# Contents

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The source of the cover illustration is a *ketubah* from Ferrara, 1728, which lsaac Lampronti signed as a witness. The *ketubah* is the property of the Umberto Nahon Museum of ltalian Jewish Art, in Jerusalem, and I extend heartfelt thanks to its curator, Daniel Niv, for permission to use this image.

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# Introduction

The challenge of the modern, secular, age for religious people has been to embrace the advances in knowledge and technology of the last few centuries while maintaining their devotion to the traditions and customs of their heritage. There have been and continue to be challenges in a variety of spheres. With respect to Jewish law, one might point to challenges stemming from science and technology, such as the question of the halakhic status of brain death. Spinoza challenged the assumption that knowledge of the world, particularly metaphysics, is to be derived not only through the rational faculty but also through the senses, meaning Revelation and its corollary, tradition. Spinoza's role in launching biblical criticism is another facet of his importance in nudging citizens of the modern world in the direction of secularism, which poses a fundamental, existential, threat to the survival of traditional monotheism, be it Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

History offers an avenue for the exploration of how the spiritual leaders of religious communities have confronted the challenges of modernity. It is clear from the example of Spinoza that the crisis of faith can be traced to the early modern era in European history, from about 1500 or so, though of course the roots of some of the same issues can be found in the Middle Ages or even Greco-Roman antiquity. Maimonides is a model of a medieval religious leader who confronted the challenges to religion from science and philosophy, but although his attitudes are useful from a methodological perspective, in thinking about strategic, epistemological, approaches, the body of knowledge, and specifically the assumptions about the world, that underpinned both his worldview and the ideas that challenged it are obsolete and archaic, for they rested on the philosophy of Aristotle and on an epistemology of scholastic reasoning rather than empirical science.

We turn, therefore, to early modern thinkers for models of how challenges to traditional religious faith and practice were confronted. Moses Mendelssohn is the classic example of such a thinker, but he was scarcely representative of

the traditional religious leadership. In search of early modern attempts to create a *Weltanschauung* that combines fidelity to religious tradition, including observance, with a positive approach to the current state of science and philosophy, scholars have often looked to Italy. This is partly because Italy was home to scholars in the vanguard of scientific enterprises, including Lorenzo Valla, Galileo Galilei and Giambattista Vico, and also because the Italian Renaissance, by reviving the kinds of literature and art characteristic of Greco-Roman antiquity, challenged the power exercised by institutionalized religion, specifically the Catholic Church, in molding and directing European thought and social behavior. This aspect of Italian culture, and similarly the pioneering of critical-historical thinking by Valla and later Spinoza, are not tantamount to the advent of secularism, but they have been seen as pointing the way to future, modern, developments.

Italy's Jews have a particular historical connection to the developments in critical-historical thinking associated with Valla, a connection that links them directly to Spinoza. In the centuries following the fifteenth-century expulsion of the Jews from the Iberian peninsula, their descendants, now known as "New Christians," particularly from Portugal, migrated to Italy in significant numbers, whether to escape the scrutiny of the Inquisition or for economic opportunity. Some of the new arrivals elected to abandon Catholicism for Judaism, a religion of which they were largely ignorant, and this population either created new Jewish communities or new ethnic contingents beside their brethren already resident in various cities and towns. Naturally, the new Sephardim, as they were called, underwent a process of becoming educated in the beliefs and practices of their ancestral faith, and while some encountered little difficulty returning to Judaism, others found the faith and practices of their old-new religion puzzling or even objectionable, whether because these seemed irrational and even absurd, or because they did not seem rooted in the Bible, the only Jewish text with which the New Christians were somewhat familiar. Spinoza is an extreme example of a new Sephardi who regarded the Judaism of his day critically, but there are others, including Uriel da Costa, who penned a stinging critique of latter-day Judaism, was blackballed by the Jewish community of Amsterdam, and ultimately committed suicide.

The critical-historical thinking that ultimately contributed to the advent of modern thought is linked in Italy not only to the skepticism expressed by some of the Iberian arrivals, but also to the historical scholarship of Azariah De' Rossi of Ferrara, whose *Me'or Enayim* (*Light of the Eyes*), published in 1573, presents a series of critical essays on rabbinic Judaism, questioning, for example, the

authenticity of the Jewish calendar. De' Rossi joined the enterprise of historical criticism through his novel method of comparing traditional Jewish sources with ancient writings by non-rabbinic authorities such as Philo, and also by Christian and pagan writers. De' Rossi's wide-ranging erudition exemplifies the high degree of acculturation attributed by historians to the Jews of Italy.

