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## THE AMSTERDAM TRANSLATION OF THE MISHNAH

(William Horbury (ed.), *Hebrew Study from Ezra to Ben-Yehuda*, T&T Clark 1999, 257-267)

The first complete Latin translation of the Mishnah appeared between 1698 and 1703.<sup>1</sup> Henceforth Christian scholars would be able to consult a printed translation of the whole Mishnah. The work was edited by Willem Surenhuis, about whom we do not know very much. Surenhuis was born around 1664 in the countryside of Groningen, the son of a German-born minister of the Dutch public church.<sup>2</sup> At eighteen, he enrolled at the University of Groningen. Four years later, in 1686, he moved to Amsterdam to take up lessons in rabbinical literature with Jewish teachers. We do not know how he made his living in these years. He taught some rabbinics himself, but it is hard to imagine that this could be a full-time occupation. Years later he would proudly state that several of his pupils had become professors at universities in the Dutch Republic, Sweden, the German Empire and Switzerland.<sup>3</sup> It was during this stay in Amsterdam that he edited the translation of the Mishnah. In 1704, at the age of forty, eighteen years after he had moved to Amsterdam, he became the successor of Etienne Morin, professor for oriental languages at the Athenaeum Illustre, predecessor of the University of Amsterdam. Some years later, the teaching of Greek, too, was entrusted to him. He died in 1729.

The Latin Mishnah was published in six slim folio volumes by the Amsterdam printers Gerardus and Jacobus Borstius. This publishing house was not specialized in rabbinics. Its list consisted mainly of short Dutch theological treatises.<sup>4</sup> Borstius had,

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1 *Mischna sive totius Hebraeorum juris, Rituum, Antiquitatum, ac legum oralium Systema, cum clarissimorum rabbinorum Maimonidis & Bartenorae Commentariis integris. Quibus accedunt variorum auctorum notae ac versiones in eos quos ediderunt codices. Latinitate donavit ac notis illustravit Guilielmus Surenhuisus ...* A bibliographic description of the six volumes is to be found in L. Fuks and R.G. Fuks-Mansfeld, *Hebrew Typography in the Northern Netherlands 1585-1815. Historical Evaluation and Descriptive Bibliography II*, Leiden 1987, no 612.

2 Sources for the life of Surenhuis are scarce. Most information has to be gathered from his own works, especially his *Dissertatio de natura pandectarum Hebraicarum*, Amsterdam 1704. The short article in the *Nieuw Nederlandsch Biografisch Woordenboek* 9:1086 (ten volumes, Leiden 1911-1937) has to be used with care. It can be supplemented by the data from A.J van der Aa, *Biographisch Woordenboek der Nederlanden* (12 volumes, Haarlem 1852-1878). Surenhuis' enrollment at the University of Groningen at 23 June 1682 ('Wilh Suirenhuisen (sic) Omlando Groninganus, a. 18, Phil') is recorded in the *Album Studiosorum Academiae Groninganae*, Groningen 1915). His portrait is to be found in the introduction to volume V of his translation of the Mishna. F.A. van Lieburg's *Repertorium van Nederlandse hervormde predikanten tot 1816*, Dordrecht 1996, 243 summarizes the career of Surenhuis' father: born in Elberfeld, he became a minister in Rottum in 1655, moving to Menkeweer in 1668. He died in 1673. Five rather unimportant letters have been published in Jan Wim Wesselius, "De briefwisseling tussen Johann Christoffer Wolf en Willem Surenhuisen (1720-7)", *Studia Rosenthaliana* 26 (1992), 136-48.

3 *Dissertatio*, 4.

