

SARRA COPIA SULAM:
A SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY JEWISH
POET IN SEARCH OF IMMORTALITY

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Sarra Copia Sulam (d. 1641) is renowned for having written a *Manifesto* in which she upholds the principle of the immortality of the soul as applicable both to Christians and to Jews. With this work Copia enters the annals of one of the most heated controversies of her age and secures a unique place for herself within Italian literature. Yet the subject of immortality seems to have occupied Copia more fundamentally: Its ramifications can be demonstrated in her ongoing quest for self-fulfillment. I shall trace the subject in different areas of relevance to Copia's life and writings, starting with her relations with members of her family and her interaction with her intellectual peers; continuing with pictorial and poetic evidence of "the quest"; and concluding with a vindication of Copia's unwavering belief in the soul's immortality as proffered in an unexpected source: a wedding ode set to music.

. . . falsissima, ingiusta, e fuori di ogni ragione è l'imputazione da
voi datami . . . che da me sia negata l'immortalità dell'anima.

The charge you brought against me . . . namely,
that I denied the immortality of the soul, is false to
the extreme, unjust, and beyond any reason.

—Sarra Copia Sulam, *Manifesto*¹

E se tu aspiri a uscir di man di morte / Co'l favor de le Muse,
io porre il piede / Con maggior forza ne l'eterna stanza.

If you aspire to escape the hand of death / With
the favor of the Muses, I do too, putting my foot /
In the eternal room with greater force.

—Eadem, from her sonnet "Amai, Zinan"²

It is well known that Sarra Copia Sulam (d. 1641) wrote a *Manifesto* on the immortality of the soul.³ But her concern with the subject seems to go beyond the *Manifesto* to become a search for her own immortality, as reflected in both her life and her writings.

The topic of immortality came up for discussion in the literary salon that Copia formed in her house in the Venetian Ghetto around 1618. Copia appears to have said certain things that could be interpreted as a denial of the soul's immortality, a principle upheld in common by Christians and Jews;⁴ which gave one of her listeners, the Christian advocate and eventually bishop Baldassare Bonifaccio, reason to think that she did in fact deny it.

"Even if I raised some philosophical or theological difficulty in some discussion with you," Copia would explain to Bonifaccio in her *Manifesto*, "it was not out of any uncertainty or indecision I ever felt about my faith." Rather, she did so "solely out of curiosity to hear from you [Bonifaccio] some curious and uncustomary teaching to provide a solution to my arguments."⁵ But Bonifaccio's suspicions increased when, in a letter she wrote to him, she carelessly implied that "matter" (the body), as "an intrinsic, substantial part of its compound" with "form" (the soul), "is eternal"; that "what remains of any compound, were it to dissolve and be corrupted, is always matter"; that, of the two component parts, matter and form, "the first of them lasts eternally and the second vanishes"; and that "the Creator would not have made humans immortal by nature if He intended to have them preserved as such." Moreover, she asked, if "the immortality that humans enjoyed in their primal state" had not been preserved, how would it be possible for their procreation to continue?⁶ But Copia never clarified that her various statements were advanced as arguments to be tested by discussion; or that the compound of body and soul remained intact only as long as humans were alive; or that by the notion of humanity as immortal, she was referring not to individuals but to the human species and its permanence from generation to generation. Whatever the case, Bonifaccio, who found grist for his mill, wrote a lengthy *Discorso* in which he pulled out every argument to attack Copia for denying the immortality of the soul.⁷

One month after the publication of Bonifaccio's *Discorso*, Copia responded with her *Manifesto*, which drew her, against her will, into one of the major philosophical controversies of her time, starting with Marsilio Ficino and continuing with Pietro Pomponazzi and a long list of others. Recognizing the import of the subject, she stated at the beginning of the *Manifesto*: "Immortality? It is the most difficult and arduous matter to be found in philosophy."⁸ The *Manifesto* was her only published work, and she made it clear, at the outset, that she wrote it "not with an end or any thought to achieve glory for myself, but only to defend myself against the false accusations leveled at me by Signor Baldassare Bonifaccio."⁹ In a sense, one can only be glad that circumstances forced her to disprove his charges, for her *Manifesto* is unique among the works of Italian Jews.¹⁰

Copia's arch-critic Bonifaccio declared that his correspondent was less concerned with the immortality of the soul than with gaining fame; or, to quote him: "If you, Signora, did not want fame after death, and did not believe you would have any feeling for it in the other life, you would not have invested so much energy into perpetuating

your honored name with the immortal works of your divine mind.”¹¹ He may have had a point, for as Copia herself acknowledged in her rebuttal: “If I am allowed to hope for salvation and an afterlife, it will be in my intellect’s creations, for which I have been granted some fertility, so that my name, . . . lively expressed, will live on in them.”¹² Hints gleaned from a study of her biography, writings and milieu make it clear that Copia oscillated between viewing immortality as a philosophical principle and as a matter of personal fame, an antithesis illustrated by the two epigraphs.

The following remarks are in four parts, addressing the theme of the soul’s immortality as it relates, respectively, to Copia’s biography; to her poetry; to the different portraits made of her; and to a piece of contemporary music.

Immortality in Relation to Copia’s Biography

It is touching that Copia dedicated her *Manifesto* to her father, Simon Copia, fifteen years after his death, as a sign of her unwavering affection and reverence.¹³ “To you did I want to present this little gift, yes, indeed, to you, most beloved soul, who awaken being in that dear compound [of matter and form, i.e., body and soul] from which I was generated in this world; to you, I say, most devoted parent, who, though divested of an ephemeral veil [viz., a body], reside midst living spirits and will reside there for eternity”¹⁴ (a statement avowing in itself the immortality of her father’s soul). But there appears to have been another reason for the dedication. Copia and her sister were Simon Copia’s only children. She knew that her father ached to have a son to carry on the family name, “as you so fervently hoped would happen in this life.”¹⁵ Her being a daughter weighed on her conscience, and her every aim was to prove to him that “having brought a woman into the world will be no less dear to you, for the conservation of your name, than having brought a man into it.”¹⁶ She hoped that he, looking down from above, would rejoice in “the little renown that accrues to [her] name”¹⁷ and, as a compensation for the lack of sons, would take pride in her achievements. And what achievements: not only verses but a tract on immortality!

The same problem that troubled Copia in relation to her father, his not having had male descendants, was one that recurred in her marriage to Jacob (Giacob) Sulam: She produced no sons to perpetuate her husband’s name. A daughter was born to them in 1615, but she died at the age of ten months.¹⁸ Some time before May 1618 Copia had a miscarriage,¹⁹ after which, as far as is known, there were no children. As with her father, so with her husband: She seemed determined to prove, through her verses and prose writings and her discussions as an intellectual on matters of literature, religion and philosophy, that she was worthy of respect.

