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Why Genoa? The Significance of Genoa in

*Daniel Deronda*

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Among the heirs of Art, as at the division of the promised land, each has to win his portion by hard fighting: the bestowal is after the manner of prophecy, and is a title without possession. To carry the map of an ungotten estate in your pocket is a poor sort of copyhold. And in fancy to cast his shoe over Edom is little warrant that a man shall ever set the sole of his foot on an acre of his own there. (1)

Sooner or later, all the roads--"the converging outer roads getting deeper with the white dust (p.684)--of the world that George Eliot has created in her novel *Daniel Deronda* lead to Genoa. The old city in the novel is a place of revelation and judgement; a place where identities and lives are lost and found. In Genoa Daniel discovers his roots, his Jewish destiny. From Genoa he will also set out on his Zionist quest for the Promised Land. Genoa? Wouldn’t Venice have provided a more fitting background for such momentous happenings? At first glance, a hero of romance, as the novel has been described, seems to be out of place in the ugly old money-grabbing crusader town. Associations with romance and national destiny?

Of course, money was always greatly valued by her proud citizens. But they

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had reason to be proud of their town. Had not crusading Genoa, like her great rival Venice, for centuries ruled over the shores of the Mediterranean? Had she not been hospitable to many waves of outcasts and refugees—or to artists? We remember Jacobus da Voragine who wrote there *The Golden Legend* back in the 1260s—or that famous Venetian traveller whom the Genoese detained for a year in one of their jails where he whiled his time away by dictating to Rusticano of Pisa his adventures, *The Book of Marco Polo* (1298). Others, for instance the Spanish Muslim Ibn Jubair and the famous Jewish traveller Benjamin of Tuledo, received a more friendly reception in medieval Genoa.

The recent Victorian public had been treated to such Gothic gems as John C. Cross’s *Genoese Pirate* (1798) and Charles Isaac Mungo Dibdin’s *Great Devil...of Genoa* (1801). Hadn’t that great English champion of freedom Lord Byron—with rather ambivalent feelings, to be sure—on July 16, 1823, set sail from Genoa on his last Hellenic venture? Genoa in revolt was brought to the attention of the novelist’s contemporaries when Charles Philip Yorke, Fourth Earl of Hardwicke who was captain of the *Vengeance*, one of Her Majesty’s naval vessels in the Mediterranean, quelled the uprising of 1849 by elbowing the male and by embracing and kissing the female Genoese revolutionaries into surrender. The history of *Genova, la Superba* certainly has been varied and colorful. Yet Tony Tanner, more than likely, will not commemorate her in a sequel to his valuable study *Venice Desired*.^{(3)T}

In the tradition of romance, the hero finds his treasure in an exotic and far-away place. Genoa, the city that has been associated with power, fabulous riches, intrigue, mysterious happenings, and cloak-and-dagger adventure, does fulfill this requirement in the case of the well-bred young English gentleman. But George Eliot’s choice of the old port as Daniel’s birthplace—an honor he shares with such historical figures as Columbus, Mazzini, and Paganini—where his “new life” begins, suggests much more than a desire to comply with the conventions of romance. We know that she was interested in the history and traditions of Genoa, and in the novel they foreshadow and unify the major events of the novel. Through them as well, most of the themes of the novel are unified. Perhaps Eliot was partly referring to this vast web—her favorite image—of metaphor, historical reference, and allusion that she has spun around the old city when she asserted that she meant “everything in the book to be related to every-

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thing else there."(4)

Genoa as a result of the generous assistance she had rendered the Crusaders had become very rich and powerful. For centuries, the "superb" and "magnificent" city (p. 682) controlled European trade with the East and the West and ruled over cities, islands, even countries. And she was not known to be fair and generous with the peoples over whom she exercised power; this includes the Jews who lived within her walls. True, Genoa was a proud and magnificent city; only the reputation of Genoa is rather tarnished and thus the associations that George Eliot makes between the history of the city and events and characters in her novel in most cases are quite negative. By relating crusading and anti-Semitic Genoa so closely to Daniel's Zionist quest, the novelist cannot be positive about the fervent rhetoric of Mordecai's call for a Jewish homeland and the purpose and goal of Daniel's crusade that would eventually lead to the Zionist colonization of Palestine. This is what the vast web of allusion with Genoa at the center implies.

