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LEGENDS OF REBECCA: *IVANHOE,* DYNAMIC IDENTIFICATION, AND THE PORTRAITS OF REBECCA GRATZ

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Of Walter Scott's characters, one of the most enigmatic and the one that most threatens the ideological edifice upon which historical fiction is built is the figure of the Jewess, Rebecca of York, from the novel *Ivanhoe*. In the novel, Rebecca is a healer; she is also beautiful, and her beauty attracts more than one Christian lover. At the end of the novel, Rebecca and the hero, Ivanhoe, do not marry, to the chagrin of many a reader. Rebecca's choice to remain with her father, to go into exile, and never to marry has been one of the main focuses in the history of the tale's reception.

The full extent of Rebecca's originality and subversive potential is revealed when one compares this character to the historical Rebecca Gratz of Philadelphia, who, many speculate, inspired the fictional Rebecca. Rebecca Gratz, we shall see, may have been inspired in turn by Scott's fictional heroine to explain (to herself and to others) some of her own life choices by way of the character's values and behaviors. This dynamic of identification will be explored through an analysis of a portrait of Rebecca Gratz that may have been shaped by her fictional counterpart. Of a series of three portraits of Gratz, painted by Thomas Sully in 1830–1831, the middle portrait, reputedly of Gratz wearing a turban, was said to have been rejected by her or her family, disowned, or simply erased. Nevertheless, the painting appears to have survived. Two different images have been identified as the "missing portrait." One of them is widely available, while the second, arguably the more viable candidate, missing at auction since the 1940s and from print since the 1970s, has been rediscovered and is restored herein to print.

To arrive at a satisfactory analysis of the portraits, we must first understand what it means for Scott to have put a Jewess in his text. In *Ivanhoe*, Scott creates a character that troubles traditional oppositions and identification. As a

Jewess, Rebecca offers a particularly apt demonstration of the tensions arising from the opposition between truth and plausibility, concepts I shall explain further below. Scott's reflections on the problem of truth and plausibility evolved in relation to Rebecca and the unfolding of the character's reception and influence. She is a literary type, and therefore fictional; she is an ideal type, and therefore exemplary; being a type and a heroine of romance should put her beyond the truth–plausibility continuum. Scott nevertheless claims her as a character to be measured by historical fact, one whose origin, as his interpreters claimed, is purportedly historical.

Rebecca's characterization reflects the features of Rebecca Gratz of Philadelphia, in accordance with the legend of "origins" that has come to surround both Rebeccas. Portraits of Gratz, in turn, illuminate how the historical Jewish woman became shaped by her fictional counterpart in a process of dynamic identification.

Truth versus Plausibility

Historical fiction's special features permit exploration of the exchange that occurs between fiction and history and between characters in books and the people who read them. Rebecca of *Ivanhoe* becomes an emblem of historical fiction's liminality and brings light to an old debate by unsettling the long-standing opposition between fiction and history. If the definition of historical fiction is the inclusion of a real person or event amid fictitious characters and events, then the genre's particular energy derives from its desire to retell history "in order to make a truer story"–not truer to the facts, that is, but more universal in its implications.[1] Critics contemporary with Scott insisted, despite the untenability of this demand, that the domains of history and literature remain categorically separate.[2] Novelistic plausibility was charged with a moral function, and the danger was that a so-called historical "truth" in historical fiction could potentially corrupt readers.[3] Readers identified with characters in novels "*because* of the characters' fictiveness and not in spite of it."[4] If history recounts the "true" story, that story is atypical; if fiction would exercise its moral function, it draws on its ability to employ types rather than individuals.[5]

Scott's historical fiction, subject to the constraints of both history and romance—claiming authenticity and truthful representation while at the same

time invoking conventional tropes to edify, instruct, and engage his readership—revives the passions and prejudices of an earlier age while highlighting his expertise at negotiating the distance between the "then" of history and the "now" of his contemporary readers. Scott resists defining what is true and what is plausible, perhaps realizing that the opposition and purity of the two concepts is itself a "useful fiction" and that the most creative and dynamic space is to be found between them. In his preface to *Ivanhoe*, he writes:

> I am conscious that I shall be found . . . faulty in the tone of keeping and costume, by those who may be disposed rigidly to examine my Tale. . . . [I]t is extremely probable that I may have confused the manners of two or three centuries. . . . It is my comfort, that errors of this kind will escape the general class of readers.[6]

Targeting his more expert readers as "rigid," Scott is sure that his so-called faults, errors, and confusion will go undetected by his general readership. Elsewhere, Scott defends the blending of historical accuracy and necessary fiction: "He that would please the modern world" must invest historical fiction with "language and sentiments unknown to the period assigned to his story; and thus his utmost efforts only attain a sort of composition between the true and the fictitious."[7]

At stake in the claim for Rebecca as a sign of historical fiction's indeterminacy is precisely the omission of historical time. What makes Rebecca such an appealing character is that, as a medieval Jewess, she has no known recorded history for the nineteenth-century reader, and therefore she exists primarily outside of time.[8] If Scott's readership was bound to consider both the "truth" and the plausibility of Rebecca's character, against what could they measure her? In measuring her "truth," readers fell back on preconceived notions of what a Jewish woman's "historical reality" was, while in measuring her plausibility, they judged her according to her relative adherence to literary conventions of and cultural assumptions about the Jewess.[9] Historical fiction calls on both processes to occur at once. Overtly, its historical detail attempts to convince readers that characters are representations of a pre-existing "real" person rather than of conventional literary types. Covertly, however, fictional romance conventions hold full sway—providing powerful guidelines, categories, models, and constraints. The reality of a historical novel set in the Middle Ages is something to which only a specialist (not Scott's "general class

of readers") brings prior knowledge. So only readers with an investment in some other "reality," against which Rebecca seems implausible, will refute the weight of authenticity and truth-value that historical fiction brings to bear.