4 All information about the list of Borstius has been gathered from the computerized *Short Title Catalogue Netherlands*, a new retrospective bibliography of all works published in the Netherlands

however, undertaken some larger, more scholarly ventures. In 1684 the firm had published, in two volumes, the *Opera Omnia* of the Dutch theologian Cloppenborgh and in 1694 the *Opera Omnia* of Descartes. These works had not much to do with oriental languages. The five volumes of the *Opera Omnia* of the Groningen theologian J. Alting, published in 1687, on the other hand, mainly consisted of exegetical works concerning the Old Testament. It is tempting to suppose that Surenhuis (who had moved from Groningen to Amsterdam a year earlier) was somehow involved with this edition and came into contact with Borstius in this way. In 1693 Borstius produced a beautiful one-volume edition of Louis de Dieu's exegetical works. The work contains Greek, Hebrew and Syriac type. These larger publishing ventures were probably made possible by the use of the new commercial technique of publication by subscription, which had been developed in England, and had been introduced on the continent by Jewish scholars working for a Christian public.<sup>5</sup> It is only in the case of Borstius' edition of the Latin Mishnah, however, that we know for certain that the work was published by subscription.<sup>6</sup> The largest project concerning oriental languages which Borstius was involved with, was the publication in 1698 of a new, enlarged edition of the *Critici Sacri*, the multivolume collection of humanist commentaries on the Bible, originally published together with the London Polyglot Bible. Borstius was one of the participants in the consortium which undertook this enormous project.

The Amsterdam edition of a Latin translation of the Mishnah was, in a certain sense, a collection too. In the case of 26 of the 63 tracts that make up the Mishnah, Surenhuis' edition simply offered the text of an earlier translation. He included almost all published Latin translations, those by Fagius, L'Empereur, Guisius, Ulmann, Sheringham, Coccejus, Wagenseil, Peringer, Sebastian Schmidt, Houting, Arnoldi, Otho and Lund.<sup>7</sup> In this way Surenhuis' edition also offers an implicit overview of the development of the Christian study of rabbinical literature. It is immediately clear that these studies were mainly pursued in the second half of the seventeenth century. Only one of the translations included by Surenhuis, Fagius' edition of Pirkei Avot, stems from the sixteenth century, and only the translations of Bava Kamma and Middot by L'Empereur, and those of Sanhedrin and Makkot by Cocceius were published before 1650. In short, the second half of the seventeenth century is the period during which Christian Hebraism produced most of its works on rabbinical literature.

Surenhuis himself had a clear opinion about the development of scholarship during the previous two centuries.<sup>8</sup> In the sixteenth century God had elevated a few men who possessed a better understanding of Christian doctrine. They stimulated the study of

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before 1800, and from the so-called 'Apparaat Enschede', in the University Library of the Universiteit van Amsterdam.

5 Peter van Rooden & Jan Wim Wesselius, "Two Early Cases of Publication by Subscription in Holland and Germany: Jakob Abendana's *Mikhlal Yophi* (1661) and David Cohen de Lara's *Keter Kehunna* (1668)", *Quaerendo* 16 (1986), 110-130.

6 I.H. van Eeghen, *De Amsterdamse boekhandel 1680-1725*, 5 vols., Amsterdam 1960-1978, II, 35-6

7 E. Bischoff, *Kritische Geschichte der Thalmud-Uebersetzungen aller Zeiten und Zungen*, Frankfurt am Main 1899, 22 offers an overview of the few published translations not used by Surenhuis.

8 *Mischna* I, \*\*2r.

languages. Only in the seventeenth century, however, did the study of rabbinical literature really begin to flourish. Surenhuis offers several explanations for the tardiness of this blossoming. It was only in the seventeenth century that the quarrels about religion lost their vehement character. Peace returned, contacts with the Jews were re-established, and all sciences were recognized as interconnected.<sup>9</sup>

This view of history is a neat synthesis of humanist elements and conceptions of the early Enlightenment. A fairly close parallel can be found a few years later, in an overview of the history of biblical scholarship by Jean le Clerc, professor at the Arminian College in Amsterdam.<sup>10</sup> The idea that the rebirth of the knowledge of classical languages coincided with the Reformation and that both were the work of God-inspired individuals derives from the world of Protestant humanism. The allusion to the discovery of the unity of the sciences in the middle of the seventeenth century suggests Cartesian influence.<sup>11</sup> Truly enlightened is Surenhuis' opinion that the religious and theological quarrels of the sixteenth and early seventeenth century had been a hindrance to scholarship.

