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Reframing Race and Jewish/Christian Relations in the Middle Ages

Abstract

This article evaluates Jewish-Christian difference in the constantly shifting terrain of thirteenth-century medieval England. It reframes this difference in relation to theories of embodiment, feminist materialism, and entanglement theory. To conceptualize how Jews can be marked by race vis-à-vis the body, the article uses the example of Christian Hebraists discussing the Hebrew alphabet and its place in thirteenth-century English bilingual manuscripts.

In the last twenty years, numerous monographs, articles, and book collections have discussed the concept of race in the Middle Ages.[1] In relation to Jewish-Christian difference, this discussion has turned to differing methodologies, approaches, definitions, and theoretical frames. Geraldine Heng, in her 2011 articles on race in the Middle Ages, takes up the topic by pointing to recent critical work done on medieval race, especially related to Jewish-Christian difference as primarily focused on the body.[2] Her ongoing work will be a *histoire longue dur*ée on this topic that encompasses current critical race theory as well as long institutional histories and capacious geographic zones. This article reconsiders the reframing of Jewish/Christian difference and addresses race through an analysis of the body, but from the point of view of methods that counterbalance each other: the theoretical and the microhistorical.

First, this article is a theoretical consideration of Jewish/Christian difference in relation to theories of embodiment and especially feminist materialism. The theoretical frame allows us to consider the second methodology: microhistory and how this method helps us conceptualize how Jews can be marked by race vis-à-vis the body. This article evaluates Jewish/Christian difference in the constantly shifting terrain of thirteenth-century medieval England. In particular, I will consider the complex evidence of thirteenth-century bilingual Hebrew-Latin manuscripts, especially the way Christian scholars understood the Hebrew alphabet.

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[1]See Andrew Colin Gow, *The Red Jews: Antisemitism in an Apocalyptic Age 1200-1600* (Leiden: Brill, 1995). Robert Bartlett, "Medieval and Modern Concepts of Race and Ethnicity," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 31 (2001): 38-56. Thomas Hahn, "The Difference the Middle Ages Makes: Color and Race Before the Modern World," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 31 (2001): 1-37. William Chester Jordan, "Why Race?" in *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 31.1 (2001): 165-173. Geraldine Heng, *Empires of Magic: Medieval Romance and the Politics of Cultural Fantasy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003). Lisa Lampert[-Weissig], "Race, Periodicity, and the (Neo)-Middle Ages," Modern Language Quarterly 65 (2004): 392-421. Denise K. Buell, *Why This New Race: Ethnic Reasoning in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia UP, 2005). Steven F. Kruger, *The Spectral Jew: Conversion and Embodiment in Medieval Europe*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006). Robert Bartlett, "Illustrating Ethnicity in the Middle Ages," in *The Origins of Racism in the West*. Eds. Miriam Eliav-Feldon, Benjamin Isaac, and Joseph Ziegler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 132-56. Denise K. Buell, "Early Christian Universalism and Modern Racism," in *The Origins of Racism in the West*. eds. Miriam Eliav-Feldon, Benjamin Isaac, and Joseph Zieger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 109-31. David Goldenberg, "Racism, Color Symbolism, and Color Prejudice," in *The Origins of Racism in the West*. eds. Miriam Eliav-Feldon, Benjamin Isaac, and Joseph Ziegler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 88-108. Joseph Zieger, "Physiogomy, Science, and Proto-racism 1200-1500," in *The Origins of Racism in the West*. eds. Miriam Eliav-Feldon, Benjamin Isaac and Joseph Ziegler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 181-199. Anthony Bale, *The Jew in the Medieval Book; English Antisemitisms 1350-1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). Anthony Bale, *Feeling Persecuted: Christians, Jews and Images of Violence in the Middle Ages* (London: Reaktion Books, 2012). Cord Whitaker, ed. *Making Race Matter in the Middle Ages* (special issue of *postmedieval*) 6:1 (Spring, 2015).

[2]Geraldine Heng, "The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages I: Race Studies, Modernity, and the Middle Ages," *Literature Compass* 8/5 (2011): 258-274. Geraldine Heng, "The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages II: Locations of Medieval Race," *Literature Compass* 8/5 (2011): 275-293.

A History of Entanglement Theory

In Jewish Studies, historians working on the nineteenth and twentieth-century have just begun addressing entanglement as a theoretical frame to discuss Jewish/Christian in German/Jewish histories.[3] In particular, Todd Presner's work on German/Jewish relations and modernity has recently based entanglement on the theoretical work of Jacques Derrida and his idea of the separatrix. [4] In the case of Jewish/Christian relations in the Middle Ages, the use of the separatrix/the slash indicates that the two groups—Jews and Christians—are unstable identities that are mutually constructing and revising these two terms, Jewish/Christian. In essence, these two religious groups are "contaminated": their identities are not merely next to each other, but are overlapping and blurred. Jewish/Christian religious identities, therefore, could be articulated only while entangled with each other. In fact, Presner argues that the separatrix allows "permanent tension."[5] Jeffrey Kipnis explains that Derrida's use of the separatrix allows him to "twist" it and, thus, "turn it back on itself, poke holes in order to expose the inseparability of those terms that it separates."[6] An essential component in Derrida's theories on deconstruction, the separatrix allows a number of fluid possibilities between Jewish/Christian: opposition, simultaneity, choice, touching closeness.[7] Likewise, several German/Jewish historians have put pressure on "Jewish" as a minority history and have challenged ideas of "a universal majority culture."[8] German historians Till van Rahden and Ben Baader usefully characterize German society as consisting "of individuals and groups with multiple constantly evolving identities that together shaped 'the public space of a shared culture.'"[9] Instead, one should contend with a "de-centered, multivalent" history in which minority histories "cease to figure as marginal other."[10]

Beyond German/Jewish history, Jewish historians working across fields have started to "de-essentialize the category "Jewish"[11] with specific references to Moshe Rosman's *How Jewish is Jewish History?* and David Biale's *Cultures of the Jews: A New History*.[12] Baader writes that "Jews are never a pre-existing entity with a well-defined core and stable boundaries, but Jews as a group and Judaism or Jewishness as a symbolic system and a set of practices are created and shaped in interactions with other groups, who are also created and shaped in the process."[13] He further explains, "All participants in such a system remain interminably entangled with each other, even though— or indeed because—they often define themselves against each other."[14] In essence, he writes what he sees is not a "strange and outlandish proposition" but "self-evident and necessary" that "Jews are not a well-defined stable group that... integrated into a stable and well-defined Christian, Gentile, or secular society."[15]

[3]Todd Samuel Presner, *Mobile Modernity: Germans, Jews, Trains* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007). Ben M. Baader, "From the History of Integration to a History of Entanglements: Reconceptualizing the German Jewish Experience," *transversal: Zeitschrift für Jüdische Studien* 14 (2013): 51-60. I am particularly indebted to Ben Baader whose generosity in sharing his current work has deeply affected the framework of this article.