The genre of historical fiction is a specific instance in which the aesthetics of both truth and plausibility, facilitated by temporal distance, may be said to overlap. For example, when Rebecca threatens the villain Bois-Guilbert that if he persists in his sexual advances she will jump out of the window of her tower-prison, we understand this as threatened suicide. Rebecca is not expected to fly out of the window and land safely on the ground: Truth and plausibility support the same expectation. In a counterexample, however, expectations based on "truth" and those based on plausibility are in tension. Scott's "general class of readers" was frustrated by the story's end, in which Rebecca does not marry the hero. Literary convention determines the reader's expectation that the Jewess convert, marry, and join Christian society (as with Shakespeare's Jessica from *The Merchant of Venice*), not remain celibate and faithful in exile. Readers' expectations were not the only ones defied; there is evidence from even the earliest dramatic and operatic adaptations of the novel that playwrights[10] and librettists[11] were also upset, many choosing to rewrite the resolution. But Scott chooses to construct Rebecca as a romance heroine, virtuous and chaste, an example worthy of imitation. As such, she partakes of the rhetoric of uniqueness, "truth," and exemplarity.

"True," that is to say, historically accurate Jewesses, Scott suggests with Rebecca, forgo love in favor of faith and duty. Whatever Scott's contemporary readers might think, it is not as though medieval Jewish women commonly went around marrying Christians. In a new introduction to his novel written ten years after its composition, Scott responded to his audience:

> The character of the fair Jewess found so much favour in the eyes of some fair readers, that the writer was censured, because, when arranging the fates of the characters of the drama, he had not assigned the hand of Wilfred [Ivanhoe] to Rebecca, rather than the less interesting Rowena.[12]

Scott insists, however, that such readers had misunderstood Rebecca, for romance convention implies that "a character of a highly virtuous and lofty stamp is degraded rather than exalted by an attempt to reward virtue with temporal prosperity." Moreover, an author of historical fiction must follow not only the laws of literature, but also the medieval historical "truth." Aside

from her virtue, the Jewess Rebecca may not marry Christian Ivanhoe because "the prejudices of the age rendered such a union almost impossible." In one paragraph, Scott shifts from "Heroines aren't like that" in literature to "Jewesses couldn't be like that" in life. An author accused of slighting his Jewish heroine by withholding the reward of marriage shifts quickly and fluidly between plausibility and truth.

The Historical "Original"

In order that Rebecca's refusal to convert, abandon her father, and remain in England be accepted by Scott's readership as new, ideal, and "true" (but nonetheless conforming to the Jewess character and therefore plausible), it helps to learn of a historical woman as the "real" model or inspiration for Rebecca of the historical novel. Scott positions Rebecca as authentic; she represents the truth or the "real" historical Jewish woman (about whom readers ostensibly know nothing). That is to say, literary anomalies and atypical behaviors may be explained away by referring to something outside of literature.

The search for Scott's models commenced very early in the publishing history of the Waverley Novels, even before "The Author of Waverley" was publicly known himself. The efforts of Robert Chambers to identify the "real characters" (1822)[13] were followed by those of John Lockhart in his posthumous biography of Scott, his father-in-law. Lockhart records that Scott's friend James Skene, who told him of seeing Jews in Germany in his youth, suggested that they be introduced into Scott's next novel. After the publication of *Ivanhoe*, Scott is said to have thanked Skene, saying, "You will find this book owes not a little to your German reminiscences."[14]

An alternative story about the "original" of Scott's Rebecca began to circulate as early as 1821.[15] This "original" was Rebecca Gratz (1781–1869), an unmarried, well respected, philanthropic, and politically active member of one of Philadelphia's elite Jewish families. The historical Gratz founded three Philadelphia institutions that influenced the shape of American Jewish society: the Female Hebrew Benevolent Society, the Jewish Foster Home, and the Hebrew Sunday School. According to legend, New York regionalist writer Washington Irving, who was Gratz's friend, told Scott of his admiration for her when Scott visited him at Abbotsford in 1817. Scott was said to have written a note to Irving accompanying a gift of the first edition of *Ivanhoe*, asking,

"How do you like your Rebecca? Does the Rebecca I have pictured compare well with the pattern given?"[16] Although researchers have searched laboriously for evidence of this note, no one has found it.[17]

The search for the origins of Rebecca should help us to understand the dynamics of identification, or the curious exchange that occurs between characters in books and people who read them. The connection between the two Rebeccas hinges on Gratz's never marrying. A historical predecessor in Rebecca Gratz becomes a means to explain (and justify) the singularity and originality of the character Rebecca of York; conversely, Scott's Rebecca, even during Gratz's lifetime but especially thereafter, becomes a means to explain, justify, and contain the historical woman's life choices.

Consider how Gratz's biography inflected some readers' understanding of the character Rebecca. In 1821, a letter from Rachel Mordecai Lazarus of Virginia to British author Maria Edgeworth first suggested that Rebecca Gratz was the inspiration for Rebecca of York. This story circulated orally during Gratz's lifetime and appears episodically in print to this day.[18] Like Rebecca of York, Gratz was said to have refused to marry a Christian man out of devotion to Judaism; thereafter, she remained single. Of Gratz's many non-Jewish suitors, there are at least three competing candidates for identification as the "legendary" hero (including Washington Irving himself). The most viable is Samuel Ewing, a literary lawyer and son of a Presbyterian minister. In February of 1801, Gratz accompanied Ewing to a Dancing Assembly, and gossip spread about their "stormy relationship." In March, Gratz warned her confidante, Maria Fenno:

> Your heart [can] give you the slip . . . [and] when it has once found a resting place in another bosom it will not return to yours tho you plead with sighs and tears. . . . Gain another [heart] before you part with your own . . . don't put too much confidence in its present security.