Surenhuis was no radical adherent of the Enlightenment. He subscribed to all important Christian doctrines, finding the core of Christian belief in Christ's atonement.<sup>12</sup> Yet he was no theologian. He was not indebted to the spiritual interests of any particular denomination and therefore did not live in the world of orthodox Protestantism. His relative freedom from confessional constraints appears from the manner in which he dedicated the various volumes of his translation of the Mishnah. Dedications to the Burgomasters of Groningen and Amsterdam, or the Curators of Leiden University are not surprising in the case of a scholar born in the countryside of Groningen, working in Amsterdam and hoping to move on to a prestigious university.<sup>13</sup> The dedication to Robert Harley, the most powerful member of the House of Commons, fits this pattern too.<sup>14</sup> English benefices, and the English politicians who held the key to them, were very popular with Dutch scholars in the seventeenth century. Isaac Vossius, and, once again, Jean le Clerc spring to mind. Yet Surenhuis also dedicated a volume to the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Cosimo III, and another one to a cardinal, who was also a member of the house of the Medici.

The truly original element in Surenhuis' description of the development of scholarship is his mention of the importance of the Jewish presence. The use of Jews as teachers and informants was a characteristic aspect of the work of all Christian Hebraists. Yet usually they resented and suppressed the dependence implied by this use.<sup>15</sup> In fact, the development of Christian Hebraism during the seventeenth century

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9 Ibid: "omnes scientias habere aliquod commune vinculum, & cognatione quadam inter se contineri".

10 Jean le Clerc, *Genesis*, Amsterdam 1710, xxvii-xxviii.

11 Cf., for instance, the first chapter of Descartes' *Regulae ad directionem ingenii* (*Oeuvres*, publ. par C. Adam et P. Tannery, Paris 1964-1974, X, 360f)

12 *Mischna* V, \*\*2r.

13 Curators thanked him with a gift of a f 100 (P. C. Molhuysen, *Bronnen tot de geschiedenis der Leidsche Universiteit*, 7 vols, 's-Gravenhage 1913-1924, 5:199), about a months' salary for a professor.

14 *Dictionary of National Biography* 24: 399-406.

15 Peter van Rooden, *Theology, Biblical Scholarship and Rabbinical Studies in the Seventeenth Century: Constantijn L'Empereur (1591-1648), Professor of Hebrew and Theology at Leiden*, Leiden 1989, 163.

century can well be described as a sustained project to break the dependence on living Jews in the study of Jewish literature. Surenhuis, on the other hand, was exceptionally frank in his recognition of his debt to Jewish teachers.

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Jews are equally prominent in Surenhuis' defense of the importance of the study of the Mishnah. His sketch of the development of sixteenth and seventeenth-century Christian scholarship was part of a larger overview of the vicissitudes of rabbinical literature since Moses.<sup>16</sup> One of the aims of this overview is to explain why Christians had lacked any detailed knowledge of rabbinical literature for so long. In the first half of his argument, Surenhuis elaborates upon the humanist commonplace linking political power and cultural greatness. From Salomon onwards, the Jewish state had entered a gradual and inexorable decline and Jewish letters could not influence other peoples or neighbouring states. After God's wrath against the Jews had culminated in the fall of the Second Temple, he took pity upon them and raised Juda ha-Nasi, who committed the Mishnah to writing. Yet in these years the Christians were not able to study Hebrew thoroughly. They were persecuted and channelled all their energies into missions. In later centuries Christians were no longer interested in rabbinical literature, due to misunderstandings concerning its nature and a mistaken preference for Greek and Latin. Surenhuis goes to great lengths to offer these explanations, as he is convinced of the enormous value of the Mishnah. The embarrassing lack of appreciation by Christian scholars of rabbinical literature through the ages presents a serious problem for him.