Several critics have pointed to a web of allusion, however, not with Genoa at its center. Erwin Hester in his essay written in 1967 suggests that George Eliot in Daniel Deronda "uses historical events almost like images to define the situations of her characters;" her use of historical fact even "acquires a metaphorical significance to illuminate the moral situation of her characters."(5) Gillian Beer follows Adrian Poole when she maintains that even more than in the novelist's "previous books, parallel narratives are fleetingly condensed through allusion to opera, myth, legend, politics." These images bind past and present together by "anticipation and echoes."(6) Janet K. Gezari adds that these running images do express the themes of the novel, while Peter Dale feels that in no other work of Eliot "does the role of the symbolic representation take on such prominent proportion." The recognition of "so many 'hidden affinities', pointing to deeper connexions between the familiar world of Gwendolen's tragedy and the remoter nexus of poetry and philosophy in Mordecai's, requires strenuous efforts by experienced and willing readers," is the verdict of Rivkah Zim.(7)

That Genoa occupies the center position in this vast web of allusion and metaphor of the novel, the critics have not seen. The city constitutes the historical and metaphorical space at the heart of *Daniel Deronda*; she is the touchstone that reveals the true nature of the major characters of the book, their relationship to each other and the larger world they inhabit. These themes are not static; they overlap, form clusters, and new configurations. Against this fluid pattern, Daniel and the others in the novel are seen and judged.

The most inclusive of these theme-webs is that of money. As the popular song has it, "Money makes the world go round". Genoa's proud history bears witness to this truth, including that part of her history that deals with giving shelter to the Jews. And who in the novel does not share this concern? No one is so misguided not to value money and the power that it bestows on its owner. Heirlooms are pawned and redeemed; wills are made; jewels and social positions are bought; widows' dowers are lost on the money market, while children and young girls are disinherited and might be "sold" on a modern version of the slave market. Fortunes are inherited--rightly or wrongly--lost, or gambled away. Money upholds the social structure; it sustains beauty and the arts, including the "true" artist. Even the dreamers and visionaries of the novel do not disdain the contact with money. Mordecai is very much aware of what money can buy, and Daniel's patrimony is money that his father earned in Genoa as money changer. The novel, like Genoa, is thus one huge Vanity Fair where everything and everybody is up for sale. While once upon a time Bunyan's Christian could reach his heavenly Jerusalem without the benefit of money, Daniel's Zionist Jerusalem will be very costly. Money is the root of power and pride; it makes and supports the artist, traveller, explorer, visionary, crusader, colonialist, nationalist, chauvinist, tyrant, and revolutionary--all of whom are very much at home in Genoa and the novel as well. Money bought the heirlooms and made the traditions possible that are so easily sold and rejected by the sons and daughters of the city and in the novel. They themselves, in turn, become pawns in the game for power and rejection that has been played by their elders. It certainly is not a pleasant world that is reflected through these themes and the related allusions that lead to the center of the world of *Daniel Deronda*: the most supreme of all the Vanity Fairs.
Genova, la Superba--and we remember that the chief of the Seven Deadly Sins is, after all, Pride: *superbia*.

George Eliot, who like Daniel was an avid student of Sismondi's *History of the Italian Republics* and "had a passion for history, eager to know how time had been filled up since the Flood" (pp. 202f), was very much aware of the role Genoa had played in history. Her choice of a city with such dubious associations as the point of origin for Daniel's quest for a Jewish homeland strongly suggests that her feelings about his Zionist utopia are at best very ambivalent.

Of course it is easy to see Daniel as "a prophet and potentially world-historical hero" who will "hasten the Messianic aim" of early Zionism, a hero who "is the forger of nations, dressed in a costume woven out of German Romanticism and idealism."(9) Ever since its publication, the novel has been interpreted by many of its readers "literally as a political statement". To support this position, her own pronouncement in the essay "The Modern Hep! Hep! Hep!" can be quoted: she "hoped a Jewish state would give the world another moral lead by renewing the integrity of practical spirituality in the ethics of daily life."(10) Enthusiastic and grateful early Zionist settlers even named a street in Tel-Aviv after her.

That George Eliot's assertion is misleading and that such a pro-Jewish reading of the book is simplistic has also been maintained by several critics. For instance, Susan Meyer in her feminist reading of *Daniel Deronda* has pointed out that the book betrays a deep uneasiness about Jews and women as well: "Both the language in which the novel's proto-Zionism is expressed, and its proto-Zionism in itself, when considered in its historical context, reveal Eliot's uneasiness about the Jews and about female transgressiveness, her desire to conclude the novel with a restoration of hierarchies in race and in gender."(11) The same can be concluded when we approach *Daniel Deronda* through the metaphorical significance of Genoa.