Fenno wrote to her the next year that Ewing was having "another fit of his old complaint," meaning that he continued to love her. Ewing sent an essay in praise of Gratz's merits to her sister. Rebecca's mind, he wrote, was "discriminating and correct, expanded by observation and by books—with a disposition formed to cheer and charm . . . she will . . . as a wife . . . render anyone happy whose . . . disposition is not at war with happiness."[19] In 1806–1807, Gratz wrote a series of poems on birch bark in which she "traced the emotional turmoil experienced

by her and an unnamed man whose religion prohibited their marriage" and her attempt to regain a "heart of ease." As Gratz biographer Dianne Ashton suggests, "The poems name no names, but they may have referred to Sam Ewing, whose Presbyterian faith would have demanded Gratz's conversion before marriage."[20] Although Gratz's two brothers who married both wed non-Jewish women, it was possible in America for them to remain Jews.[21] Presbyterians, however, "insisted on marriage between confessing Christians only."[22] Just as marrying a Christian and remaining Jewish was not an option for Rebecca of York, it was also not an option for Rebecca Gratz.[23]

Now consider the converse, that is, how Scott's Rebecca has been used, even by Gratz herself, to understand and construct the identity of Rebecca Gratz. In April of 1820, Gratz wrote enthusiastically to her non-Jewish sister-in-law, Maria Gist Gratz, "[H]ave you received Ivanhoe? When you read it tell me what you think of my namesake Rebecca."[24] As Ashton recounts, Gratz hoped her sister-in-law would agree

> that the character was not only plausible but also "just such a representation of a good girl as . . . human nature can reach." Would her Christian friends and relatives find it believable that so virtuous a female could be, and remain, a Jew as Rebecca did in the tale? . . . For Gratz, Scott's Rebecca became a test of her friends' opinions about Jews.[25]

The following year, Gratz received a letter from Baltimore writer Sarah Ewing Hall (Sam Ewing's sister) complimenting her on the character of Rebecca in *Ivanhoe*:

> Are you not delighted with your sublime namesake in *Ivanhoe*? . . . If Miss Edgeworth failed in her good intentions towards you—Walter Scott has made you ample amends. *Ivanhoe* is a misnomer; the title should have been "The Jewess." Rebecca is completely the heroine of the tale, the only beautiful, and by far the most interesting person in the book. So firm, yet so tender—so heroic, yet so feminine, her character alone would place a wreath of glory on the brow of its author.[26]

The use of the word "namesake" by both Gratz and Hall may refer merely to the name shared by Gratz with Rebecca of York—but it may also suggest Gratz's awareness of her status as Rebecca's "original."

Maria Edgeworth's novel *Harrington* (1817) ends with the Jewess Berenice Montero discovering that her dead mother was not Jewish after all, allowing her to marry the Christian hero. Following its publication, Edgeworth began an extensive correspondence debating whether her ending suggested the ease with which Jews would now be integrated into British society, where Jews did not yet have full rights.[27] When Scott's novel appeared, with its radically different ending rejecting conversion and intermarriage, the debate shifted to whether "such a choice could be realistic." Alerted "that Gratz was the prototype for Rebecca . . . proving the book's authenticity," Edgeworth wrote directly to Gratz, sending her a signed copy of *Harrington.* The latter responded, diplomatically contrasting the two works but nevertheless calling Berenice's marriage "implausible." Gratz emphasized that Scott, by means of the medieval setting, had "placed his heroine in situations to try her faith at the risk of life," and, she asserted, "I . . . believe his picture *true to nature*."[28] This phrase describes Gratz's personal negotiation between truth and plausibility: If belief initially suggests a character's "realistic" plausibility, being "true to nature" refers to an ahistorical, transcendent, contentiously essentialist Jewish "reality."

Whether in this complex identification process, involving a "namesake" that is "true to nature," Gratz meant to claim matrilineal-literary precedence—as an historical woman negotiating with or against a fictional representation for priority—remains unclear. The power of a literary intertext to suggest the "real" may help us here. As Michael Ragussis has written, when one literary character precedes another, the prior representation assumes "the power of the 'original' or the 'real.'" The model can take "temporal priority" if it appears first chronologically, or "signifying priority" if it leaves the more powerful impression.[29] Employing this theory to understand the exchange between the two Rebeccas underscores the circular chronology of the Gratz legend and the novel. In one scenario, Irving tells Scott about Rebecca Gratz, whom the latter uses as his model for the Jewess's refusal to convert and marry: The historical woman is the precursor that justifies the literary descendant's "truthful" behavior. In the alternative scenario, Rebecca Gratz reads of "medieval" Rebecca of York, her precursor, who, "centuries beforehand," models a behavior that Gratz identifies with and recognizes as her own, confirming it as "true to nature." Each Rebecca—for each—signifies temporal priority and thereby takes on the power of the original: that of the novel by virtue of its setting in 1194, and Gratz by virtue of having anticipated the novel. Gratz, though the

elder of the two Rebeccas, suggests in her use of "true to nature" that her own life choice not to marry a non-Jew is justified as both viable and plausible through its portrayal and idealization in the historical novel.[30]

The foregoing exchange between the two Rebeccas inflects our discussion of the zone between truth and plausibility inhabited by Scott's novel and character. If some readers invariably protest Rebecca's fate at the end of the book, others find in it at last a positive literary model of a dutiful, sacrificially chaste Jewish woman. There was perhaps no universal agreement that a marriage between Christian and Jewess was "implausible" or "[un-]true to nature," but, though Rebecca's actions may be idealized, both Gratz and Scott do wish to call such a marriage "untrue to history." As I initially suggested, part of what enables assertions of both truth and plausibility to coexist in historical fiction is historical distance, that is, the incommensurability between the fictional character and verifiable facts (in this case the culture and behavior of medieval Jewesses). Yet, Rebecca Gratz's nineteenth-century existence in a sense denies the temporal aspect of this distance. (Of course, Rebecca's time and Gratz's time circle each other in a complex way.) As we shall see below, historical contemporaneity displaces the distancing function onto another axis, not time but space, shifting the focus from the now/then of history to the here/there of geography. This new displacement in space rather than time takes place by means of the rhetoric of exoticism and the opposition set up between Europe and the "East."

