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Jews in *New Athens* by Benedykt Chmielowski*

Abstract: Benedykt Chmielowski (1700–1763), a Catholic priest, the author of the *New Athens* encyclopedia (extended edition: Lwów, 1754–1756) included in his polyhistorical work plenty of information on issues related to Jews. The article discusses these issues and connects their specificity with the character of different parts of the work in which Chmielowski placed them as well as with the detected and secret sources of his knowledge about Jews (especially books by early modern scholars) and the ways he dealt with those sources. The author of the article also shows Chmielowski's writing strategies, placing *New Athens* in the tradition of baroque encyclopedism—a literary production typical of the previous epoch.

Keywords: encyclopedism, *New Athens*, Benedykt Chmielowski.

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Benedykt Chmielowski (full name: Joachim Benedykt Chmielowski, 1700–1763) is known first and foremost as the author of *Nowe Ateny* [henceforth: *New Athens*].¹ In Lwów (now Lviv in Ukraine), two volumes of the work were published between 1745 and 1746, and a four-volume extended version between 1754 and 1756.² The author included therein a model of baroque polyhistory, in which he attempted to explore all relevant areas of knowledge, and present them in encyclopedic fashion on the basis of work from other academic authorities.³ Faced with an excess of books—a fundamental problem of early modern science⁴—he tried to preserve the unity of this knowledge by accounting for the discrepant opinions of authorities, compiling content from various sources, and trusting the work of Catholic scholars, especially Jesuits with a *scientia curiosa* approach.

Chmielowski was born in Volhynia, and studied at the Lwów college of Jesuits. He then became a priest, and from 1725 until his death was a parish priest in Firlejów (now Lypivka in Ukraine), a village in the Rohatyn deanery (of which he was also the dean), located near the road to Przemyślany (now Peremyshliany in Ukraine) in between Stanisławów (now Ivano-Frankivsk in Ukraine) and Lwów.⁵ At the time, near Chmielowski's residence, Hasidism was developing among Polish Jews in an environment of mysticism, messianism, and Kabbalistic teachings. Did Chmielowski, in creating a universalist encyclopedia, perceive these developments among his fellow Jews?⁶ Did he have something to say about them? What can we learn about Jews and their affairs from his work?

¹ The citations and locations in this article are taken from the second edition of *Nowe Ateny* [*New Athens*], where the Roman numeral refers to the volume, and the Arabic numeral to the page.

² There are many publications and different opinions on the subject of *New Athens*. See Wojciech Paszyński, “Czarna legenda *Nowych Aten* Benedykta Chmielowskiego i próby jej przezwyciężenia,” *Prace Historyczne* 141 (2014), 1: 37–59. A collection and discussion of the source literature can be found therein.

³ For more information on this model, see Anthony Grafton, “The World of the Polyhistor: Humanism and Encyclopedism,” *Central European History* 18 (1985), 1: 31–47; Cesare Vasoli, *Encyklopedyzm w XVII wieku*, trans. Adam Aduszkiewicz (Warsaw, 1996).

⁴ For ways of handling this problem, see Ann Blair, “Reading Strategies for Coping with Information Overload ca. 1550–1700,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 64 (2003), 1: 11–28; Brian W. Ogilvie, “The Many Books of Nature: Renaissance Naturalists and Information Overload,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 64 (2003), 1: 29–40; Wiesław Pawlak, *De eruditione comparanda in humanioribus: Studia z dziejów erudycji humanistycznej w XVII wieku* (Lublin, 2012).

⁵ See Wincenty Ogrodziński, “Chmielowski Joachim Benedykt,” in *Polski Słownik Biograficzny* [henceforth: PSB] (Kraków, 1937), 3: 341–342.

⁶ In Firlejów itself there were not many Jews. According to researchers, “In 1765 there were only a few Jews living in this area”; see Jerzy T. Petrus, “Kościół parafialny p.w. św.

The information in *New Athens* is presented thematically according to the content, character, and literature used by Chmielowski to address different topics in each chapter. Although he refers to numerous authors and books, this does not mean that he actually studied them. He often took erudite references from direct sources, which were not always mentioned⁷ (this was widely practiced by early erudite scholars). Because certain information may belong thematically to various chapters of *New Athens*, and because the final two volumes supplement and expand upon the knowledge presented in the first two volumes, repetitions and the accompanying inconsistencies resulting from the use of various sources are characteristic of this work. This complicates understanding of its content, including with regard to Jews.

Jews of the Old Testament and Later According to Chmielowski

In *New Athens*, the author devotes much attention to Israeli antiquities, especially in the geographical segment entitled “Palestine or the Holy Land” (II 520–578), which is supplemented in volume four by the following information: “In Canaan or in Judea, i.e. Palestine, what is *notandum*? Whatever the Scripture gives us *ad sciendum et credendum*” (IV 471–516). The biblical status of these lands, as well as their buildings, artifacts, and historical events require Chmielowski to devote special attention thereto. This is justified by the special position of their inhabitants: “Before Christ was born . . . the Jews were known as *Populus Sanctus*” (IV 481), and “the Orthodox call [their land] *Terra Promissionis*, because it was promised by God to the Israelites. It is said to be the Holy Land . . . because the Orthodox Israeli people lived there” (II 520).

Of course, the information from this part of the text goes beyond the content of the Bible. Some of it concerns nature (e.g. information on the Dead Sea, where “*bitumen* is formed, which is a sticky, awkward, and drippy glue which the medic Dioscorides calls ‘Jewish glue’”; II 522), customs, religious regulations (e.g. whether fighting on the Sabbath was

Stanisława biskupa i męczennika w Firlejowie,” in *Materiały do dziejów sztuki sakralnej na ziemiach wschodnich dawnej Rzeczypospolitej. Cz. 1: Kościoły i klasztory rzymskokatolickie dawnego województwa ruskiego*, vol. 15, ed. Jan K. Ostrowski (Kraków, 2007), 217. But there was a Jewish community in nearby Rohatyn, where prominent supporters of Sabbatism were active (e.g. Eliza Shor).

⁷ These work methods of Chmielowski have been described in critical editions of individual parts of *New Athens*. See appropriate volumes in the *Bibliotheca Curiosa* series.

allowed, what sacrifices were made to God, what priests wore, and what *Urim* and *Thummim* were; IV 481–485), and history—especially that of Jerusalem. Chmielowski addresses the city’s famous destruction by the late emperor Titus several times (II 526–527; II 547–548; I 366; IV 487–488), and in detail, e.g., he discusses how a Jewish woman ate her child during the famine of the siege (IV 492).⁸

The conquest of Titus is so important that it constitutes a turning point in the author’s treatment of the Israelites. He writes, “From that time onward, Jews were scattered around the world” (IV 488), and follows with a historiographical comment:

Forty years after leaving Egypt, and after roaming in the wilderness, the Jews entered the Promised Land and Jerusalem. Then again, 40 years after the death of Christ, they were driven out. Please consider with great admiration for divine judgement . . . that Christ was sold here for 30 pieces of silver—then, during the siege, 30 Jews were sold for one piece of silver . . . that Christ was here thirsty, the Jews eat leather, manure from dovescotes, and children (IV 492–493).

In *New Athens*, Old Testament Jews and their various affairs are usually the subject of favorable attention.⁹ In the chapter “*Mirabilia* about People,” ancient Jewish heroes are prominently listed in specific categories of distinction. The list of persons “of extraordinary power” begins with “Samson of great strength”; Moses, Joshua, David, and the Maccabees are “bellicose (*belliciosi*), or with gallant hearts”; “Judith, victor of Holofernes” is an example of a “heroic dame”; Joseph and Susanna are examples of “the purity of virtue”; and Saul and David, in the section “elevation of the wretched,” represent how a person can rise above a low position (I 686ff.). Events from the history of Jews are prominent in the chronology of world history up to the war with Titus (I 204–208), yet they appear sporadically and in totally different functions in the sections that concern later times. For example:

In the Toledo district of Spain, a Jew, when expanding his vineyard, found a book in the rock with wooden pages written in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, *inter cetera*, which read: “The Son of God was born to Mary, and suffered for human salvation.”