Poets and novelists have usually not been attracted by the splendor of the city and impressed by the fact that wealth was the cornerstone of Genoese life. The Spanish writers of the Golden Age--for example: Alemán, Cervantes, Quevedo, Tirso, and Gracián--"created the literary image of the avaricious,

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(10) For a review of Zionist approaches to the novel, see Zim, pp. 171-177.

unscrupulous, and materialistic Genoese who was both comic and vicious." Naturally they were prejudiced; while they lived the Genoese waged a very successful trade war against Spain. Yet the Italians Boccaccio and Bandello had commemorated even more negative character traits in the Genoese. And who can forget Dante cursing that group of Genoese who populate one of the darkest corners of the Inferno?

Ahi Genovesi, uomini diversi
d'ogn costume e pien d'ogni magagna,  
perche non siete voi del mondo spersi? (13)

Historians of the Crusades tend to share the views of the Pilgrim Dante: "Among all the Italian cities participating in the Crusades," J. K. Fotheringham observes, the Genoese were "conspicuous for the violence that they alternatively suffered and inflicted." (14)

For the Elizabethans, Italy and all Italians were corrupt, but Shakespeare has associated especially Genoa with betrayal. It was there that Jessica rejected her father and her Jewish heritage. It was in Genoa that she sold Shylock's turquoise, the memento of his wife Leah, for a monkey and became a Christian. In the novel, too, daughters sell their family heirlooms and their heritage. In the first chapter of Daniel Deronda, we see Gwendolen pawning the turquoise necklace she has inherited from her father to pay for her gambling. Later in the book, the Princess asks Daniel to bring with him the ring that once belonged to his father, one of the symbols of his Jewish inheritance, when he comes to see her in Genoa. The ring, in turn, is stolen by Mirah's father on the same evening Daniel reveals his Jewish family background to her. Like Leah's ring, this diamond will be sold by a thief who betrayed his Jewish heritage.

But more significant is the parallel between Jessica and Daniel's mother, the artist Alcharisi, the descendant of a long line of Genoese Jews. Through her revolt, George Eliot explores the "difficulties of the daughter achieving cultural

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and social legitimacy within a responsive, if not actually menacing, patriarchal society."(15) A similar situation we encounter in The Merchant of Venice. By eloping with Lorenzo and then selling her father’s ring in Genoa, Jessica breaks with whatever her father represents to her. She will become a Christian and a "loving" wife—and a very marginal member of this new society as her position among her "peers" in the moonlight scene of the play suggests. The Alcharisi does not need any stolen property to buy herself a new identity and a Christian husband; since she has her highly appreciated artistic talent her revolt is far less crassly materialistic than Jessica’s. The Alcharisi, too, breaks in Genoa with her father’s heritage. She also will eventually become a Christian and a wife, not very "loving" though. Unlike Jessica, she escapes for a while from a father’s curse because she is much less honest than Shylock’s daughter. Yet at least this Victorian Jessica(16) will preserve the ring and the chest, the symbols of her Jewish heritage, for her son.

The Princess’s escape from the confinement of a Jewish family was possible on account of her artistic ability. George Eliot’s use of art, especially music in Daniel Deronda, has become a critical commonplace.(17) The theme of music and the true musician is reflected as well in George Eliot’s choice of Genoa.

Ever since the late Middle Ages, Genoa has been one of the most important musical centers of northern Italy. It is then only fitting that the Princess was born there. Genoa is also the birthplace of Niccolo Paganini (1782-1840), who defi-

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Rahel Levin (1771-1833) was a member of a well-to-do Jewish family that lived in Berlin. At the beginning of the century, she was a prominent literary hostess there till 1806 when the family became impoverished. After her marriage to the Prussian diplomat K. A. Varnhagen von Ense and her baptism, her salon was again the most important social focus of Berlin literary life. According to Baker, her life was "typical of so many Jews trying to escape the shackles of their birth and to assimilate into Gentile society but finally and unwillingly forced to come to terms with their origin."

nately qualifies to be one of the Klesmers of this world. Eliot, however, does not relate her composer to the Genoese master--she does not refer to him, but that does not mean she was oblivious of his achievement. In the novel, there is an implied relationship with the other "true" Jewish musician, Mirah. Their talents are vastly different, but as children both were mercilessly goaded on by an exacting father--for somewhat different purposes--but their spirit was upheld by a gentle and pious mother.