The value of talmudic literature was the subject of Surenhuis' inaugural lecture at the Athenaeum Illustre, too. In this lecture he favourably compared the Talmud with Roman law.<sup>17</sup> He argued that Jewish law does not only enjoin public order, but fosters personal morality as well. Thanks to its haggadic passages, it can be grasped by the common people, whereas Roman law can only be understood by scholars.<sup>18</sup> The greatest advantage of the Mishnah above the Codex Iuris Civilis lies elsewhere, however. Both codifications are collections of rulings of lawyers, summarizing a legal tradition of centuries. Yet Justinianus' codification excluded many earlier rulings and decisions. It is therefore no longer possible to understand the historical development of Roman law. Surenhuis follows sixteenth-century French humanist lawyers in considering this a very serious deficiency.<sup>19</sup> Since it is unclear how Roman law emerged and was developed, the Codex bears an authoritarian character. Juda ha-Nasi, on the other hand, carefully preserved the whole of tradition during his codification. Consequently, in the Mishnah, one can follow and trace the rational development of Jewish law. Submitting to the rulings of the Mishnah does thus not

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16 *Mischna* I, \*\*1rff.

17 In a marked opposition to the Leiden professor Constantijn L'Empereur, who had also compared both systems, and concluded the Mishnah was wanting in justice and equity. Cf Peter van Rooden, *Theology*, 179-81.

18 Surenhuis offers several apologies for the haggadic passages which Christian scholars usually adduced as proof of the depravity and unreasonableness of the Jewish religion. Elsewhere he quotes Maimonides' interpretation of these stories as esoteric riddles, meant to ensure that a sublime doctrine is not vulgarised. References to the concrete and imaginary style of Eastern languages occur as well.

19 H.E. Troje, "'Peccatum Triboniani'. Zur Dialektik der 'Interpretatio duplex' bei François Baudouin", *Studia et documenta historiae juris* 36 (1970), 341-358.

imply obeying an external authority. One can truly understand the reasonableness of its laws and decisions because one can know the way in which they were reached.

Surenhuis laid great stress on continuity as a characteristic of Jewish law. He actually shared the Jewish conception of the divine origin of the Mishnah. According to Surenhuis, the present text contains later additions and is certainly no literal version of God's revelation. Yet it is a faithful rendering.<sup>20</sup> The orally transmitted revelation explains, and offers additions to, the revelation preserved in the Bible. Surenhuis enhanced the value of the Mishnah even further by using the New Testament conception of a parallel between the Old Testament rituals and the work of Christ. Type (the forms of the Jewish cult) and antitype (Christ's work of salvation) have been linked by God. While the Jews focus on the type, most Christians recognize only the antitype. According to Surenhuis, one ought to grasp the divine origin of both. Christians should take interest in the Mishnah, because it is a divinely originated commentary on Old Testament law which prefigures Christ.<sup>21</sup>

In so far as this conception offers a justification for Surenhuis' scholarly work, without actually inspiring it, it is mostly ideology. His primary motive probably comes to the fore in a casual remark in the dedication of the sixth volume, where he speaks about the extraordinary pleasure which the study of the Mishnah affords its practitioners.<sup>22</sup> The justification as such, however, is original, because it links the traditional Christian view of the Old Testament as foreshadowing the New Testament with the Jewish conception of the Mishnah as a authoritative and divinely sanctioned interpretation of the Old. Both these views concern the interpretation of Scripture. An interest in biblical exegesis lay at the core of Surenhuis' interest in the Mishnah.