Few Jewish scholars could equal De' Rossi's worldliness, and his rabbinical colleagues viewed *Me'or Enayim* as profoundly threatening to Jewish tradition and moved to suppress it. In this sense De' Rossi failed, and still Robert Bonfil, the historian, praised De' Rossi's heroic effort to deploy the new critical-historical method for the sake of Judaism's continued survival, and offered the following autobiographical note: "It seems to me that de Rossi was also correct; it is impossible to defend Judaism in times of crisis by taking shelter in a fortress built upon false foundations."[1] Bonfil's grasp of the relevance of De' Rossi's project for our own day also applies to the author of *Isaac's Fear*, who, as we shall see, labored to establish the harmony of traditional Judaism and scientific knowledge at a time of rapid and dynamic development.

For the most part, in the early modern era Jews and Christians attained maximal intellectual overlap at the university, where youngsters of all backgrounds read the same books and attended the same lectures. This aspect of Jewish-Christian relations showcases Italy's exceptionally liberal ambience, for at the time Padua's university was the only one in Europe to allow Jews to matriculate. University attendance was not an issue in the Middle Ages, when Europe's Jews were known for their knowledge of medicine and astrology, and more often dispensed it to Christians than vice versa. But the flow of knowledge changed direction in the early modern era, and Padua's medical faculty became a Mecca for aspiring Jewish doctors, many from homes in other European lands, with some two hundred matriculating in the early modern era.

Medicine, and science generally, became the testing ground and sometimes the battleground of new scientific ideas, and it was the Jewish physicians who acquired this knowledge and pondered its implications, including its implications for the faith and practice of their religion. Medieval and early modern physicians often had expertise in a broad range of fields, reflecting a holistic conception of knowledge that can be traced to Aristotle. Due to prevailing educational norms and perhaps also to practical considerations, among

1 Robert Bonfil, "Some Reflections on the Place of Azariah de Rossi's *Meor Enayim* in the Cultural Milieu of Italian Renaissance Jewry," *Jewish Thought in the Sixteenth Century*, ed. Bernard Dov Cooperman (Cambridge, Mass., 1983), p. 42.

the Jews of early modern Italy, many physicians were also versed in Jewish law and theology, including kabbalah, and some of these individuals even held positions as community rabbis or as instructors in rabbinical academies, i.e., yeshivas. In the ranks of early modern Italian Jewry, therefore, we find a cohort of intellectuals with a relatively sophisticated conception of both science and religion, who were thus well-positioned to confront the theoretical and practical challenges to traditional religion posed by the latest advances in European thought. The most prominent member of this cohort was Isaac Lampronti of Ferrara (1679–1756), the rabbi and university-trained physician whose encyclopedia is the subject of this book.

The subject of the encyclopedia, entitled *Isaac's Fear* (*Paḥad Yiṣḥaq*), after Gen. 31.42, is Judaism, theory and practice. The studies in this volume explore this voluminous work, as I will shortly explain, but the main point here is Lampronti's perspective on the state of European thought, mainly science, in the latter portion of the early modern era. His career has merited a modicum of scholarly attention, and David Ruderman's focused analysis of Lampronti's discussion of spontaneous generation deserves special mention for Ruderman's appreciation of Lampronti's importance as a Jewish intellectual who confronted the challenge to traditional Judaism emerging from the rapidly changing body of European knowledge.[2] The present book is, however, the first attempt at a broad investigation of the book and its author.

Broad, but far from comprehensive, owing to the book's essential nature. *Isaac's Fear* is, of course, Isaac's brainchild, but he is largely its compiler and editor rather than author, in the sense that his own ideas constitute only a tiny portion of the vast quantity of material on offer. An intellectual biography of Lampronti, then, would obscure his singular achievement. To illustrate, *Isaac's Fear* has often been mined for rabbinical writings by a variety of contemporary Italian thinkers, which Lampronti published from manuscript. Of these, Lampronti's own compositions are only a small and not especially significant fraction, and hence his ideas, views and values should not eclipse the book's greater significance as a vehicle that affords a close-up view of the thinking of some of European Jewry's best-educated early modern intellectuals, as they confront the era's challenges to the mores and values of their ancestors.