The Curious Turban

A continued exchange between fiction and history—between characters and readers—creates a nexus of allusions and meanings beyond the control of both Scott and his "original," Gratz. The weight of literary precedents inflected by cultural stereotypes comes to bear on both Rebeccas, subtly linking them yet again while undermining their potential to be viewed as, in Gratz's phrase, "just such a representation of a good girl as . . . human nature can reach." The hitherto unexplored, undermining link has to do with the significance and meaning of a certain kind of dress—the turban that appears in the literary description of Rebecca of York and in the middle portrait of Rebecca Gratz. As a marker of foreignness and Jewishness, the turban reveals what kind of literary conventions and cultural stereotypes continue to operate within the

hypothetically uninflected historical truth of the story of Rebecca and the legend of Gratz.

In looking at Scott's word-portrait of Rebecca of York alongside the paintings of Rebecca Gratz done by Thomas Sully, we will be interested in the significance of the turban in relation to both Rebeccas. We will consider the varying conventions for hair covering within both Christian and Jewish communities in the medieval England of *Ivanhoe*, the 1820s Britain of Scott, and the early America of Rebecca Gratz. Rebecca's initial appearance in *Ivanhoe*, in which she appears in a turban and elaborate costume, is described as follows:

> Her form was exquisitely symmetrical, and was shewn to advantage by a sort of Eastern dress, which she wore according to the fashion of the females of her nation. Her turban of yellow silk suited well with the darkness of her complexion. The brilliancy of her eyes, the superb arch of her eyebrows, her well-formed aquiline nose, her teeth as white as pearl, and the profusion of her sable tresses, which, each arranged in its own little spiral of twisted curls, fell down upon as much of a snow-white neck and bosom as a simarre of the richest Persian silk, exhibiting flowers in their natural colours embossed upon a purple ground, permitted to be visible—all these constituted a combination of loveliness, which yielded not to the loveliest of the maidens who surrounded her. It is true, that of the golden and pearl-studded clasps, which closed her vest from the throat to the waist, the three uppermost were left unfastened on account of the heat, which something enlarged the prospect to which we allude. A diamond necklace, with pendants of inestimable value, were by this means also made more conspicuous. The feather of an ostrich, fastened in her turban by an agraffe set with brilliants, was another distinction of the beautiful Jewess.[31]

In European tradition, the turban is an iconic shorthand for "East." As Charlotte Jirousek has shown, when Westerners appropriated this extremely codified marker, its significance was not only muddled, but new layers were added, including its signification of commerce, travel, status, luxury, and Oriental exoticism.[32] However, the turban also has particular meaning in relation to Jewish women. Diane Owen Hughes has argued that in Italy, in the time of Shakespeare's exotic Venice of *The Merchant* (one of Scott's influences), Christian laws required both Jewish women and prostitutes to wear a sort of turban,

in the form of a yellow band of linen wound round their heads from ear to ear. A Jewish woman discovered in the street without her yellow marker could be publicly stripped—the same fate that awaited a prostitute. The lawmakers' idea was that Jewish women, like their circumcised brothers, must be clearly—and publicly, if arbitrarily—distinguishable.[33] In Scott, Rebecca's luxurious turban signifies Jewish difference; moreover, the association with female promiscuity constructs the turban as a sign of sexual availability and impurity.

In considering Scott's Rebecca, we recognize a longstanding prohibition against Jewish women displaying their hair, because a woman's hair is considered to be *ervah* (nakedness).[34] Hair covering, in a Jewish context, thus indicates sexual *unavailability*. There has been dispute as to whether this rule applies to both married and unmarried women. The custom generally followed throughout Jewish history has been that when living in a society where all women cover their hair, all Jewish women do so, too. Therefore, the unmarried medieval Saxon Rowena represents the dominant culture in covering her hair with a veil or snood, and Rebecca follows suit, covering her hair as well—but with a distinguishing turban. That particular headgear functioned as a marker that applied to all Jewish women, including the unmarried (as both Rebeccas crucially are), and singled them out. The underlying assumption of the yellow turban is that the Jewish woman is always already a sex object, subject to prohibition, domination, and sexualization.

With the Jewish Enlightenment in Europe commenced the decline in women's hair covering. Hats worn by Jewish married women, even to synagogue, began to leave some hair in sight.[35] Moreover, if we look at the way Christian and Jewish women dressed in Britain in 1819, when Scott was composing his novel, we find that turbans had been fashionable as "full-dress" headwear for nearly twenty years and were often combined with a feather or a brooch.[36] Scott's Jewish contemporaries adamantly maintained no markers of difference; on the contrary, the Jewish community in Britain acculturated quickly, "adopting current fashions in dress and personal adornment."[37] Rebecca of *Ivanhoe* can thus be read as an exotic Jewess among medieval Saxons and Normans, or as an anachronistic 1820 fashion plate in the twelfth century. She is distinguished from her surroundings in either case, and the special associations of the turban remain in force.