⁸ For more information, see Flavius Josephus, *The Jewish War* VI, 3, 4.

⁹ This even concerns their betrayal of God, which serves to educate readers. One of the reasons for the pollution of nations was the “uncontrolled *carnalitas* in Orthodox Jews,” which Chmielowski illustrates with the following example: “That the Israelites in the desert are not hermits, but suitors, as they make sacrifices out of sexual acts to the idol *Beelphegor*, that they had relations with the daughters of the Moabites, and that 24 thousand adulterers died” (I 429). Cf. Book of Numbers 25.

Together with his entire household, the Jew converted. In the Year of our Lord 1260 (I 212).

It is precisely Jewish converts to Christianity that Chmielowski cites as credible and well-informed authorities on religious matters, as well as on original Jewish culture. These include “Egesipus, a Christian from a Jew” (III 627), i.e. Saint Hegesippus, a Church historian from the second century; “Galatinus, a faithful Christian from a Jew” (I 2), i.e. Pietro Colonna Galatino (ca. 1460–1540), a Franciscan scholar of Jewish descent; and “Julius Mauroaenus, a Christian from a rabbi” (I 1067). However, in the case of the latter, Chmielowski misrepresented the name. In fact, the reference was to seventeenth-century convert Giulio Morosini (formerly Samuel Nahmias), or Maurocenus in the Latin version, who Chmielowski was not directly familiar with.¹⁰

Chmielowski provides an entire list of rabbi converts in his catalog of noteworthy persons. The extensive section is entitled, “Rabbis,” which he explains as follows:

A “Rabbi” is a Jewish expert or doctor . . . i.e. a *master*. Some lived before the birth of Jesus Christ, others after. Rabbi Yoram, Rabbi Hakkados, and Rabbi Simeon Ben-Asrain wrote about the unborn Messiah as if they were full of prophetic spirit . . . Other rabbis, having become Christians, such as Rabbi Joseph Samla from Samaria, Rabbi Yuda Ben Sammia from Caesarea, Rabbi Mardocheus Ben Yona Jerusalemite, and Rabbi Ben Yusal from Yoppe, used their pens against those Jews who were stubborn in their blindness (III 681).

Without citation, Chmielowski took this information from a monumental biblical comment, which was often used in *New Athens*, and which was written by Belgian Jesuit Jacobus Tirinus (1580–1636).¹¹ Chmielowski himself completes the list:

Also belonging to this group of persons is Samuel, a rabbi turned Christian, *natione* Africa, homeland *Marochium*, who in the year 1000 wrote a book in Arabic, i.e. a letter to Rabbi Isaac in that country, with great and clear proof that Christ the

¹⁰ This incorrect surname also appears in the first edition of *New Athens* (I 716). Furthermore, Chmielowski refers here to a second Church writer named Joannes Clericatus (Giovanni Chericato, 1633–1717), who was an important source of information on Jewish issues. Clericatus correctly cites “Julius Maurocenus, *olim rabbinus*”—cf. Joannes Clericatus, *De venerabili Eucharistiae sacramento decisiones...*, XVII, 1–2 (Venetiis, 1705), 99—as an authority on paschal Jewish customs. Maurocenus described them in a work published as Giulio Morosini, *Via della fede mostrata a’gli Ebrei...*, II, 30 (Roma, 1683), 550–568.

¹¹ Jacobus Tirinus, *Commentarius in Sacram Scripturam...* (Lugduni, 1683), 2: 17 (in the separately paginated chapter “Index auctorum”).

Messiah had already come. The book was translated from Arabic into Latin in 1339 by Spanish Dominican Alfons Bonhomo, and printed several times in various languages. I have read it in its entirety, and with great gain, as I often cite it (III 681).

The letter from Rabbi Samuel containing information on the history of the text was published in 1733 by Jakub Paweł Radliński,¹² a priest in Leżajsk, whose work was also a significant source of Chmielowski's knowledge on other issues related to Jews (a fact that he clearly revealed).

Chmielowski, however, did not consider acceptance of Christianity by Jews to be beneficial in every case, as he reveals that the reasons for conversion were not always religious. He writes: "May any Jew that sincerely opens his eyes do so to better conduct business in Khotyn, Berlin, and Frankfort. There is no religious stability in him: *mutavit religionem, non mores*" (IV 386). Yet it is difficult to say whether these are his personal observations, or a common judgement of social discussions at the time.¹³

In other parts of the encyclopedia, Chmielowski focuses on other topics related to Jewish antiquity. In the extensive section entitled "Judaismus" (I 1061–1094), he presents the history of the Chosen People, religious factions, and Jewish holidays. He explains the Feast of Trumpets, the Feast of Tabernacles, Purim, and in particular Passover. He also recalls curiosities associated with celebration of the Sabbath ("they did not want to put on their shoes, as the soles were reinforced," "they were not brave enough to break the seal of a letter on the Sabbath"; I 1069), and lists the names of Jewish months (I 1065–1069). Furthermore, he reasons against the views of Jews who deny the Holy Trinity and the Christ-Messiah, using theological arguments, references to the Scripture and the meanings of Hebrew words, concluding that God has rejected the Jews and in their place elected pagans (I 1077–1094). He then closes the segment with the following remark: "For all of these obvious reasons, Jews are like marble, blind as . . . bats, and deaf as posts" (I 1094).

¹² *Prawda chrześcijańska od nieprzyjaciela swego zeznana...* (Lublin, 1733), and further publications. Radliński is here the author of an extensive supplement intended for Jews; cf. the full title in Karol Estreicher, *Bibliografia polska* (Kraków, 1929), 27: 60–61. The letter itself was already known in the Polish version as *Epistola albo list rabi Samuela Żyda ku drugiemu rabi Izaakowi Żydowi posłany, że Jezus Nazarański prawdziwym jest Mesjaszem* (Kraków, 1538).

¹³ See Adam Kaźmierczyk, *Rodzitem się Żydem... Konwersje Żydów w Rzeczypospolitej XVII–XVIII wieku* (Kraków, 2015).

The Talmud in New Athens

Chmielowski devoted much attention to the Talmud in the section entitled “Judaismus,” and provided supplementary information in the third volume, where he wrote briefly about the rabbis responsible for its creation, the fate of the Jerusalem Talmud and the Babylonian Talmud, the difference between the two, and the papal decrees intended to undermine them (III 683–684). However, he does not reveal that he copied this content (though not always exactly) from Tirinus’ work.¹⁴ Here is one example of the differences: the Jerusalem Talmud is partially composed of the “Misna,” which was compiled by Rabbi Judas Hakkadosch, whom Tirinus refers to as Haccados, and the “Themara,” which Tirinus refers to as the “Ghemara.”

In “Judaismus,” Chmielowski writes also about the Jerusalem Talmud, its history, and parts (“Misna” and “Ghema”; I 1071), as well as the Babylonian Talmud. In doing so, he cites several authorities, the primary of which is the above-mentioned Joannes Clericatus.¹⁵ Nevertheless, Chmielowski introduces a different division just below this: “*Keser Moschem*, i.e. *Borders*,” “*Keser Naasym*, i.e. *Women*,” “*Keser Thensesim*, i.e. *Holiness*,” “*Jezebor*, i.e. *Savior*.” He found this division in a book by Jan Achacy Kmita, entitled *Talmud*.... On the title page was written in Hebrew letters: דומלת *abo wiara żydowska* [or the Jewish faith] (Kraków, 1610).