It was important for Copia that nothing tarnish her reputation. Thus, when she was publicly accused, in writing, of denying the immortality of the soul, she saw this as an attack on her good name. She immediately replied to remove any blight. Lest her readers think she was presumptuous for writing a *Manifesto* on such a learned topic, she clarified that her only intent was to stave off the unwarranted accusations made

by Bonifaccio. “It was not to my advantage,” she said, “to let an excess of time or an abundance of gossip intervene between the offense [of Bonifaccio’s *Discorso*] and my rebuttal, for there was danger of my incurring damage as a result.”²⁰ The damage, she feared, would affect her reputation not only among her Christian friends, but also within the Jewish community. Its members no doubt had their hands full with Jacob Sulam’s unconventional (to put it mildly) wife: She must, in their eyes, have been suspected of denying her Judaism in her dealings with Christians. Her status within the community was clearly at risk. It might be remembered that Uriel da Costa, around the same time, was excommunicated from the Jewish community in Amsterdam for qualifying the soul’s immortality as a principle unsupported by biblical precedent.²¹ Tongues must have been wagging, and to quell the turmoil, Copia, “under compulsion,” she explained, “hurriedly composed and published” her *Manifesto*.²²

But Copia had still other problems, within her own household. The poet Numidio Paluzzi, whom she had chosen as editor of her Italian verses and letters, and his bosom friend, Alessandro Berardelli, who, like Paluzzi, lived off Copia’s largesse, connived with other members of the household—the laundress and her sons and husband, the kitchen maid—to rob Copia and her husband of their belongings. Little by little, things began to disappear.²³ These thieves “despoiled the Jewess of her comforts, . . . defrauded her of her jewels, stole her gold plate, bared her coffers, threw open strongboxes and looted her money.²⁴ . . . They stole chickens, scraped off skewers, and cleaned out saucepans. . . . They made off with two pairs of her sheets and one pair of her husband’s underwear. Nor did it bother them that they were dirty!”²⁵ When Copia discovered the treachery, she denounced its perpetrators to the authorities. In retaliation, Paluzzi and Berardelli composed abusive pamphlets, which they called *Sareide*—roughly, “Satires on Sarra.” After having them printed, they read and distributed these pamphlets in public places, including the ghetto.²⁶ Here, too, Copia feared for her reputation.

Immortality in Relation to Copia’s Poetry

Of Copia’s fourteen surviving poems, all of them sonnets, a remarkable number are concerned with the afterlife. Even without her *Manifesto*, one could, on the basis of her verses, extrapolate an attestation of the soul’s immortality, or, barring that, of Copia’s own desire for immortality. Copia discourses on “heavenly stars” and the “empyrean heavens”;²⁷ on how “in heaven” one “enjoys glory” for having led an exemplary life (“if virtue opens the doors of heaven,” she wrote, “I . . . take hope in going there to rejoice”);²⁸ on “souls in the highest heaven”;²⁹ on their “happy state”;³⁰ on “the blessed who live” on high;³¹ on “aspiring to the heights”;³² and on the permanence of fame (“neither heat nor cold can consume it”).³³ In a sense, Copia thought that through her poetry she might “escape the hand of death with the favor of the Muses . . . to enter the eternal room with greater force.”³⁴

These statements probably owe more to Copia's wish for fame than to her concern over immortality. One might argue that earthly renown is important for life on earth but has nothing to do with immortality proper; or, conversely, that immortality is important in the afterlife but has nothing to do with earthly renown. It was only when Copia wrote her *Manifesto* that she confronted immortality as a subject unto itself. There she included "a sonnet to the human soul," addressing it, in the first quatrain, as "divine":³⁵

O divine form of mortal life,
And sublime end of God's works,
In which He expresses Himself and His power
And made you [the soul] a queen of as much as He created.³⁶

In the second quatrain she invokes the mind, equating it with the soul in the sense of an *anima rationale*, an intellectual soul:

Mind that informs man, in whom the immortal
Adjoins the mortal . . .³⁷

Both the soul and the mind are capable of reaching the heights, where "the angels themselves are appointed to guard and preserve [them]."³⁸

How does the theme of the afterlife in Copia's poetry compare with the same theme in the poetry of Ansaldo Cebà, her Christian correspondent in Genoa?³⁹ Cebà was not concerned with the immortality of the soul. Rather, he set his sights on saving souls from damnation. Copia's soul could only be redeemed, he claimed, by a change of faith:

You do not answer Christ and he calls you;
You place the Faithful after the Circumcised
And he awaits you, and admonishes you, and loves you.
Ah, how can you, Sarra, keep your heart
Separated from him who, if you have beauty and fame,
Elevates your name and illumines your face?⁴⁰

Copia's "fame," for Cebà, would only be increased by her conversion. But she continues to "deny the highest Sun / Who once hid, for your salvation and mine, in Mary's womb"⁴¹—"and mine," because Cebà's "salvation," after consorting with a Jewess, depended on garnering another soul for the Church. Cebà praises Copia's virtues, but one of them "still does not come into sight":

I gaze upon all the others in you,
But Faith, alas, I do not see.
. . . Rather I am saying, and it really saddens me,

That you still do not believe in Christ.
. . . Come, honor of our century,
Come, love of my soul,
Believe in the son of Mary,
Offer me a more living ink [viz., a poem about Christ Incarnate],
Whereby, with other hymns, I might now
Rise with you to heaven.⁴²

The ascent to heaven was not for Copia's and Cebà's souls to be immortalized. Rather it resulted from their souls being saved. The only way for Copia to assure her salvation would be through baptism, and Cebà was ready to "bathe [her] head in the sacred Font."⁴³ But Copia was stubborn:

What are you thinking, Jewess, and what are you doing?
Why do you not bathe your golden hair in the holy fount?
Are you shutting your charming, beautiful eyes
At the sight of the Sun that blazes upon Calvary's mount?⁴⁴

If she thinks that "with our arts," i.e., with writing skills, she can "overcome / That ferocious and great Tyrant"—Death—"Against whom, in the end, names have no shield,"⁴⁵ she errs:

You live in the world and die in heaven
As long as the veil,
Wrapped around your eyes,
Makes you refuse, alas, to give tribute,
On your knees,
To him [Christ] who has already come.⁴⁶

"You live in the world," says Cebà of Copia; or as he wrote in another poem, she has "no heart or no voice to conquer plebeian glories."⁴⁷ "[You] die in heaven": Try as she may to preserve her name, without joining the Church she will be forgotten after death.

Immortality in Relation to the Different Portraits Made of Copia

Not only do written works survive ("littera scripta manet"); so does a portrait. Michelangelo, in one of his sonnets to Vittoria Colonna, wrote: "From the 'idea' (*concetto*) that, through divine art in its integrality, inspired the [sculptor] to shape the form and features of someone, he makes a simple model in plain matter [e.g., clay] as its first 'creation,'" then, "for its second, works the promises of his mallet on live stone [marble] to endow the 'idea' with such beauty as to assure it, as nobody could have predicted, of immortality."⁴⁸ True, there is an injunction against representation in

Jewish law (“You shall not make for yourself a sculpture or any painting of an object in the heavens or on earth”; Ex. 20:4). But that did not deter Copia: she was intent on having her portrait done, in yet another attempt, it would seem, at self-perpetuation. Three different portraits are recorded: one, in 1620, by an unknown Venetian artist;⁴⁹ another, in 1622, by Alessandro Berardelli, mentioned above as Paluzzi’s accomplice in ransacking Copia’s belongings;⁵⁰ and yet another in 1622 by the Genoese painter Bernardo Castello (d. 1629).⁵¹

The story of the third portrait is particularly interesting: Copia wanted Castello to do her portrait after the example of the first one. To this end, she sent the original to Cebà for him to give to Castello, his close friend.⁵² Though till now none of the three portraits has been discovered, Carla Boccato made a strong case for identifying the third as a work that Castello’s son Valerio copied after the original, thus enlarging the number of portraits to four.⁵³ Indeed, the supposed copy was published in a catalog of Valerio’s paintings (see Figure 1).⁵⁴

Together with the portrait sent to Cebà, Copia enclosed a sonnet of her own composition.⁵⁵ In its verses she describes the details of her representation. The poetic imagery and painterly figuration of this and other poems exchanged between Copia the Jew and Cebà the Christian, not to speak of their letters at large, often took the form of a *jeu d’amours*. Copia played the part of a loving admirer of Cebà’s writings—indeed, it was from a reading of his epic poem on Queen Esther⁵⁶ that she had been drawn to correspond with him in the first place;⁵⁷ Cebà played the part of a no less loving admirer of Copia’s soul, which he hoped to gain for Christianity. The sonnet reads thus:

The image is that of her who, in her heart,
Carries, sculpted, your image alone;
And who, with her hand on her breast, indicates to the world:
“Here I carry my idol, let everyone adore him.”
With her left hand she supports love’s weapons,
Your poems;⁵⁸ her right hand signals
The place where she is wounded;⁵⁹ pale and bewildered,
She says: “Ansaldo, my heart is dying for you.”
She comes before you as a prisoner⁶⁰
Asking your help, and she offers you that
Chain from which my love is faithful and constant.⁶¹
Oh, accept the shadow of your faithful handmaiden,
And may my feigned appearance enjoy, if anything,
What an inauspicious star denies these eyes.⁶²

Yes, the lady shown in the portrait has her hand on her heart; yes, she carries something in her other hand (“love’s weapons,” i.e., Cupid’s arrows?); and yes, she wears a necklace (“chain”). Should it turn out that the image is really Copia’s—although, as we shall see, confirming the correlation between verses and portrait is problematic—it is clear that Copia was a beauty; according to Cebà, in real life she was even “more



Figure 1. Portrait of a woman approximately twenty years old in a painting from the 1660s; though once attributed to Valerio Castello, it is now thought to be by Antonio Lagorio (see note 54). Is the woman Sarra Copia as copied from an earlier painting by Bernardo Castello? Formerly in Genoa, private collection (present owners unknown).

beautiful than the representation in [her] portrait.”⁶³ Since the portrait in the catalog of Valerio Castello’s works is blurred, and inaccessible for inspection because its present owners wish to retain their anonymity, I asked them through an intermediary—a descendant of the original owner—to describe what exactly the woman has in her hand. It turns out, from their report, that she carries not a bunch of Love’s arrows, but two sprigs of laurel (a metaphor for Cebà’s poems), and, further, that she wears a crown of laurel leaves—a detail not visible in the portrait as reproduced in the catalog. Such crowns, we recall, occur in portraiture and literature, from ancient times on, as a designation of outstanding poets: Their works assure them of “immortality,” a theme that, in retrospect, correlates with Copia’s literary ambitions and her noisy dispute with Bonifaccio over the immortality of the soul. All this is well and good. But is the portrait a replica of Sarra Copia?

Copia’s Views on Immortality as Substantiated by a Poem Set to Music

Copia’s belief in the immortality of the soul is confirmed, rather unexpectedly, in a poem set to music by the leading Jewish composer of the early seventeenth century, Salamone Rossi (d. c. 1628). Rossi published eight books of Italian works, four of instrumental ones, and a single collection of Hebrew polyphonic works, his “Songs by Solomon” (1623), the first printed collection of its kind.⁶⁴ It turns out that Rossi, Rabbi Leon Modena (d. 1648) and Copia intertwine biographically and conceptually in the formation of the “Songs,” which ends, most unusually, with a wedding ode by the poet

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Chorus 1
 Le - mi ely - potz la' - sot ye - kar? hen li - n'fa - shot be - zi - vug nikh - na -

Chorus 2

10 sot ke - ge - ver be - 'al - - - - mah

'al mah.

Figure 2. Salamone Rossi, “Songs by Solomon” (*Hashirim asher liShelomo*), no. 33 (wedding ode), measures 1–18. Based on Rossi, “Songs by Solomon,” ed. Harrán (see note 64).

Jacob Segre, a rabbi and *littérateur* from Casale Monferrato.⁶⁵ The ode, as it appears in Rossi’s “Songs,” celebrated the nuptials of Copia’s sister Diana (alias Stella or Rachel, her Hebrew name) to a son of the Mantuan musician and dancer Isacchino Massarano and was probably written at the request of Modena, who accompanied the prospective bride to Mantua in May 1623 (see below). The presence of an epithalamium as the concluding item in a collection of otherwise standard liturgical pieces (prayers, Psalms, *piyutim*) is incongruous enough. Segre the poet and Rossi the composer appear to have conceived the poem and its music as relaying a deeper message: The two “souls that entered into wedlock” (to quote an image from the verses; see below) signified the sacred bond between God and His people. To emphasize the dialogic quality of the text (humans in discourse with their Maker), Segre wrote the ode as an echo poem with significant repeats of one or more syllables of the final word in each stanza. These final words all end with the syllable *mah*, which, by itself, means “what?” Thus, for example, at the close of stanza 4, *hokhmah*, “wisdom,” elicits the echo *mah*; and in stanza 8, *mezimah*, “evil devices,” produces *zimah*, “vices.”⁶⁶

The first stanza reads:

למי אהפוך לעשות	Lemi eḥpotz la'asot
יקר? הן לנפשות	Yekar? Hen linefashot
בזווג נכנסות	Bezivug nikhnasot
כגבר בעלמה	Kegever be'almah

To whom would I desire to pay
Tribute? Certainly to souls
That enter into wedlock
As a man with a maid.

After *be'almah* comes the echo *'al mah*, which reads in Hebrew, playfully, as “what for?” or in Italian (when the syllables are recombined) as “soul” (*alma*, alias *anima*), confirming the “souls” (*nefashot*) in line 2. *Be'almah* itself can be doubly construed as “with a maid” (Hebrew) or, homophonically (replacing the final *heh* with an *alef*), as *le'alma*, “for eternity” (Aramaic)—the word with which the final stanza concludes.

The first stanza, as it occurs in Salamone Rossi’s “Songs,” no. 33, has its eight voices divided so that four sing the stanza and the other four sing the echo (see Figure 2).⁶⁷

But what of Sarra Copia? The wedding ode contains verses that seem to have been intended for her via allusions to Esther, a figure with whom she had identified ever since she read Cebà’s *La reina Esther*: In the first two lines we find: “To whom would I desire to pay tribute?” (Esth. 6:6), and in lines 14–16: “Great is the wealth of him who sells everything he has in order to take her [Esther] unto himself as a daughter” (after Esth. 2:7, 2:15).⁶⁸ More significantly, though, the ode declares *urbi et orbi* that the soul is immortal. The last stanza reads:

ואתה אל שדי	Ve'atah, El Shadai,
תברך לידידי	Tevarekh liyedidai
לעלם לבלי די	Le'olam leveli dai
לאין קץ ולעלמא	Le'ein ketz ule'alma.

May You, God Almighty,
Bless my friends
Forever, without cease,
Without end and for eternity.

God is beseeched, in the last stanza (see Figure 3), to bless the poet’s and composer’s friends “for eternity” (*le'alma*), a concept reinforced by “forever” (*le'olam*—the same word in Hebrew), “without cease” and “without end.” *Le'alma* means only one thing in Aramaic, “for eternity,” while in Italian, again, the last two syllables may be read as *alma*, “soul.” True, the echo to *le'alma* in the manuscript source of Segre’s poem⁶⁹ is the ambiguous *'al mah*, the same echo heard at the end of the first stanza. To reinforce the notion of “eternity,” or better, “immortality,” Modena in his capacity as

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Chorus 1

163

Ve - 'a - tah El Sha - dai te - va - rekh li - y'di - dai le - 'o - lam

Chorus 2

173

li - v'li dai le - 'ein ketz u - l'al - - - ma

u - l'al - ma.

Figure 3. Rossi, “Songs by Solomon,” no. 33, measures 163–182.

editor-in-chief of the collection changed the echo, presumably with Segre’s consent, from *‘al mah* to a repeat of all the syllables of the concluding word, *ule’alma* (“and for eternity”).