Genoa, renowned for her musicians, has also given birth or sheltered generations of idealistic and practical patriots, advocates and seekers of national unity, as well as revolutionaries.

Genoa had prospered under the Dorias, especially under the great Andrea (ca. 1468-1560) who ruled the town with an iron fist. Among his mementos glorifying his pride and power that proliferate the town, Grandcourt, a match for the proudest and most tyrannical of the Dorias, should feel very much at home. He is the embodiment of pride and the lust for mastery over others. In Nancy Pell's words: "The figure of Henleigh Malinger Grandcourt is one of monolithic passive control."(18) Before Gwendolen married him, she thought "she was going to have infinite power" over him (p. 359); soon after the wedding the tables were turned, and she found out like the rest of his entourage--his horses and dogs and servants and his mistress as well--that Grandcourt hated nothing more than "a sense of imperfect mastery" (p. 398). Whoever comes in contact with him feels that "the thumbscrew and the iron-boot were being placed by creeping hands within sight of the expectant victim" (p. 392). Now Grandcourt, during his "drifting" towards Genoa, is at the zenith of his power, especially over his wife. He reflects that he "had the courage and confidence that belong to domination, and he was at that moment feeling perfectly satisfied that he held his wife with bit and bridle" (p. 744). She is his colony, his territory; George Eliot emphasizes this by her references to Grandcourt's attitude to contemporary military events.(19)

During the Renaissance, Genoa, like all the other Italian city republics, had her share of tyranny and rebellion. The most colorful of these rebels is Giovanni Luigi de Fieschi who led an uprising against the great Andrea Doria in 1547. Fortunately for the Genoese, he fell or was pushed into the waters of the harbor and drowned; more than likely he would have become a worse tyrant than any Doria could ever be.

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(18) Pell, p. 442.
George Eliot had ample occasion to contemplate the historical and literary associations of the town during her three visits to Genoa: in 1849, shortly after her father’s death; in 1860; and again in 1861 when she researched the background material for *Romola*, her Florentine novel. The educated nineteenth-century visitor when he got to the town would, more than likely, associate Genoa with Friedrich von Schiller’s *Fiesco* (1783), a play inspired by the revolt against the great Andrea. This was Heinrich Heine’s initial reaction when he reached the city, and probably George Eliot’s as well. She knew and admired the work of both Schiller and Heine.

In the play, Schiller dramatizes the metamorphosis of an idealistic and visionary political reformer into a tyrant consumed by his hunger for power. At the height of the revolt, his fellow conspirator Varrina pushes him from a gangway and he drowns. George Eliot, true to this tradition, lets the tyrant Grandcourt drown in the waters of the Gulf of Genoa and Gwendolen accuse herself of murder. A few decades earlier, the larger Gulf of Genoa claimed another visionary and revolutionary when the poet Shelley drowned off the coast of Spezia in 1822.

Especially the young enthusiastic Fiesco before he is blinded by power has much in common with the Zionist visionaries in Eliot’s novel. Could it be that the novelist in her indirect manner through allusion wants to suggest that even an idealist like Mordecai or Daniel might turn into a Fiesco should the occasion arise?

Genoa is renowned for her great musicians and revolutionaries but also for her idealistic and practical patriots and advocates of national unity. The city is the true home of Daniel Deronda who will become the idealistic and practical—at least he will go to Palestine—prophet of Zionism. Eliot emphasizes that he is a Jewish version of his Genoese compatriot Mazzini. Giuseppe Mazzini (1805-1872), one of the key figures of the Risorgimento—the period of national unifi-


Marghanita Laski sees a close resemblance between the drowning incidents in the novel and a story by Paul Heyse that was published in 1858, the year Eliot met Heyse in Munich. *George Eliot* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1973), p. 106.
cation in Italy lasting from about 1815 to 1870--like Daniel, spent most of his life as "exile" in England. In London, he met George Eliot who showed sympathy for him and his ideas. There he expounded his highly idealistic revolutionary patriotism in a manner that parallels Mordecai’s Zionist exhortations. Daniel is aware of the dreams of the Italian patriot and recognizes that they are not at all dissimilar from Mordecai’s, and consequently from his own as well, when he observes:

Look into Mazzini’s account of his first yearning, when he was a boy, after a restored greatness and a new freedom to Italy, and of his first efforts as a young man to rouse the same feelings in other young men, and get them to work towards a united nationality. Almost everything seemed against him: his countrymen were ignorant or indifferent, governments hostile, Europe incredulous... Yet you see the prophecy lay with him (p. 595).