Kmita is the author of an entire series of anti-Jewish booklets—a result of some quarrel therewith—which stand out among anti-Jewish literature from the beginning of the seventeenth century due to their amusing and interesting literary form.¹⁶ His *Talmud*... contains a catalog of peculiar content allegedly taken from this sacred book and ascribed to the various

¹⁴ Tirinus, *Commentarius in Sacram Scripturam*, 19 (in the separately paginated chapter “Index auctorum”).

¹⁵ Cf. footnote 10. On the Talmud: Joannes Clericatus, *De sacrosancto missae sacrificio decisiones*... (Venetiis, 1727), 165 (here: dec. 24, nos. 37–38).

¹⁶ See Maria Cytowska, Zbigniew Wojas, “Kmita Jan Achacy,” in PSB (Wrocław, 1967), 13: 93–94. For more about these works, see Kazimierz Bartoszewicz, *Antysemityzm w literaturze polskiej XV–XVII w.* (Warsaw, 1914), 60–73; Anna Michałowska-Mycielska, “Jan Achacy Kmita: An Anti-Jewish Writer of the First Half of the 17th Century,” *Scripta Judaica Cracoviensia* 4 (2006), 11–15. See also Robert Kaśków, “Zainteresowanie Żydami i kulturą żydowską w XVI i na początku XVII w. w Polsce” (Ph.D. dissertation written under the guidance of Professor Jerzy Woronczak, University of Wrocław, 1996, call no. Dr 248).

rabbis mentioned here.¹⁷ Essentially, it is a humorous compilation intended to be—as Kmita wrote on the title page—“amusing for commoners.” This was one of Chmielowski’s sources¹⁸ for his “Table of Talmudic Fairy Tales” (I 1071–1077), to which he added: “God is playing with a *Leviathan*, that encircles the whole world and is held by the tail”; “Rabbi Saul believes that God has not laughed since the destruction of Jerusalem, and that he cries thrice daily upon seeing the misery of the Jews”; “Rabbi Osias is afraid that Eve is with the snake deceiver as with her husband *concubuit*”; “they whisper stories that God has a headache when a Jew gets sick” (I 1072); etc. Chmielowski initiated serious discussions in response to some of these quotes. For example, in reference to the latter, he wrote: “Would God not prefer to heal a Jew than to get sick with him or keep him from getting sick, so that he himself does not become sick?” On messianic hope he wrote, “Rabbi Chenina teaches that the Messiah will come into the world when . . . the king becomes *opressor* of the Jews,” to which he responds: “Was it not Philip III, the King of Spain, who drove 900 thousand Jews out of their homelands? And why did the Messiah not come to them?” (I 1073), etc.

These remarks from Chmielowski indicate that he took the works of Kmita seriously. At the beginning of his “Table of Talmudic Fairy Tales,” he indicated that the purpose of the table was to ridicule (“*ad ridendum*”), but also to expose authentic errors of Jews, which were “selected by various authors versed in the language of the Talmud, and compiled here by me *ad ridendum et videndum*, how the Jews have gone astray” (I 1071). At the end of the table, he included a statement made by the Jews, i.e. “that is not in the Talmud,” in order to reply, “I sooner believe wise and good Catholics, who are capable of reading their books with curiosity, than deceitful Jews” (I 1077).¹⁹

¹⁷ Kaśków claims that the above-mentioned division of the Talmud into four parts “proves that the author [*scil.* Kmita] did not know the holy book of the Jews, just like he did not understand Hebrew.” He also comments on Kmita’s catalog of peculiar content: “[The catalog] contains both authentic sayings and Talmudic legends, albeit severely distorted, as well as absurd statements . . . Here, truth is inextricably intertwined with imagination.” *Ibid.*, 267–268.

¹⁸ In his description of the expedition of the Jews to Paradise for the Messiah (I 1075–1076), Chmielowski used another apparently humorous booklet by Kmita, entitled *Ein send Breief abo list od Żydów polskich po mesyjasza, który, jako Żydzi wierzą, w Raju siedzi czekając czasu przyścia swego...*, [n.p., after 1614].

¹⁹ He also accounted for another possibility: Talmuds condemned to be burned for blasphemy and errors may have already been purified in Catholic countries; but copies in Turkey, Arabia, and even in Protestant countries may contain the original content.

In fact, Chmielowski also had other reasons for taking Kmita's revelations at face value. By the time of Chmielowski's writing, Radliński had already presented such bizarre content as true in the above-mentioned book Chmielowski was familiar with, i.e., *Prawda chrześcijańska od nieprzyjaciela swego zeznana* (Lublin, 1733). Its chapter "Talmudic Fairy Tales and Blasphemies"²⁰ ends with an assurance that Christians who knew Hebrew found these "errors and blasphemies" in the Talmud. They were cited here from other sources, and not from Kmita.

Moreover, Chmielowski himself, when discussing the content of the Talmud, cites other authorities aside from Kmita (I 1074), two of whom are particularly important here: Clericatus²¹ and "author Masquardus," known by Chmielowski only through the former.²²

"Masquardus," who is also referred to as such on other pages of *New Athens*,²³ is Marquardus de Susannis, author of a sixteenth-century compilation of works entitled *Tractatus de Judaeis*, which contains a passus of relevant content.²⁴ However, there are books from that time which contain information much more relevant to the topic at hand, and which prove the long and erudite tradition of listing Talmudic peculiarities. Famous biblical scholar and Dominican of Jewish origin, Sixtus Senensis [Sixtus of Siena] (1520–1569), included in his *Bibliotheca sancta* a section entitled "Index errorum aliquot, quos ex innumeris stultitiis, blasphemii et impietatibus Thalmudici operis collegimus," in which he adds to these "errors" cross-references to locations in the Talmud.²⁵ It was this section that was published and spread throughout Poland as a bilingual Latin-Polish version prepared by Jakub Górski—a theologian, scholar, and rector of the Academy of Kraków.²⁶

²⁰ *Prawda chrześcijańska*, 449–463.

²¹ For an extensive catalog of these "errors," see Clericatus, *De sacrosancto missae sacrificio decisiones*, 166–167 (here: dec. 24, nos. 39–40).

²² However, it is possible that they were both mentioned in *New Athens* only through Radliński, since in his catalog of "Talmudic fairy tales" he refers to "Joannes Clericatus ex Masquardo." *Prawda chrześcijańska*, 462.

²³ Cf. I 220: "As Masquardus writes, Talmuds teach the Jewish people that God flies on cherubs so that he can see eighteen thousand worlds."

²⁴ See Marquardus de Susannis, *Tractatus de Judaeis et aliis infidelibus* (Venetiis, 1558), f. 114 (III, 1, no. 49).

²⁵ Sixtus Senensis, *Bibliotheca sancta*... (Venetiis, 1566), 199–202.

²⁶ The title page contains both the Latin and Polish titles. The Polish version is the following: Jakub Górski, *Okazanie kilka błędów z nierozlicznego bluźnierstwa, szaleństwa i niepobożności z Talmuta żydowskiego zebranych, z których może każdy zrozumieć, jako błędzą i jako wielkimi są nieprzyjaciółmi krześcijanom . . . Wyjęte z wtórych ksiąg "Biblijoteki świętej" Syksta Seńskiego* (Kraków, 1569).