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In an account of his studies Surenhuis stated that he began by studying Greek, hoping to further his understanding of the New Testament.<sup>23</sup> He expressed his bitter disappointment with these studies in formulations that imply a strong rejection of the theory that New Testament Greek is a pure and classical Greek<sup>24</sup>. Studying the Mishnah promised to be a far more fruitful way to approach the New Testament. It was for this reason that he moved to Amsterdam, as possibilities for further rabbinical studies in Groningen were lacking. In Amsterdam he attended for several years the *collegia* of the Jews. In these years he was already intending to translate the entire Mishnah. Here, as elsewhere,<sup>25</sup> Surenhuis stressed the necessity of oral teaching by a Jewish scholar to gain a true understanding of rabbinical literature.

When he had almost finished his own 'interpretatio' of the Mishnah, he heard that the Latin translation prepared by Isaac Abendana for the Cambridge scholars would be

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20 *Mischna* II, \*3vff; *Dissertatio*, 7ff.

21 *Mischna* V, \*\*2r.

22 *Mischna* VI, B2v.

23 *Mischna* I, \*\*2r

24 For the debate about the nature of New Testament Greek, see H.J. de Jonge, *De bestudering van het Nieuwe Testament aan de Noordnederlandse universiteiten en het Remonstrants Seminarie van 1575 tot 1700*, Amsterdam 1980, 35ff.

25 *Dissertatio*, 3.

published shortly.<sup>26</sup> He stopped working on the Mishnah, switching to a translation of the Gemara on Berakhot and the preparation of a commentary on Leviticus based on the Mishnah. Upon learning that Isaac's translation would not appear, he resumed his earlier work, using a manuscript of a Spanish translation of the Mishnah and the commentaries of Maimonides and Obadiah Bertinoro (which he, mistakingly, ascribed to Jacob Abendana<sup>27</sup>). He also showed his translation to several Amsterdam Jews to make sure it did not contain any mistakes.

Surenhuis tells us that he decided on the form of the edition after consulting with several scholars, both within the Republic and elsewhere. They urged him to include the commentaries of those Christian scholars who had earlier published translations of the Mishnah. Reluctantly, he followed their advice.

His edition of the Mishnah follows a more or less traditional form. Each of the six volumes contains one order of the Mishnah. At the center of every page, the unvocalized Hebrew text of a single mishnah — the smallest unit of a tractate — is printed, accompanied by a Latin translation. Beneath both, in two columns, Latin versions of the commentaries of Maimonides and Bertinoro are printed. In the case of tractates translated by earlier Christian Hebraists, Maimonides and Bertinoro are followed by their commentaries. Some tractates contain Surenhuis' own notes as well. In the first order Surenhuis added notes to all tractates except Orlah and Bikkurim; in the second order only to Shekalim and Megillah; in the third to Yevamot, Ketubbot, Nedarim and Gittin. Only the annotations to Berakhot, in the first order, are numerous and extensive. Usually Surenhuis' notes offer brief summaries, a function which from the second volume onward is taken over by his elaborate forewords, which offer a detailed overview of the content of the various tractates. The forewords — though not the dedications — of earlier translations by Christian Hebraists are included as well, as are Maimonides' introductions to his work as a whole and to the various orders and tractates of the Mishnah. Each volume has three large indices, one of Bible verses, one of Hebrew words, and a Latin one on subjects.

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The most striking aspect of Surenhuis' introductions and notes is that they lack any critical distance from the Jewish interpretation of the Mishnah. He abstains from all historical or theological criticism. This attitude fits well with the support he enjoyed from Jewish scholars, which he recognizes in a long passage in the first volume.<sup>28</sup> Their support did not extend solely to the translation. They also supplied the etchings in the first three volumes (I, 9, 44, 121, 129; II, 17, 88, 260; III, 238, 239, 261, 264, 306, 316, 325). Salomoh Jehuda Leon Templo offered several etchings that his father had made. Isaac de Matatia Aboab supplied etchings by Moses Aquillar. His Jewish friends had also written to the Jewish communities of Thessalonica, Egypt and Livorno, asking for prints which could be used in the work. A main role in the publication of the etchings was played by Isaac Coenraads, rabbi of the German

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26 J.W. Wesselius, "I don't know whether he will stay for long': Isaac Abendana's early years in England and his Latin translation of the Mishnah", *Studia Rosenthaliana* 22 (1988) 85-96.