[4]Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore & London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997).

[5]Ibid, 3.

[6]Jeffrey Kipnis, "/Twisting the Separatrix/," *Assemblage* 14 (1991): 30-61.

[7]Presner, *Mobile Modernity*, 3.

[8]Baader, "Entanglements," 53; Till van Rahden, "Jews and the Ambivalences of Civil Society in Germany, 1800 to 1933 – Assessment and Reassessment," *The Journal of Modern History* 77 (2005): 1024-1047.

[9]Baader, "Entanglements," 53.

[10]Ibid.

[11]Ibid. See also Michael Satlow, "Beyond Influence: Toward a New Historiographic Paradigm" in *Jewish Literatures and Cultures: Context and Intertext*, eds. Anita Norich and Yaron Z. Eliav (Providence: Brown University Press, 2008), 44-46. See also Shaye J.D. Cohen, "'Those Who Say They are Jews and Are Not': How Do You Know a Jew in Antiquity When you See One?" in *Diasporas in Antiquity*, ed. Shaye J.D. Cohen and Ernest S. Freichs (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), 1-45.

[12]Moshe Rosman, *How Jewish is Jewish History?* (Oxford & Portland, OR: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2007). David Biale, ed., *Cultures of the Jews: A New History* (New York: Schocken Books, 2002).

[13]Baader, "Entanglements," 53.

[14]Ibid., 53.

[15]Ibid., 53.

Feminist Materialism and Entanglement

Baader's work on Jewish/Christian relations has also addressed entanglement theory through the lens of feminist materiality: the critical discussion in feminist theory that considers the linguistic and cultural turn, but finally addresses the materiality of matter. Though it may seem strange to link quantum physics to Jewish/Christian relations, Karen Barad's book *Meeting the Universe Halfway* and her foundational example—the narrative of quantum physics—is precisely about the history of Jewish/Christian relations. Her book's overarching frame is the story of the breakneck research done on the atom bomb between Nils Bohr, the Danish Jewish physicist, and Werner Heisenberg, his German colleague and counterpart during WWII.[16]

Barad, a theoretical quantum physicist, explains the contours of entanglement theory by discussing the phenomenon of "intra-action":

The notion of intra'action (in contrast to the usual 'interaction,' which presumes the prior existence of independent entities/relata) marks an important shift, reopening and refiguring foundational notions of classical ontology such as causality, agency, space, time, matter, discourse, responsibility, and accountability. A specific intra-action enacts an agential cut (in contrast to the Cartesian cut—an inherent distinction—between subject and object) effecting a separating between "subject" and "object." That is, the agential cut enacts a "local" resolution within the phenomenon of the inherent ontological indeterminancy.[17]

In essence, Barad's point in "Nature's Queer Performativity" is to reveal these flattened hierarchies in which everything—human, non-human, matter—becomes a constantly shifting component. Within this universe, she "reframes" causality: what "intra-acting" ultimately allows is that " 'relata' do not pre-exist relations, but rather that 'relata-within-phenomen' emerge through specific intra-actions."[18]

In addition, new work in feminist materialism/material feminism has informed these theoretical discussions. Stacy Alaimo and Susan Hekman have identified materiality as a location for feminist theory, so much so that "most contemporary feminisms require that one distance oneself as much as possible from the tainted realm of materiality by taking refuge within culture, discourse, and language."[19] Instead, material feminism proposes that feminist theory must discuss materiality, and particularly the body, as an active agent that includes "lived experience, corporeal practice, and biological substance."[20] The point of material feminism is "to build on rather than abandon the lessons learned in the linguistic turn" namely, in this case, "a deconstruction of the material/discursive dichotomy that retains both elements without privileging either."[21] Thus material feminism rethinks "agency, semiotic force, and the dynamics of bodies and natures."[22] The most focused energies and the most radical move is to reconsider materiality: the "stuff" of bodies and environments. Thus, the "material turn" requires us to take "matter seriously."[23] Material feminism insists on flattening hierarchies and ontologies; it requires a consideration of how "culture, history, discourse, technology, biology, and the environment" interact without organizing these nodes without giving more power to one or the other.[24] In essence, it is a new way to consider "matter" in relation to "material culture, geopolitical space, food, climate and environment, gender, body, nature, and culture."[25]

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[16]Karen Barad, "Introduction," *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2007), 3-38.

[17]Karen Barad, "Nature's Queer Performativity," in *Kvinder, Køn, Forskning* 12:1 (2012): 32.

[18]Hilda Rømer Christensen and Bettina Hauge, "Feminist Materialism," in *Kvinder, Køn, Forskning* 12:1 (2012), 15.

[19]Stacy Alaimo and Hekman, "Introduction: Emerging Models of Materiality in Feminist Theory," *Material Feminisms* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2008), 1.

[20]Alaimo and Hekman, *Material Feminisms*, 5.

[21]Ibid., 9.

[22]Ibid., 8.

[23]Ibid., 6.

[24]Ibid., 17.

[25]Christensen and Hauge, "Feminist Materialism" in *Kvinder, Køn, Forskning* 12: 1, 4.

Race and Entanglement Theory

More contemporary discussions of race and entanglement provide ways to reconsider the question of Jews and medieval race. For instance, one node of considering entanglement theory derives from an analysis of contemporary South Africa and the entanglements between South African blacks and whites. Sarah Nuttall describes how "the more whites dispossessed blacks, the more whites depended on blacks (for labor) and the more blacks depended on whites."[26] She describes how "in their dependence on blacks whites erected an ideology of separation and difference—racism" which she defines as a "co-dependency." In essence, she wants to disrupt the binaries here between "colonizer and colonized, metropole and colony, center and periphery, domination and resistance."[27]

I would like to set the discussion of Jewish/Christian within this framework: a co-dependency that problematizes easy binaries and also disrupts ideas of one-directional movement (i.e. colonizer acting on the colonized). Instead, like the separatrix that can turn on itself and poke holes on the categories it purportedly juxtaposes, separates, and lines up, entanglement (dependence and dependency) functions more like a "web, carrying with it the notion of interlacing, an intricacy of pattern or circumstance, a membrane that connects."[28]

Critical Race Theory and Medieval Jews

One of my interests in this article is the reframing of ideas of Jewishness in relation to how we mark "Jewish" as a religious/racial category, and about whether this can and should be done. Though several scholars, including Hugh Thomas and William Chester Jordan, have suggested "ethnicity" rather than "race" as the more useful term for the period, I am using the term "race" because it is centered and linked to the body. As Michael Hames-Garcia has written, "race, like most social concepts, however, means many different things and is not reducible to neat, orderly categories... social identities, including race, have blurry boundaries, changing over time and from place to place, and produce ambiguities and indeterminacies."[29] The indeterminacy resonates particularly in how to use the term "race" in a pre-modern European world.

