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### Cassen, Flora. Marking the Jews in Renaissance Italy: Politics, Religion, and the Power of Symbols

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to defuse Protestant doctrine. During the first half of the sixteenth century, many alternatives were under consideration.

Caravale does not dismiss the scholarship on the Counter-Reformation; nor does he deny that Catarino was a strong anti-Lutheran. Rather, he brilliantly gives the readers a different perspective on how to understand Catarino as a multifaceted character who played an important role in assisting the Catholic Church's efforts to stop the spread of Protestantism. This book makes a valuable addition to Italian as well as European religious studies. It will certainly delight the enthusiasts of Catarino. Caravale's conclusion—both complicating and revising Catarino's character—fits well with the burgeoning body of revisionist scholarship begun by Paul Grendler, Eric Cochrane, Paul Murphy, and many others on the history of sixteenth-century Italian church history and the crisis that spread across Europe after the advance of the Protestant Reformation

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**Cassen, Flora.**

*Marking the Jews in Renaissance Italy: Politics, Religion, and the Power of Symbols.*

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. Pp. viii, 225. ISBN 978-1-1071-7543-3 (hardcover) £75.

Since the twelfth century, the Jews in western Europe have faced the problem that Christians wanted them to be somehow marked, sometimes justified biblically in terms of the Mark of Cain, signifying the first crime (20–22). The “mark” could take the form of a coloured badge, a special coloured hat, long cloak, or, for females, a veil or coloured head-dress. The wearing of a badge was decreed in 1215 by the Lateran Council under Innocent III. The Pope's key viewpoint was that sexual intercourse between Christian and Jew needed to be prevented; symbolic identification would alert Christians. This factor persisted through the centuries, whatever other reasons for separate identification might be added: such as punishment, humiliation, or the exercise of power by church, state, or local officials. The imposition of the mark was opposed by Jews, with individuals or communities petitioning and negotiating exemptions.

In this fascinating study, instead of focusing on the better-known Venice, Rome, and Florence and their ghettos, Flora Cassen has chosen to concentrate on northern Italy in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and the under-studied areas of Piedmont, the Duchy of Milan, and Genoa, where Jewish communities were small. While we learn about the kinds of “marks” imposed, the coming and goings of impositions, of *condotte*—agreements over exemptions—we learn much else about the small communities involved and some key individuals. In the first chapter, Cassen ranges wider in studying the various kinds of marks—in different shapes and colours—used across Europe. By the fifteenth century, the yellow cloth badge, recorded “O” in documents (Fig.1.1), predominated in northern Italy, with a yellow or black hat as an alternative or addition. The yellow badge, hat, or veil was seen by Jews as the most humiliating sign, as stressed by Joseph ha-Cohen (166), and the stigmatizing colour desperately to be avoided. Leading Jews, like Joseph, might depart rather than agree to wear a yellow badge. Cassen argues that the black hat was the least damaging mark, attracting limited attention when travelling, with less risk of attack, and even conveying status. The imposing of badges or hats was accompanied by other restrictions on Jews’ activities and lives, imposing segregations and controls over usury, and forbidding employment of Christian servants and wet nurses.

States and officials were ready to give exemptions because they valued some Jews as physicians, scholars, merchants, and money lenders. Some individuals or families could fulfil all those functions to earn backing for exemptions from rulers or local officials at least some of the time. Cassen has interesting stories about men such as Joseph ha-Cohen (mainly in Genoa), a historian, doctor, and writer of a notable chronicle (“The Vale of Tears,” *Emek ha-Bakha*); Manno of Pavia, a leading banker and financier for the dukes of Lombardy in the mid-fifteenth century; Judah Abravanel, alias Leone Ebreo, author of *Dialoghi d’amore*, in Genoa; the physician Jo Treves of Ovada and his banking family in the mid-sixteenth century, who was accused of denying the Virgin’s virginity in debate with a Christian; and Raffaele Sora of Sarzana, physician, trader, and loan banker praised and protected locally for his help for the poor in the later sixteenth century.