2 David B. Ruderman, "Contemporary Science and Jewish Law in the Eyes of Isaac Lampronti of Ferrara and Some of his Contemporaries," *Jewish History* 6 (1993), pp. 211–24; Idem, *Jewish Thought and Scientific Discovery in Early Modern Europe* (New Haven, 1995).

That said, Part I of this volume is strictly devoted to Lampronti. The first essay, "Empiricism," offers a detailed evaluation of the nature of *Isaac's Fear*, and focuses on that feature of his thought for which the chapter is named, which is both salient and historically significant. Although Aristotle acknowledged that knowledge is attained through the senses, medieval thinkers viewed the rational faculty as a parallel, equally useful, tool. Saadia Gaon, of tenth-century Baghdad, for example, was a supreme believer in the power of reason to solve philosophical problems in general, and in particular to prove the truth of the Jewish faith through syllogism. True, medieval philosophers never abandoned the conviction that scientific knowledge is rooted in experience, namely in the observation of nature, but the scientific method, which emerged in early modern Europe, involves proactive observation, namely the testing of hypotheses through experimentation.[3] This chapter demonstrates that Lampronti was keenly aware of this methodology, and that it was fundamental to his approach to nature, regarding not only scientific questions but also those pertaining to Jewish concepts, principles, motifs and practices.

"Palazzo Tè" is a close analysis of a single entry in *Isaac's Fear*, one of singular importance for a grasp of Lampronti's epistemology and of the significance of his approach for his interpretation of Judaism. The entry concerns his interpretation of a rabbinic expression, which he relates to a phenomenon from the physical world that he encountered in Mantua's Palazzo Tè. The chapter situates Lampronti's perception of Palazzo Tè in the context of writings on the subject by Christian scholars, several dozen of whom published their interpretations, some of which are cited in *Isaac's Fear*. The chapter compares Lampronti's experience at Palazzo Tè to that of the only other Jewish visitor to visit the palace and pen an account of his experience: Hayyim Joseph David Azulay, the famous rabbinic scholar who circulated in various countries as a fundraiser for the land of Israel in the eighteenth century. The Palazzo Tè encounter exemplifies Lampronti's heroic efforts to align the science he had learned at the university with the religious traditions he imbibed with his mother's milk.

Chapters 3 and 4 are explorations of Lampronti's thought along what are sometimes referred to as the vertical and horizontal axes. In assessing the way he approached his Jewish heritage, "The Past" addresses the issue of authority, namely the degree to which subservience and loyalty to the thinking and

3 On this issue, see: Malkiel, "The Artifact and Humanism in Medieval Jewish Thought," *Jewish History* 27 (2013), pp. 21–40; Idem, "The Rabbi and the Crocodile: Interrogating Nature in the Late Quattrocento," *Speculum* 91 (2016), pp. 115–48.

decisions of earlier rabbinical masters, chiefly of the middle ages, directed his own. This issue poses a perennial challenge to rabbis in positions of authority, and through the centuries the call has been sounded for intellectual freedom and independence from predecessors, only to be countered with iterations of the theme that the ancients were closer than moderns to the fount of knowledge and were as giants in comparison with latter-day dwarfs.[4] *Isaac's Fear* addresses the dilemma of early modern scholars, who were faced with challenges to tradition stemming from the era's scientific advances, such as the toppling of the geocentric thesis. Lampronti's empiricism is relevant here as well, for his entries on matters of praxis are devoted to custom as often as to codified law, and not only is custom empirical, but additionally, Lampronti frequently testifies (in the first person) to the existence of myriad customs, whose legitimacy and authority he proceeds to assess.

The title "Traditional Society" stems from Jacob Katz's characterization of early modern Jewish society, notwithstanding the scholarly criticism of this notion, on the grounds that it homogenizes a reality that was diverse and dynamic to the point of kaleidoscopic. Katz searches for the fault lines of Europe's traditional society, which imploded with the advent of the modern era, as Emancipation made it possible for Jews to live as individuals, rather than as members of a collective.[5] Katz ignores the Jews of Italy, and so this chapter surveys the image of Italian Jewish society in the early modern era as it emerges from dozens of entries in *Isaac's Fear*. The essay tracks the encyclopedia's material with regard to challenges from within and without, probing both the extent of the Jews' fidelity to traditional observance as well as the firmness of Jewish identity vis-à-vis the political, social and cultural pressures posed by the Christian majority.