Hames-Garcia's point is that race is "reducible neither to behavior nor to genes, nor is it exclusive a function of physiognomy. Race is not the same thing, in other words, as culture, class, nation or color."[30] Its very slipperiness, its shifting boundaries are, in fact, the point. His aim is to consider the historical contexts because "ethnicity does not provide the basis for communal heavens in the network society, because it is based on primary bonds that lose significance, when cut from their historical context, as a basis for reconstruction of meaning in a world of flows and networks."[31] And within these shifting sands, is how materiality and the body fits into reframing "race." Hames-Garcia points out that to understand race in material ways could mean three things: "(1) Race has material-economic reality in the immediate effects and legacies of racism. (2) Race has a social and psychological reality as an existing system of beliefs and attitudes with material effects (this would include certain epistemic effects on the production and acquisition of knowledge). (3) Race exists in a physical or biological form, as bodily matter."[32] He tackles this question of whether the biological body matters by pointing out that we must understand that biology is "mutually constituted with culture and as significantly less determinate that it is often taken to be."[33]

[26]Sarah Nuttall, *Entanglement: Literary and Cultural Reflections on Post Apartheid* (Johannesburgh: Wits University Press, 2009), 3.

[27]Ibid. Nuttall gestures to the work of Isabel Hofmeyr. See Isabel Hofmeyr, *The Portable Bunyan: A Transnational History of Pilgrim's Progress* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 30.

[28]Nuttall, *Entanglement*, 3. Hofmeyr, *The Portable Bunyan*, 17.

[29]Michael Hames-Garcia, "How Real is Race?" in Alaimo and Hekman (eds.) *Material Feminisms* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2008), 322.

[30]Hames-Garcia, "How Real is Race?," 314.

[31]Ibid., 326.

[32]Ibid., 327.

[33]Ibid, 324.

How race functions socially is entangled with what Hames-Garcia describes as "visible human difference." Thus, while physical differences may have barely any "meaning" for our "biological functioning as organism or for our innate capacities," they do compute in how we function socially.[34]

Likewise, Barad points out that social theory must address "how the body's materiality—for example, its anatomy and physiology—and other material forces actively matter to the processes of materialization."[35] Thus, theories of race that do not contend with the "intra-action" of social culture and material body are unable to explain the capaciousness and nuance of race. I would argue that within the frames of pre-modernity (the Middle Ages), bodies can miraculously change instantly what has been imagined as immutable physical characteristics—hair, skin color, eye and nose shape, etc.—and therefore medieval bodies already "intra-act" and have more agency and flexibility than imagined. How they function socially in narratives, historiographies, and in physical manuscripts becomes a narrative about their own material life.

Reframing Medieval Race

Several scholars have recently argued for the critical and nuanced use of "race" in considering the medieval past, including Geraldine Heng, Suzanne Akbari,[36] and Jeffrey Jerome Cohen. Cohen has succinctly summed up the arguments for "ethnicity" as a term (namely): "Ethnicity… is identity as expressed in culture. Race, on the other hand, is identity lodged in the body, no matter how speciously. Ethnicity is adoptable, malleable, and ethically neutral. Race is enfleshed, immutable, and haunted by pernicious history."[37] However, critical arguments about the term "race" have highlighted race's constructedness, its flexibility, and its embodied performativity—but performativity in the way that has been discussed by earlier feminist theory during the linguistic term (especially Judith Butler, i.e. discursively and linguistically). I would argue that race is not a static term; nor is it marked only on the flesh.

In focusing on the body, the term "race" also has critically examined ideas of what I would term "extensible embodiment," or what J.J. Cohen calls "corporeal/somatic practice" and Andrew Tyrell, in his article "*Corpus Saxonum*: Early Medieval Bodies and Corporeal Identity," calls "body-idiom."[38] Beyond the identifiable painted figural representational differences in the flesh that separate the Christian from the Jew, often seen in medieval art— including the color of the skin, the exaggerating of facial features, the difference in hair quality— there are also the body's material extensions that signal "race." These include but are not limited to the style, color, cut, and markers on clothing; physical adornments, hair color, style, and quality; the "preparation and consumption of food; patterns and speech and use of language; law; customs and ritual; and the practice of sexuality."[39]

Early Modern theories of sexuality have created a useful vocabulary to consider how to work with social construction and the body. In Will Fisher's book, *Materializing Gender in Early Modern English Literature and Culture*, he theorizes a prosthetics of gender in what he sees as everyday objects in Early Modern England: the codpiece as a sign of masculinity, and Desdemona's handkerchief as a metonymic prosthetic of her female virginity in *Othello*.[40] Unlike Fisher, I see these as "extensible embodiments," preferring the term because it highlights that these items are usually attached, though an extended part, to the physical body. Thus, the embodied markers of

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[34]Ibid., 329.

[35]Barad, "Posthuman Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter" *Signs: Journal of Women and Culture in Society 28:3* (2003), 809.

[36]Suzanne Conklin Akbari, *Idols in the East: European Representations of Islam and the Orient, 1100-1450* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009). Heng, "The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages I," 258-274. Heng, "The Invention of Race II," 275-293. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, "Race" *A Handbook of Middle English Studies*, ed. Marion Turner (Chicester: Wiley Blackwell, 2013), 109-122.

[37]Cohen, "Race," 109-122; Hugh Thomas, *The English and the Normans: Ethnic Hostility, Assimilation, and Identity, 1066-c.1220* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 9.

[38]Cohen, "Race" 109; Andrew Tyrell, "*Corpus Saxonum*: Early Medieval Bodies and Identity" in *Social Identity in Early Medieval England*, ed. William O. Frazer and Andrew Tyrrell (London: Leicester University Press, 2000), 137-55.

[39]Cohen, "Race" 109.

[40]Will Fisher, *Materializing Gender in Early Modern English Literature and Culture* (Cambridge, 2006), 25.

race are racial prosthetics linked to the body—items with constructed and malleable meaning dependent on the bodies they perform with.