It is significant that other Church authors in Poland, i.e. Jan Stanisław Wujkowski and Franciszek Antoni Kobielski, when treating of Jewish issues, also included lists of Talmudic peculiarities in their works. They were a conventional supplement to this type of literature.²⁷

Among the authors whom Chmielowski referred to when discussing the controversial opinions of rabbis is the most important *scientia curiosa* scholar, Jesuit Athanasius Kircher—“the last man who knew everything.”²⁸ Chmielowski presents information from his texts about the biblical character Og, king of Bashan, as the teaching of Jewish sages, and therefore made the following general criticism of the Israelites: “In Kircher I read that Og, according to the rabbis, when searching for Noah in the flood waters 15 cubits above the mountains, only had water up to his knees. The stupidity of the Jews is greater than this giant!” (I 1073). This criticism from Chmielowski is nevertheless misinformed, as Kircher, in writing that Og had water up to his knees, was citing not rabbis, but Arabic tradition.²⁹

Chmielowski devoted so much space to Jewish issues primarily in order to explain various aspects of the Bible. After having done so, he posed the following question: “Are Christians obliged to practice ancient Jewish ceremonies?” He then answered unequivocally: “We are not . . . obliged to practice Old-Testament ceremonies, for example circumcision, Jewish-style Easter, customs concerning food and clothes” (I 1008). When discussing the intricacies in the translations of Hebrew Old-Testament books, he issued the following warning: “Jews shall not be approached together with today’s heretics for an explication of the Scripture” (III 596).

His biblical perspective also necessitates address of the Hebrew language, which “is superior as the first language in the world.” He wrote, “Wherever they are *in orbe terrarum*, all Jews must use this language for worship services and writings; for familiar discourse *adhibent* the language of the country they are in.” He then added, “Our Polish Jews speak German, Polish, and Ruthenian” (II 747–748).

²⁷ See the relevant fragments of the following books: Jan Stanisław Wujkowski, *Kontrowersyje polskie abo prawda otwierająca dysydenckie oczy . . . Z przydatkiem o niewierności i ślepotcie żydowskiej...* (Warsaw, 1737), 319–320; Franciszek Antoni Kobielski, *Światło na oświecenie narodu niewiernego, to jest kazania w synagogach żydowskich miane...* (Lwów, 1746), 187–188.

²⁸ Athanasius Kircher: *The Last Man Who Knew Everything*, ed. Paula Findlen (London, 2004). See also Joscelyn Godwin, *Athanasius Kircher: A Renaissance Man and the Quest for Lost Knowledge* (London, 1979).

²⁹ Athanasius Kircher, *Mundus subterraneus...* (Amstelodami, 1665), 2: 60; id., *Arca Noë...* (Amstelodami, 1675), 9.

“Are Jews Everywhere in the World?”

New Athens also mentions more contemporary Jews—both those living in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and in other countries. At the end of “Judaismus” is a passus entitled “Are Jews Everywhere in the World?”. It reads:

My answer is that they are everywhere—in Asia, in Africa . . . now in various European countries . . . Significant numbers are in Poland and Lithuania; as is said about the Polish Crown—*infernus rusticorum, paradisus Judaeorum*. Poles, princes and kings, gave them rights, privileges, and freedom (I 1094).

Chmielowski explains here that Casimir the Great gave into the persuasion of “Jewish darling Estera.”³⁰ He also writes about the historic expulsion of Jews from various lands, especially Spain (he returns to this topic several times in other places³¹), noting that “Only Spain does not smell like their garlic” (I 1094). This country and its inhabitants are particularly appreciated by Chmielowski, as “Spaniards are *catholicissimi*: they suffer neither Jews nor heretics, for which *sint in benediction*” (II 37). He also mentions the (smaller-scale) expulsion of Jews from Poland—namely from Warmia, Sącz, Warsaw, Biecz, and “in the year of our Lord 1739 they were legally sentenced to exile from Silesia”—which he summarizes by saying, “they visit these places” (I 1094).

Chmielowski also made remarks about Jews in Poland and otherwise in the geographical sections, and in the lists of curiosities concerning certain locations; however, these are generally laconic. When describing the peculiarities of Saxon electors, he notes, “There is a Bible written in Hebrew for which Jews paid 20 thousand talers” (II 240); near Avignon “is a Jewish town . . . where there are 500 of them walking in yellow hats, and the Jewish women with yellow laces on their hats” (IV 193); in Amsterdam there is “a Jewish synagogue or large temple for the Portuguese Jews” (II 248).

With respect to indigenous matters, in the section entitled “Which other regions of Poland are peculiar?” he recalls Batoh in Podole as a terrible place, and describes the surroundings of Trembowla (now Terebovlia in Ukraine) as abounding in stone. In between these two observations he writes, “Grodno is full of Jews, and also Brzeście Litewskie; Warmia has

³⁰ Compare the section dedicated to rulers in Poland, where we read that Casimir’s “Jewess Esterka *emollivit*, and she gave many privileges to the Jews” (II 347).

³¹ Cf. also II 18; II 31; IV 181; IV 386.

none” (II 334). When enumerating the pestilences that have plagued the country, he specifies, “20 thousand Christians and 4 thousand Jews died in Vilna in 1710” (I 219). As much as half the entry dedicated to Poznań in the geographical section comprises a tale about hosts that were allegedly profaned by Jews at the end of the fourteenth century (II 317). He records briefly that: robbers also assaulted Jews in Podgórze (IV 341); Jews are among merchants in Stanisławów in the region of Pokucie (now Pokuttya in Ukraine) (IV 342); in Lwów are “2 Jewish temples of brick” (II 315); in Kraków, “Jews from the city are being driven to Kazimierz, because [in Kraków] their lodgings were often ravaged by fires,” and now “in Kazimierz Jews have their own city” (IV 329).

Sometimes Chmielowski’s observations are so trivial that their value for an encyclopedic work is dubious. However, they are sometimes intended to be humorous, and are based on word play and conceptual constructions. This is characteristic of Chmielowski’s reasoning. A remark about the three “Sabbaths” is found in the description of Vilna: “The citizens there observe the *tria sabbata*: the Tartars, who were allowed to settle by prince Witold, have their own suburb; since they are Islamic, they observe Friday; the Jews *secundum Legem Moysis* observe Saturday; and the Christians observe Sunday” (II 320–321).

We also encounter remarks that, although short, are more useful, as they convey atypical information. For example, Chmielowski makes a favorable remark about Brześć Litewski (now Brest in Belarus): “There is a famous Jewish synagogue in this city, which *subministrant* [supplies] other cities with educated rabbis” (IV 361). On Jewish holidays, he included information about one specific indigenous holiday in “Judaismus”: “Polish Jews celebrate 17 June *alias* observing a strict feast; they do not even breastfeed their children; all in memory of a few thousand Jews killed in Ukraine by Chmielnicki, Cossack hetman” (I 1068–1069).

“Lords’ Jews”

The section devoted to earthly assets, which is addressed to feudal lords, contains statements about lease administrators, who were unambiguously identified with Jews:

A lease administrator, namely a Jew, if a lord possesses one in his estates, should be chosen *ex millibus*, such that he is trustworthy, already on a lease, not an extortioner, and without a big family, so that he does not depend on his lord . . . Do not

lease him cereals, wood, or peasants, because indulging Jews entails submission and serfdom. It is best to have a smaller lease, and peace of mind (III 362–363).