Modena, with his alteration in the final stanza, and Rossi, with his musical setting, thus corroborate the immortality of the soul as a tenet fundamental to Jewish doctrine. The ode simultaneously responds to Bonifaccio’s vitriolic discourse and exonerates Sarra Copia in verse and song.

The collection of “Songs by Solomon” emphasized the theme of immortality in the choice of traditional hymns and psalms that precede the final wedding ode, no. 33. Thus, in no. 26, “Ein k’Eloheinu,” the text speaks of God as saving His people from destruction—“There is none like our savior” (“Ein kemoshi’enu”)—the implication being that they will live on forever. In no. 28, “Yigdal Elohim hai,” God is said to be immortal: “He exists and there is no term to His being” (“Nimtza ve’ein ‘et el metzi’uto”), nor any “end to His unity” (“Ein sof le’ahduto”). No. 29, “Adon ‘olam,” offers further assertions of His immortality: “He reigned before any creature was created” (“Malakh betere kol yetzir nivra”), and He is “without beginning, without end” (“beli reshit, beli takhlit”). In no. 30, “Haleluyah: Ashrei ish yere Adonai”

("Haleluyah: Blessed is the man who fears the Lord," Ps. 112), the righteous man earns immortality: "His righteousness will last forever" ("Vetzidkato 'omedet la'ad"), and "He will never die, for the righteous shall be in eternal remembrance" ("Ki le'olam lo yimot, lezekher 'olam yihyeh tzadik"). No. 31, "Haleluyah odeh Adonai" ("Haleluyah. I will praise the Lord," Ps. 111), asserts the immortality of God's covenant and His commandments: "He has commanded His covenant [to last] forever" ("Tzivah le'olam berito"); "All His commandments are sure; they stand fast forever and ever" ("Ne'emanim kol pikudav; semukhim la'ad le'olam"). All of which brings us to no. 32, the next to last item in the collection, "A hymn, a song for the Sabbath day" ("Mizmor shir leyom hashabat," Ps. 92), in which God resides "on high forevermore" ("marom le'olam"). In the Mishnah one reads that this last psalm is "a hymn, a song for the time to come, for the day that will be all Sabbath and rest in the life everlasting."⁷⁰ All these allusions to immortality show how carefully the collection was prepared, leading gradually and intentionally to the final piece, the wedding ode, with its declaration of the soul's immortality.⁷¹

One might ask what a psalm to be recited on the Sabbath has to do with a wedding ode. The connection between Sabbath and wedding is evident in the *piyut* composed later in the sixteenth century by Solomon Halevi Alkabetz for inaugurating the Sabbath: "Go, my beloved, toward the bride; / We will welcome the presence of the Sabbath" ("Lekha dodi likrat kalah / Penei shabat nekabelah"). The bride of the Sabbath is the Shekhinah, God's immanence in His people. Thus the continuation: "Toward the Sabbath [viz., the bride, or Shekhinah] let us go, / For She is the source of blessing" ("Likrat shabat lekhu venelkha / Ki hi mekor haberakhah");⁷² further on, it declares: "Come, bride, come bride, Sabbath queen" ("Bo'i kalah, bo'i kalah, shabat malkata"), "Your God will rejoice over you / As a bridegroom rejoicing over a bride" ("Yasis 'alayikh elohayikh / Kimesos hatan 'al kalah"). Ps. 92, "A Song for the Sabbath," was no less emphatic in signaling rejoicing: "It is good to thank the Lord and sing unto Your name . . . for You gladdened me, Lord, with Your acts; in the works of Your hands will I rejoice" ("Ki simahtani Adonai befo'olekha, bema'asei yadekha aranen"). Thus, Ps. 92 sets the proper frame for the wedding ode, with its expression of a "bridegroom rejoicing over a bride." This is clear from the introduction to Segre's poem in the manuscript source: It reads "Praise the Lord. A lovely poem for the Sabbath: The bridegroom rejoices over the bride as a voice calling out."⁷³

One might also ask: Why was the wedding ode no. 33 in the collection? The number of pieces in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century music collections runs anywhere from fifteen to twenty-five or thirty. Five of Rossi's eight secular vocal collections (with madrigals, *canzonette* or *madrigaletti*) comprise nineteen works each.⁷⁴ Sacred collections vary considerably in their contents, some with few works, other with upwards of thirty. Rossi's "Songs by Solomon" is not the only sacred collection to comprise thirty-three pieces.⁷⁵ But in the "Songs" that number has special significance, as I shall explain.

The bride and groom, it seems, were married on Lag ba'omer, the thirty-third day in the Counting of the Omer (the Hebrew letters LG stand for 33), a period of

semi-mourning in the Jewish calendar extending over forty-nine days, from the second day of Passover (the 16th of the Jewish month of Nisan) to Pentecost (Shavuot, the 6th of Sivan). On Lag ba'omer the mourning customs are temporarily lifted, and weddings are permitted. In the Hebrew calendar this holiday falls on the 18th of Iyar, which, in the Gregorian calendar for 1623—the year in which the “Songs by Solomon” were published⁷⁶—corresponds to May 18. Rabbi Leon Modena accompanied the bride, Diana Copia, to Mantua in Iyar 5383 (May 1623).⁷⁷ From a responsum by Modena (see below), we learn that the Copia–Massarano nuptials were originally to have taken place on the first day of Sivan 5383 (May 30, 1623). Rumors that the offspring of two affluent Jewish families were to be joined in matrimony appear to have spread. The wedding party traveling from Venice to Mantua feared that, on the way, they would be waylaid by highway robbers, the more so since, with the lush foliage of early spring, there would be ample place for the predators to take cover. It was suggested that the festivities be scheduled a month earlier, but the first of Iyar fell during the period when religious custom ruled out the celebration of a wedding. In mid-April Modena was asked to rule on the feasibility of the earlier date, and from the question put to him we learn about the original date of the wedding, the fiancé’s visit to Venice during the intermediate days of Passover (coinciding, in 1623, with 16–20 April) to see his bride-to-be, the general fears that attended the return trip and the consideration of the alternative date:

Question. A fellow, from among those who present this entreaty and reside in Mantua, became engaged to a woman who happens to be the daughter of a wealthy man in Venice. As the wedding date they set Sivan 1, and now, during the octave of Passover [April 15–22, 1623], the [prospective] groom came, as is customary, to see his bride[-to-be]. He was told that were they to wait another month [mid-May], persons would be lying in ambush, on all the roads, to plunder and steal his property and personal belongings; and that the situation would only worsen were they to delay the time [until the end of May or the beginning of June]. Then the wheat and the tree branches are full and all the fields become a forest with places to hide in waiting. Rumor, indeed, reached the robbers that the couple counts among the rich families of Israel. Therefore, while the ways are still safe for the travelers, it was asked whether rulings could be secured from the rabbinical literature for having the wedding and its celebration under the *hupah* (canopy) on Iyar 1 [May 1], which would allow them to go home immediately in peace, even though it is not customary to do so on the days of the Counting of the Omer; or, on the contrary, whether the literature rules against having it on that date.⁷⁸

Modena responded that it is indeed possible to hold the wedding earlier, for religious law bends whenever the life of its observers is endangered (the principle known in *halakhah* as *pikuaḥ nefesh*, “protecting the soul”).⁷⁹

All the more so since there is a sensible reason and explanation [for an earlier date], namely the danger of bodily and financial loss. Nor is it customary [on Iyar 1] to practice the rite of mourning. . . . It follows that the two can celebrate their marriage on Iyar 1 in mirth and with happiness in their hearts and luck from above, amen!⁸⁰