The decline in Jewish women's head coverings carried over to antebellum America as well, where fashions for both Christian and Jewish communities tended to imitate Europe.[38] The general rule of thumb for both Christians and

Jews in America was that one never "stepped out in public without some form of head covering."[39] However, in America as in Britain, head coverings were no longer used for reasons of modesty or to cover the hair completely. Jewish women, according to one eye witness, went about "with curled hair and French finery such as is worn by ladies of other religions."[40]

In Rebecca Gratz's family, covering one's hair seems to have been more a matter of social setting or a sign of age than a requirement. In Ashton's biography, portraits of Rebecca herself are interleaved with several of her family. All the men are portrayed hatless and clean-shaven, according to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Western conventions, while only Rebecca's mother and Rebecca herself, as we shall see, appear with partially covered hair.[41] Rebecca's married sister, Frances, is depicted bareheaded. As an unmarried Jewish woman, Rebecca may have chosen to but was not required to cover her hair (witness Figure 2, below), and many married Jewish women who, like Gratz, were considered observant, kept kosher, and attended synagogue had abandoned the practice of covering all of their hair in public, though not necessarily that of wearing a hat in synagogue, since this would have been consistent with Christian practice.[42]

If the turban was a marker of fashion for all between 1798 and 1820, by 1830 (in Europe at least) it was passé. In 1837, Balzac used the wearing of a "Jewish turban" to send up a foolish, self-elected, aging précieuse in his *Lost Illusions*, and Charlotte Brontë used it in *Jane Eyre* (1847) to satirize the haughty, pompous dowager Lady Ingram.[43] In those literary contexts, the turban signifies being past one's prime and out of place, if not out of fashion; its appearance mocked the wearer's fantastic self-aggrandizement. However, there is evidence that in rural America, wearing a turban remained fashionable for social occasions well into the 1830s–1840s. An 1835 letter from Rebecca Gratz to her sister-in-law Maria in Kentucky describes a clothing commission sent westward from Philadelphia:

> Having purchased you a gown & Turban I thought you would require a cape to suit a walking dress—and one to make it complete for an evening and so I exceeded your order by these articles—. . . I hope most sincerely that you will enjoy health & happiness and wear them with a light heart.[44]

There appears to be no irony in the conventional Jewish wish to "wear them in good health." Wearing a turban must still have been acceptable.

Though the congregation Gratz attended regularly in Philadelphia, Mikveh Israel, maintained separate seating for men and women and followed a Sephardic style of worship, there is nothing to suggest that this included an oriental style of headdress.[45] It has been argued that Sephardic Jews were more positively viewed by Christians than the later-arriving Ashkenazi immigrants, which might explain the impetus to "pass as oriental" as a sign of upper caste, but it does not explain why Gratz's family would have refused a turbaned portrait.[46] On the other hand, antebellum American Jews were invested in acceptance as Americans, that is, as Westerners, as evinced by the monthly journal *The Occident*, published by Jacob Leeser, which reached every major Jewish settlement in the US. *The Occident*, to which Gratz was a sometime contributor, published works by American and British Jewish women writers. It offered literary images of American Jewish women to its female readers, which they used to measure the change in their own lives. Yet mid-nineteenth-century writer Marion Moss Hartog, for example, continues to describe her Jewish heroines as having "olive skin, [a] high brow, dark eyes, black hair, full lips, and a voluptuous figure." The tension between continuity and change underscores the contradictory impulses in cultural play between East and West, sexually attractive and "passionless[ly]" pure.[47]

It would seem that Rebecca Gratz was not required to cover her hair, yet in an 1830 painting she does so with a specific type of headdress: a turban. The turban *per se* is an indeterminative marker—Jewish and Christian women wore them as fashion accessories in early nineteenth-century Britain and America. Yet, just as Scott insists on distinguishing Rebecca of York with a *Jewish* turban (worn "according the to the fashion of the females of her nation") that takes on a special significance, Gratz's apparent choice to pose with one is significant, too, as is the evidence that the portrait with the turban was abandoned. The assumption of an Eastern turban by a Western Jewish woman unleashes a set of associations and distinguishing functions, surely unforeseen by Gratz, that go beyond contemporary fashion, underscoring her sexuality, her singularity, and her link to Rebecca of York.

The legend of origins, interlocking the fates of the two Rebeccas, focuses on their exceptional duty and virtue and renders them both exemplary. That is, their life choices mutually reinforce each other as unique and valid. However, the iconography marking both Rebeccas with the turban—hence as exotic and as sexual objects—countervails against the discourse of chastity

by reinscribing both women (historical and fictional) into known and accepted conventions. Here we witness the concepts of truth, as historical verifiability, in anxious tension with plausibility, defined as the weight of cultural stereotype and literary convention.

The "Missing" Portrait

In spite of Scott's admission of deliberate ambiguity in the claim that Jewish women wore turbans "according to the fashion of the females of [their] nation," his Rebecca clearly wore one. What is more surprising is how the turban turns up in the Gratz legend.

Thomas Sully (1783–1872) was a British-born artist living in America when Washington Irving sent him from New York to Philadelphia in 1807 with a letter of introduction to Rebecca Gratz.[48] Sully's first painting of Gratz was a copy of a miniature by Edward Greene Malbone depicting her at age twenty-five. Sully recorded in his journal that he had changed the image in the miniature into a "fancy picture."[49] Over the course of his career, Sully painted more than 2,600 canvases, including portraits of many members of the Gratz family and several of Rebecca.[50] His register records portraits of Rebecca Gratz's father, of two of her nieces, and of one of her brothers-in-law.[51] But it was not until 1830–1831 that Sully executed three original paintings of Rebecca Gratz, two of which have been clearly identified.

A bust portrait painted for Benjamin Gratz of Lexington, Kentucky, the youngest of the Gratz siblings, was begun on October 25, 1830, and "lingered over," for it was not finished until June 8, 1831.[52] In this first portrait, Rebecca wears a wide-brimmed hat, tilting her head slightly to the left (Figure 1). She appears up to date and confident, commanding if almost imperious, yet also slightly sensuous and buxom, with her right hand opening her collar and a Mona Lisa type smile. She is surrounded with luxurious textures that evince the artist's technical mastery: white silk, wine-colored velvet, yellow drapery, fur, and a cascading veil or ribbons at the back of the neck. Her hat's brim is surmounted and divided by a piece of ornamental lace that softens Gratz's high brow and frames her face in a heart shape.