We see an example of the complexities of bodily entanglement that is also a background text about strictures related to the Jews in thirteenth-century England in canon 68 of Lateran IV. Though it is fairly famous as the canon that first codifies the marking of Jews and Saracens with identifiable symbols on their clothes, I believe a close analysis of this canon reveals that the embodied categories of race are unstable, flexible, and ambiguous:
Concilium Lateranense IV – 1215

68. Ut Iudaei discernantur a christianis in habitu
In nonnullis provinciis a christianis Iudaeos seu Saracenos habitus
distinguit diversitas, sed in quibusdam sic quaedam inolevit confusio,
ut nulla differentia discernantur. Unde contingit interdum, quod per
errorem christiani Iudaeorum seu Saracenorum et Iudaei seu Saraceni
christianorum mulieribus commisceantur. Ne igitur tam damnatae com-
mixtionis excessus per velamentum erroris huiusmodi excusationis ulterius
possint habere diffugium, statuimus ut tales utriusque sexus in omni
christianorum provincia et omni tempore, qualitate habitus publice ab
aliis populis distinguantur, cum etiam per Moysen hoc ipsum legatur eis
iniunctum. In diebus autem lamentationis et dominicae passionis, in
publicum minime prodeant, eo quod nonnulli ex ipsis talibus diebus,
sicut accepimus, ornatius non erubescunt incedere ac christianis, qui
sacratissimae passionis memoriam exhibentes lamentationis signa prae-
tendunt, illudere non formidant. Illud autem districtissime inhibemus, ne
in contumeliam Redemptoris prosilire aliquatenus praesumant. Et quo-
niam illius dissimulare non debemus opprobrium, qui probra nostra
delevit, praecipimus praesumptores huiusmodi per principes saeculares
condignae animadversionis adiectione compesci, ne crucifixum pro nobis
praesumant aliquatenus blasphemare.[41]

Canon 68
In some provinces a difference of dress distinguishes Jews or Saracens from Christians, but in certain others such confusion has developed that they are indistinguishable. Whence it sometimes happens that by mistake Christians unite with Jewish or Saracen women and Jews or Saracens with Christian. Therefore, in order that so reprehensible and outrageous a mixing cannot for the future spread under cover of the excuse of an error of this kind, we decree that such people of either sex in every Christian province and at all times shall be distinguished from other people by the character of their dress in public, seeing that in addition one finds that this was enjoined upon them by Moses himself. On the days of Lamentation and on Passion Sunday they shall not appear in public at all, because some of them on such days, so we have heard, do not blush to parade in their most elegant clothes and are not afraid to ridicule the Christians, who exhibit a memorial of the most holy Passion and display signs of grief. What we most strictly forbid is for them to venture to burst out at all in derision of the Redeemer. And as we ought not to ignore the insulting of Him who atoned for our sins, we order secular rulers to inflict condign punishment upon those who so venture, to restrain them from daring at all to blaspheme Him who was crucified for us.[42]

Though it initially appears quite transparent, the logic behind this ordinance actually is quite entangled. Because the canon places both the Jew and the Saracen (*Iudaeos seu Saracenos*) in a single category of difference, it also defines both groups as a racial as well as a religious other. The motive behind this decree is the deep unease that Christians, Jews, and Muslims may be so physically similar that they cannot be differentiated. The decree's anxiety appears to be chiefly about the possibility that Jews and Muslims could pass as Christian and/or the Christian could be (mis)identified easily as the religious/racial other.

[41]G. Alberigo, ed., *Conciliorum oecumenicorum decreta* (Basel and Freiburg, 1962), 242; ll. 5-23.

[42]Patrick J. Geary, ed., *Readings in Medieval History*, 4th ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 452.

Canon 68 also explains why difficulty in distinguishing among these groups is a particularly thorny issue. The scenario the Church imagines is one in which "by mistake Christians unite with Jewish or Saracen women and Jews or Saracens with Christian." This suggests not only that religious others might "pass" as Christians, but also that Jews and Saracens might have held a particular attraction to Christians.[43] By ordering a specific dress code, the Church hoped to avoid contaminated couplings. This canon also highlights the flexibility of bodily markers of race; the uneasy framing of this kind of identity formation; and the fluidity and the malleability of racial categories of difference attached to the material body.

Though this fearful vision of mixed relations has the hallmarks of fiction, historical information illustrates the possible real consequences of mixed relations. In discussing the history of twelfth and thirteenth-century English Jews, Robert Stacey notes that, "In the 1220s, when a Christian deacon converted to Judaism, he was induced to do so by the beauty of his Jewish lover."[44] England puts the dictates of canon 68 into practice in 1218 with the requirement that all Jews wear the tabula badge.[45] Thus, the English tabula badge, a stark sign of the Jewish connection to the Old Law, is a racial prosthetic of their difference from Christians and also a mark of their dangerous sexual desirability. The badge is an embodied sign of their racial identity. And yet we know that in England, Jews could circumvent these signs by paying bribes in order not to present their bodies with the Jewish bodily marker.[46]

Christian/Jewish Relations and the Articulation of Hebrew

The second half of this article turns to microhistory: a moment of Jewish/Christian engagement and an articulation of Jewish/Christian difference. The world of English Christian Hebraists, their manuscripts, and their interest and attention in learning Hebrew displays an important example of how Jewishness is marked as race through the body and in this case through the sound of Hebrew. I propose that in this microhistorical case, thirteenth-century bilingual Hebrew/Latin manuscripts mark Hebrew as a racialized language. This racial marking happens in the manner that English Christian Hebraists organized the Hebrew alphabet and their Hebrew grammatical discussions. I contend that Christian Hebraists in medieval England marked Hebrew vis-à-vis the embodied sounds marked on the mouth—a phenomenon we now usually see discussed in contemporary Linguistics textbooks.

Judith Olszowy-Schlanger's work in the last two decades has been foundational in reevaluating the state of English Christian Hebraists and the Hebrew-Latin manuscripts extant from pre-expulsion England. These manuscripts reveal a network of entangled relationships between Christian scholars and their Jewish scribes and informants.[47] Olszowy-Schlanger lays out a research conundrum about pre-Expulsion Jews and Christian scholars interested in Hebrew scholarship. She wonders why there existed a number of Christian English scholars who were evidently interested in the *Talmud* and Jewish exegesis, but not particularly invested in understanding the Hebrew language

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[43]See Nella Larsen, *Passing*, ed. Carla Kaplan (New York: Norton, 2007).

[44]Robert Stacey, "Jews and Christians in Twelfth-Century England: Some Dynamics of a Changing Relationship," in *Jews and Christians in Twelfth-Century Europe, Notre Dame Conferences in Medieval Studies*, ed. Michael A. Signer and John H. Van Engen (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 344. See also Frederic W. Maitland, "The Deacon and the Jewess," in *Roman Canon Law in the Church of England: Six Essays* (1898; reprint, London: Methuen and Co., 1998), 158-79.

[45]Heng, "The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages I," 258-274.

[46]See Suzanne Bartlett, ed. for publication by Patricia Skinner, *Licoricia of Winchester* (London and Portland, OR: Vallentine Mitchell, 2009).

