tariffs imposed on imports and exports; the transportation of various types of goods from faraway countries, which are intended not only to provide for basic material wants but also to adorn civil life; the abundant supply of materials, such as wool, silk, and cotton, which, in turn, increases the employment of the local workers and craftsmen, keeps them content, and, thereby, helps avert civil discord; the sale of a large amount of products made in Venice, which generates income for a substantial portion of the population; and the promotion of reciprocal trade, which are conducive to peace among neighboring states, since most of the time it is the rulers who are moved by their people to engage in war, and not the other way around.[32]

Luzzatto's ideas about the nexus of trade and cosmopolitanism share some theoretical ground with those of his French contemporary Émeric Crucé (ca. 1590–1648). Crucé considers free trade a means for extirpating inhumanity (*inhumanité*), the most common vice and the source of all other social and political ills.[33] Crucé's main political work, *Le Nouveau Cynée, ou, discours d'é[s]*

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[30] João de Barros, *Ropica pnefma. Reprodução fac-similada da ediçaõ de 1532*, ed. Israel S. Révah (Lisbon: Instituto de Alta Cultura, 1952–1955). On this point and for further discussion, see Claude B. Stuczynski, "Judaïcité et richesse dans l'apologétique des Conversos portugais: un argument contre-culturel," *Atalaya* 14 (2014), http://atalaya.revues.org/1295 (last accessed January 5, 2021).

[31] Isaac Polgar, "*The Support of Religion*," trans. Charles H. Manekin, in *Medieval Political Philosophy: A Sourcebook*, 2nd edition, eds. Joshua Parens and Joseph C. Macfarland (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 2011), 208–19, 217–19. For further discussion, see Racheli Haliva, *Isaac Polqar – A Jewish Philosopher or a Philosopher and a Jew? Philosophy and Religion in Isaac Polqar's ʿEzer ha-Dat and Tešuvat Epiqoros* (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2020), 90–100. I am grateful to Racheli Haliva for earlier discussions on this point. Consider also Shlomo Pines, "Some Topics on Polqar's Treatise *ʿEzer ha-Dat* and Their Parallels in Spinoza's View," in *Studies in Jewish Mysticism, Philosophy and Ethical Literature*, eds. Joseph Dan and Joseph Hacker (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1986), 395–457 [in Hebrew]; ibid., "Spinoza's *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* and the Jewish Philosophical Tradition," in *Jewish Thought in the Seventeenth Century*, eds. Isadore Twersky and Bernard Septimus (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 499–521; Shalom Sadik, "Negation of Political Success in the Thought of Rabbi Isaac Pulgar," *AJS Review* 39 (2015): 1–13 [in Hebrew].

[32] For further discussion, see Syros, "*Mercati ex Machina*," 16–17.

[33] Émeric Crucé, *Le Nouveau Cynée ou Discours d'Etat représentant les occasions et moyens d'établir une paix générale et liberté du commerce par tout le monde*, eds. Alain Fenet and Astrid Guillaume (Rennes: Presses

tat représentant les occasions et moyens d'établir une paix générale, et la liberté du commerce par tout le monde (*The New Cyneas, or, Discourse on the Occasions and Means to Establish a General Peace and the Freedom of Commerce throughout the Whole World*, Paris, 1624), a plan for a universal and durable peace, is addressed to the rulers of his time and has been interpreted to contain the vision for the creation of a league of nations.[34] Trade is, in Crucé's mind, the foundation of religious tolerance as well as of a network of interstate relations based on the equilibrium among the world's great powers.