The first day of Iyar marks the New Moon. That a celebration could be sanctioned on it lay, for Modena, in its status as a minor festival. But the fact is that the families decided *not* to hold the wedding on Iyar 1. Rather, they seem to have deferred it to Iyar 18—Lag ba'omer. Their change of mind can be deduced from Modena's autobiography, in which the author tells us that "in Iyar"—i.e., *during* Iyar, ruling out the possibility that the nuptials took place on the first—he escorted the wedding party to Mantua. His colorful report reveals the hazards of travel, although, as it turns out, the highway bandits were no less frightened than the voyagers or the riflemen they brought along for their protection. After some tense moments, the travelers' apprehensions subsided and there was general merriment:

In Iyar 5383 I went to Mantua to accompany Diana Copia, to be married to one of the Massarano sons. For fear of robbers we had with us thirty-six *archibugieri* (arquebus bearers). We encountered fifty Corsican mercenaries, who thought we were robbers, as we did them, and both sides, without a word, started to load and aim their rifles. We were between Sanguinetto and Castel d'Ario [not far from Mantua], and the women and some of the men, I among them, ran to take cover, until they [the arms-bearers] recognized and greeted one another. Together we went to Castel d'Ario, enjoying a meal in good spirits, and from there to Mantua.⁸¹

The "good spirits" would have continued until the party arrived in Mantua and, beyond it, through the wedding on the only day possible during the Counting of the Omer, Lag ba'omer.

One thing is clear: In the wedding ode that concludes the "Songs by Solomon," Rossi meets with Copia in a piece of music unique in the literature, not only because of its singularity within the collection, but also because of its purport as an affirmation of the soul's immortality. True, neither Rossi nor Copia needed a wedding ode to assure their immortality or *nitzḥiyut*: They will clearly live on forever, *lanetzaḥ*, in their works. Yet the wedding ode adds, in its own way, a new, unusual perspective to Copia's search for "immortalization" as a motive for her actions, in her life or in her works. Copia acknowledged her place in a larger scheme. Only by God's volition, she realized, would she achieve her aims:

My heart is consumed by a more noble desire.
. . . striving and thirsting,
I seek that fount,⁸² from which there habitually drips the wave⁸³

That confers true fame on people's names.
Nor need one seek another fount or another stream
When, indeed, one has the desire to leave to the world,
Immortally, a living memory of oneself.⁸⁴

Notes:

1. Sarra Copia Sulam, *Manifesto* (Venice: Antonio Pinelli, 1621), fol. B 2r.
2. Eadem, from her sonnet "Amai, Zinan," printed in Gabriele Zinano, *Rime diverse* (Venice: Evangelista Deuchino, 1627), p. 47, ll. 9–11. The two quotations illustrate the two different conceptions of immortality that underlay Copia's writings (see below). All translations here and elsewhere are my own.
3. Of the many writings on Sarra Copia, the most recent is my book, *Sarra Copia Sulam: Jewish Poet and Intellectual in Seventeenth-Century Venice*, with an edition and translation of Copia's works in verse and prose, along with writings of her contemporaries in her praise, condemnation or defense (Chicago–London: University of Chicago Press, 2009). For a discussion of her life and works, see pp. 1–90; for her *Manifesto* in translation, pp. 311–332, and in the original, pp. 526–533.
4. For Jewish views on immortality, see, among others, Elio Toaff, "Morte ed immortalità secondo l'ebraismo," in Sergio J. Serra and Elena Lea Artom (eds.), *Scritti sull'ebraismo in memoria di Emanuele Menachem Artom 1916–1992* (Jerusalem: Sinai, 1996), pp. 314–321; Rifat Sonsino and Daniel B. Syme, *What Happens after I Die? Jewish Views of Life after Death* (Northvale, NJ: Aronson, 1990); Neil Gillman, *The Death of Death: Resurrection and Immortality in Jewish Thought* (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights, 1997); and Simcha Paull Raphael, *Jewish Views of the Afterlife* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004).
5. "Se pure in alcun discorso io vi ho promossa alcuna difficoltà Filosofica, o Teologica, ciò non è stato per dubio, o vacillamento, che io habbia mai havuto nella mia fede; ma solo per curiosità d'intender da voi, con la solutione de miei argomenti, qualche curiosa, e peregrina dottrina." Copia, *Manifesto* (above, note 1), fol. B 1v.
6. Copia, letter to Baldassare Bonifaccio (January 10, 1620), reproduced by Bonifaccio in his *Risposta al manifesto della signora Sara [sic] Copia* (Venice: Antonio Pinelli, 1621), fols. A 5r–6v: "se la materia è parte intrinseca e sostantiale del composto & essa è eterna" (A 5v); "poiché dissolvasi, e corrompasi qual si voglia composto, sempre di esso rimane la materia" (*ibid.*); "di due parti componenti che vediamo nelle cose naturali, dico materia e forma, una dura eternamente e l'altra svanisce" (*ibid.*); "ma per qual cagione il Creatore non fece l'huomo per natura immortale, se hebbe intentione che tale si preservasse?" (A 6r); "la potenza all'immortalità che godea l'huomo nel primo stato e se egli si fusse in esso preservato . . . vorrei sapere se la generatione dovea continuare . . . ?" (*ibid.*).
7. Baldassare Bonifaccio, *Dell'immortalità dell'anima discorso* (Venice: Antonio Pinelli, 1621).
8. "Immortalità? . . . materia la più difficile, & ardua, che habbia la Filosofia." Copia, *Manifesto* (above, note 1), fol. B 3v.
9. "Non con fine, ò pensiero alcuno di procacciarmi gloria, ma solo per defendermi da una falsa calunnia datami dal Sig. Baldassare Bonifaccio. . ." *Ibid.*, fol. A 2r.

10. On the *Manifesto* as a *unicum*, see Umberto Fortis, *La "bella ebrea": Sara Copio Sullam, poetessa nel ghetto di Venezia del '600* (Turin: Silvio Zamorini, 2003), p. 76. Fortis goes on to say that "its double import, particular and collective, distinguishes and individualizes it from every other defense or dispute of religious character in the many significant examples one finds of such in Italian Jewish literature" (*ibid.*).
11. "E voi, Signora, se non desideraste fama dopo la morte, se non credeste di haverne alcun sentimento nell'altra vita, non porreste tanto d'industria nell'eternare il vostro honorato nome con l'opere immortali del vostro divino ingegno." Bonifaccio, *Discorso* (above, note 7), p. 17.
12. "Che se mi sarà concesso poter sperar salute, e vita, come mi è conceduta alcuna fecondità de' parti dell'ingegno, vivrà in essi vivamente espresso . . . il mio nome." Copia, *Manifesto* (above, note 1), fol. A 3v.
13. *Ibid.*, fols. A 3r–4v. Simon Copia died on August 26, 1606, at the age of 48. Venice, Comunità Israelitica di Venezia, Università degli Ebrei, "register of the dead" for the period 1600–1627, G.F. 57–58.
14. "Onde a te, Anima dilette, che desti l'essere a quel caro composto, da cui fui generata in questo mondo: a te dico mio svisceratissimo Genitore, che benché spogliato del caduco velo tra spirti viventi dimori, e dimorerai in eterno, ho voluto fare questo picciolo dono." Copia, *Manifesto* (above, note 1), fol. A 3r.
15. "Come in questa vita mostravi estremo desiderio." *Ibid.*, fol. A 3v.
16. "Per la qual cagione penso non ti sarà men caro haver prodotta una Donna, per conservazione del tuo nome, al mondo, di quel che ti sarebbe stato l'haver prodotto un'huomo." *Ibid.*, fol. A 3v. On Copia's assuming the role of male to compensate for the sons that her father wished to have, see Marina Arbib, "Rivisitando la biblica Ester: Implicazioni sottese all'immagine femminile ebraica nell'Italia del Seicento," in Claire E. Honess and Verina R. Jones (eds.), *Donne delle minoranze: le ebree e le protestanti d'Italia* (Turin: Claudiana, 1999), p. 146.
17. "Possi accrescer le tue gioie, con quel poco acquisto di fama, che nel mio nome forsi vedrai. . ." Copia, *Manifesto* (above, note 1), fol. A 3v.
18. Venice, Archivio di Stato, Provveditori alla Sanità, Necrologie ebrei (register 847); also Venice, Comunità Israelitica degli Ebrei, obituary notices, register for 1600–1627, G.F. 57.
19. As she admitted in a letter (no longer extant) to Ansaldo Cebà, who, in responding to Copia in a letter dated May 19, 1618, reported her remarks. Cebà, *Lettere . . . scritte a Sarra Copia e dedicate a Marc'Antonio Doria* (Genoa: Giuseppe Pavoni, 1623), p. 2.
20. "Poi perché non conveniva che io interponessi dilazione di tempo, né longhe dicerie a ributtar l'offesa, per lo pericolo del danno che poteva risultarmene." Copia, *Manifesto* (above, note 1), fol. A 2v.
21. He wrote about this in a manuscript from the early 1620s. Samuel da Silva, who filched the manuscript before da Costa could publish it, confuted its allegations in his *Tratado da immortalidade da alma* (Amsterdam: Paulo da Ravensteyn, 1623; ed. Jesué Pinharanda Gomes, Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional–Casa da Moeda, 1982), whereupon the Jewish leaders in Amsterdam issued an official edict for da Costa's excommunication as a heretic.
22. "Sono stata astretta a comporre, e dar fuori frettolosamente questa breve scrittura." Copia, *Manifesto* (above, note 1), fol. A 2r.
23. The events are recounted in the *Avisi di Parnaso*, Venice, Biblioteca del Museo Correr, MS Cicogna 270 olim 206; for a translation, see "Notices from Parnassus," in Harrán,

