

I'll divide this talk into three parts: Salamone Rossi as a Jew among Jews; Rossi as a Jew among Christians; and conclusions.

1. *Rossi as a Jew among Jews*. What do we know of Rossi's family? His father was named Bonaiuto (Azaria), not to be confused with the great scholar Azaria de' Rossi (d. 1578) who composed *Me'or Einayim* (Light of the Eyes). Rossi had a brother, Emanuele (Menaḥem), and a sister, Europa, who, like him, was a musician. She is known to have performed as a singer in the play *Il ratto di Europa* ("The Rape of Europa") in 1608. The court chronicler Federico Follino raved over her performance, describing it as that of "a woman understanding music to perfection" and "singing, to the listeners' great delight and their greater wonder, in a most delicate and sweet-sounding voice."

Rossi appears to have used his connections at court to improve his family's situation. His brother Emanuele received certain privileges after Salamone's intervention with the authorities. In 1602, for example, Rossi asked Duke Vincenzo to grant Emanuele the right to collect the income for the formation of commercial partnerships.

[SLIDE: Rossi, letter to duke about Emanuele]

The duke granted the request in order to "to show Salamone Rossi *ebreo* some sign of gratitude for services that he, with utmost diligence, rendered and continues to render over many years. We have resolved to confer the duties of collecting the fees on the person of Emanuele, Salamone's brother, in whose faith and diligence we place our confidence."

Rossi himself was involved in various business affairs. Until now, it has been thought that Rossi earned his livelihood from his salary at the Mantuan court, and since the salary was, by comparison with that of other musicians at the court, very small, Rossi tried to supplement it by earning money on the side by investments. From 1622 on he was earning 1,200 lire, a large sum of money for a musician whose annual wages at the court were only 156 lire. Rossi needed the money to cover the cost of his publications. He needed it to support his family.

Rossi's situation within the community can only be conjectured. By "community," we are talking about some 2,325 Jews living in the city of Mantua out of a total population of 50,000. True, Rossi was its most distinguished "musician" and his service for the court would have brought honor on the Jewish community. But because of his non-Jewish connections, he enjoyed privileges denied his

coreligionists. In 1606, for example, he was exempted from wearing a badge. The badge was shameful to Jews who, in their activities, were in close touch with Christians, as were Rossi and other Jews who performed before them as musicians or actors or who engaged in loan banking.

As other “privileged” Jews, Rossi occupied a difficult situation: his Christian employers considered him a Jew, yet the Jews probably considered him an outsider. He could choose from two alternatives: convert to Christianity, to improve his situation with the Christians; or solidify his position within the Jewish community, which he probably did, whenever he could, by representing its interests before the authorities and by providing compositions for Jewish weddings, circumcisions, the inauguration of Torah scrolls, and for Purim festivities. All this is speculative, for we know nothing about these activities. We are better informed about Rossi’s role in the Jewish theater, whose actors were required to prepare each year one or two plays with musical *intermedi*. Since the Jews were expected to act, sing, and play instruments, their leading musician, Salamone Rossi, probably contributed to the theater by writing vocal and instrumental works, rehearsing them and, together with others, playing or even singing them.

It was in his Hebrew collection, however, that Rossi demonstrated his connections with his people. His intentions were good: after having published collections of Italian vocal music and instrumental works, Rossi decided, around 1612, to write Hebrew songs. He describes these songs as “new songs [*zemirot*] that I devised through ‘counterpoint’ [*seder*].” True, attempts were made to introduce art music into the synagogue in the early seventeenth century. But none of these early works survive. Rossi’s thirty-three “Songs by Solomon” (*Ha-shirim asher li-Shelomoh*) are the first Hebrew polyphonic “songs” to be printed.