The chapter reveals a remarkable degree of elasticity in Jewish identity, as Lampronti's confreres occasionally flout rabbinic law and authority but do not break out in open rebellion. Similarly, while apostasy appears to have been a familiar occurrence, Italy's Jews are also seen clinging with conviction to their ancestral identity and heritage in the face of contemporary challenges. Notably, Lampronti usually responds with equanimity to the "give" of Jewish society on both the internal and external fronts, its unruly nature and occasional defeats,

4 See Abraham Melamed, *On the Shoulders of Giants: The Debate between Moderns and Ancients in Medieval and Renaissance Jewish Thought* (Hebrew) (Ramat-Gan, 2003).

5 Jacob Katz, *Tradition and Crisis: Jewish Society at the End of the Middle Ages*, trans. Bernard Dov Cooperman (New York, 1993).

without communicating a sense that his world was threatened with extinction. This essay is at the very core of the Lampronti project, for it appraises the Italian experience of modernity, or more specifically the final period of pre-modernity, a historical moment before the political and social upheaval that drastically and permanently altered the political-legal status of European Jewry, their position in society and their attitudes to their age-old identity and tradition. The overall experience that emerges from *Isaac's Fear* is one of both pliability and resilience, and fundamentally, then, the absence of the kind of crisis that scholarship on the Jews of northern and eastern European, including Katz's writings, has led us to expect.

The second half of this volume consists of essays that excavate *Isaac's Fear* entries about a series of social and cultural themes that resonated powerfully among intellectuals from Lampronti's milieu. This half of the book, then, is about the intellectual vista of Italian Jewry in the early modern era, one which was not solely Lampronti's but which finds expression in his encyclopedia.

"The Sambation" is devoted to a unique entry in the encyclopedia, the only one in Italian, which is presumably why it remained in manuscript long after the volume in which it should have appeared went to press. Linguistic complexity is also characteristic of this chapter, which is based on a Hebrew article, but which substitutes an English translation of Lampronti's Italian entry for the Hebrew translation that appears in the published article.

The Sambation river is famous in Jewish tradition as the barrier behind which the lost Ten Tribes of Israel are believed to dwell in exile, cut off from their Jewish brethren. On the other hand, the tribes beyond the Sambation supposedly live as fierce warriors, in sharp contrast to the Jews' political powerlessness, not to mention their lack of military prowess. By the eighteenth century there was a veritable library of Hebrew sources about the Sambation and the Ten Tribes, which never ceased to fascinate the Jews throughout the Diaspora. In contrast, Lampronti's effort is devoted to sources on the subject by non-Jewish authors. The chapter explores possible motivations for the entry's composition, within and without the strictly Jewish environment, and what emerges from both perspectives is the sense that Italy's Jews were experiencing anxiety over the long-anticipated messianic advent, an anxiety which may have been rooted in the Sabbatian debacle, which continued to reverberate in Italy, as the movement of Ramhal (Rabbi Moses Hayyim Luzzato, 1707–1746) and his circle illustrates most eloquently.

*Isaac's Fear* testifies that intercessory prayer, the supplication of angels to petition God on behalf of the Jewish people, was another contemporary source

of anxiety. As "Intercessory Prayer" makes clear, a liturgical tradition of this nature dates back to late antiquity and runs through the Middle Ages, and yet there were those in eighteenth-century Italy who rose up, specifically in Trieste, to object to the use of intermediaries and to stamp out this tradition. The heart of the debate is a set of letters on the subject exchanged by rabbis from northern Italy in 1727, which are published in *Isaac's Fear* and constitute one of the encyclopedia's longest entries.

The letters address various concerns, including the uncomfortable similarity of Jewish intercessory prayer to the same Catholic notion and practice. The discussion branches out into a broader discussion of seemingly irrational Jewish customs, and particularly kabbalistic ones, and we find that those who defend intercessory prayer in 1727 lean heavily on the weight of tradition rather than on the prestige of kabbalah, even though kabbalah was then rising to new heights of popularity. The Trieste struggle is situated at a surprising chronological juncture, at the end of a chain of discussion going back centuries, but almost a century before the modern Reform movement revamped the Jewish liturgy. And what fundamentally distinguishes the 1727 initiative from earlier stages of debate is, indeed, the intention of the Trieste protagonists to put an end to intercessory prayer once and for all.