[47]Judith Olszowy-Schlanger, "The knowledge and practice of Hebrew grammar among Chirstian scholars in pre-expulsion England: the evidence of 'bilingual' Hebrew-Latin manuscripts" in *Hebrew Scholarship and the Medieval World,* ed. Nicholas de Lange (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 107-128. Judith Olszowy-Schlanger, *Les manuscripts hébreux dans l'Angleterre medieval* (Paris: Peeters, 2003). Judith Olszowy-Schlanger, "A School of Christian Hebraists in Thirteenth-Century England: A Unique Hebrew-Latin-French and English Dictionary and Its Sources," *European Journal of Jewish Studies* I (2007), 249-277. Judith Olszowy-Schlanger, *Dictionnaire hébreu-latin-français de la Bible hébraïque de l'Abbaye de Ramsey (XIIIe s.)* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008). Judith Olszowy-Schlanger, "Christian Hebraism in Thirteenth-Century England: The Evidence of Hebrew-Latin Manuscripts," *Crossing Borders,* eds. Piet van Boxel and Sabine Arndt (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2009), 115-122.

and grammar itself.[48] She writes that most Christian scholars were interested in Hebrew texts, but not in linguistic and grammatical questions. There are hardly any grammar manuals or pedagogical tools available to help access the Hebrew Bible and commentaries.[49]

She points out that during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Latin grammar itself was having problems establishing itself as a "*scientia*," so it is not surprising that Christian scholars lacked a fully-developed sense of Hebrew grammar as a field of study as well. Given this situation, other than a small number of Christian scholars who did understand Hebrew in varying degrees—Herbert of Bosham, Andrew of St. Victor, Robert Grosseteste, etc.[50]—most scholars with an interest in Hebrew had to rely on the knowledge and expertise of Jewish rabbinic scholars and possibly converts to learn more about the Hebrew Bible and its commentaries.[51] Most Christian Hebraists were therefore not proficient enough in Hebrew to be able to use Jewish biblical and rabbinical materials on their own.[52]

Olszowy-Schlanger's point is that the aids to learning Hebrew that have survived are almost entirely connected to information known from the Church Fathers—like St. Jerome's *Interpretationes nominum hebraicorum*—or Hebrew alphabets with information about the letters.[53] However, she argues that this really only shows what Roger Bacon defined as the very "first stage of Hebrew proficiency": the ability to identify the Hebrew references in patristic texts.[54]

In her discussion of Roger Bacon's oeuvre, she highlights his discussion of the three steps in Hebrew knowledge. In *Opus Tertium*,[55] Roger Bacon explains these three levels: 1. As a mother tongue ("sicut maternam in qua natus est"); 2. As the ability to translate from Hebrew into Latin ("ut quilibet fiat interpres et transferre possit in linguam maternam Latinam scientiam de linguis illis"); 3. As a means to comprehend the Hebrew references

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[48]Olszowy-Schlanger, "The knowledge and practice of Hebrew grammar,"107. See also Beryl Smalley, *Hebrew Scholarship among Christians in XIIIth Century England: As Illustrated by Some Hebrew-Latin Psalters* (London: Shapiro, Vallentine & Co., 1939). R. Loewe, "The Mediaeval Christian Hebraists of England: The *Superscriptio Lincolniensis*," HUCA 28 (1957): 209. R. Loewe, "Latin *Superscriptio* manuscripts on portions of the Hebrew Bible other than the Psalter," *Journal of Jewish Studies 9* (1958): 63-71. Gilbert Dahan, "Deux psautiers hébraïques glosés en latin," *Revue des Études juives* 158 (1999): 61-87.

[49]Olszowy-Schlanger, "The knowledge and practice of Hebrew," 107-128. Olszowy-Schlanger, *Les manuscrits hébreux dans l'Angleterre medieval*. Olszowy-Schlanger, "A School of Christian Hebraists in Thirteenth-Century England," 249-77. Olszowy-Schlanger, *Dictionnaire hébreu-latin-français*.

[50]See R. Loewe, "Herbert of Bosham's Commentary on Jerome's Hebrew Psalter," *Biblica* 34 (1953): 45. Deborah L. Goodwin, *"Take Hold of the Robe of a Jew": Herbert of Bosham's Christian Hebraism* (Leiden: Brill, 2006). Eva de Visscher, " 'Closer to Hebrew': Herbert of Bosham's Interpretation of Literal Exegesis," in *The Multiple Meaning of Scripture,* ed. Ineke van't Spijker (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 249-272. Eva de Visscher, "Putting Theory into Practice? Hugh of Saint Victor's Influence on Herbert of Bosham's '*Psalterium cum Comment*'" in *Bibel und Exegese in der Abtei Saint-Victor zu Paris: Form und Funktion eines Grundtextes im europäischen Rahmen*, ed. Rainer Berndt, *Corpus Victorinum*, vol. 3. *Instrumenta* (Münster: Aschendorff Verlag, 2009), 491-502.

[51]Loewe, "The *Superscriptio Lincolniensis*," 208-213. Gilbert Dahan, *Les intellectuels chrétiens et les juifs au Moyen Âge.* (Paris, Les Editions du Cerf, 1990), 249.

[52]Olszowy-Schlanger, "The knowledge and practice of Hebrew grammar," 107-108. She names several Christian Hebraists and their relationship to Hebrew. She writes: "Stephen Harding (c. 1060-1134), while stressing that knowledge of Hebrew and Aramaic is essential to establish the correct text of the Vulgate, derived his own references to the Hebrew text from the explanations he received from his Jewish tutors." Regarding Andrew of St. Victor, she points out his lack of direct quotation in Hebrew: "Andrew of St. Victor (1110-75), for his part, was probably the first scholar to make extensive use of rabbinic works in his commentaries (to the point of being accused of 'judaizing'). It is probably that he knew only the rudiments of the Hebrew alphabet and grammar. Despite Roger Bacon's praise of Andrew's learning and encouragement to consult the Hebrew text whenever the translation of the Bible seems problematic, his commentaries do not contain Hebrew characters or direct quotations." And regarding Robert Grosseteste (c. 1175-1253), she writes that "the bishop of Lincoln, may have possessed at least one Hebrew psalter and initiated a new literal Latin translation, but according to his admirer Roger Bacon, his knowledge of Hebrew was not sufficient to translate without the aid of proficient linguists." S. Berger, *Quam notitiam linguae hebraicae habuerint Christiani medii aevi temporibus in Gallia* (Nancy, 1893), 9-10. C. Singer, "Hebrew Scholarship in the Middle Ages among Latin Christians," in *The Legacy of Israel*, ed. E.R. Bevan and C. Singer, (Oxford: OUP, 1927), 292-3. Loewe, "The *Superscriptio Lincolniensis*," 233. G. Dahan, "Juifs et chrétiens en Occident médiéval. Le recontre autour de la Bible," *Revue de Synthèse* 110 (1989): 9.

[53]M. Thiel, *Grundlagen und Gestalt der Hebräischkenntnisse des Frühen Mittelalters* (Spoleto, 1973); A. Darmesteter, "Un alphabet hébreu-anglais au XIVe siècle," *REJ* 3-4 (1881-2): 255-68.