[Here is an example from the opening of the collection: *Elohim hashivenu*]

[Performed by New York Baroque, with Eric Milnes, Director (recorded in 1996)]

Good intentions are one thing; the status of art music in the synagogue is another. The prayer services made no accommodation for art music. Rossi’s aim, to quote him, was to write works “for thanking God and singing [*le-zammer*] to His exalted name on all sacred occasions” to be performed in prayer services, particularly on Sabbaths and festivals. Yet by introducing “art music” into the synagogue, the composer was asking for trouble. He is said by Leon Modena, the person who

encouraged him to write his Hebrew songs, to have “worked and labored to add from his secular to his sacred works,” “secular” meaning Gentile compositions. As happened when Modena tried to introduce art music into the synagogue in 1605, yet met with objections, so again, he and Rossi feared the composer’s works would awaken hostility. To answer prospective objections, Modena added to Rossi’s collection of “songs” the same *responsum* he wrote, many years before, on the legitimacy of performing art music in the synagogue. He said:

It could be that among the exiled there are sanctimonious persons who try to eliminate anything new in the synagogue or would prohibit a collection of Hebrew “songs.” To avoid this, I decided to reproduce here in print what I wrote in my *responsum* eighteen years ago with the intention of closing the mouth of anyone speaking nonsense about art music.

To quiet these same “sanctimonious persons” Rossi was in need of a patron. He found him in Moses Sullam, whom he described as a “courageous, versatile man, in whom all learning and greatness are contained.” Sullam encouraged Rossi to overcome the obstacles in the way of composing Hebrew songs, “obstacles” because it was not easy to write to Hebrew words with their accentual and syntactic demands so different from those in Italian. “How many times did I toil, at your command,” so Rossi declares, “until I was satisfied, ordering my songs with joyful lips.” Sullam had his own private synagogue, and it was there that Rossi probably first tried out the songs to gauge the reaction of singers and listeners to their content. His efforts were favorably received. “When people sang them,” Modena reports, “they were delighted with their many good qualities. The listeners too were radiant, each of them finding it pleasant to hear them and wishing to hear more.” Rossi must have taken heart from these and other “friends”—thus they are called in the preface to the collection. To please them he completed the collection, or in Modena’s words:

I, too, from the time I numbered among his *friends*, entreated him earnestly and pleaded with him until the enterprise succeeded, thanks to the Creator of all, and he reached that crucial stage I hoped he would with *us* here [*us* meaning his friends in Venice where Modena was rabbi]: he came and consented to discharge his vow to print as he had promised.

But it was not enough to have the influential Sullam, “highly successful and well known in Mantua,” behind him. Rossi needed rabbinical support, and here Modena, who followed the progress of the collection from its inception, rushed to his defense. For Modena the collection marked the resuscitation of Hebrew art music after its being forgotten with the destruction of the Second Temple. Modena exalted the composer, noting his importance in what he described as a Jewish musical renaissance. He wrote that “the events of our foreign dwellings and of our restless running are dispersed over the lands, and the vicissitudes of life abroad were enough to make them [the Jews] forget all knowledge and lose all intellect.” Yet what was lost has now been recovered. “Let them praise the name of the Lord, for Solomon [= Salamone, in reference to King Solomon] alone is exalted nowadays in this wisdom. Not only is he wiser in music than any man of our nation” but he restored the once glorious music heard in the Temple.

Rossi, who was scared to death over how his Hebrew works would be received, asked Modena to prepare them for the printer and to do the proofreading, or in Rossi’s words, “I asked him to prevent any mishap from coming to the composition, to prepare it [for typesetting], embellish it, proofread it, and look out for typographical errors and defects. Modena composed a foreword to the collection and three dedicatory poems; he included, as already said, the early *responsum* from 1605 together with its approval by five Venetian rabbis. The collection went out into the world with as much rabbinical support as any composer could hope to receive.

The major problem for Rossi and Modena was how to narrow the gap between contemporary art music practiced by the Christians and Hebrew music practiced in the synagogue. To do this, Modena resorted to a clever remark of Immanuel Haromi, who wrote around 1335: “What will the science of music [*niggun*] say to others? ‘I was stolen, yes stolen from the land of the Hebrews’ [Genesis 40:15: *gunnov gunnavti mi-eretz ha-ivrim*].” If the Christians “stole” their music from the Hebrews, who, in their wanderings, forgot their former musical knowledge, then by cultivating art music in the early seventeenth century the Jews in a sense recuperated what was theirs to start with. In short, the only thing that separates art music of the Jews from that of the Christians is its language: Hebrew.