Genoa is also associated with the more militant Italian patriots. On May 6, 1860--Daniel Deronda was published in 1877--Giuseppe Garibaldi (1807-1882) with his "Thousand" set out from Genoa on his nationalistic expedition to Sicily. George Eliot, who was keenly interested in the political events of her time, surely was aware of the role Genoa was playing in the unification of Italy. In Italy the nationalistic dream was being realized, and the events of contemporary Italian history to which she refers (for example: pp. 595, 684) parallel the political aspirations of the Zionists. These Italian patriotic sentiments are, in turn, rendered by the Jewish artists of the book: Klesmer plays with great feeling and profundity Conte Giacomo Leopardi’s (1798-1837) nationalistic song, and Mirah puts much feeling into her not so strong voice when she interprets Giuseppe Verdi’s (1813-1901) triumphant "O patria mia".

The Zionist dream for George Eliot is therefore not a uniquely Jewish phenomenon but merely the last manifestation of European nationalistic feeling and part of the great march towards nationalism and progress in which nineteenth-century man was engaged and which found its deadly fruition in our own time. And Genoa did play a significant role in this great march.

The Mordecais of this world are still proclaiming their gospel of "national homes" and "organic centers" and are expounding how much the rest of mankind would benefit from the realizations of their prophetic dreams. And the quest for the respective Jerusalems continues. Only the gospel according to Mordecai easily becomes the call of hatred, bigotry, injustice, and bloodshed; easily degenerates into the "Hep! Hep! Hep!" bay of bloodhounds of the Crusaders whom George Eliot detested and Daniel recalls as he floats in the Gulf of Genoa.
towards his identity and the East (p. 430)—while the Grandcourts are drifting towards Genoa, their telescope focused on sugar plantations, totally oblivious of anything outside themselves. By associating Daniel’s Zionist dream so closely with Genoa and what the old crusading town stands for, it seems, the politically aware and intensely practical "Sibyl" expressed a possible dark side of even the most idealistic crusade.

Genoa is an appropriate port of embarkation for any crusade or journey of exploration; the city has been traditionally known as the European window or gateway to the East. Her name, a Celtic word, means "gateway" or "entry". In the novel, Genoa becomes the metaphorical window setting for the moment of contrasting epiphanies that we know from the other novels of George Eliot. In Genoa, Daniel’s soul opens as his vision becomes focused on his Jewish heritage and the East, whereas for the Grandcourts the place is intolerable. "Who wants to be broiling in Genoa?" asks Grandcourt (p. 739). As Daniel’s vision widens, Gwendolen’s becomes more and more painfully narrow.

The Genoese turned to both the East and the West, and the South as well, and opened up Africa, but particularly the Americas, to adventure, exploration, and colonialism. Genoa is the birthplace of adventurers and explorers such as Vivaldi who sought an ocean route to India by way of Africa as early as 1291; Malocello, one of the discoverers of the Canary Islands; and John Cabot (ca. 1461-1498) who sailed under patent granted by Henry VII of England in 1497 seeking access to the riches of the Far East and reached the American coast instead. He set out on a second exploratory expedition in 1498 and was never heard of again.

The historical associations with the city of Genoa and the cluster of themes in the novel—wealth, power, exploration, adventure, exploitation, colonialism—merge again, for English colonial claims in North America were based on Cabot’s discovery. It is then this English "birthright" that Rex and his sister Anna plan to claim like so many other English emigrants to Canada were doing during last century. This led in 1867 to the Federation of British North America. Of course Rex is blissfully unaware of the bigger colonial movement he would become involved in, for he "had not studied the character of our colonial possessions," the author explains. His notions of what this would involve are childish; he knows that he wants to escape from his hopeless infatuation with his cousin and that he "should like to go to the colonies and work the land there" (pp. 117, 119). Later in the novel, Gwendolen repents for having trespassed on another woman’s claim when she married Grandcourt, yet she is never bothered by the knowledge that the money that had supported her family, too, was blood
money. She did not know "how her maternal grandfather had got the fortune...but he had been a West Indian--which seemed to exclude further question" (p. 52). He, too, had claimed the English birthright to colonize. There are many more examples; references to colonialism abound in the novel. Katherine Bailey Linehan has summed up this aspect of the novel: "Diction, imagery, and narrative innuendo call attention to the way that imperialist habits of supremacy, particularly the objectification of 'lesser' human beings as animals to be governed or commodities to profit by, carry over into the micropolis of everyday life in genteel society."(21)