The entire subsection on this topic is of practical nature. It gives calculations of gains and losses resulting from relations between lords and their administrators. The Jewish identity of the latter prompts Chmielowski to stipulate that the needs of Christians living with such lease arrangements also be respected in economic practices and daily life. He writes, “A Jewish lease administrator should not keep the farmhands and maids of Christians, as he is not a Christian” (III 363), and closer relations with him negatively influence Christian servants, demoralizing them religiously; let him not work hard on Christian holidays; let him not manage the felling of trees, “because Jews do not know about it” (III 364–365). Chmielowski advises feudal lords to treat their Jewish lessees with noble superiority—yet with appropriate moderation and humanity—and to not refuse their lordly care in a time of danger:

I am surprised that lords are afraid to offend a Jew. Once the conditions of a contract are agreed upon, he should be warned right away what to expect. Should he be flattered when he strips your peasants so that he himself may grow rich? May you appear *serio* [seriously] before the Jew in a lordly fashion, and may he be *subiectus* [subject], as befits a lease administrator who owes rent payments. However, as a neighbor, neither shall harm be done to him, nor shall *denegare protectionem* [protection be refused] if he finds himself in oppression (III 365).

“Major Errors of Jews”

Other parts of *New Athens* speak differently about relations between lords and Jews, which is further evidence that what is conveyed by Chmielowski depends on the conventions in individual chapters, and especially on the traditions in the literature used. In the fourth volume is a chapter entitled “Two Things Desirable for Poles and Lithuania: Dismissal of Jews and Heretics *vulgo* Dissidents, or Tolerance Thereof under Pain of the Law, Because These Are Two Powerful Faces of Polish Ruin.” The beginning part of this chapter concerns Jews (IV 383–390), and encourages the reader to pay close attention: “This material is beautiful and must be read.” Here Chmielowski talks about “Lords’ Jews”³² and lease administrators quite differently than in the section on economy: “It is also a serious *scandalum*,

³² For more information, see Moshe Rosman, *The Lords’ Jews: Magnate-Jewish Relations in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth during the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1990).

and it is not appropriate for lords to have Jews as administrators, writers, or commissioners over Christians in their estates, and they are not to lease those estates or granges to Jews” (IV 387). And in explaining why such a *scandalum* was taking place, he wrote, “through their frequent spells and offers, they have charmed the hearts of lords” (IV 389). This accusation was strongly rooted in anti-Jewish literature.³³

Even more deeply rooted was the practice of accusing Jews of ritual murders and spilling Christian blood for the purposes of various practices, especially magic.³⁴ This can also be seen in *New Athens*—not only in the indicated section of volume four, but earlier, in “Judaismus.” There, in his attempt to comprehensively treat of Jewish affairs, Chmielowski recognized that such issues must be addressed as conventional and expected by readers. He therefore assembled a list of the “major errors of Jews,” at the end of which is a short, 15-line subsection beginning with the words, “Jews have a great appetite for Christian blood” (I 1070). It contains a handful of common themes related to this topic. He first mentions Simon of Trent, a famous victim-child, with the annotation, “*teste Nadasi 24 Martii.*” “Nadasi” refers to János Nádas (1613–1679), a Hungarian Jesuit and author of many works, including a devotional book entitled *Annus caelestis*, translated into Polish as *Rok niebieski albo przewodnik do szczęśliwej wieczności...* [The Heavenly Year, or Guide to Happy Eternity...]. The entry for 24 March features the following call to prayer:

St. Simon, child from Trent, cut by Jews with scissors at the age of 29 months, your entire body pricked by needles, attacked in various ways and crucified. When you bowed your head to a dying Jesus, you became a martyr. Holy child, come to me in the hour of death so that, if not for Christ, I would at least die in Christ.³⁵

In terms of ritual murders, Chmielowski had access to a wide range of anti-Jewish literature which extensively and in detail cataloged the numerous alleged victims and executioners.³⁶ Yet he chose to cite the

³³ For more on the charming of lords by Jews, see my article, “Władanie przyjaźnią: Staropolskie uwagi o magicznym jednaniu uczucia,” in Agnieszka Czechowicz, Małgorzata Trębska (eds.), *Przyjaźń w kulturze staropolskiej* (Lublin, 2013), 221–229.

³⁴ See especially Ronnie Po-chia Hsia, *The Myth of Ritual Murder: Jews and Magic in Reformation Germany* (New Haven–London, 1988). The literature on this subject is extensive.

³⁵ Jan Nadasi, *Rok niebieski albo przewodnik do szczęśliwej wieczności...*, trans. Franciszek Iworski (Kalisz, 1697), 469–470.

³⁶ Such literature is compiled and heavily cited in the first part of a work by Joanna Tokarska-Bakir, entitled *Legends o krwi. Antropologia przesądu (z cyklu: Obraz osobliwy)* (Warsaw, 2008).

work which was of a completely different nature, and which presented the matter of Simon of Trent only in the above quote. Another authority, cited here twice by Chmielowski, is Piotr Hiacynt Pruszc (1605–ca. 1668), who in his devotional work *Forteca duchowna Królestwa Polskiego* included a short, three-page chapter entitled “On the cruel murder of innocent children.” The following quote indicates that Chmielowski read his work inattentively: “In the work of Pruszc, I counted five Christian children in Poland alone who were killed by Jewish maliciousness” (I 1070). It is easy to see, however, that there were twice as many. The explanation of “Evicomen” as blood used for magical purposes was also based on this work; or, more specifically, on an anonymous rabbi convert cited therein: “as confessed by a baptized rabbi in Pruszc the author” (I 1070).³⁷ Only Radliński’s book, which Chmielowski once referred to here as a legal compendium, can be categorized as encyclopedic literature directly concerning Jewish affairs.

In the above-mentioned chapter “Two Things Desirable for Poles and Lithuania: Dismissal of Jews and Heretics *vulgo* Dissidents, or Tolerance Thereof under Pain of the Law...,” eight pages are devoted to a more extensive address of the subject matter. Once again, Chmielowski begins on the topic of murder with Simon of Trent. He also mentions other murder victims, but fails to provide details, dates, and the names of the accused. The murder of Dominic “is attested to by Nadasi 31 *Augusti in Anno caelesti*”³⁸ (IV 383); and the murders of others by Hendrik Engelgrave (1610–1670), a Belgian Jesuit and author of the pious work on saints cited here:³⁹ “In *Panteon*, Engelgrave lists the children killed by Jews: Gwilelms, Hugos, Richards, Christophers, *etc.*” (IV 383). Such collective treatment of the victims gives the impression that the author is only mentioning the matter cursorily. In terms of Polish victims, he mentions Maciej from Kodeń, who was “endowed with reverence in 1713.” He hints that there were others as well, going only as far as to say, “[they] are listed by Fr. Pruszc in *Forteca*, and Fr. Radliński” (IV 383). Further cited here

³⁷ Cf. Piotr Hiacynt Pruszc, *Forteca duchowna Królestwa Polskiego...* (Kraków, 1662), 185: “Ex relatione cuiusdam rabini noviter baptizati.”

³⁸ In fact, the entire testimony is closed in the prayer: “St. Dominic, infant martyr, nailed to the cross by Jews in Spain, above whose body a heavenly light can be seen, give me the grace and the glory that I may see and love God forever.” Nadasi, *Rok niebieski*, 1329–1330.

³⁹ Hendrik Engelgrave, *Caeleste pantheon sive caelum novum...*, pars posterior (Coloniae Agripinae, 1658), 141.

is Piotr Skarga: “According to Skarga, the blood of Christian children is called *jubel*, i.e. *jubileus*”⁴⁰ (IV 384).

He dedicates a bit more space to a murder near Żytomierz (now Zhytomyr in Ukraine) in the region of Kijów (now Kiev in Ukraine). But the story is not limited to a description of the crime and punishment, which took place in May of 1753. It also covers the activity of the bishops of Lwów and Kijów, who, “by creating an image of the innocent child and printing *Dekret*,”⁴¹ (IV 384) completed the fate of the dead, ensuring remembrance of him.