27 In fact, this translation went back to a project started by Adam Boreel around the middle of the century: E.G.E. van der Wall, "The Dutch Hebraist Adam Boreel and the Mishnah Project: Six unpublished letters", *Lias* 16 (1989), 239-263

28 *Mischna* I, \*\*4rf.

synagogue in Amsterdam. His death was the main reason that the last three volumes lack all illustrations. Surenhuis remembered Coenraads, his friend during twelve years, in very warm words.<sup>29</sup>

This close collaboration with Jewish scholars and Surenhuis' acceptance of the Jewish interpretation of the Mishnah should undoubtedly be connected with his marked philosemitic sentiments. His friendly attitude towards the Jews is expressed in many places in his work, but most eloquently in the dedication of the first volume to the Burgomasters of Amsterdam. He justifies the praise he lavishes on the Burgomasters by their treatment of the Jews. They govern Amsterdam in a humane, just and benevolent manner. Jews actually prefer to be citizens of Amsterdam than to be called to Jerusalem. The Jewish contributions to the arts, technical developments and commerce is one of the reasons why Amsterdam has gained a world-wide fame. The most stunning sign of the benevolence of the Burgomasters, which makes them almost divine, was, according to Surenhuis, their permission for the construction of Jewish synagogues.

Quite probably Surenhuis is the most philosemitic Christian Hebraist of the seventeenth century. He never indulged in polemics. He censured other Christian Hebraists in a fairly severe way for their use of rabbinical literature to combat Judaism, as they themselves had only gained this knowledge by having recourse to Jewish teachers.<sup>30</sup> Surenhuis' rejection of this manner of polemicizing marked a break with an intellectual tradition stemming from the high Middle Ages.<sup>31</sup>

In general, Surenhuis wished to keep the study of rabbinical literature separate from the theological polemics against Judaism.<sup>32</sup> He ended the introduction to the last volume of his translation with a prayer, expressing his hope and wish that his translation of the Mishnah might help lead the Jews to Christ. Yet he expected this result not from better polemics, but from the improved knowledge of the Bible which his translation would make possible. In this last volume, he also provided a list of plans for the future.<sup>33</sup> He wanted to spend the rest of his life studying the Mishnah and the Talmud. He intended to make an inventory of all questions discussed in the Mishnah, and work out the answers given by Jewish scholars. He planned to examine the whole of halakhic literature, from the Tosephta and other early works to the medieval Tosaphot and the great codifications. This was an ambitious programme fed by a remarkable self-confidence. Surenhuis considered himself the first Christian scholar who truly understood what Jewish law was about.<sup>34</sup> He was even thinking about giving his own decision on every legal question raised. The project would, so he thought, take him eighteen years. It will come as no surprise that it was never fulfilled.

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29 *Mischna V*, \*\*\*\*\*2v.

30 *Mischna I*, \*\*2rff; *Dissertatio*, 18f.

31 Van Rooden, *Theology*, 174-9; Peter van Rooden & Jan Wim Wesselius, "The Early Enlightenment and Judaism: the 'Civil Dispute' between Philippus van Limborch and Isaac Orobio de Castro (1687)", *Studia Rosenthaliana* 21 (1987), 140-153.

32 *Mischna I*, \*\*2v.

33 *Mischna VI*, L1rff.

34 *Dissertatio*, 18.

Two other announced projects bring us closer to the source of Surenhuis' interest in the Mishnah. Both have to do with the interpretation of the Bible. First, he wanted to treat all passages in the Old and New Testament dealing with the religious cult in order to reconcile seemingly contradictory statements. He pointed to Menasseh ben Israel's *Conciliator* as an example of such a study. In the second place, he wanted to investigate the Old Testament quotations in the New Testament, using the Mishnah to explain the way in which these quotations seem often rather loose or simply wrong. Both projects had to do with the *integritas Scripturae*, the unity and perfection of Scripture.<sup>35</sup> All aspects of Surenhuis' scholarship seem to come together in this desire to save the *integritas* of the Bible.