It is puzzling that debate over intercessory prayer should have erupted when it did, and the same fundamental historical conundrum surrounds a halakhic debate documented in *Isaac's Fear* over the problem of ritual pollution. The encyclopedia publishes a sizeable corpus of rabbinic documents from Lampronti's milieu about the ostensible impossibility of escaping "tent pollution," which is contracted by anyone present under the same roof as someone deceased. The pollution seemed inescapable because ostensibly the architecture and urban layout of the ghetto allowed impurity to pass between buildings. As in the case of intercessory prayer, we are witness to an eruption of anxiety over a status quo that had been place since time immemorial, but unlike intercessory prayer, tent pollution did not exercise the rabbis of earlier centuries. The issue seems to have been particular to the Jews of Italy in the age of the ghetto, and it affords a rare opportunity to examine the impact of Jewish space, the ghetto's physical presence, on the religious life and thought of its inhabitants and their leadership.

The pollution entry stands out among other entries comprised of rabbinic letters and treatises in that the problem troubled the rank and file as well as the rabbinic leadership. In fact, the lay leadership of Venice went so far as to propose that, for lack of a better solution, priestly inhabitants, who were singularly

affected by the threat of contamination, be banished from the ghetto! Clearly, on the eve of the modern era, the Jews of northern Italy were anything but apathetic towards their religious identity and heritage. The contemporary context may be related to the eschatological anxiety suggested by the Sambation entry, since ritual pollution renders priests unfit to function in the Temple, the reconstruction of which was the subject of heightened interest in early modern Europe among both Jews and Christians.

More fundamentally, the anxiety over tent pollution reflects an unwillingness to accept an anomaly in the system of Jewish law and practice, which by the eighteenth century had become highly structured and ramified, and clearly and systematically set down in rabbinic literature. In this respect, the pollution literature dovetails with Lampronti's overall project, for *Isaac's Fear* is an attempt to pull together the multitudinous and multifarious strands of Jewish thought and law, halakhah and aggadah, in a single, comprehensive, literary product, to be made available not only to rabbis but to anyone with a decent Jewish education. The expectation that Judaism, like any other discipline, be consistent and sensible explains the anxiety expressed throughout the pollution literature, and what is new here is the active participation of educated commoners, the so-called "third estate."

The last essay in this collection mainly concerns Christian thinkers. The chief protagonist is Bernardino Ramazzini (1633–1714), who taught medicine in Padua and may have been one of Lampronti's teachers. In 1680–1682, Ramazzini corresponded with Antonio Magliabechi, the librarian of the Grand Duke of Tuscany and one of Italy's leading intellectuals, after the latter deputized him to search for Hebrew epitaphs of interest in the Jewish cemeteries of northern Italy. Ramazzini may not have known that Magliabechi acted on behalf of Johan Christian Wagenseil, the renowned Christian Hebraist, who sought to assemble and publish a collection of Hebrew texts of this nature.[6]

Ramazzini duly approaches his Jewish contacts, primarily rabbis, senior colleagues of Lampronti's, at least some of whom he probably knew. In the course of his correspondence with Magliabechi, Ramazzini receives and forwards a series of Hebrew epitaphs, but he confesses some frustration when his efforts meet with a lack of cooperation by the Jews, and his letters include

6 See, recently, Michela Andreatta, "Collecting Hebrew Epitaphs in the Early Modern Age: the Christian Hebraist as Antiquarian," *Jewish Books and Their Readers: Aspects of the Intellectual Life of Christians and Jews in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Scott Mandelbrote and Joanna Weinberg (Boston, 2016), 260–86.

some ugly remarks about their nature, alongside warm references to his Jewish friends. Ultimately, the correspondence is telling testimony about the relations between Christians and Jews in early modern Italy. It is, basically, a story about a cooperative effort, based on a shared appreciation of Hebrew, and specifically of Hebrew epitaph poetry, an Italian specialty. Yet cooperation is only one side of this story, while the other is of the social and cultural gap that remained firmly in place. To some degree, the refusal of the Jews to convert to Christianity made such a gap inevitable and eternal, something that would survive even the advent of the modern, secular, age, and would disappear only when and where Jews surrendered their particular identity and abandoned their heritage.

The story is part and parcel of Lampronti's world because not only did he undoubtedly know at least some of the rabbis who cooperated with Ramazzini, but he also would have known Ramazzini himself, for Lampronti is known to have consulted with Ramazzini's colleague at Padua, Giovanni Battista Morgagni. Lampronti probably did not know Magliabechi, but he would certainly have known of him, for Magliabechi was famous throughout Europe for his unparalleled erudition. Both Ramazzini and Magliabechi were part of Europe's Republic of Letters, with which Lampronti and many of his Italian rabbinical colleagues identified.