Crucé describes a universal polity (*une police universelle*) that would be useful to all nations and agreeable to those who have some light of reason (*quelque lumière de raison*) and sentiment of humanity (*sentiment d'humanité*).[35] This task involves giving to each person what belongs to him, granting privileges to citizens, being hospitable to foreigners, and guaranteeing freedom of travel and commerce.[36] Crucé considers one of the ruler's prime concerns to be the promotion of trade, free movement and interaction among people from different countries.[37] He identifies religious differences as one of the major causes of hostility among various peoples. He ascribes hostilities among nations to political motives and the dissolution of the natural bonds among humans, which are the foundation of friendship and social cohesion. A threat to the unity of humankind is the person who adheres to common and inveterate opinions inherited from his ancestors to such an extent that he looks down on, taunts, and harasses the adherents of other religions.[38] The advocacy of consonance among various religious traditions stems from Crucé's conviction that all religions converge in the same mission, i. e., worship of the divine (*divinité*). Certain persons deviate from the right path because of simplicity and the influence of erroneous teachings rather than malice; such people deserve compassion rather than hatred or disdain.[39] Like Luzzatto, Crucé observes that too many people expect the entire world to embrace their persuasions and beliefs as an infallible rule. This is a misconception nourished, however, by the common people who have never travelled beyond the boundaries of their own towns, and who therefore expect that all other people should live like them. Sage and divine spirits should, in contrast, realize that the harmony of the world rests on diversity of opinions and customs.[40]

Certain polities accommodate a multitude of religions: for example, the Ottoman Empire, the Polish State, and the Spanish Empire are receptive to religious diversity. To sustain universal peace, Crucé proposes the creation of a general assembly of ambassadors, emissaries, and envoys of all governments, where differences between states would be adjudicated. Intriguingly, as the venue of the assembly he recommends Venice due to its geographical proximity to most

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Universitaires de Rennes, 2004), 55; *Émeric Crucé, The New Cyneas*, ed. and trans. Thomas Willing Balch (Philadelphia, PA: Allen, Lane, and Scott, 1909), 3–4. On Crucé's ideas about universal peace and trade, see, e. g., Alain Fenet, "Émeric Crucé aux origines du pacifisme et de l'internationalisme modernes," *Miskolc Journal of International Law* 1 (2004): 21–34; Miriam Eliav-Feldon, "Universal Peace for the Benefit of Trade: The Vision of Émeric Cruce," in *Religion, Ideology and Nationalism in Europe and America*, eds. Hedva Ben-Israel et al. (Jerusalem: Historical Society of Israel, 1986), 29–44; Anna Lazzarino Del Grosso, "Utopia e storia nel *Nouveau Cynée* di Émeric Crucé," in *Studi sull'Utopia*, ed. Luigi Firpo (Florence: L. S. Olschki, 1977), 99–155. Compare the sections "Of the Use and Benefit of Trade" and "Of the Chief Causes that Promote Trade" in Nicholas Barbon, *A Discourse of Trade*, ed. Jacob H. Hollander (Baltimore, MD: Lord Baltimore Press, 1905), 21–31 and 31–34, respectively.

[34] Crucé, *Le Nouveau Cynée*, 61; Crucé, *The New Cyneas*, 15–16.

[35] Crucé, *Le Nouveau Cynée*, 57; Crucé, *The New Cyneas*, 9–10.

[36] Crucé, *Le Nouveau Cynée*, 148; Crucé, *The New Cyneas*, 301–02.

[37] Crucé, *Le Nouveau Cynée*, 76; Crucé, *The New Cyneas*, 65–66.

[38] Crucé, *Le Nouveau Cynée*, 81–82; Crucé, *The New Cyneas*, 83–86.

[39] Crucé, *Le Nouveau Cynée*, 82; Crucé, *The New Cyneas*, 87–88.

[40] Crucé, *Le Nouveau Cynée*, 84; Crucé, *The New Cyneas*, 89–92.

kingdoms. The Pope would have the seat of honor and would be followed by the Ottoman emperor because of his excellence in majesty, power and the prosperity of his realm.[41]

Crucé exhibits a perspective similar to Luzzatto's idea that the way in which a ruler treats his Jewish subjects reflects his true feelings and intentions and is a measure of the quality of the government and that any justice, clemency, protection, and defense he uses towards the Jews can only be construed as the result of a heroic virtue of a genuine soul naturally disposed to aid the oppressed and the poor.[42] Specifically, Crucé suggests that a righteous sovereign ought to amiably receive those asking for his mercy or seeking refuge in his realm, especially traders and individuals who have been victims of persecution.[43] He counsels rulers to reach an agreement about different countries' trade activities with each other and the procedures to be followed by local authorities for resolving disputes. An integral aspect of Crucé's project for universal peace is the call to render justice to foreigners, and to ensure that they are not molested or harmed by the natives of a country during their visit, whether they travel for business or pleasure.[44]