[54]Olszowy-Schlanger, "The knowledge and practice of Hebrew grammar," 108.

[55]J.S. Brewer, ed. *Fr. Rogeri Bacon, Opus Tertium*, in *Compendium Studii*, The Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland during the Middle Ages (Rolls Series) 15. (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1859), vol. XX, 65.

in the biblical commentaries of the Church Fathers.[56] Bacon imagined that one could acquire the third level—understanding Hebrew references in the commentaries and works of the Church Fathers—as a plausible exercise to be accomplished in three days ("Sed certum est mihi quod infra tre dies ego quemcumque diligentem et confidentem docerem Hebraeum, ut scired legere et intelligere quicquid sancti dicunt, et sapientes antique…").[57] But it is when one examines Bacon's discussion of Hebrew alphabets that a microanalysis reveals how the Hebrew "letter" has become materially embodied. I am arguing that if the identity of Hebrew letters and language (alphabet and sound) was an embodied material practice located in the Jewish body, it was, therefore, a radical moment of feminist materiality.

Christian Hebraists and Jewish Difference

At the beginning of Eva de Visscher's article, "An Ave Maria in Hebrew," she writes that

An increasing emphasis on the otherness of the Jews in twelfth- and thirteenth-century ecclesiastical sources seems to coincide with a revival of the study of Hebrew among Christian scholars. While this revival, which forms part of a wider intensification of interest in language, rhetoric, and the study of the biblical text, is visible all over Western Europe, scholars and texts of English origin are particularly well represented in the extant source material.[58]

Because Hebrew was not part of school or university curriculum, formal training had to be obtained through other means.[59] The main object, at least among Christian Hebraists, was to read the Hebrew *Tanakh*. Though this learning of Hebrew does not take into account the practical uses related to Christian-Jewish business worlds and the uses of Hebrew for practical, everyday activities, it does explain the interest of a specific scholarly community in England.[60]

There are a few surviving manuscripts that reveal more extensive involvement with both Hebrew language and Hebrew grammar. One that has not survived is recorded as *Ars loquendi et intelligendi in lingua hebraica* in a thirteenth-century catalogue of the monastic library at the Benedictine abbey of Ramsey.[61] There are also a few examples of works on Hebrew pronunciation and language; the best example is in MS Paris BN lat. 36, which includes discussion of Hebrew in the preface to *De Interpretationibus nominum sacrae scripturae*. However, the most prominent surviving manuscript that gives us a glimpse of Christian Hebraists and their knowledge of Hebrew is the Hebrew grammar in Cambridge MS UL Ff. 6.13. This text has been connected to Roger Bacon because he himself discussed working on a Hebrew grammar, and there are parallel sections in this manuscript to other works in which Bacon discusses grammar.[62]

[56]Bacon, *Compendium Studii*, vol. VI, 433. See Sam A. Hirsch, "Early English Hebraists: Roger Bacon and His Predecessors," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 12 (1899-1900): 33-88. Hans H. Wellisch, *The Conversion of Scripts: Its Nature, History, and* Utilization (New York: Wiley, 1978), 154-61. Horst Weinstock, "Roger Bacon's Polyglot Alphabets" *Florilegium* 11 (1992): 160-78. Horst Weinstock, "Roger Bacon and Phonetic Transliteration," *Folia Linguistica Historica* 12 (1992) 57-87. Horst Weinstock, "Roger Bacon und das 'hebräische' Alphabet," *Aschkenas* 2 (1992): 15-48. See also Olszowy-Schlanger, "The knowledge and practice of Hebrew grammar," 110. See also, C. Philipp E. Nothaft, "Robert of Leicester's treatise on the Hebrew *computus* and the study of Jewish knowledge in medieval England," *Jewish Historical Studies* 45 (2013): 70.

[57]Bacon, *Opus Tertium*, in *Compendium Studii*, vol. XX, 65. See also Weinstock, "Roger Bacon's Polyglot Alphabets," 160-161.

[58]Eva de Visscher, "An Ave Maria in Hebrew: the Transmission of Hebrew Learning from Jewish to Christian Scholars in Medieval England" in *Christians and Jews in Angevin England The York Massacre of 1190, Narratives and Contexts*, eds. Sarah Rees Jones and Sethina Watson (Boydell and Brewer, 2013), 174-183. R. Loewe, 'The Mediaeval Christian Hebraists of England: Herbert of Bosham and Earlier Scholars', *JSHE Transactions* 17 (1953), 225-49. Loewe, "The *Superscriptio Lincolniensis*," 205-52. R. Loewe, "Alexander Neckham's Knowledge of Hebrew," *Mediaeval and Renaissance Studies 4* (1958), 17-34. Olszowy-Schlanger, *Les manuscrits hébreux dans l'Angleterre médiévale*.

[59]Loewe, "The *Superscriptio Lincolniensis*," 209.

[60]Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, 200-206.

[61]R. Loewe, "Hebrew Books and 'Judaica' in Mediaeval Oxford and Cambridge," in *Remember the Days, Essays on Anglo-Jewish History Presented to Cecil Roth*, ed. J.M. Shaftesley (London, 1966), 30.

[62]Eds. S.A. Hirsch and E. Nolan, *The Greek Grammar of Roger Bacon and a Fragment of his Hebrew Grammar* (Cambridge, 1902). Wellish, *The Conversion of Scripts*, 154-61. Weinstock, "Roger Bacon's Polyglot Alphabets," 150-178.

In Cambridge MS UL Ff. 6.13, a small section (a few folios) of the manuscript includes grammatical information mostly related to the Hebrew alphabet and its vowels, and a discussion of pronunciation. In terms of grammar, Bacon has a succinct discussion that covers morphology, definite articles, declensions, masculine and feminine plural, "possessive and object suffixes" and how they are tacked on at the end of a word, a little syntax explanation in relation to relative pronouns and definite articles.[63] But, as Weinstock explains, Bacon's explanation of the Hebrew letters adheres to "the rules and habits of the letter of the Latin microalphabet for universal literation and transliteration. Each of the letters bears a name (*nomen*), a shape (*figura*), and a sound-value (*potestas*)… "[64] Weinstock points out the dialectal issues—for both Bacon's Anglo-Norman pronunciation and the dialectal varieties of Ashkenazi Hebrew—that would have affected the "*potestas*" of Hebrew letters.[65]

Bacon's grammatical sections are interspersed between two longer parts about the alphabet and pronunciation.[66] However, the bulk of the discussion is centered on the Hebrew alphabet, even with equivalent details of specific letters and their forms—e.g. "the dagesh" as "punctum infra" and the "rafe" as "tractus gracilis super deleth."[67] Weinstock and Wellisch's discussion of the layout, transliteration, and format of Bacon's Hebrew alphabet discusses the importance of "sound" in Bacon's rendering and translation of the Hebrew alphabet.[68]