Yet the most famous of Genoa's "sons" remains Christopher Columbus (1451-1508) who, we are usually told, went on a Quixotic search for a route to an old continent only to find a new world. The two idealists of the novel, Daniel and Mordecai, must have been taught the same romantic notions. The young Daniel used to interrupt his serious investigation into history with "conjectures about his own history, and he had often made stories about...Columbus, just to fill up the blanks before" he became famous (pp. 206f). And Mordecai, waiting for the "deliverer's footstep" coming closer and closer, feels that his own "ideas had been as true and precious as those of Columbus," even though this might be an "insane exaggeration of his own value" (p. 531).

But is this association with Columbus, especially in Mordecai's case, only the romantic flight of an idealistic "position...that Jewish 'Masters' have historically been masters of scholarship rather than of men" (p. 591) as George Eliot would have us believe? Linehan does agree; "through Mordecai, the novel implicitly claims, in fact, that power, conquest, and racial hostility are foreign to Jewish culture."(22) Yet the association with Columbus does suggest possible darker aspects in Daniel's and in Mordecai's character. The role Columbus played in the history of exploration and colonialism is not at all positive. Columbus was a "true" son of Genoa, a fact of which Eliot's visionaries were ignorant but certainly not their creator. Columbus was a trained merchant who "thought in terms of profits and losses; the First Voyage was essentially a business venture for him." It was Columbus who "suggested to the Catholic Kings the enslavement of the Indians--an economic proposition at so much a head."(23) Susan Meyer is especially disconcerted by Eliot's anti-Jewish sentiment sug-

(21) Linehan, p. 327.
(22) Linehan, p. 335.
(23) Pike, pp. 707f.
gested by the parallel between Columbus and Mordecai, since the great Genoese "used money confiscated from Jews who had been forcibly converted or expelled from Spain, provided to him by Ferdinand and Isabella, in order to fund his voyage." Moreover, he "expressed a desire to keep Jews out of the 'new' lands to which his voyages took him."(24) Columbus's objection to Jews is even more disconcerting than the critic has realized, for there is a very strong tradition that the explorer, more than likely, was the descendant of a Spanish-Jewish family that had settled in Genoa after they had been expelled from their homeland. In order to succeed in life, like Jessica and the Alcharisi, he had converted to Christianity.(25)

Genoa, like the other great Italian city republics, played a part in the history of the Jewish diaspora. Rome has the oldest Jewish colony in Italy; Venice never extended her hospitality very gladly to Jews, yet her part in Jewish history has been much more pleasant and romantic than that of Genoa. Genoa has been one of the most hostile places in the history of Italian Jewry; only the reputation of Naples is perhaps blacker.

The Jewish community has never played a noteworthy part in the history of Genoa. Life of this handful of Jews must always have been at best very precarious. For long periods during the Middle Ages, it was forbidden to any Jew to remain in the city for more than three days at one time. But Genoese policy towards the Jews is confusing. Small Jewish communities were at times permitted to stay only to be chased out of town and the territory till a friendlier government or economic necessity asked them to come back again. Not too many availed themselves of Genoa's friendly welcome; for instance, in 1763 the Jewish community numbered a mere seventy. This number increased in the 19th century, especially after 1848 when the city granted full equality to the Jews. The most unpleasant episode in this bewildering history occured in 1492, the year Columbus discovered the Americas. In this year, the Jews were expelled from Spain and Sicily. After an arduous journey, many survivors were seeking refuge on the quays of Genoa. Christian contemporaries, usually not given to squeamishness, were shocked by the spectacle which presented itself at Genoa "where ardent friars wandered among the famished groups on the quayside, a crucifix in one arm and loaves of bread in the other, offering food in return for conversion." Only a few were permitted to stay in town; the rest were given a

choice of either embracing Christianity or being sold into slavery. In the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* we read that these refugees were at first "allowed to land for three days, but on January 31, 1493, this concession was withdrawn through fear that the Jews had introduced the plague."(26)

During those hot summer days as Daniel is waiting for the audience with his mother, as he is drifting in the Genoese Bay, drifting closer towards his Jewish identity, he begins to imagine that his own ancestors were among the poor outcasts on the quays of Genoa back in 1492:

Among the thoughts that most filled his mind while his boat was pushing about within view of the grand harbour was that of the multitudinous Spanish Jews centuries ago driven destitude from their Spanish homes, suffered to land from the crowded ships only for brief rest on this grand quay of Genoa, overspreading it with a pall of famine and plague--dying mothers with dying children at their breasts--fathers and sons agaze at each other's haggardness, like groups from a hundred Hunger-towers turned out beneath the mid-day sun.