Rossi’s sacred music was both old, in the sense that it connected with the Ancient Temple, and new, in the sense that it represented a form of composition that, as Rossi said, was *hadashah ba-aretz*

(something new in the Land; Jeremiah 31:22). Those who rejected the “new” were insufficiently informed about the old. That is what Modena meant when he spoke about “those sanctimonious persons who eliminate anything new” (*ha-mithasdim ha-marhikim kol hadash*), though there was nothing in the rabbinical tradition, as he demonstrated in his *responsum*, to prohibit art music in the synagogue.”

But Rossi seems to have had other things in mind when he composed his Hebrew works: he was interested in their beautiful performance. Christians, who were familiar with Jewish music from their visits to the synagogues, were usually shocked by what they heard. Here is how Gregorio Leti described Jewish prayer services in Rome in 1675:

No sooner do they [the Jews] enter their sanctuary than they begin to shout with angry voices, shaking their heads back and forth, making certain terribly ridiculous gestures, only to continue, sitting down, with these same shouts, which “beautiful” music lasts until their rabbi begins his sermon.

Even Leon Modena, who was a cantor at the Italian synagogue in Venice, was disappointed with the way music was performed in the synagogue. He rebuked the cantors for being so negligent as “to bray like asses” or “shout to the God of our fathers as a dog and a crow.” Oh, how the Jews are fallen, for “we were once masters of music in our prayers and our praises now become a laughingstock to the nations, for them to say that no longer is science in our midst.”

Both Modena and Rossi were concerned over how Christians would respond to Jewish music. They wanted to prove that whatever the Christians do, the Jews can do equally well. They may not be physically strong, Modena explains, but, in the “sciences,” they are outstanding:

No more will bitter words about the Hebrew people
 be uttered, in a voice of scorn, by the haughty.
 They will see that full understanding is as much a portion
 of theirs [the people’s] as of others who flaunt it.
 Though weak in [dealing] blows, in sciences
 they [the people] are a hero, as strong as oaks.

2. *Rossi as a Jew among gentiles.* As a Jewish musician working for the Mantuan court, and competing for the favors that its Christian musicians and composers hoped to gain, it was only inevitable for Rossi to have been considered an intruder. His talents as composer and a violinist must have been so remarkable that the dukes decided to keep him in their service over the course of almost forty years, from 1589 to 1628. In his publications he was designated an *ebreo*, but the very fact that he published so widely suggests that the quality of the music must have been more important than his Judaism.

Still, in Rossi's dealings with the authorities, his Judaism was a bone of contention. For one thing, because of Jewish holidays and the Sabbath, Rossi was not always available when needed. For another, he could not be expected, when asked to do so, to write music to texts with Christian content. We know from a letter of Claudio Monteverdi that the ducal palace ran concerts of chamber music on Friday evenings, yet Rossi, who observed the Sabbath, would not have been present. We also know that of the various composers who were asked to write music for *La Maddalena*, a "sacred representation" about the sins and penitence of Mary Magdalen, Rossi was the only one to be assigned, at his request, a secular poem.

[Here is the piece he wrote for it: "Spazziam pronte"]

[Performed by the Zamir Chorale of Boston, directed by Joshua Jacobson (recorded in 1995)]

Rossi appears to have had cordial relations with Duke Vincenzo I, to whom he dedicated, moreover, his first two publications. In the first of them, from 1589, he refers to the duke as his "most revered patron" and to himself as the duke's "most humble and devoted servant"; in the second, from 1600, he supplemented the phrase "most revered patron" with "my natural lord," to whom he was indebted, he admits, for everything he knows.