- Sarra Copia Sulam (above, note 3), pp. 349–498; for the original Italian text, see Carla Boccato, “Sara Copio Sullam, la poetessa del ghetto di Venezia: Episodi della sua vita in un manoscritto del secolo XVII,” *Italia: Studi e ricerche sulla storia, la cultura e la letteratura degli ebrei d’Italia*, 6 (1987), pp. 104–218.
24. *Avisi di Parnaso* (above, note 23), fol. 25v.
25. *Ibid.*, fol. 35v.
26. *Ibid.*, fol. 49r.
27. Copia Sulam, “La bella Hebrea,” line 3, “Sì che fra stelle in ciel ne i sacri ardori”; line 13, “da l’empireo Cielo.” In Harrán, *Sarra Copia Sulam* (above, note 3), pp. 119–120.
28. “Signor, pianto non merta,” lines 3–4: “hor gode in Cielo, / . . . di gloria” (*ibid.*, pp. 147–148); “Amai, Zinan,” lines 12–14: “Ché s’apre la virtù del Ciel le porte, / . . . / D’andarlo ivi a goder prendo speranza” (*ibid.*, pp. 517–519).
29. “Se mover a pieta,” line 4: “Può l’alme anco ritrar dal ciel superno” (*ibid.*, pp. 184–185).
30. *Ibid.*, line 13: “Odi ch’ei dice in sì felice stato.”
31. *Ibid.*, line 11: “E ponga indugio al viver suo beato.”
32. “A vile e indegno oggetto,” line 7: “Ch’in alto aspira” (*ibid.*, pp. 462–463).
33. “La bella Hebrea” (above, note 27), line 11: “Né la consumerà caldo, né gelo.”
34. “Amai, Zinan” (above, note 27), lines 9–11 (see the second epigraph, above).
35. Copia, *Manifesto* (above, note 1), D 2r (also Harrán, *Sarra Copia Sulam* [above, note 3], pp. 331–332).
36. *Ibid.*, lines 1–4: “O di vita mortal forma divina, / E dell’opre di Dio meta sublime, / In cui sé stesso e ’l suo potere esprime / E di quanto ei credè ti fé Reina.”
37. *Ibid.*, lines 5–6: “Mente che l’uomo informi, in cui confina / L’immortal col mortale,” etc. (man created in the image of God, after Gen. 1:27).
38. *Ibid.*, lines 13–14: “Basti saper che ’son gl’Angeli stessi / A custodirti et a servirti eletti” (after Ps. 91:11).
39. Though Cebà published two major collections of poetry, I limit the examination to his thirteen sonnets, six madrigals and two multistrophic *canzone*, in his *Lettere . . . scritte a Sarra Copia* (above, note 19).
40. From the sonnet “Bella è la guancia tua,” lines 9–14: “Tu non rispondi a Christo, ed ei ti chiama; / Tu posponi il Fedele al Circonciso; / Ed ei t’aspetta, e t’amonisce, e t’ama. / Ah come puoi tu, Sarra, il cor diviso / Tener da lui, che, s’hai bellezza, e fama, / T’innalza il nome, e ti dà luce al viso?” (*ibid.*, p. 12).
41. From the madrigal “Dolci son le parole,” lines 4–6: “Tu neghi il sommo Sole, / Che nel sen di Maria / S’ascose già, per tua salute, e mia” (*ibid.*, p. 14).
42. From the *canzone* (in twenty stanzas) “O se, come al vivo espressi,” lines 49–50, 53–54, 59–60, 97–102: “Una sola al mio cospetto, / Sarra, ancor non comparisce, / . . . Tutte l’altre in te vagheggio, / Ma la Fede oime non veggio. / . . . Ma ben dico, e ben m’attristo, / Che non credi ancora in Christo. / . . . Vieni, honor del secol nostro, / Vieni, amor de l’alma mia: / Credi al figlio di Maria, / Porgi a me più vivo inchiostro, / Ond’homai, con altri carmi, / Possa teco in Ciel levarmi” (*ibid.*, pp. 21–25, esp. pp. 23–24).
43. From the sonnet “Ma la tua Musa ancora però non noma,” line 14: “. . . ti bagno il crin nel sacro Fonte” (*ibid.*, p. 43).
44. From the sonnet “Che pensi, Hebrea,” lines 1–4: “Che pensi, Hebrea, che fai? nel sacro Fonte / Non bagni l’oro ancor de’ tuoi capelli? / E chiudi gli occhi tuoi leggiadri, e belli / Al Sol, ch’avampa in sul Calvario monte?” (*ibid.*, p. 81).