It is significant that Chmielowski, also in a special anti-Jewish section of these additions, consistently avoids referring to books that are extreme in this respect, such as Przechwał Mojecki’s *Żydowskie okrucieństwa, mordy i zabobony* (Kraków, 1598), and the complementary writings of Sebastian Miczyński and Sebastian Śleszkowski.⁴² Chmielowski’s reliance on Church authors and devotional books not particularly focused on Jewish issues may be taken as a certain statement. Undoubtedly, Chmielowski treated the authors he cited as credible, but his own allegations against the Jews (very typical of the literature on Jews) seem to lose force when presented using their books. At the same time, none of his contemporaries could blame him for being silent in this respect.

Why Chmielowski selected the material used further in this chapter is also unclear. In reference to the accusation of spilled blood, Chmielowski writes that “the Jews heavily defend themselves, swear their innocence,” and put up arguments. He then acquits them by citing their arguments and saying, “this is how the Jews want to free themselves from blame,” thus allowing room for them to defend themselves. Some of these arguments are unquestionably sensible. For example, if they really needed blood, they would buy Christian slaves in Turkey and get it thence with no risk (IV 384–385).

⁴⁰ Yet he cites him inaccurately, as Skarga uses the term “*joel*, i.e. *jubileus*.” Piotr Skar-ga, *Żywoty świętych...* (Kraków, 1598), 263 (30 March: “The martyrdom of boy Simon of Trent”).

⁴¹ Undoubtedly, this refers to *Dekret o zamęczeniu przez Żydów dziecięcia katolickiego w grodzie żytomierskim...* (Kraków, 1753). For more information, see Zenon Guldon, Jacek Wijaczka, *Procesy o mordy rytualne w Polsce w XVI–XVIII wieku* (Kielce, 1995), 63–64, 141–145.

⁴² Sebastian Miczyński, *Zwierciadło Korony Polskiej urazy ciężkie i utrapienia wielkie, które ponosi od Żydów, wyrażające...* (Kraków, [1618]); Sebastian Śleszkowski, *Odkrycie zdrad, złośliwych ceremonij, tajemnych rad, praktyk szkodliwych Rzeczypospolitej i straszliwych zamysłów żydowskich...* (Brunsbergae, 1621).

In the title of this chapter, Chmielowski puts forth the idea that “dismissal of the Jews” would be good. However, he himself disavows the idea in various ways later in the same chapter. He writes, “They have acquired sums from monasteries, churches, and noblemen all over Poland and Lithuania, which could amount to a dozen or so millions; and because of this, the exiles themselves have become difficult to expel” (IV 389). Indeed, a law on their expulsion would have been difficult to pass, as corrupt deputies would break off the *Sejms*. Furthermore, he ultimately presents the idea of their elimination as bad, as they would go to Turkey, where to the detriment of Christians “they [would] teach the Turks many *artes*” (IV 390).

Chmielowski provides a long list of various “crimes” in Jewish customs and beliefs (“Clericatus . . . testifies”), including the following: “Jews curse Christians thrice daily”; “they teach witchcraft”; “they counterfeit coins and liquor”; “they are spies for foreigners”; “the Talmud teaches burning of the Gospels”; etc. (IV 385). He is also irritated by certain religious rites:

They *scenice* [theatrically] make poor Christians and drunkards with their Haman, on whom the blows fall in the synagogue. . . . they abhor our dishes and plates (*quanta ignominia*) [what an insult!], calling them *immundum alias treyfe* [unclean or *treyfe*]; and Christians have no objection (although they should) to eating hamantash or kugels (IV 386).

He concludes this part of the text with the words, “How can a real Christian suffer a nation as bad as this?” (IV 386). However, just below, as if he had forgotten this question, he lists four benefits from a theological perspective of Christians and Jews living together (IV 388–389).

Peaceful, mutual relations between Jews and Christians could theoretically be achieved by law, hence the author presents “holy canons against the Jews,” and “the essential Statutes and Constitutions of the Kingdom of Poland against the Jews” (IV 387–388), which were intended to regulate various aspects of everyday life, work, and customs. These laws concern dress (“Jews must dress so as to distinguish themselves from Christians, either in black as in old Poland, or with a yellow band around their hats, as in foreign countries. In Avignon, they have yellow hats”; IV 387), and prohibit Jews from employing Christians for various reasons, including sexual reasons, one of which is “to avoid sin, as the Old Testament is often mixed with the New Testament at night” (IV 387); etc.

Having listed these and other accusations and problems, he concludes, “after all, such shameful, wrong-doing blasphemers of Christ and our extortioners are tolerated by Poles” (IV 388). At the end, he evokes the

“holy canons”—guaranteeing peace to the “Orthodox Jews”—which, if disobeyed by Christians, could result in a curse.” He writes, “they do not order a forcing of the Jews into the Christian faith, a violation of their persons or belongings, a profanation of their holidays, or a ravaging of their cemeteries” (IV 390).

Spells, Magic, and Kabbalah

Among the “crimes” mentioned in this part of the text—albeit not very prominently—are accusations of witchcraft. This major cultural charge against Jews is revisited in a more extensive and various fashion in the section of the third volume devoted to magic and witchcraft. Characteristic here is the inclusion of Jews in the Christian concept of witchcraft that was gradually developing at the time. Texts often depicted a Jewish sorcerer, an expert in chirographs and an agent in relations with the devil entered into by St. Theophilus of Adana, which Chmielowski writes about with erudite reference to Symeon the Metaphrast, a Byzantine hagiographer (III 212–213). However, the legend of St. Theophilus and the Jewish sorcerer was commonly known from the popular lives of saints,⁴³ thus it is likely that his readers already knew about it.

With respect to source material on magical power, less obvious is the record of a Jew named Zedechiasz. However, Chmielowski classified it clearly:

The great power of sorcery is also visible in authentic secular histories. Zedechiasz, a Jewish sorcerer, during the times of King Louis the Pious, threw a man into the air like a ball, quartered him, and once again joined him back together; he also swallowed a carriage together with the horses and the hay—according to Maiolus in *Diebus canicularibus*⁴⁴ (III 231).

Chmielowski also had no doubts when evaluating the causes of King Solomon’s extraordinary accomplishments: “perfect was Solomon the naturalista” (III 220). This meant that he had acquired proficiency in natural magic and recognized the order of nature. This is spoken about

⁴³ Skarga, *Żywoty świętych*, 160–163 (23 February).

⁴⁴ On the swallowing of the carriage, the cited Simone Maioli used the word “absorbat,” which, in addition to swallowing, also means raising or lifting up. This is the more probable meaning here. Simone Maioli, *Colloquiorum seu Dierum canicularium continuatio...* (Coloniae, 1608), 258.

in the Bible passages (cf. 3 Kings 4:33, Wis 7: 17–21) that Chmielowski draws from:

[Solomon had knowledge of] trees, cattle, birds, snakes, fishes, the dispositions of the world, power, the spirit of the elements, time, the stars, the hidden properties of herbs, as the Book of Wisdom attributes to him, *cap.* 7; but these books of his are then burned, so that people do not focus on worldly things instead of God (III 220).

The belief that this Israeli ruler had mysterious knowledge was rooted in tradition,⁴⁵ and Chmielowski described his magical achievements in other parts of *New Athens* in reference to the erection of the temple in Jerusalem. Solomon became famous when he cleverly took possession of a worm that was useful in building construction:

the *thamur* worm drew lines of blood on the marble, which then fell smoothly along those lines, so no hammers or axes were necessary. The wise Solomon investigated the nature of this worm by putting a young ostrich in a glass bowl. The older ostrich, in order to free the child, brought the worm from the wilderness, touched the glass with its blood, and the glass fell apart (II 545).