All seventeenth-century scholars considered it their duty to resolve contradictions in the Bible. Their main differences and quarrels were about the methods to be used in achieving this end. The main question was at what moment the special status of the Bible had to be invoked, and where exactly one ought to cease treating it like any other text. This question went back to the very beginnings of the humanist study of the Bible. It had already been formulated quite clearly in the famous letter of Eck to Erasmus, contesting the latter's new Latin translation of the New Testament.<sup>36</sup> In this great debate about the interpretation of the Bible, Surenhuis resolutely put himself on the side of those who claimed a special status for the Bible: Scripture ought never to be treated like any other classical text.<sup>37</sup>

For the whole of the seventeenth century, the Old Testament quotations in the New Testament were a kind of touching stone for this question. Hugo Grotius carefully left aside the New Testament uses of the Old Testament when annotating the latter,<sup>38</sup> Louis Cappel had used them to engage in textual criticism of the Old Testament,<sup>39</sup> and Richard Simon used them to reconstruct the historical development of the text of the Old Testament.<sup>40</sup> Surenhuis devoted his last major publication, his *Biblos Katallages*, to the use of the Old Testament in the New. He tried to show that all apparent contradictions would vanish if one supposed that the New Testament used the Old Testament in the same way as the Mishnah does. This, I want to stress, was not an historical argument. Surenhuis considered the Mishnah to be an extraordinary text with a revelatory character. The best way to approach the Bible is by way of the Mishnah, because both are special, inspired texts.

The *Biblos Katallages* also makes clear how precisely Surenhuis hoped to use his knowledge of the Mishnah to further the conversion of the Jews. He wanted to refute one of their main objections to the New Testament, namely, that it was a falsification of the Old Testament. The New Testament quotes the Old Testament in much the same way as the rabbis do. In the introduction, this intention is only one among many. In the actual treatment of passages, however, this refutation of Jewish objections to the New Testament is much more important, and much more frequent, than opposition

35 *Mischna* I, \*\*4r; VI, L2r; *Dissertatio* 15, *BIBLOS KATALLAGES in quo secundum veterum theologorum hebraeorum formulas allegandi et modos interpretandi conciliantur loca ex V. in N.T. allegata*, Amsterdam 1713, \*3v, \*\*4r.

36 Allen, *Opus Epistolarum D. Erasmi*, no 769.

37 *Dissertatio*, 15.

38 Van Rooden, *Theology*, 143-8.

39 Louis Cappel, *Critica sacra*, Paris 1650, 53ff

40 Richard Simon, *Histoire Critique du Vieux Testament*, Rotterdam 1685, 97ff



to humanist interpretations. This work brings together Surenhuis' wish to safeguard the unity of Scripture, his high esteem of the Mishnah, and his wish to further the conversion of the Jews.

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Surenhuis' translation of the Mishnah found a very warm reception.<sup>41</sup> Yet it was to share the fate of the *Critici Sacri*, that other great work collecting humanist scholarship. The *Critici Sacri* marked the end of humanist exegesis of the Bible. Surenhuis' work marked, in a similar way, the end of the flowering of Christian Hebraism. His work was extensively reviewed in the conservative *Acta Eruditorum*, but Jean le Clerc's far more modern *Bibliothèque Choisie* did not even mention it. Within twenty-five years the *Acta*, too, would no longer review works dealing with rabbinical literature.

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<sup>41</sup> Cf. J.C. Wolfius, *Bibliotheca hebraea*, Hamburg Leipzig 1715-1733, II, 886f. Wolfius knows of only some critics of Surenhuis' work and censors them severely.