Bacon appears to have wanted to make Hebrew grammar simple, and he even explains at the end of his grammatical section: "the Hebrews have only a basic grammar and few rules." He proposed in *Opus Tertium* to "teach basic Hebrew in three days."[69] (As I have discussed earlier, Bacon believed that one could acquire enough Hebrew proficiency in three days to understand Hebrew references in the commentaries and works of the Church Fathers.)[70]

Yet this basic outline of Hebrew knowledge does not explain the more fluent and in depth interaction with the language seen in pre-Expulsion Hebrew "commentaries, *correctoria*, and translations."[71] This probably means that twelfth to thirteenth-century Christian scholars had access to Jewish manuscripts and works on Hebrew. Though Bacon writes about his frustration with his lack of Hebrew books—particularly a Hebrew *Talmud* and dictionary— he does explain that other Christians owned many Hebrew books in England and France. He writes: "Nam iamdiu est fecisset certam probationem si Bibliam Graecam et Hebraeam habuisset, et librum ethimologicarum in illis linguis quae abundant apud eos, sicut Isidorus et Papias apud nos, et sunt etiam in Anglia et in Francia, et in multis locis inter Christianos."[72]

Embodied Hebrew Sound and the Extensible Markers of Race

Even more striking than the evidence of Bacon's discussion is the handful of manuscripts that reveal a deep interest in not just the translation of Hebrew words and interpretation, but in a meditation on the sound of Hebrew itself. In MS Bodl. Or. 62, a bilingual Hebrew-Latin manuscript, we find the book of Ezekiel, *superscriptio* translation, and also some Latin glossing, a biblical chronology from Adam to the Babylonian exile in Hebrew and

[63]Olszowy-Schlanger, "The knowledge and practice of Hebrew grammar," 109-110. See also Hirsch and Nolan, eds., *The Greek Grammar*, 204-205.

[64]Weinstock, "Roger Bacon's Polyglot Alphabets," 162.

[65]Weinstock, "Roger Bacon's Polyglot Alphabets," 162-170.

[66]Olszowy-Schlanger, "The knowledge and practice of Hebrew grammar," 110.

[67]ibid. Hirsch and Nolan, eds., *The Greek Grammar*, 207.

[68]Weinstock, "Roger Bacon's Polyglot Alphabets," 162-172. Wellisch, *The Conversion of Scripts,* 154-61. Weinstock and Wellisch chart out this entire section of Hebrew alphabet and the Latin transliteration.

[69]Olszowy-Schlanger, "The knowledge and practice of Hebrew grammar,"110. Bacon, *Opus Tertium*, in *Compendium Studii*, vol. XX, 65.

[70]Olszowy-Schlanger, "The knowledge and practice of Hebrew grammar," 110. Bacon, *Compendium Studii*, vol. VI, 433.

[71]Olszowy-Schlanger, "The knowledge and practice of Hebrew," 110.

[72]Quoted by Nolan, *The Greek Grammar*, lviii. Bacon, *Compendium*, vol. I, 434. See also a discussion of this in C. Phillip E. Nothaft, "Robert of Leicester's Treatise," 70.

Latin, the *Pater Noster* in Hebrew, and comments on Hebrew phonetics.[73] On f. 132r of this manuscript, there is a section that organizes the Hebrew characters in "separate columns according to their place of articulation."[74] This organization of letters in relation to embodied sound—where they fall within a physical understanding of speech (gutturals, labials, palatals, dentals, and linguals, etc.)—has no precursor in Latin grammatical tradition. It is not just a theoretical organization, but one focused on explaining pronunciation to be articulated by readers.[75] Though Bacon discusses how to pronounce a handful of letters—*alef* and *he* are articulated in the mouth while *ayin* and *het* are articulated from the throat—and discusses terminology like "aspiration, semivowels, liquid and silent letters," this terminology is used in Greek and Latin grammatical traditions.[76] But the kind of separation of sounds by speech organ indicated in Bodl. Or. 62 was not used until the early modern period (16th-century) when European vernaculars began borrowing from the Hebrew grammatical tradition to describe Western European languages.[77]

As the later (early modern) practice reveals, this embodied linguistic practice of how to explain Hebrew sound has had a long history in Hebrew language commentary. Olszowy-Schlanger explains that as it was first discussed in *Sefer Yezira* and in pre-Expulsion England, the organization of consonant sounds by location of articulation in the throat and mouth was a long-developed area in Hebrew grammatical writings, including Moshe ben Isaac ha-Nessiya of London's *Sefer ha-Shoham*.[78] The collation of consonants in this bilingual Hebrew-Latin psalter (MS Bodl. Or. 62) directly parallels the organization seen in most versions of *Sefer Yezira.* MS Bodl. Or. 62 is slightly different from Menahem ben Saruq's organization, which has four groups, and also differs slightly from Dunash ben Labrat, who discusses five division but does not identify the speech organ.[79] It also differs slightly from Moshe ben Isaac and David Kimhi's grammatical work, which includes the labials at the end.[80] Though there are slight differences because of the manuscript copy, it's clear that MS Bodl. Or. 62 is based on the information found in Hebrew grammatical work (David Kimhi, Menahem ben Saruq, Dunash ben Labrat) that circulated in England, or even on the work of a local, pre-Expulsion Anglo-Jewish Hebrew grammarian: Moshe ben Isaac.[81]

Another manuscript, London, Lambeth Palace 435—also a Hebrew-Latin psalter with superscription, glossing, and directionally right to left—contains Anglo-Norman glosses and clear Latin marginalia that identifies it as a thirteenth-century English manuscript. Olszowy-Schlanger describes how at this manuscript's beginning, two English scribal hands have written notes on Hebrew pronunciation and grammar on the fly-leaves. This manuscript is highly unusual because of its focus on how to pronounce the Masoretic vowels (f. IIIr).[82] The Masoretic vowel points are not from St. Jerome's understanding of Hebrew; thus, the fact that they are described absolutely indicates that Hebrew knowledge from Jewish sources. The preface of a Parisian manuscript with the *De Interpretationibus Nominum*, Paris, MS *Bibliotheque Nationale* lat. 36, also contains an explanation of the vowel points as distinct sounds.[83] This practice is unusual, because usually the way that Hebrew vowels would be explained for Christian audiences would be by framing the discussion via Jerome, or else just not discussing them at all.[84]

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[73]Olszowy-Schlanger, "The knowledge and practice of Hebrew grammar," 120. A. Neubauer, *Catalogue of the Hebrew Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library and in the College Libraries of Oxford* (Oxford, 1886-1906), vol 1; CF. Smalley, *The Study of the Bible*, 347; Loewe, "*Superscriptio Lincolniensis*," 224; Roth, *Intellectual Activities*, 11, note. 5.