45. From the *canzone* (in fifty stanzas) “Io non so, se tu piangessi,” lines 76, 79, 81–82, 84: “. . . con le nostr’arti / . . . Soperchiar . . . / . . . Quel feroce, e gran Tiranno, / Contro a cui . . . / . . . Schermo i nomi al fin non hanno” (*ibid.*, pp. 44–53, esp. p. 46).
46. *Ibid.*, lines 109–114: “Vivi al mondo, e mori al cielo, / Fin che ’l velo / Ti s’ avvolge intorno a gli occhi, / Ond’a quei, ch’è già venuto, / Dar tributo / Neghi, oime, co’ tuoi ginocchi” (*ibid.*, p. 47).
47. From the sonnet “Domò Giuditta un Capitan feroce” lines 5–6: “che petto e voce / Non hai da conquistar glorie plebee?” (*ibid.*, p. 93).
48. “Da che concetto ha l’arte intera e diva / La forma e gli atti d’alcun, poi di quello / D’umil materia un semplice modello / è ’l primo parto che da quel deriva. / Ma nel secondo poi di pietra viva / S’adempion le promesse del martello; / E sì rinasce tal concetto e bello / Che ma’ non è chi suo eterno prescriva.” Michelangelo, *The Sonnets of Michelangelo* (ed. and transl. John Addington Symonds; London: Vision, 1989), p. 42 (no. 14).
49. Ansaldo Cebà reports on it in various letters addressed to Copia; for their translation, see Harrán, *Sarra Copia Sulam* (above, note 3), pp. 115–256, esp. pp. 201, 202–203, 205, 206, 207–208, 209, 218, 243.
50. See *Avisi di Parnaso* (above, note 23), fols. 11r, 18r, 20v, translated in Harrán, *Sarra Copia Sulam* (above, note 3), pp. 364–365, 374, 377.
51. Again as reported in letters by Cebà; see Harrán, *Sarra Copia Sulam* (above, note 3), pp. 238–239, 253, 254.
52. On their friendship, see Regina Erbenraut, *Der Genueser Maler Bernardo Castello 1557?–1629* (Freren: Luca, 1989), pp. 229–230.
53. Carla Boccato, “Il presunto ritratto di Sara Copio Sullam,” *La rassegna mensile di Israel*, 52 (1986), pp. 191–204.
54. *Valerio Castello: Catalogo della mostra*, ed. Camillo Manzitti (Genoa: SAGEP, 1972), p. 152. The attribution was questioned by Alessandro Morandotti, who identified the painter as Antonio Lagorio in his “Studi sulla pittura barocca nell’età del Web/1: Profilo di Antonio Lagorio,” *Nuovi studi: Rivista di arte antica e moderna*, 8 (2000), pp. 81–92. Manzitti thereupon withdrew the portrait from the catalog in its revised edition: *Valerio Castello* (Turin: U. Allemandi, 2004).
55. Cebà reproduces the sonnet, and his own response to it, in a letter he wrote to Copia on April 18, 1620; see Harrán, *Sarra Copia Sulam* (above, note 3), pp. 201–204. It reads: “L’imago è questa di colei ch’al core / Porta l’imago tua sola scolpita, / Che con la mano al seno al mondo addita: / ‘Qui porto l’Idol mio, ciascun l’adore.’ / Sostien con la sinistra arme d’amore / Che fur tuoi carmi; il loco ov’è ferita / La destra accenna; e pallida e smarrita / Dice: ‘Ansaldo, il mio cor per te si more.’ / Prigionera se ’n viene a te davante / Chiedendo aita, et a te porge quella / Catena ond’è ’l mio amor fido e costante. / Deh, l’ombra accogli di tua fida Ancella / E goda almeno il finto mio semblante / Quel che nega a quest’occhi iniqua stella.”
56. Ansaldo Cebà, *La reina Esther* (Genoa: Giuseppe Pavoni, 1615); second edition: *La reina Esther, poema heroico* (Milan: Battista Bidelli, 1616).
57. As Cebà explained at the outset of his volume of letters to her: “My poem about Queen Esther moved a noble Jewish woman to covet my friendship, as discussed in these letters.” Cebà then launches into the “love” metaphor (“I did not refuse to make love to her soul in order to improve the condition of mine”), the first of many similar utterances. Idem, *Lettere . . . scritte a Sarra Copia* (above, note 19), in the dedication to his patron Marc’Antonio Doria, fol. †2r.

58. Thus Cebà, in his “poems,” used Love’s “weapons” to “wound” Copia.
59. The place being her heart, as is clear from the portrait and from the next line, where her heart is said “to be dying” for Cebà.
60. That is, her love for him imprisons her.
61. Love is a chain that binds her to him.
62. In other words: May you have the pleasure of seeing my portrait, though I myself am denied the pleasure of seeing your reaction to it.
63. From his Letter 23 (April 25, 1620); Harrán, *Sarra Copia Sulam* (above, note 3), pp. 204–207, esp. p. 205. For further references to her beauty by Cebà and others, see pp. 129, 137, 138, 144, 161, 191, 197, 400, 472, 503, 504. Responding to the sonnet that Copia sent with her portrait, Cebà declared in his Letter 22, written three days earlier (*ibid.*, p. 204), that she was “in the years of [her] greatest bloom” (Tu sei de gli anni tuoi sul più bel fiore).
64. See Don Harrán, “A Tale As Yet Untold: Salamone Rossi in Venice, 1622,” *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 40 (2009), pp. 1091–1107, summarized in Harrán, *Sarra Copia Sulam* (above, note 3), pp. 55–56. On Rossi in general, see idem, *Salamone Rossi, Jewish Musician in Late Renaissance Mantua* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); on the “Songs by Solomon,” see pp. 201–241. For an edition of the “Songs by Solomon,” see the composer’s *Complete Works*, ed. Harrán, 13 vols. (Neuhausen-Stuttgart–Madison, WI: American Institute of Musicology, 1995–2003), 13a–b. On Leon Modena and his connections with music, see Harrán, “‘Dum recordaremur Sion’: Music in the Life and Thought of the Venetian Rabbi Leon Modena (1571–1648),” *Association for Jewish Studies Review*, 23 (1998), pp. 17–61; and on Copia as a musician, see Harrán, *Sarra Copia Sulam* (above, note 3), pp. 32, 33, 79, 84, 85, 127, 144, 397, 399; and Harrán, “Doubly Tainted, Doubly Talented: The Jewish Poet Sara Copio (d. 1641) as a Heroic Singer,” in Irene Alm, Alyson McLamore and Colleen Reardon (eds.), *Musica franca: Essays in Honor of Frank A. D’Accone* (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1996), pp. 367–422.
65. For nine of his sonnets, see Dvora Bregman (ed.), *A Bundle of Gold: Hebrew Sonnets from the Renaissance and the Baroque* (Tzeror zehuvim: Sonetim ‘ivriyim mitekufat harenensans vehabarok; Jerusalem–Beersheba: Ben-Zvi Institute–Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, 1997), pp. 139–147. On Segre’s relations with Leon Modena and his place in Rossi’s music collection, see Harrán, “‘A New Thing in the Land’: Jacob Segre as Poet in Salamone Rossi’s ‘Songs by Solomon’ (1623),” forthcoming in *Revue des études juives*, 172/3–4 (2013). The study was undertaken in an attempt to accommodate Segre into Rossi’s biography after Bregman’s identification of Segre as the author of the wedding ode; see her “‘Souls / that into Wedlock do Enter / as a Man with a Maid’: A Manuscript from Budapest Reveals the Identity of the Author of a Baroque Hebrew Poem Known until Now from the Music of Salamone Rossi” (‘Nefashot bezivug nikhnasot kegeber be’almah’: Ketav yad miBudapest megaleh et zehuto shel mehaber shir ‘Ivri baroki, shenoda’ ‘ad hayom bizekhot halaḥan shel Salamone de Rossi), *Haaretz*, September 22, 2010, “Culture and Literature” (Tarbut vesifrut) section, p. 3. On wedding odes by Modena and Moses Zachut (in the context of a wedding ode by Samuel Archivolti), see Harrán, “‘Keḥi kinnor’ by Samuel Archivolti (d. 1611): A Wedding Ode with Hidden Messages,” *Association for Jewish Studies Review*, 35 (2011), pp. 253–291, esp. 271–276.
66. Though “echo” in Hebrew is literally *hed*, another, more suggestive term is *bat kol*, roughly “reflection of sound.” It has a long tradition in Talmud and rabbinical writings as a voice sent from heaven to reveal God’s will. See Peter Kuhn, *Offenbarungsstimmen im Antiken Judentum: Untersuchungen zur Bat Qol und verwandten Phänomenen*