For Cassen, the badge was often “a tool of power that rulers at all levels could wield to achieve their own agendas” (81), including the indirect taxing of Jews (124), or “a form of extortion” in fifteenth-century Milan (131–37). In reality, the marking of a Jew resident in a locality was not a matter of identification;

neighbours mostly knew who was Jewish, and local Jews did not mind being identified. In some cases, e.g., in Genoa, females were exempted from the coloured veil because they were “undoubtedly known” by their hairstyles (178). But the mark was seen as important for identification of male Jews in transit through a strange place. Jewish complainants focused on their vulnerability to robbery and attack if obviously marked when travelling, as they were liable to be seen as “rich” with real money. This point sometimes swayed rulers to grant immunity from the general requirements for travellers. Local podestà officials, often the least understanding, challenged exemptions and imposed heavy fines on travellers caught unmarked, earning good money. Those moving between states and communities could be caught when one jurisdiction required a yellow badge, another a yellow or black hat; moreover, definitions of “yellow” varied, as the Piedmontese Leone Segele found in Lombardy (39–40, 93–94). Jews of Spanish origin were most feared or suspect. In Lombardy, Cassen finds evidence of fines actually imposed on resident defaulting Jews to be rare (95–96).

Jews’ social conditions and campaigning differed somewhat from state to state; and dukes, doges, and senators acted variously. In Piedmont, there was considerable solidarity for Jewish communities in resisting marks and negotiating for renewals of *condotte*. In the Genoese Republic, Jewish individuals were isolated and fended for themselves but sometimes “fell victim to a zealous bishop or podestà” (186). Here, central and local authorities tended to work together, “using the badge as a powerful means to control the Jews” (187). In Lombardy, rich Jews made links with the court for their own exemptions, and also to help broader Jewish communities—sometimes beneficially. Spanish rule in the sixteenth century tended to work against Jews in Milan and Genoa, though Philip II varied in attitudes according to practicalities.

Cassen’s study is based on good archival resources in state archives in Milan, Genoa (here mainly extant financial records), and Turin; but she also uses records in Cremona, Piacenza, and Simancas. The bibliography does not list archival sources. The index is limited, and some page references are missing for key names—like Vitale Sacerdoti, a very wealthy Milan Jew. The citation of secondary writings is very extensive; however, many books and articles in the dense footnotes (pleasingly full of original quotations) are not listed in the bibliography. Many important points made in the notes would have been better placed in the main text. Some narrative passages are chronologically confusing

and some background comments misleading—as with inquisitions (175) or remarks about the Counter Reformation. Bishops or friars are said to be among the leading anti-Jewish campaigners for marking and exclusion but are not necessarily named or documented. Cassen raises (99–100) the interesting debate of how far Jews were linguistically identifiable—a topic needing further research. Despite these limitations, her book is a stimulating and informative contribution to Jewish–Christian studies.

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### **Chapman, George.**

#### ***Homer's Odyssey*. Ed. Gordon Kendal.**

MHRA Tudor and Stuart Translations 21. London: Modern Humanities Research Association, 2016. Pp ix., 505. ISBN 978-1-78188-121-7 (hardcover) US\$45.

When George Chapman published his first translations from Homer in 1598, he pointedly addressed them “to the understander,” noting: “I suppose you to be no mere reader, since you intend to read Homer.” With Gordon Kendal’s richly annotated and glossed edition of Chapman’s English *Odyssey*, we are brought one step closer to the translator’s ideal readership of “understanders.”

Kendal here follows the editorial model established in his critically acclaimed, two-volume edition of Gavin Douglas’s 1513 Middle Scots *Eneados* (2011). Featuring modernized spelling and punctuation and a full critical apparatus, this edition’s purpose is not only to clarify Chapman’s “often obscure language” but also to help us “understand [...] how and why he translated Homer in the particular way he did.”

The introduction discusses the immediate historical and literary context for Chapman’s *Odyssey*, including humanist editions of the classics, Hakluyt’s travel narratives, and early modern re-workings of the classical epic in the forms of prose and verse vernacular romances. The Tudor and Stuart Translation Series’ mandate to present translations “as literary texts in their own right” proves especially relevant in the case of Chapman’s Homer, and Kendal puts particular emphasis on the project’s significance to Chapman’s literary career,