Conclusion

In Luzzatto's *Socrate*, Timon's assault upon Hippias' philosophical program involves a sharp critique of cosmopolitanism: one of the most deleterious effects of the pursuits of those who engage in contemplation and the observation of the celestial phenomena is, in Timon's view, that they consider themselves to be part of a universal polity. As a result, they become contemptuous of their own homeland as if it were a "vile wasps nest" or an "abject anthill." They declare, for instance, that they are equally affected by the ruin of their city and the smashing of a small stone on a huge mountain; or that they would be as discontent by the oppression of their own people as they would feel happy thanks to the victory of those who vanquished them, because all of them would be members of a great, all-encompassing republic on earth. Therefore, certain legislators prohibited the citizens from settling down and including themselves in a foreign republic. In doing so, they sought to keep the citizens more firmly attached to their own republic because otherwise the legitimate love for their homeland would grow weaker and fade. In another iteration of the river metaphor, Timon points out that just as a river with abundant water supplies, when divided into several branches, eventually dries up, so too when human emotions diffuse to multiple objects and in different directions, they dissipate. For this reason, some legislators, in order to reinforce the love and affection for their own citizens, infuse hatred and aversion against aliens who come from outside. Timon concludes that a citizen with his discourse should not wander beyond the boundaries of his own homeland and extend to the skies and aspire to embrace all of humankind, but rather remain within the confines of his own homeland.[45]

Timon's plea for loyalty to one's homeland displays striking affinities with the *Discorso dell'amore verso la patria* (*Discourse about Love toward the Homeland*, Venice, 1631) written by Lodovico Zuccolo (1568–1630), a major Venetian exponent of the reason-of-state tradition. Zuccolo's *Discorso* is suffused with patriotic fervor, calls for the unification of Italy, and bemoans the fact that the Italian peninsula has become the buffer zone between Spain and France. Zuccolo formulates a definition of *patria* as something that is not simply the place of someone's birth or education. Rather, it connotes the right to partake of the honors and benefits prescribed by the

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41 Crucé, *Le Nouveau Cynée*, 87–90; Crucé, *The New Cyneas*, 99–110.

42 Luzzatto, *Discourse on the State of the Jews*, 92–93.

43 Crucé, *Le Nouveau Cynée*, 102; Crucé, *The New Cyneas*, 151–52.

44 Crucé, *Le Nouveau Cynée*, 147; Crucé, *The New Cyneas*, 297–98.

45 Luzzatto, *Socrates*, 436–39.

existing laws. The benefits emanating from civil legislation do not extend to the Jews, gypsies, and vagabonds who are scattered groups, unless perhaps a political community is corrupt and dysfunctional. The fact that the Jews and gypsies are protected from offenses is a privilege, which all humans, including the vulnerable members of society, should enjoy in accordance with common laws. But that does not entitle them to claim the city or country, where they reside, as their *patria*.[46]

In Luzzatto's *Socrate*, Socrates, albeit not an unalloyed proponent of radical skepticism, asserts that he sympathizes with many of the views expressed by Timon.[47] In his approach to cosmopolitan ideas, he, however, reconciles Hippias' and Timon's teachings: in his defense, Socrates argues that the guiding principle of his actions was to operate not just as the administrator of a household or a patrician of a specific republic, but as a citizen of the universe, who would be perceived to be at the disposal of the common people and contribute to the good of all of humankind.[48] At the same time, however, he declares that he has always been a loyal citizen and that he has always been respectful of the religious ceremonies and institutions stipulated by the city and that he has offered sacrifices in public in conformity with the rites in Athens, at appropriate locations, at the right time, and in legitimate ways.[49]