This image has frequently appeared in print. Hannah London, who reproduced it in her 1927 book about early American portraits of Jews, writes:

> When I saw the portrait . . . it was hanging in the spacious dining room of . . . Rebecca's grandnephew. I noted Rebecca's soft, dark brown eyes, her olive complexion and brown curly hair. She wore a claret-color dress and over the bodice was a pale yellow mantle bordered with white fur.[53]

The same image makes an appearance in John Sartain's late-nineteenth-century memoir, where the author recollects a visit to Gratz in her later life:

> Her eyes struck me as piercingly dark, yet of mild expression, in a face tenderly pale. The portrait Sully painted of her must have been a remarkable likeness, that so many years after I should recognize her instantly by remembrance of it.[54]

Sartain's two adjectives, "tender" yet "piercing," are very appropriate to the mixed effect of this domineering yet endearing painting.

Figure 1
Thomas Sully, "Rebecca Gratz" (October 25, 1830–June 8, 1831).
Oil on canvas, 30" × 25".
Photograph courtesy of the Rebecca Gratz Picture Collection, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

The last portrait Sully did of Gratz was begun on May 16, 1831, and finished on June 11. It is a smaller, head picture painted for Benjamin's wife and Rebecca's frequent correspondent, Maria Gist Gratz (Figure 2). This portrait appears both on the cover of Ashton's biography of Gratz and as a frontispiece to David Phillipson's volume of her selected letters. Ashton writes that both portraits "show a beautiful, fashionable, elegant and sensuous woman";[55] nevertheless, the two depictions are decidedly different. The portrait for Maria (intended for the same household as Benjamin's) invokes a completely different set of associations than the first. It is smaller, painted in a circular cameo shape, floating on a rust and brown square background. Rebecca appears with her head uncovered and slightly to the left, with her gaze no longer direct but slightly off to the viewer's left. The only item of dress depicted is a striking, ruffled, stand-up collar, fastened at the throat yet drooping open slightly. The collar's highlights draw the eye in the same way the detailed ruffs in a Dutch seventeenth-century portrait would, but the collar also evokes early American

Figure 2
Thomas Sully, "Rebecca Gratz" (May 16–June 11, 1831).
Painted for Maria Gist Gratz, subject's sister-in-law.
Oil on panel, 20" × 17"; signed, lower left, *TS 1831*.
Collection of Rosenbach Museum and Library, Philadephia.
Photograph courtesy of the Rebecca Gratz Picture Collection, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Puritan portraits, as does the black and white, puritanical Protestant clothing (the dark dress is suggested by the appearance of the inscription "TS 1831"—Sully's initials and the date—on the right shoulder; only the last three digits are visible in the image reproduced here). Could these associations be meant to appeal to Maria's Protestant background? The other focus of the portrait is the brightly lit, broad, uncovered forehead, highlighted and framed by curls into the shape of a Moorish horseshoe arch. The broad forehead conventionally suggested force of thought, whereas the Moorish shape creates the subtlest hint of exoticism. Thus, the Puritan severity of the coloring, collar, and forehead contrasts with the intimacy of the bared head, the discreet gaze, the covertly exotic shape, and the soft, ethereal background blended into upswept curls.

In between these two identified portraits was one begun on November 15, 1830. The mysterious, missing middle portrait has generated its own myths. Ashton writes of it: "She . . . allowed Sully to paint her portrait, . . . but she did not like the result. Sully erased it."[56] Monroe Fabian, who specifies that this portrait was intended for Rebecca herself, also records it as having been "erased" in April of 1831. Edward Biddle and Mantle Fielding, cataloguers of Sully's works, describe the middle portrait of Rebecca Gratz as a bust portrait commissioned by Hyman Gratz, one of the unmarried brothers with whom Rebecca lived. They, too, remark that it was "noted in register as 'erased,'" but they add:

> This painting was probably finished; there is a tradition in the Gratz family that it was not accepted on account of a turban or head-dress painted in the portrait by the artist. The finished picture shows a turban which emphasizes the oriental beauty of [Gratz's] features. Owned by John Gribbel.[57]

In 1928, John Gribbel wrote to Hannah London and sent her a photographic image:

> The portrait of Rebecca Gratz wearing the Turkish turban is still in my possession. To me it is one of the most beautiful things that Sully ever did.
>
> You are probably acquainted with the tradition in the Gratz family, that when Sully was painting this portrait Rebecca insisted on wearing the Turkish turban. The family being unable to swerve her from her decision, disowned the portrait, and Sully's fee book shows the entry of this portrait scratched out.

London includes this letter and Gribbel's photo in her article "Portraits of Rebecca Gratz by Thomas Sully." She writes, "Though Rebecca's profile portrait is noted in Sully's register as 'erased,' this charming portrayal in which she is shown with a cluster of curls at the nape of the neck was obviously finished." She follows Mantle and Fielding in identifying the image as commissioned for Hyman Gratz, but she concludes her article by saying,

> Several portraits of Rebecca Gratz supposedly by Sully though not listed in his Register have come to my attention, but as yet I do not have conclusive evidence of their authenticity. The three illustrated here, which show her as younger looking by far than the age of forty-nine or fifty that she had attained when they were painted, are fully documented as the work of the illustrious Thomas Sully.