[Here is one madrigal from his first collection dedicated to Duke Vincenzo: "Cor mio"]

[Performed by Ensemble Daedalus, directed by Roberto Festa]

Vincenzo was described by his contemporaries as a person "who favored the Jews and spoke kindly to them." He appears to have encouraged Rossi to compose and perform as a violinist. But with his death in 1612 his successors Francesco and Ferdinando were less sympathetic toward Jews. Before entering office, Francesco was known as a Jew hater—even the pope said so—and as likely to drive

the Jews out of Mantua. He was responsible for erecting the Jewish ghetto. It is uncertain what Rossi's relations were with Francesco or Ferdinando. That Rossi dedicated none of his publications to them speaks for itself.

Jews were not liked and try as he might, Rossi was subject to criticism, if not slander. He asks Duke Vincenzo to keep him "safe from the hands of detractors" by lending his "felicitous name" to his first book of madrigals (1600). "Without your support," he writes, "his works would be torn to shreds by his critics." Felicita Gonzaga is asked to "protect and defend" the works in his second book of madrigals (1602), for "no slanderer or detractor would ever dare to censure something that is protected and favored by a lady of such great distinction."

Rossi was determined to make a name for himself in a non-Jewish environment. His situation appears to have been so hopeless that he grabbed at every opportunity to win a new patron. In choosing his dedicatees, he emphasized some favor he received from them. The extent of these "favors" appears to have been no more than a friendly glance, or a word of praise, or the mere presence of the dedicatee at a performance of his works.

Flattery, praise, gratitude: these were the means by which Rossi hoped to improve his situation. For Rossi, the word *patrono*, or patron, designated persons who, once having granted him favors, were being asked for new ones. It is difficult to know how much of his dedications is sincere and how much is fabricated. In his Hebrew collection Rossi tells us how he chose Moses Sullam as his patron. "I searched in my heart," he writes, "for the one ruler to whom I would turn, to place on his alter the offering of this thanksgiving. Then I lifted my eyes and saw that it would be better for me to show my affection to you, honored and important in Israel, than to anyone else." The tone seems to be genuine. Yet when Rossi dedicates his four-voice madrigals to Prince Alfonso d'Este, he speaks in another language, artificial, rhetorical:

My mind, particularly disposed to serving Your Highness forever, and your infinite kindness and sublimity have given me the courage not only to dedicate to you these few efforts of mine but also to make me hope, at the same time, to be able to see them, by means of your most felicitous name, consecrated to the immortality of your fame, resting assured that you will not disapprove of my

receiving this favor of your kindness, which is to reveal to the world, with my meager demonstrations, the most ardent signs of my reverent devotion to Your Highness, whom I, in all humility, beseech, with deepest affection, to accept these trifling notes of mine, assuring that every wearisome undertaking is bound to become the lightest load for me, inasmuch as I am stirred by an immense desire to serve Your Highness.

As said, Rossi did not do the one thing he could have done to solve his problems: convert to Catholicism. The pressure to do so must have been tremendous, but it is doubtful it would have improved his lot. Mahieu le Juif, the thirteenth-century trouvère who composed various songs tells us that the reason that he converted was to please a certain lady, for whose love he “abandoned his religion and his faith in God.” Little did it help him though, for she did not “reciprocate” his “love”; her heart was like “steel”; she “betrayed” him; and she “made a fool” of him. The thirteenth-century minnesinger Süsskind of Trimberg, who too wrote various songs, also converted, but suffered from poverty (“the rich man has flour,” he said, “the poor man has ashes”). In the end, his patrons “separated him from their estate,” whence he “fled the courts,” only perhaps to return to his faith, though now “with a beard,” “gray hair,” after the “life style of an old Jew,” as he is depicted, in fact, in an illustration.