Of course, Chmielowski also talks about other magic-related biblical matters in *New Athens*, such as the fight between Moses and the Pharaoh's magicians, Saul and the witch of Endor, as well as Simon Magus (III 226–229). These references were typical of the specialized treatises on witchcraft and secret teachings (known also in Poland) that Chmielowski drew from in this chapter.

More interesting are his remarks about another secret tradition specific to Jewish teaching: Kabbalah. Below is a short note included at the end of the above-mentioned entry entitled “Rabbis”:

The section on rabbis shall contain remarks about Kabbalah (hence: *cabalists* [Kabbalists]), which means, *receptio*. It has 70 volumes, which—as they say—Esdras, son of Sarajas, the supreme Jewish priest, left only to the Jewish wise men, that they would not circulate among lay people. Joannes Picus Mirandula . . . a very learned and interesting man, praises this Kabbalah and has collected many teachings from Kabbalists. But today's Jewish Kabbalah is different, full of errors, and cursed by the Church of God (III 684).

This note refers to the apocryphal Fourth Book of Esdras, and mentions the divine order to Esdras regarding these secret books, a part of which

⁴⁵ See Pablo A. Torijano, *Solomon the Esoteric King: From King to Magus, Development of a Tradition* (Leiden, 2002).

should remain hidden and preserved only for the elect: “you shall keep seventy to give to the sages of your people.”⁴⁶ Chmielowski also cites Pico della Mirandola, who explored Kabbalistic knowledge, combining it with natural magic and concepts taken from Christianity. The most interesting here is the last sentence, which speaks of “today’s Jewish Kabbalah” with disfavor. Was Chmielowski referring here to local Jewish religious movements based on Kabbalistic studies? Is he judging this spiritual phenomenon? The clear answer to these questions is “No.” The entire fragment on Kabbalah, together with the last sentence, was taken (without indicating the source) from Tirinus,⁴⁷ an educated Jesuit, and originally concerned the status of Kabbalah in the seventeenth century. Of course, Chmielowski probably shared his views, but he accepted them as they were.

The magic described in the Bible and in biblical apocrypha has a totally different status than the magic attributed to Jews in Europe by Christian authors. Moreover, there were still authentic magical practices kept by Jews as part of their own folk culture, which was not very accessible to Christians.⁴⁸ *New Athens* contains information related thereto in the section on measures to counter magic:

Are there still some *remedia* for devils and magic?

I say there are, but they are ignoble, and Catholics may not use them if they want to avoid sin and *superstitionis*; because those from the Church of God have neither been implemented nor approved. Among these is a *tyfthym*, which the Jews carry with them and nail to the gate of their houses. It is a reliquary of wood and glass, in which certain words are locked to protect against evil. When they leave their homes, they touch it, just as Catholics touch consecrated water, and then kiss their fingers. In this way, they protect themselves from devils, witches, and evil right from the threshold. They say a commandment of God is written and locked within (III 263–264).

Chmielowski was particularly interested in Lilith, to whom he devoted three entries with different forms of Jewish spells, and with references to various authors:

The Hebrew and Jewish *Lilith* and *Lilis*, that is, *Hecate* or *Lamia*, a night *spectrum* (apparition) or phantom. She is the enemy of mothers, as she suffocates children. For this reason, Jews write the following words on the wall of the home where

⁴⁶ 4 Esdras 14, 46.

⁴⁷ Tirinus, *Commentarius in Sacram Scripturam*, 4 (in the separately paginated chapter “Index auctorum”). In recalling the Kabbalah praised by Pico, he wrote: “Sed haec non est illa, quam Judaei plenam errorum iam nobis obtrudunt; et damnata est a Sede Apostolica.”

⁴⁸ See Joshua Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition: A Study in Folk Religion* (Philadelphia, 2004).

a woman is giving birth as a precaution and *antidotum*: *Adam Chava, Chutz, Lilith* etc. As Rabbi Elias and the Jews explain, and after them Jan Achacy Kmita, this means, “Come Adam and Eve, and the ghost of Lilis shall go away” (I 39).

Rabbi Salomon claims *stulte* [foolishly] that before Eve, Adam had *Lilis* or *Lilith* as his wife, who is now regarded by the Jews as a bogeyman and ghost who harms children and women giving birth. This is why they write the following words on the walls of women giving birth in the area: *Adam Chava, chye Lilis, machszayfe, Loy sechaie*. This means, “Come Adam and Eve, and the ghost of Lilis shall disappear.” Rabbi Elias Theslntes laughs at this ceremony as a scholar (I 1072).

Just when the Jewess gives birth, the Jews, then fearing the witch that they call *Lilis, Lilith*, wrote the following words on the walls: *Adam, Chava, Chutz, Lilith*. This means, “Come here Adam and Eve, and you Lilit—i.e. witch, spectre—get out.” In this way, they curse witches so that they do not harm children or women giving birth. And on the doors, they write the names of three angels, *Senoi, Sansenoi, Samengeloch*, as the German Jew Elias explains (according to Kircher) (III 264).

Scholars of Jewish folklore are familiar with protective amulets that contain inscriptions such as “Adam hava hutz Lilith,” or “Senoy, Sansenoy, Semangelof” (the names of angels), which are meant to serve newborns and their mothers.⁴⁹ When discussing this, Chmielowski refers to Kmita and Kircher. In this way, he shows once again that the lists provided by Kmita mocking the Talmud are for him just as credible as the erudite reasoning of Kircher. Yet Kmita only briefly referred to this subject,⁵⁰ thus Chmielowski took detailed information and references from Kircher.⁵¹

Controversial Issues

In the chapter entitled “Dubitantius or Unanswered Questions,” which discusses controversial issues that require explanations, especially with regard to the opinions thereon in the works of various authors, Chmielowski

⁴⁹ See the entry “Lilith,” in *Encyclopedia of Jewish Folklore and Traditions*, eds. Raphael Patai, Haya Bar-Itzhak (Armonk–London, 2013), 335, 333. For more on Lilith, the cultural traditions related thereto, the magic rituals used to drive her away, and the amulets meant to protect against her, see Raphael Patai, *The Hebrew Goddess* (Detroit, 1990), 221–254 (in the chapter “Lilith”). Cf. also id., “Lilith,” *The Journal of American Folklore* 77 (1964), 306: 295–314.

⁵⁰ Jan Achacy Kmita, *Talmud abo wiara żydowska* (Kraków, 1610), f. A4r: “said Rabbi Slomo: . . . after a Jewess gives birth, they will write the following words in chalk around the room: *Adam Chawa chuc Lilis*, come Adam and Eve, and Lilith shall be cast away.”

⁵¹ Athanasius Kircher, *Oedipus Aegyptiacus*... (Romae, 1652), 1: 321–322. This “Elias, a German Jew in Kircher,” appears in this work as Elias Levita (a Hebrew scholar and poet, active in Germany and Italy in the first half of the sixteenth century), quoting Rabbi Solomon. It was in Kircher’s work that Chmielowski found the juxtaposition of Lilith with Hecate and Lamia, the formulation “Adam, Cheva, Chutz Lilith,” and the names of the three angels.

presents his own extensive and interesting arguments. Among the topics he covers that are related to Jews, three are particularly interesting: “On the Leviathan from the Jewish Talmuds”; “On Shorobor the Ox. Does He Exist?”; and “On the River *Sabbaticus*. Does It or Did It Exist?” (I 137–140).⁵²

Chmielowski writes, “The *Leviathan* is a fish so large that, having wrapped itself around the circumference of the Earth, holds its own tail that it may grow no more. The Jews say that God plays with this fish and keeps it for them, that they may have it for meals and specialties after death”; “*Thalmudistae* . . . told ordinary Jews . . . that Shorobor the Ox is in the Arabian deserts, so big that he eats the grass from a thousand mountains daily, that a flying swallow takes twelve days to fly from one of his horns to the other.”⁵³ Chmielowski based his remarks about these giants on short notes in one of Kmita’s booklets concerning the Talmud,⁵⁴ and firmly denies their existence, urging the reader to mock “the teachings of Talmudists.” However, Chmielowski speaks differently of the sacred river *Sabbaticus*, “named after the Jewish Sabbath,” which “every seventh day, i.e. on Saturday, dries up, but on other days is full and flowing.”⁵⁵ He acknowledges that the river existed in earlier times, and uses its subsequent disappearance to make theological remarks. Important here is that Chmielowski cites trusted authors other than rabbis; namely, Pliny the Elder, Isidore of Seville, Simone Maioli,⁵⁶ and Flavius Josephus.⁵⁷

⁵² For more information, see the critical edition: Benedykt Chmielowski, *Nowe Ateny: Traktat Dubitantius*, ed. Jerzy Krocza, introd. Bartosz Marcińczak (Wrocław, 2009), 100–104 (*Bibliotheca Curiosa* 3).