Unfortunately, London lists the location of the portrait as untraceable after Gribbel sold it at auction in 1941.[58]

The first in the series of family portraits interleaved in Ashton's biography—the only one to receive an entire page on its own—pictures a woman in a turban labeled "Rebecca Gratz, by Thomas Sully" (Figure 3).[59] The Jewish Women's Archive, which describes the above two images straightforwardly as portraits of Rebecca Gratz, captions this one more cautiously: "Portrait Believed to be of Rebecca Gratz."[60]

In the mystery surrounding the middle "turban" portrait, it turns out that not only was the portrait not "erased," but two different paintings vie for its identity. The turbaned portrait owned by John Gribbel, pictured in Hannah London's article, is not the same one that appears in Ashton's book (Figure 3, overleaf). Fortuitously, in attempting to procure the rights to reprint the image from London's article, I discovered the "missing" painting itself—donated to the Delaware Art Museum in 1971 (Figure 4).[61]

This painting differs from the others in significant ways. On a very dark background, the first thing to strike the eye is a bright diagonal of skin that goes beyond the frame (suggesting the possibility of even more unseen skin). The diagonal is reinforced by a cluster of curls trailing down the neck and by the sharp line of the nose and chin in profile. Gratz's gaze does not engage the viewer but rather drifts dreamily to the lower left (suggesting the perpendicular diagonal). At the center of the picture is a sand-colored turban bisected by a green ribbon. Gratz's unfocused gaze, the emphasis on nose, chin, pink lips,

and cheeks rather than on an intelligent forehead, in addition to her wearing the Turkish turban, render this portrait far more voyeuristic and objectifying than the others.

Though we can attribute the initial appearance of Rebecca of York in a turban to Scott's imagination, who is responsible for putting a turban on Rebecca Gratz in an 1830–1831 painting—the artist or the model? How is this gesture to be read?

In both variants of the tradition, either the Gratz family or Rebecca herself rejects (even "disowns") the turban portrait. One can only speculate how Gratz and her family understood the message evoked by the turban, but it was clearly very different from those evoked by the accepted portraits. If the sensual appeal of the portraits in the broad-brimmed hat and the lace ruff somehow verges on the oriental exotic, it toes a line without crossing it. Consider the "brillian[t] eyes, . . . superb . . . eyebrows, [and] . . . profusion of sable tresses" attributed to Rebecca of York. Are they not reminiscent of the orientalist mode in which

Figure 3
Thomas Sully, "Rebecca Gratz."
Collection of American Jewish Historical Society, New York.
Photograph courtesy of the Rebecca Gratz Picture Collection, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

London describes the "soft, dark brown eyes, . . . olive complexion and brown curly hair" of the first portrait, or in which Sartain describes the "eyes . . . piercingly dark, yet . . . mild . . . in a face tenderly pale" of the real-life Gratz? On the other hand, London's description of the turbaned portrait's "cluster of curls at the nape of the neck" is a recognizably less innocent gesture, one that encourages us to think more along the lines of Scott's "spiral of twisted curls [that] fell down upon as much of a snow-white neck . . . [as three unfastened clasps] permitted to be visible." William Hogarth discusses the curl as a synecdoche for the body as a whole: "The most amiable [form] . . . is the flowing curl; . . . [the] contrasting turns of naturally intermingling locks ravish the eye with the pleasure of pursuit . . . [of] the wanton ringlet waving in the wind." Even the ringlet, an "artificial" curl, Hogarth calls "too alluring to be strictly decent."[62] It is not just the suggestion of the turban but also the curling hair, trailing down the neck, that evokes desire. The sense that a line was crossed was perhaps felt only retrospectively, and so the portrait in progress was abandoned.

Figure 4
Thomas Sully, "Rebecca Gratz" (1830).
Oil on canvas mounted on Masonite (TM), 20" × 17".
Delaware Art Museum, Gift of Benjamin Shaw II, 1971.
DAM # 1971-167

Are the portraits authentic? Monroe Fabian, curator of a Sully portrait exhibition at the Smithsonian, spearheads the argument against either turban portrait being of Rebecca Gratz by Sully. He rejects the legend of the missing portrait as merely a family "tradition" (though he dutifully cites the Gratz–Irving–Scott legend):

> Contrary to other opinions, I believe that the portrait . . . was actually erased. The picture of an exotic beauty in a turban that has been sometimes presented as this 1830 portrait is more likely to be—if it is a Sully—one of his fancy pictures.[63]

"Fancy pictures," according to Richard Altick, are role-playing portraits,

> a distinct, though very loosely defined, category of painting . . . in which the artist improved on reality by generalizing or beautifying. . . . The characters personified in fancy, or "historical" portraits tended to be drawn more from English literary sources than mythology or hagiography.

It is very easy to imagine a fancy picture of "Rebecca Gratz as Rebecca of York" being composed in the "great age of Scott painting," as Altick has called the period from 1830 to 1850,[64] and Sully himself was known for his fancy pictures. He claimed to have made a fancy picture out of his copy of Malbone's miniature of Rebecca Gratz, and was known to have painted at least thirteen fancy pictures of British actress Fanny Kemble during her extended stay in Philadelphia.[65] As one critic argues, the turbaned portrait is perhaps a fancy picture for which Sully did not use a sitter at all; he may have called it "Rebecca Gratz" because it was offered for sale in Philadelphia, the city in which she was a legend:

> It seems unlikely . . . that Gratz actually sat for the picture because it looks nothing like her. Nor does it look unlike her in the ways [the] other Sully portraits for which she sat look unlike her.

Gratz was thirty-six when *Ivanhoe* came out and fifty when these portraits were painted, the turbaned one ostensibly for private display in Gratz's own

home, which she shared with Hyman and her other unmarried brothers. If the picture were "fanciful" rather than a likeness, "the family might have decided against [it] because it could not be used for their purposes."[66]

Perhaps Rebecca Gratz commissioned a Rebecca-like "fancy picture" in 1830, the heyday of Scott painting, which was later disowned. Perhaps Gratz's disowned portrait was finished as a fancy picture reminiscent of Rebecca of York. Or perhaps, through the nexus of associations between the two Rebeccas, a generic fancy picture (or two) by Sully (or someone signing TSully) of a woman in a turban came to be identified both with Rebecca of York and with Rebecca Gratz, her "original." After all, as London puts it, "Rebecca Gratz never denied that she was the prototype of the novel's heroine."[67] Or as Phillipson recounts, "It is reported that Miss Gratz, when asked if she was the original of Scott's Rebecca, answered, 'They say so, my dear.'"[68]