As the essays in Part Two of this book shift focus from Lampronti to his Italian milieu, this chapter in particular extends its purview beyond Jewish society, to take in Christian colleagues with whom he came into contact, as an intellectual if not in person. What is unique to the experience narrated in this chapter is that, whereas Lampronti and many of his rabbinical colleagues were typically consumers of the thought and writings of their Christian intellectual counterparts, in this case the latter seek access to the treasures of Italian Hebrew literature, testifying to a shared aesthetic and thus, more broadly, to a realm of cultural overlap that deserves to be remembered as part of the legacy of early modern Italy.

# Part One

# CHAPTER 1

# Empiricism

## INTRODUCTION

The seventeenth to nineteenth centuries have been portrayed as a lull in Jewish cultural creativity. Heinrich Graetz wrote disparagingly of Jewish culture worldwide during the century between Spinoza and Mendelssohn:

> The Jews were at no time in so pitiful a plight as at the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth century … The former teachers of Europe, through the sad course of centuries, had become childish, or worse, dotards … The leaders of the community were for the most part led astray, wandering as if in a dream, and stumbling at every step. But few rabbis occupied themselves with any branch of knowledge beyond the Talmud, or entered on a new path in this study … The rabbis of this period were not models, the Poles and Germans being for the most part pitiable figures, their heads filled with unprofitable knowledge, otherwise ignorant and helpless as little children. The Portuguese rabbis presented a dignified, imposing appearance but they were shallow. The Italians bore more resemblance to the Germans, but had not their learning. Thus, with no guides acquainted with the road, sunk in ignorance, or filled with conceit, beset with phantoms, the Jews in all parts of the world without exception were passing from one absurdity to another, and allowing themselves to be imposed upon by jugglers and visionaries.[1]

Cecil Roth wrote specifically about Italy, rather than about all of Europe. He also differed from Graetz in that his remarks were more specific. Moreover, he attenuated his criticism, by noting both the conditions that caused the decline, as well as exceptions. Overall, however, in his characterization of the cultural productivity of Italian Jewry after the Renaissance, the negative view predominates:

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1 H. Graetz, *History of the Jews*, vol. 5 (Philadelphia, 1956), pp. 199–201.

> The daring speculations, the untrammeled intercourse, the penetrating influences of the Renaissance period were now remote memories … It is probably true to say that, whereas before the Renaissance the general intellectual standard of the Jews was higher than that of their neighbors, now it lagged behind … Personalities of slender significance left a mass of writings which endow them with an unjustified prominence in the eyes of posterity … The intellectual life of the Ghetto was increasingly petty, and the writings that emanated from it increasingly trivial.[2]

On what basis did Roth determine whether writings were trivial or important, whether people's prominence in the eyes of posterity was justified or not? The criteria are not spelled out. Roth suggests that, viewed against the backdrop of the Renaissance, anything that came afterwards was by definition inferior or decadent. Like Graetz, Roth's negative image of the period is imposed from without, rather than emanating from within the culture and mindset he was analyzing.

Roth's evaluation continues as follows:

> Profound rabbinic scholarship was now, to be sure, difficult to attain, in view of the fact that over so great a part of the country the mere possession of the Talmud and much of the allied literature was a penal offense. In many places only the emasculated legal compendia were accessible, so that some of the greatest savants of the age had to study, to write, and even to teach without the aid of the essential material, unless they owned it furtively or were endowed with prodigious memories. The level of achievement was in the circumstances far higher than might have been anticipated … [Then comes a short list of scholars.] Above all, Isaac Lampronti, physician and rabbi at Ferrara, compiled a superb epitome of this activity in his gigantic rabbinic encyclopedia, *Paḥad Yiṣḥaq* … It may be described as the swansong as well as the greatest monument of talmudic study in Italy.[3]

Roth eulogized the rabbinic culture of Italy without verifying that it was dead. It appears that he was fitting foot to shoe, for if we look at the conventional image of Italian-Jewish culture between the ninth and eighteenth centuries, an image largely based on Roth's historical writings, a Hegelian pattern emerges: a stage

2 C. Roth, *The History of the Jews of Italy* (Philadelphia, 1946), pp. 398–9.
3 Ibid.