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 101, 102.

⁵⁴ Kmita, *Talmud*, ff. A2v, Br. But other authors also write on the games God plays with the Leviathan, including Radliński in *Prawda chrześcijańska*, 450, 457; Górski, *Okazanie kilka błędów*, f. Bv; Sixtus Senensis, *Bibliotheca sancta*, 200.

⁵⁵ Chmielowski, *Nowe Ateny: Traktat Dubitantius*, 103. He also includes it in the catalog of rivers (I 564), where he refers to “Dubitantius.”

⁵⁶ Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis historia* XXXI, 24 (he writes that in Judea the river dries up every Sabbath); Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae* XIII, 13, 9 (he also places the river in Judea); Simone Maioli, *Dies caniculares*... (Ursellis, 1600), 435.

⁵⁷ Flavius Josephus, *The Jewish War* VII, 5, 1. He writes the opposite, i.e. that the river only flows every seventh day: “That is why it is called the Sabbath River, whose name was taken from the seventh day, which for the Jews is a holy day.”

Final Remarks

There are not many Jewish authors cited on the pages of *New Athens* as authorities.⁵⁸ Among those treated as credible and cited most often are Flavius Josephus (who is variously referred to as “Josephus, historyk żydowski” [Josephus, Jewish historian] and “Józef Żydowin” [Hebrew Joseph]⁵⁹), and “Philo Żyd uczony bardzo” [Philo, a very learned Jew], i.e. Philo of Alexandria. Among later authorities—living around 1200—Chmielowski cites Rabbi David Kimhi (most likely because Kircher often cites him), on whom more information can be found in the catalog of Jewish rabbis (III 682–683). What is interesting is that Chmielowski does not refer to the opinions of Kimhi directly, but through Christians. For example, when writing about Moloch he adds: “The authors write that Kimhi claimed that the statue was of extraordinarily great size” (I 40). Here, the term “authors” actually refers to Kircher.⁶⁰

Chmielowski constructed *New Athens* from a number of books, and cites a number of different authors therein. But fundamentally, the texts that he uses to address a wide variety of Jewish issues are taken primarily from the erudite literature of the early modern period and religious writings. Indeed, he refers to matters and topics that are important for them and their perspective. When speaking about the hope of Jews for the coming of the Messiah, he writes: “they are looking and waiting, but will never see the Messiah . . . About him they write *mirabilia* [strange things, nonsense], the trickery of their rabbis” (I 1069). He fills the subsequent pages with theological arguments against the opinions of rabbis (I 1080–1092) characteristic of the sources he uses. He does not mention newer messianic perturbations in the Jewish world, or Sabbatai Zevi and his later followers (they also were not mentioned in the works he read).⁶¹

⁵⁸ Of course, aside from biblical authors.

⁵⁹ Chmielowski even included him in his catalog of noteworthy persons: “Flavius Josephus, son of Matthias [Matatyjasz], Jew *natione*, Pharisee, Jewish priest and war chief, named the Greek Livius by St. Jerome.” He also mentions why he should be esteemed: “He praises Christ the Lord as well, that he was a miracle-worker, and that the Jewish nation accused him and brought him to death” (III 644).

⁶⁰ Cf. Kircher, *Oedipus Aegyptiacus*, 332–334.

⁶¹ In the Christian literature from the end of the seventeenth and the first half of the eighteenth century, Sabbathists were not extensively discussed. Works by Polish clergymen concerning Frankists were published after the second edition of *New Athens*. For more information, see Jan Doktór, *Śladami mesjasza-apostaty: Żydowskie ruchy mesjańskie w XVII i XVIII wieku a problem konwersji* (Wrocław, 1998), 24–26.

In treating of Jewish issues, Chmielowski addressed topics typical of literature and traditional knowledge,⁶² which indicates how culturally isolated he was from real Jews—his actual neighbors.⁶³ When reading Chmielowski's comments on aspects of the spiritual life of Jews, it is best to exercise caution, as the validity of the information therein may be deceptive, such as in the passus on Kabbalah,⁶⁴ as it was taken from an old book.



Scandal—the image in the French version of *Iconologia* by Cesare Ripa (part 2, Paris 1643). According to Chmielowski: “A man, in alleged Jewish dress.”

⁶² For more on typical images of Jews, see the classic article by Janusz Tazbir, entitled “Żydzi w opinii staropolskiej,” in id., *Świat panów Pasków: Eseje i studia* (Łódź, 1986), 213–241. See also Judith Kalik, “Żydowska duchowość, religia i praktyki religijne w oczach Polaków w XVII–XVIII wieku,” in Michał Galas (ed.), *Duchowość żydowska w Polsce* (Kraków, 2000), 81–90.

⁶³ On the symptoms of cultural isolation (using remarks about Jews in the writings of Marcin Bielski as a case study), see Dariusz Śnieżko, “Mieszanie krwi,” *Poznańskie Studia Polonistyczne. Seria Literacka* 22 (2013), 20.

⁶⁴ “But today’s Jewish Kabbalah is different, full of errors, and cursed by the Church of God” (III 684).

Finally, and with full certainty, I would like to indicate a minor, yet interesting, reflection of the perceptions of Chmielowski and his experience with Jews. In the section entitled “Umbras Explained,” which talks about hieroglyphics, symbols, and emblematic material, he presents the personification of Scandal (I 1173) taken from the French edition of Cesare Ripa’s *Iconologia* as follows: “*Scandalum* shows a man in alleged Jewish dress, with playing cards in one hand, a musical instrument in another, and near his legs are books with the titles *Romans a Madis*, trumpets, and other items.”⁶⁵ The words “in alleged Jewish dress” were added by Chmielowski, and reveal his association with the illustration, which in the original did not at all concern Jews.⁶⁶ The clothing and the figure featured in the image made him recall his Orthodox Jewish neighbors,⁶⁷ which serves as a modest proof that he knew about Jews not only from academic and religious books, but that he could at least recognize them visually.

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⁶⁵ See the critical edition: Benedykt Chmielowski, *Nowe Ateny: Umbry objaśnione*, eds. Jerzy Krocak, Jacek Sokolski, introd. Jacek Sokolski (Wrocław, 2015), 99 (*Bibliotheca Curiosa* 28).

⁶⁶ For more information, see Sokolski, *Wstęp*, in *ibid.*, 39–40. Here it was revealed that Chmielowski used the French version of Ripa’s work. Editions in other languages have different illustrations.

⁶⁷ However, the clothing worn by Polish Jews at that time is a more complicated matter. See Gershon David Hundert, *Jews in Poland-Lithuania: A Genealogy of Modernity* (Berkeley, 2004), 87–130.