[74]Olszowy-Schlanger, "The knowledge and practice of Hebrew grammar," 120. See also Olszowy-Schlanger, "Christian Hebraism in Thirteenth-Century England," 115-22 (118-119). Olszowy-Schlanger, *Manuscrits hébreux*, 229-33.

[75]ibid., 120.

[76]ibid. Hirsch and Nolan, *The Greek Grammar*, 204. Weinstock, "Roger Bacon's Polyglot Alphabets," 164-165.

[77]Olszowy-Schlanger, "The knowledge and practice of Hebrew grammar among Christian scholars," 120-121.

[78]ibid., 121. See B. Klar, *The Sepher haShoham* (The Onyx Book) by Moses ben Isaac Ha Nessiah (London, 1947), 6.

[79]Olszowy-Schlanger, "The knowledge and practice of Hebrew grammar," 121. Menahem ben Saruq, *Mahberet*, ed. A. Saenz-Badillos (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1986), 8*-9*. See also Elisabeth Hollender, *Piyyut Commentary in Medieval* Ashkenaz (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 69-73. See Teshuvot, 5b, quoted in David Kimhi, Mikhlol, trans. and ed. William Chomsky, *David Kimhi's Hebrew Grammar (Mikhlol) Systematically Presented and Annotated* (New York: Bloch, 1952), 11. See also, Loewe, "The Mediaeval Christian Hebraists," 224. Smalley, *The Study of the Bible*, 347.

[80]Olszowy-Schlanger, "The knowledge and practice of Hebrew grammar," 121. Kimhi, *Mikhlol*, 11.

[81]Ibid.

[82]Olszowy-Schlanger, "The knowledge and practice of Hebrew grammar," 122.

[83]See Berger in *Quam Notitiam*, 22. Olszowy-Schlanger, "The knowledge and practice of Hebrew grammar," 122.

[84]Olszowy-Schlanger, "The knowledge and practice of Hebrew grammar," 122.

Bacon and Hebrew Translation

Bacon attempted to reconcile the Hebrew Masoretic vowel system within Jerome's tradition of grammar.[85] He appeared to find it problematic that there were no vowels in the Hebrew word itself. He followed Jerome in deciding that the guttural sounds must therefore be vowels.[86] But Bacon knew from Hebrew grammatical texts that this was not true, and the vowel point system was used. In order to explain these differences, Bacon blamed the Jews for not writing down vowels and instead using vowel points as a way to deliberately confuse non-Jews and to make reading Hebrew books difficult, if not completely impossible.[87] In this way, I would argue that even in Christian Latin grammatical rhetoric and on the manuscript page, Hebrew was given a fractious and untranslatable status. It was imagined as profoundly different, with a meaning that was difficult or impossible to cipher. Hebrew is thus figured as a language and sound marked on the body, as racially embodied, and as difficult to understand, hidden and unwieldy.

Thus, Hebrew translation always was surrounded by theoretical ideas of opacity, difficulty, and hiddenness.[88] The emphasis on embodied difference in the vowels, combined with the accusation Bacon makes about Hebrew's unwillingness to conform to a universal grammatical system, show a focus on literal translation and also the difficulties that surfaced when translating into a Latin system. I believe that Christian scribes, or at least the scribes who were writing down the Latin gloss, knew of the Masoretic vowel system. Several of the "bilingual" manuscripts have vowel points written in the same ink as the scribe who wrote the Latin gloss, but not the ink of the scribe who wrote the Hebrew text. In addition, a Christian scribe added the appropriate Masoretic vowels in the marginal corrections of Lambeth Palace MS 435. Thus, it seems clear that medieval Christian scribes had an understanding of Masoretic vowels and their vocalization.[89] They knew, or at least were trying to know, the intricacies of Hebrew/Jewish vocalities and sounds. They were grappling with the difficulty of transforming or translating themselves into Hebraists, into knowledgeable Jews.

One of the practices of medieval Hebrew translation shows the importance of Hebrew letters and vocality: the use of *superscriptio*.[90] MS Lambeth Palace 435's superscription could be both a translation but also a transliteration. This continued interest in oral vocalization along with the other points of discussion that demonstrates the "ad-hoc" nature of Hebrew instruction to Christians in pre-expulsion England suggests several things. Mainly, as Olszowy-Schlanger has argued, it suggests that Hebrew instruction was done orally through direct teaching lessons with Christian scribal and scholarly students. She argues for this oral instruction because the manuscripts tell this story: "Occurring as they do in the context of particular biblical verse whose words they transcribe and translate, or as unstructured casual remarks in the margins or the fly-leaves, these notes appear to have been jotted down in the course of a lesson, when the most appropriate or indeed the only writing support available was the book of the Bible itself."[91] Translation from Hebrew and learning to read Hebrew was always an oral exercise that required transforming and translating bodily sound from one culture to another. In a way, it was a form of vocal passing, yet, clearly the anxiety of trying to read like a Jew was higher for Christians than for Jews to sound Christian or English. Thus, vocalizing, reading, seeing, and writing Hebrew was a racial marker of extensible embodiment.

[85]Hirsch and Nolan, *The Greek Grammar*, 205. Weinstock, "Roger Bacon's Polyglot Alphabets," 162-163.

[86]Hirsch and Nolan, *The Greek Grammar*, 205.

[87]Olszowy-Schlanger, "The knowledge and practice of Hebrew," 123. Hirsch and Nolan, *The Greek Grammar*, 205.

[88]See also Sander L. Gilman, *Jewish Self-hatred: Anti-semitism and the Hidden Language of the Jews* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986); Elisheva Carlebach, "Attribution of Secrecy and Perceptions of Jewry," *Jewish Social Studies*, New Series 2, no. 3 (1996): 115-36. See Naomi Seidman, *Faithful Renderings: Jewish-Christian Difference and the Politics of Translation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006) and Anita Norich, *Writing in Tongues: Translating Yiddish in the Twentieth Century*, Samuel and Althea Stroum Lectures in Jewish Studies (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2013).

[89]Olszowy-Schlanger, "The knowledge and practice of Hebrew grammar," 125.

[90]See Loewe, "The *Superscriptio Lincolniensis*," 205-52.

[91]Olszowy-Schlanger, "The knowledge and practice of Hebrew grammar," 126.

This example of English Christian Hebraists is one "intra-action" within an ecosystem of medieval Jewish/Christian relations that reframes race in the Middle Ages. What completes this entangled story of Hebrew language learning, linguistics, and the formation of descriptive embodied practices to identify vowel sounds with the place of articulation is that beginning in the Renaissance, this phonetic model is used to describe non-Hebrew vernacular linguistics and has become the standard practice of the field of Linguistics to this day.