[Show illustration of Süsskind of Trimberg]

[In the codex Manesse]

Closer to Rossi’s time, and working at the Mantuan court, is the harpist Abramino dall’Arpa. His story illustrates the unrelenting pressure brought on Jews to convert and, at the same time, Abramino’s refusal to do so. One reads, for example, that in 1582 Abramino and his son were convened to meet with a “master of theology,” but they did not show up, escaping to Ferrara. The authorities intensified their efforts. In June 1587 the singer Giovanni Andrea Robbiato, on the way back to Mantua with Abramino as his travel companion, is said to have explained to him that the “Christian religion ... was the best and the only one to be practiced, superseding what Jews profess,” but Abramino “did not agree, even though he appeared to listen.” After arriving in Mantua, Robbiato took Abramino to the church of Santa Barbara to see the baptism of the duke’s grandson, and

“Abramino appeared to be pleased with the ceremonies.” A monk clarified to him “the substance of the said sacrament of the Holy Baptism, explaining it by comparison with circumcision,” yet Abramino remained silent. Rumors of the incident immediately spread to the Jewish community, and in the evening Abramino’s uncle together with the rabbi Judah Moscato came to talk sense into him (Robbiato “approached to hear what they were saying, but they spoke Hebrew to keep him from understanding them”).

The Christians kept up their coercive endeavor, while at the same time the Jews urged Abramino to “continue in the Hebrew faith and not give ear to words spoken to him about becoming a Christian.” Infuriated, Duke Guglielmo ordered Abramino and the interfering Jews to be arrested and separately examined to determine once and for all what the musician’s intentions were. Did Abramino yield to the pressure? Apparently not, for five years later (1593, the last date we have for him) he is addressed as *ebreo*.

Similar pressure was probably brought on Rossi. He too resisted. But he did *not* resist the secularization of his music: his Italian vocal and his instrumental works follow the conventions of late Renaissance composition as practiced by Christians. Or do they? Is there anything about his works that, despite their otherwise Renaissance appearance, might be described as “Jewish”? A difficult question, because it begs the question “what is musically Jewish?”

If anything “Jewish” can be detected in his vocal music, it is in the way Rossi fits his music to the words. For Rossi, music was subservient to the structural and affective demands of the text. But Rossi’s way of having the text dominate the music is by highlighting words through a plain, unobtrusive setting, as familiar perhaps from music in the synagogue, in particular the cantillation of Scriptures in which melodies do not compete with the text. So what is Italian? What is Jewish? Only once, toward the end of his career, did Rossi allow the music to “compete” with the text in importance. I am referring to his *Madrigaletti* for two voices and *basso continuo* from 1628.

[Example of *Madrigaletti*: “Volò ne’ tuoi begl’occhi”]

[Performed by *L’Aura Soave*, directed by Diego Cantalupi (recorded in 2000)]

As a parallel question, one might ask: is there anything particularly Jewish about his instrumental works? Instrumental music did not win the approval of the rabbis, for it escaped the control of words

and was often used in banqueting. The rabbis maintained that with the destruction of the Temple it was wrong to play instruments until the Messiah reinstated them by returning the Jews to Zion. Even so, instrumental music was recognized by the Jews as an expedient for spiritual elevation: Elisha, the prophet, is said to have requested a minstrel to come and awaken his powers of prophecy: in 2 Kings 3:15 one reads that *when the minstrel played the power of the Lord came upon him*.

For Rossi instrumental music was a natural vehicle of expression. In his instrumental works he was not hampered by the semantic restrictions of words, rather he could forge his works as he desired. Not only that, but through his instrumental music he established his reputation at the court. Rossi was the only composer of instrumental music in Mantua, publishing four collections of instrumental works.

It was in his third collection of instrumental music, from 1613, that Rossi developed a more demanding, indeed virtuoso mode of expression. Rossi opened his third book of instrumental works with a sonata in a “modern” style.

[Play a portion of “Sonata terza sopra l’Aria della Romanesca” (1613)]

[Performed by “Il Ruggier,” directed by Emanuela Marcante (recorded in 1994)]

His new approach to instrumental writing in this book might have directed him, as I already said, to try a new approach to vocal writing, as clear from his last collection, the *madrigaletti*, which, in their style of writing, are truly “modern.” Whether these novel instrumental and vocal works improved Rossi’s situation in the court cannot be said. Perhaps they did, though as evidence to the contrary it might be recalled that in the years after 1613 Rossi turned his attention to composing Hebrew works. There he was under no pressure to be “modern.” Rather the very notion of writing music to Hebrew according to the conventions of art music was, for a Jewish audience, itself “modern.”