Luzzatto and Cardoso enunciated variants of Jewish cosmopolitanism that drew inspiration from Philo's analysis of the cosmopolitan elements of the Mosaic Law. Luzzatto remarks in the *Discorso* that the distinguished lawgivers and reformers of pagan nations in the ancient world, who laid down institutions and laws, were ordinary human beings, and that as such their thoughts and actions had their limitations: Solon created laws for Athens; Lycurgus for Sparta; and Romulus within the narrow place of his exile. As if they were bereft of humanity, they were not concerned with the rest of humankind. They allowed their citizens to tamper with the freedom and property of others and depredate, and some foreigners were sacrificed on the altars of their false gods. But the law of God promulgated by Moses encompasses all of humankind. As if a single nature were established by God in the world that all its constituent parts were united in harmonious concert and ruled in reciprocal affection, he decreed that all of humankind should co-exist in mutual amity, and that every human being should regard himself as a citizen of a single republic. Accordingly, Moses strove to instill in humans love and charity by teaching that man was created by a single God, descended from a single father (i. e., Adam), and proliferated thanks to Noah.[50] A similar comparison between Moses and pagan lawgivers and political leaders (Solon, Lycurgus, Numa and Caligula) occurs in Louis Machon's (ca. 1600–ca. 1673) *Apologie pour Machiavelle* (*Apology for Machiavelli*), a commentary on a set of maxims derived from Machiavelli's *Prince* and *Discourses*, which was dedicated to Cardinal Richelieu and survived in two manuscripts (1643 and 1668).[51] According to Machon, pagan lawgivers, unlike

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[46] Lodovico Zuccolo, *Discorso dell'amore verso la patria* (Venice: Evangelista Deuchino, 1631), 2–5, 16–17, 34.

[47] Luzzatto, *Socrates*, 472–73.

[48] Ibid., 46–47; 480–81.

[49] Ibid., 478–79.

[50] Luzzatto, *Discourse on the State of the Jews*, 122–23. Early Modern Italian Jewish debates on Judaism as a universal religion are surveyed in Alessandro Guetta, *Italian Jewry in the Early Modern Era* (Boston, MA: Academic Studies Press, 2014), chapter "A Link to Humanity: Judaism as Nation and Universal Religion in Italian Jewry in the Early Modern Era," 92–104.

[51] The full title of the work is: *Apologie pour Machiavelle. La politique des Rois, et La science des souverains en faveur des Princes et des Ministres d'Estat* (*Apology for Machiavelli: The Political Art of Kings, and the Science of Sovereigns in Favor of Princes and Ministers of State*).

Moses, were bereft of divine grace and had to simulate that they communicated with deities in order to gain legitimacy.[52]

The commonality of religion is, according to Luzzatto, the most important bond and the most tenacious link that holds human society together. The Jews do not regard all those who are outside the observance of their rites and do not embrace their particular beliefs as being, however, entirely free from or devoid of any bond of humanity or reciprocal amity. The Jews consider that there are various levels of connections among men as well as within the same nation regarding the obligations of charity: the love of self comes first; then blood ties; and, finally, amity among citizens. As such, the Jews believe that foreigners and those outside of their religion partake together with them of a common humanity, by following the precepts of natural morality and having some cognition of a superior cause.[53]

Luzzatto's engagement with the philosophical ideas of his time, and his thinking on cosmopolitanism and religious tolerance is colored by his Jewish identity and the cultural and economic particularities of Early Modern Venice. What he perceived to be the shared characteristic of all human beings was a sense of agony and perplexity caused by the vicissitudes of life and the uncertainty characterizing human existence in a fluid, ever-changing world. Luzzatto developed a vision of Judaism that is very different from Cardoso's "particularist cosmopolitanism:"[54] the Venetian rabbi aspired to be part of a universal "republic of letters" that would promote an enlightened form of religious belief and defy and combat bigotry and religious extremism both in and beyond the Venetian context.

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[52] Louis Machon, *Apologie pour Machiavelle*, ed. Jean-Pierre Cavaillé (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2016), 154–56. See further, Peter S. Donaldson, *Machiavelli and Mystery of State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 202; and, in general, Jean-Piere Cavaillé, *Dis/simulations Jules-César Vanini, François La Mothe Le Vayer, Gabriel Naudé, Louis Machon et Torquato Accetto: Religion, morale et politique au XVIIe siècle* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2002), 267–332; Giuliano Procacci, *Machiavelli nella cultura europea dell'età moderna* (Rome and Bari: Laterza, 1995), 465–73; Giuliano Ferretti, "Machiavellismo e Ragion di Stato in un inedito di Louis Machon," *Il Pensiero Politico* 22 (1989): 288–300.

[53] Luzzatto, *Discourse on the State of the Jews*, 134–35.

[54] I am grateful to Claude Stuczynski for earlier discussions on this point.