And Daniel's "dreamy constructions of a possible ancestry for himself would weave themselves with historic memories which had begun to have a new interest for him" (p. 682).

Daniel's daydreams once before had taken him into Jewish history. At that time, he was "lying dreamily in a boat" imagining himself "in quest of a beautiful maiden's relatives" in the Cordova of Ibn-Gebirol's time during the Golden Age of Spain. But the eleventh century ended with Pope Urban's call for a crusade to liberate Jerusalem, and very unpleasantly Daniel's vision is shattered by the blood curdling yell "Hep! Hep! Hep!" of "those devilish missionaries with sword and firebrand and crouching figure of the reviled Jew turned round, erect, heroic, flashing with sublime constancy in the face of torture and death" (pp. 430f) who was crushed by the Crusader.

The Crusades are also on the mind of Mordecai when he proclaims in one of his political speeches that the collective Jewish soul "heard the roar of the Crusaders and the shrieks of tortured Israel" (p. 555). On another occasion, George Eliot connects Mordecai with Peter the Hermit; of course the Jewish leader would never cheapen his ideas, unlike that most bigoted of the leaders of the First Crusade had done who had "a tocsin for the rabble" (p. 529). Ironically,

Mordecai as well is calling very persuasively for a crusade to "liberate" the Holy Land.

One of the ancestors of Sir Hugo Malinger found his final resting place in the romantic Gothic cloister of his estate, a place that attracts the boy Daniel. That noble warrior had joined the "rabble" of the Crusades and had enriched his family coat-of-arms with the image of the impaled "three Saracens' heads" (p. 204). The young Daniel, who still thinks of himself as bastard son of Sir Hugo, never cared much for the Malinger family tree, except for "that ancestor who had killed three Saracens in one encounter" (p. 210). Susan Meyer has pointed to this scene; in her opinion this is the only time in the whole novel that George Eliot "describes the gentle, peace-loving, Zionist idealist Daniel as having an aggressive streak." (27)

There are other references to the Crusades in the novel (for example on pp. 76f and 283), and there are associations between the Crusaders and Daniel that are even stronger and more disconcerting than Ms. Meyer suggests. It is from Genoa that Daniel will set out on his Zionist crusade to the "promised land". To realize this dream, George Eliot knew that "each has to win his portion by hard fighting" (p. 293), though the novel ends before the actual fighting for Palestine begins. Again, Genoa is the perfect starting point for such an undertaking.

Christian sentiment, love of adventure, and the smell of riches launched many fleets from Genoa. The ardor of her citizens seems to have exceeded that of any other crusading group. In fact, many a battle or siege would have been lost without Genoese help. And "the superb city" (p. 682) built for herself a vast trading empire. When we look back on her greatness--to recount it would fill volumes--we can see only too clearly that the foundations of her greatness were built on greed for power and riches, rapine, wholesale murder, and deceit.

The Genoese participated with enthusiasm in the First Crusade; perhaps not so much for religious reasons as for economic opportunities since the main Genoese activity in this holy war was the conveyance of the siege machinery to the Holy Land with which Jerusalem was captured. A great share of the glory of the sack of the Holy City belongs to Gugliemo Testa di Maglio, the Hammer Head. This warrior is one of the traditional heroes of Genoa; his monument, the impressive Torre degli Embriaci, can still be admired today. King Balduin of Jerusalem was so thankful to the Genoese for the help they had rendered him that he recorded his gratitude by inscribing on the architrave of the Holy Sepulcher

the following epigraph in golden letters: "Praepotens Genuensium praesidium" ("For the most appreciated help rendered by the Genoese").

Torquato Tasso (1544-1595) in *Gerusalemme Liberata*, his highly romantic treatment of the First Crusade, celebrates this William of Genoa, the "cunning architect" who "of all the Genoas lord and guide, /Which late rul’d all the seas from side to side." He breaches the walls of Jerusalem; but Tasso basically credits the fall of the Holy City to the ardor of the valiant Rinaldo, a mighty Crusader and imparer of Saracens' heads before the Lord (Book XVIII), "Who threatening follo’d as the Soldan fled; /And on the walls the purple cross dispread." The young Daniel who cared "only about that ancestor who had killed three Saracens" had read about the deeds of Rinaldo and of his great compatriot William the Hammer Head. Daniel, like several of the other characters in the novel, is very much aware of the poet Tasso and the heroes of *Gerusalemme Liberata*.