[Here is another work from the “Songs by Solomon”: “Adon ‘olam” for 8 voices]

3. *Conclusions*. Like other Jewish musicians in later times, among them Ernest Bloch, Darius Milhaud, and Leonard Bernstein, Rossi confronted the problems, in his own time, of preserving his Jewish identity in a non-Jewish environment and of communicating, as a Jew, with Jews and

Christians in such a way as to be understood and appreciated by both. His solutions illustrate the *paradoxe juif*.

Rossi, the man and musician, had his Jewish and Hebrew sides, as evident from his connections with his family and with Jews and their institutions in Mantua and Venice, to which one should add his commitment to the Hebrew tradition in his Hebrew works. He participated in productions of the Jewish theatrical troupe that performed before the dukes in Mantua and was probably called upon to prepare music for celebrations within the Jewish community; he might have been affiliated with one or more synagogues in and beyond Mantua.

At the same time, Rossi had his Mantuan and Italian sides. He was heavily involved in music-making for the Gonzagas and was occasionally invited to entertain guests at other courts. He came into contact with the greater and lesser non-Jewish musicians—Monteverdi, Giaches Wert, etc.—who worked in or passed through Mantua. He joined them or even collaborated with them in composing, rehearsing, and often performing vocal and instrumental music for courtly or private entertainments. He met with dukes, princes, and other worthies, sometimes receiving, though more often asking them to commission works from him.

The outward dichotomy between Jewish and non-Jewish influences and motivations cuts through his production. Rossi supplied Hebrew compositions for services in the synagogue and possibly events in the community; he related to these compositions, so he intimated in the dedication to his “Songs by Solomon,” as different from his Italian ones (“the Lord,” he said, “has been a support for me and He put new songs in my mouth”). He knew of an ancient Hebrew musical practice in the Temple, only to decline after its destruction; and he was perceived by others as playing a major role in its revival. Leon Modena believed that by writing Hebrew music Rossi both linked with the past and perpetuated it into the future. “I am convinced,” he wrote, “that from the day this collection is published, those who learn it [the science of music] will multiply in Israel in order to sing to the magnificence of our God by using the “Songs” and others like them.”

But before, during, and after pursuing his Hebrew inclinations, Rossi operated, with no less enthusiasm, within the bounds of an ongoing Italian musical tradition. His *canzonette* and madrigals are firmly rooted in Italian practice, as are his instrumental *canzoni*, dances, *sinfonie*, and sonatas.

Here and there Rossi innovated within this practice, especially in his *sinfonie* and sonatas. Yet, in the main, he shaped the ideas of his non-Jewish works according to an inherently Italian, non-Jewish tradition of vocal and instrumental music.

What the Jewish and non-Jewish sides of Rossi's repertory have in common resides perhaps in their differentiation into *antico* and *moderno*. It is with the *antico* and *moderno* as two contrasting, yet complementary ways of placing and assessing Rossi's works that I shall conclude this discussion.

The *antico* in Jewish music is represented by its practice in the Ancient Temple and, from the Middle Ages on, by the cantillation of Scriptures and the singing of prayers in the synagogue. In effect, there was no *moderno* in Jewish music until Salamone Rossi composed his "Songs." To justify their novelty, they were explained, by Modena, as effecting a reconstitution of the glorious Hebrew music in the Temple. The biblical *antico* thus became a conceptual source for Rossi's *moderno*.

The same split into *antico* and *moderno* may be detected in Rossi's non-Jewish works. Stylistically, his *canzonette* and his four- and five-voice madrigals, as well as his dances and certain *sinfonie* exemplify a *prima pratica*, as Monteverdi designated the works of the Renaissance, while his *madrigaletti* and sonatas, along with other *sinfonie*, designated a *seconda pratica*, or a "new" practice. For Monteverdi works of the *prima pratica* were "old" and those of the *seconda* were "new." Monteverdi's views may be questioned, but there is no denying that Rossi's repertory displays the tension between styles of "older" and "newer" origin.