- (Tübingen: Mohr, 1989). For the full poem, see Rossi, *Complete Works*, ed. Harrán, 13a, pp. 118–121. The poem can also be found online in Bregman’s article in *Haaretz* (see note 65), at <http://www.haaretz.co.il/literature/1.1222217> (accessed July 25, 2013).
67. In the source, the canto and tenor parts are on pp. 44–45, the alto on p. 44, the bass on pp. 36–37, the quinto (fifth voice) on p. 30, the sesto (sixth voice) on p. 21, the settimo (seventh voice) on p. 8, and the ottavo (eighth voice) on pp. 16–17. For the music, see Rossi’s *Complete Works* (above, note 64), 13b, pp. 215–228.
68. The effect of Cebà’s *Reina Esther* on Copia was so great that, as she said to Cebà in an unpreserved letter (to which Cebà referred in his response, Letter 2, in Harrán, *Sarra Copia Sulam* [above, note 3], 123–129, esp. p. 128), she kept it on the pillow of her bed. Copia’s infatuation with the poem was well known to Modena, who himself wrote a play on *Ester* (Venice: Giacomo Sarzina, 1619), dedicating it to Copia. He remarked in the preface that “on several occasions did we fall into a discussion of that most unusual poem *Regina Ester* by the illustrious Genoese Signor Ansaldo Cebà. I have noticed that Your Ladyship is exceedingly attached to it and never tires of commending and praising it for reasons that I, moreover, second and confirm” (siamo più volte caduti in ragionamento del rarissimo Poema della Regina Ester dell’Illustre Sig. Ansaldo Cebà Genovese, al quale oltre modo hò sentito esser V.S. affettionata, nè vedersi mai satia di commendarlo, e lodarlo, il che da me vien tuttavia secondato, & affermato; *ibid.*, pp. 3–4).
69. Budapest, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, MS Kaufmann A 541, fol. 40a (as first revealed by Bregman: see above, note 65).
70. Mishnah *Tamid* 7:4 (mizmor shir le’atid lavo, leyom shekulo shabat menuḥah leḥayei ha’olamim).
71. I searched for the theme of immortality in the Morning Prayers for weekdays and the Sabbath (*tefilat shaharit*), and in the Evening Prayers for the Sabbath (*tefilat ‘aravit*). But all I found were prayers that emphasized salvation, as, for example, in verses drawn from Exodus 15:2 (“The Lord is my strength and song; He has become my salvation”) and from Psalms 20:6 (“We will exult in Your salvation”), 85:8 (“Show us Your loving-kindness, O Lord, and grant us Your salvation”), 96:1 (“Sing unto the Lord, all the earth; proclaim His salvation from day to day”), 105:1 (“Give thanks to the Lord, call upon His name”) and 145:19 (“He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He will hear their cry and save them”); and as in other phrases from the prayers: “Save us, O God of our salvation,” “Salvation belongs to the Lord,” “Lord of our strength, rock of our stronghold, shield of our salvation,” etc.
72. On the Sabbath as *shekhinah*, see *Book of the Zohar* (Sefer hazohar), ed. Yehuda Ashlag (Ba’al hasulam), 20 vols. (New York: Yeshivah Kol Yehuda, 2004), VIII (*parashat Yitro*), p. 117 (fol. 88b): “Therefore it is written ‘Between Me and the children of Israel’ [Ex. 31:17] because all the Faith is found on the Sabbath. Humans are given another soul, an elevated soul, a soul with all perfection in it, as a sign of the World to Come. Therefore it is called the Sabbath. What is the Sabbath? [It is] the Holy Name, blessed be He,” which name Ashlag construes, in his commentary, as *malkhut*, a synonym for *Shekhinah*.
73. Budapest, MS Kaufmann A 541: “Haleluyah[,] Shir na’eh leshabat bimesos ḥatan ‘al kalah bederekh kol kore.” That Segre conceived the wedding ode as an echo poem is clear from the continuation: “And all the people hear the voices and will answer with what they offer in response at the end of the concluding rhymes [of each stanza]” (vekhlo ha’am shome‘im et hakolot veyanu et asher yavi’u biteshuvah besofei ḥaruzot mehasoger). The wedding ode was preceded by another echo poem by Segre, with the introduction: “A poem that

summarizes the Thirteen Principles [of Maimonides], in meter and measure, as the words of a man to his acquaintance. One will speak and the other will answer him with the sound of the [same] end rhymes [that form an echo] . . . [the poem was] composed by our *gaon*, the honorable rabbi Jacob Segre” (shir ‘im 13 ‘ikarim bekitzur, bemishkal uvimesorah, kidevar ish el re‘ehu, eḥad yedaber vehasheni ya’anenu bekol sofei haḥaruzot . . . sheḥiber haga’on kevod morenu harav Ya’akov Segre; fol. 40a).

74. The other three, respectively, comprise fourteen, seventeen and eighteen works.
75. For a rare example, see Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina’s first book of motets (1569).
76. On the date of publication, some time before or shortly after the aforementioned wedding, see Harrán, “Source,” in Rossi, *Complete Works* (above, note 64), 13a, esp. pp. 7–9.
77. As he himself reports in his autobiography, *Sefer ḥayei Yehudah*; see *The Autobiography of a Seventeenth-Century Venetian Rabbi: Leon Modena’s ‘Life of Judah’* (transl. and ed. Mark R. Cohen; Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), p. 128.
78. Modena, resp. *Ziknei Yehudah*, ed. Shlomo Simonsohn (Jerusalem: Mosad Harav Kook, 1956; after London, British Library, MS Add. 27148), no. 47, pp. 64–65, with the introductory line: “Whether it is allowed to hold a wedding on Iyar 1, in regard to that of Copia’s daughter and Massarano.” This is not Modena’s only ruling on a matrimonial issue. Elsewhere he debated whether, in the case of an Ashkenazi Jewish woman about to marry someone who practices the Italian Jewish rite, the ceremony should be conducted according to Ashkenazi or Italian custom; his conclusion: The husband’s rite determines the ceremony. *Ibid.*, no. 103, pp. 150–151.
79. BT *Yoma* 84b.
80. Modena, resp. *Ziknei Yehudah* (above, note 78), pp. 64–65.
81. Modena, *Autobiography* (above, note 77), p. 128; the translation follows the Hebrew edition, *Sefer ḥayei Yehudah*, ed. Daniel Carpi (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1985), p. 79.
82. Namely, the fountain of life granted by God; see Ps. 36:10 (“for the spring of life is with You”) and 42:2–3 (“my soul thirsted for the Lord”).
83. Of God’s beneficence.
84. “Per più nobile desio mio cor si sface, / . . . ond’ardita, e sitibonda / Quel fonte cerco, onde stillar suol l’onda / Che rende a i nomi altrui fama verace. / Né cercar dee altro Fonte od’altro Rio / Chi di lasciar immortalmente viva / La sua memoria al mondo ha pur desio.” Copia, *Manifesto* (above, note 1), D Iv, lines 5–11, from the sonnet “Ben so che la beltà.” The sonnet was written in response to one by Bonifaccio in his *Discorso*. Copia, he said in its verses, heeded externals, namely, her “beauty,” which he described as “more ephemeral . . . than leaves” and as “a tomb” where “the soul, impure / From original sin, lies buried.” This sin, he concludes, is “at the root of that tragedy / That denies [her and her people] the immortal form of life.” Bonifaccio, *Discorso* (above, note 7), p. 61, lines 1, 3, 7–10: “La tua beltà . . . / È però più caduca assai che fronda, / . . . / Io direi ch’ella è tomba, ov’alma, immonda / Di colpa original, sepolta giace. / Questa è la colpa, onde quel colpo uscio / Che la forma immortal di vita priva.”