Mrs. Arrowsmith has written a book about the life of Tasso and is very fond of Goethe's play dealing with the same subject, as she tells everybody at her party; Klesmer, for his part, is not impressed by his future mother-in-law's literary indulgences. Gwendolen, in turn, informs her hostess that she knows "nothing of Tasso except the *Gerusalemme Liberata*, which we read and learned by heart at school" (p. 76). Daniel's education had also included Tasso; he can identify with the sentiments of the Italian romance. To him, "finding Mirah was as heart-stirring as anything that befell...Rinaldo" (p. 245). Naturally, Tasso's Rinaldo is a great lover--but we remember him more for his exploits at the walls of Jerusalem the day the city fell to the Crusaders. George Eliot certainly has given gentle Daniel through these associations a rather dark and unpleasant "streak" in his character.

Genoa's role in the First Crusade, a part with which Daniel can identify, is dark indeed. But there was an even more shameful sequel, the Children's Crusade. What happened to the footsore and deluded children when the miracle they had expected did not happen in Genoa on that Sunday morning, August 26, 1212? We can follow the trail of one group to Genoa but not beyond. Ugly rumors that Genoese merchants sold many of the poor deluded youngsters on the slave markets of the East have never completely died out. The "selling" of

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children, in the novel as well, can be a very lucrative business.

What did George Eliot try to tell us about Daniel’s Zionist quest through this vast web of literary and historical and political associations that she has woven around the image of the city of Genoa? She definitely was not the prophetess of the Zionist awakening, "the most enthusiastic and energetic preacher of Zion who arose among both Gentiles and Jews, from that time to this," as J. Z. Raisin in 1908 rhapsodized in the Jewish periodical Miklat.\(^{(31)}\)

At the end of the novel, Daniel does go off to build up Palestine as a "national center" for the Jews, and a great number of the readers of the novel since it was published have thought of Daniel as the founder of a Zionist utopia in the Holy Land. But George Eliot had not always embraced Jewish hopes and sentiments as enthusiastically as she seemingly does in Daniel Deronda. For instance, after reading Benjamin Disraeli’s Eastern novels, she recorded that her "Gentile nature" was revolted and kicked "most resolutely against any assumption of superiority in the Jews and is almost ready to echo Voltaire’s vituperation...Everything specifically Jewish is of a low grade."\(^{(32)}\) The attitude of the mature artist seems to have changed. She had studied the Jewish "myths" she had once despised and found value and beauty in them; she came to appreciate the learning and friendship of the Jewish scholar Emanuel Deutsch who is the prototype of Mordecai. Yet Katherine Baily Linehan feels that George Eliot "never really lost a deeply ingrained sense of difference from and superiority to non-Gentiles...the fact remains that an element of early-formed anti-Semitism carries over into her attitude toward Jews."\(^{(33)}\) The novel is "rife with anti-Semitism," Susan Meyer adds to her discussion of the novel.\(^{(34)}\)

Genoa and the Crusades and the Jews? Not much good can come from this combination; the associations are too dark and negative. This is the message that is conveyed to us when we approach the novel through the image of the city of Genoa. George Eliot certainly was aware what any crusade, even the most ideologically motivated, would mean to the "colonized" peoples that would be created--her allusions throughout the novel make this very clear.

For George Eliot, Daniel’s Palestine is not really an "empty territory to be filled by a restorative Zionist project," as Edward Said objects to the novelist’s


\(^{(33)}\) Linehan, p. 338.

\(^{(34)}\) Meyer, p. 745.
political vision, for the heirs of the Promised Land in *Daniel Deronda* do include the Crusader and the "Saracen", the colonizer and his subject peoples. In our century, the truth of George Eliot's prophetic insight has been fulfilled: "Among the heirs...of the promised land, each has to win his portion by hard fighting"--and the "hard" fighting for the Promised Land goes on.

The realization that George Eliot was aware of the pain and suffering that Daniel's crusade emanating from Genoa would bring to the people of Palestine might give us intellectual and academic gratification; this realization, however, does not mitigate the harsh historical truth. The fact that the novelist's humanism does extend to the "actual inhabitants of the East" will, at best, remain cold comfort to Edward Said and his fellow Palestinians who have lost their portion of the Promised Land.