The division into *antico* and *moderno* might apply, more generally, to the division of Rossi's works into vocal and instrumental. The madrigals are "old"; many *sinfonie* and the sonatas are "new." But other principles could be invoked to explain Rossi's non-Jewish works. His Italian vocal music seems to be posited on "the word" as the determining factor of their composition. Words, of course, can be observed in widely contrasting ways, and Monteverdi's often highly dramatic madrigals from his later books are, musically, no less indebted to words than the much simpler, sometimes narrative madrigals of his earlier books. The same holds for Rossi's later *madrigaletti*, so different from his madrigals, yet, for all that, no less indebted to words in their music.

Regard for the text usually translates, in Rossi's Italian works, into a relatively restrained melodic and rhythmic style, with emphasis on clear delivery and articulation of words and their

syntactic units. Rossi might, in composition, have been bound to “the word” by the force of the Hebrew *verbum sacrum*. But he could equally have been word-conscious from humanistic currents in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century musical thought. The preeminence of the word, at any rate, narrows the distinction between whatever might be schematized as Hebrew and Italian forms of composition: they are at one in Rossi’s conceptions and their realization.

Rossi’s instrumental works may be posited on an opposite principle, the absence of words, with its implications for an inevitably distinctive mode of writing. Here the composer was freer to indulge his own preferences. Rossi was known as a virtuoso violinist and in his instrumental music he emphasized his soloist inclinations. The result was something quite different from his vocal music. Released from words, Rossi was free to impose his own ideas, as determined by his performing capacities. While he drew from words for his vocal works, he drew from himself for many of his instrumental ones: Rossi is the measure of their form and content. In this, however, he is a man of his times, for the seventeenth century saw the gradual rise of the soloist in vocal and instrumental music.

[Here is an example from his instrumental works: book 3, sonata 6]

[Again performed by “Il Ruggier,” directed by Emanuela Marcante (recorded in 1994)]

In daily life Rossi moved between two cultures, combining, if not fusing them in his activities. Though there was increasing segregation of Jews from Christians in later sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Mantua, Rossi illustrates the possibility of breaking down civic and religious barriers. After all, the Lord God who ruled *his* people was the same God who ruled mankind. In writing to Duke Vincenzo on his brother’s behalf in 1606, Rossi finishes with the words “I pray *our* Lord for your every happiness and content”; and in the dedication of his four-voice madrigals to Alfonso d’Este he addresses him as “Your Highness to whom I pay my humblest respects by entreating the Lord God that, in His benignity, He rain all favors upon you and Your Most Serene Household.” One wonders whether “*our* God” and the “Lord God” was the Jews’ God Almighty as against Christ; and whether Rossi was not saying, as an innuendo, that, after all, it was the Jewish God who formed the world and the nations and that it was for the Jewish God, who had chosen the Jews for His people, to dispense His benevolence to Gentiles. He might have been forcing the conclusion that it was for the nations to recognize the primacy of the Hebrew God and the primacy of His chosen people. *Ashrei ha-goi, asher*

Adonai Elohav; ha-'am bahar le-naḥalah lo (Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord and the people whom He chose for His inheritance), one reads in Psalms 33:12; and elsewhere in the same psalm, *Let all the earth fear the Lord* (verse 8) and *The Lord looks down from heaven; He beholds all the sons of men* (verse 13). Whatever the case, the result is unification, through continuities within the Judeo-Christian tradition or through notions of Hebrew culture as the *fons et origo* (source and origin) of later developments.

These and other interpretations depend on the way one reads Rossi's biography and his works. They form the chapters of a still "open book," whose contents can be variously organized according to the particular point of view selected for their narration. *Vivat S. R.* (Long live Salamone Rossi), to quote the acrostic in the table of contents to his first collection: in "living on," Rossi's story can be told and retold as a narrative for the shifting associations of Jews and their music within European culture.