All of these scenarios would be consistent with the fervor for Scott pictures in this period as well as the pressure exerted in both directions by the Rebecca / Gratz legend, regarding which Ashton uses a particularly apt metaphor:

> The Gratz legend . . . suggests that its creators desired to clothe Gratz's real life in sentimental dress. Thus draped in sentimentality, her life served the cultural and psychological needs of both its originators and its potential audience.[69]

The stories of the portrait are contradictory: In one version the turban is the artist's fantasy, while in the other it is Gratz's own, against the better judgment of her family.[70] In the latter version, at least, the symbol of "an exotic beauty in a turban," though consistent with the fashion in portraiture,[71] contained negative associations, on account of which the painting was either erased or disowned. The turbaned woman continues nevertheless to be associated with both Rebeccas, pointing up contradictions in the historical-fictional character and in her original: The exemplar of self-sacrificing duty and purity is also marked as sexualized and impure. These contradictions reveal the generic tensions implicit in the amalgamation of truth and plausibility called historical fiction.

Conclusion

Many of the ways in which the Jewess functions in *Ivanhoe* are contradictory. Rebecca represents both exotic foreignness and English, nineteenth-century good sense; both the ancient and the modern; both the familiar and the beyond.[72] Truth claims associated with historical fiction may be supported through attention to (or invention of) historical originals, as in the case of Rebecca Gratz. In an opposite movement, many problems and tensions related to truth claims are resolved when the "reality" of the Jewish woman is collapsed into the "unknowable."[73] If real knowledge of the Jewess is beyond the text, many "of course" clauses ensue: Of course she is ineligible for marriage; of course her qualities exceed the parameters of the text; of course the timelessness of her existence does not coincide with the temporality of the text; of course she must be neutralized or expunged in order for the novel to reach its resolution. This location of the historical novel—between fact and fiction—dislocates Scott's Jewess character, and her instability and self-contradiction are only shored up through her exile.[74]

The internal contradiction in Rebecca of York expresses the internal contradiction implicit in historical fiction. Both this character and the book she inhabits are located between the real and the imaginary. This position is ultimately unknowable. Many theorists have questioned the dynamics of identification, asking whether readers' self-understandings can be formulated apart from books. As Catherine Gallagher has argued, "[W]hen readers are prevented from seeing somebody else in the textual reflection (that is, when they understand that they are reading fiction), they become capable of seeing themselves." The danger of identification is the potential for over-identification, or emotional over-investment, especially with an imaginary character. In the words of an 1812 critic, women's "identifying propensity" caused them to forget who they really were and therefore how they should properly act.[75] Marilyn Orr has asked, does the "double-edged power of association, which enriches our experience by taking away our ability to experience . . . for the first time" cut us off from self-identity or allow us to cut through to its complexity?[76] Historical fiction, by positioning itself as a blend of real and imaginary, actually allays anxieties by permitting the two poles a hypothetical if paradoxical existence as absolutes, thereby enabling a powerful exchange between fiction and history and between characters and readers.

The case of Rebecca Gratz offers a very special instance of identification and the possibility of reciprocal exchange between characters and readers, as well as between the verbal and the visual. Is it possible for a thirty-six year old woman to view her life differently after reading a book? I believe it is. I have tried to emphasize Gratz's retroactive justification of her choice to remain single, against the weight of Jewish custom, by finding that choice lauded in Scott's Rebecca. The effect of the exchange can be located only in readers. To the reader's complaint, "I think Ivanhoe should have married Rebecca," the answer may be one of the following: (1) against intermarriage: "Rebecca knew that Jews and Christians don't marry"; (2) against conversion: "Rebecca was such a good Jewess that she gave up love in order not to have to convert"; (3) true story: "But the girl on which this story is based refused to marry a Christian, and one cannot change the truth." If, in Rebecca Gratz's time, when her immediate family had begun to intermarry, the first two answers were already being undermined, Gratz, too, may have reverted to faith in the "truth" of the third lesson, thinking, "Ah, what I did myself in my youth is now justified and celebrated here in this public way. It must have been the right (though painful) choice that I made, because everyone laments yet admires it in this fictional character."

Rebecca Gratz never wrote the above reflection in her letters, but she did write the following: "I . . . felt a little extra pleasure from . . . Rebecca's being a Hebrew maiden. . . . I feel gratitude for [Scott's] justification of the jewish [*sic*] character."[77] And, just as we dwelt upon the interweaving of the two legends in the case of the "missing" portrait, so, too, did Gratz, in a manner of speaking: "I have dwelt on this character [Rebecca] as we sometimes do on an exquisite painting until the canvass [*sic*] seems to breathe and we believe it is life."[78] The mysteries of Scott's missing note to Irving and Sully's missing portrait of Gratz allow no closure in this regard. Rebecca Gratz's recognition of and ineluctable linkage with her "namesake" turn out to work on many levels, not merely as inspiration for her self-justification and positive self-fashioning, but also as a weight or negative constraint that lives on in her legacy.

Historical fiction suggests the possibility of a smooth, teleological history, rewritten and fleshed out, populated by characters with whom the reader identifies, behaving in ways that are exemplary or plausible, or both. Images of Jewish women in literature, such as that of Rebecca in *Ivanhoe*, and historical or living Jewish women, such as Rebecca Gratz, continue—in the reflexive

gesture comprehended in the exchange between fiction and life—to be idealized, romanticized, and exoticized, and at the same time, as we have seen, sexualized and singled out.

Notes

Many thanks to April Alliston, Kara Doyle, Harry Marten, Annette Kuhn, Bernhard Kuhn, Deborah Greniman, Renée Levine Melammed and my anonymous reviewers.

1. Avrom Fleishman, *The English Historical Novel: Walter Scott to Virginia Woolf* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971), pp. 4, 10–11.

2. Thus, John Wilson Croker wrote:

> That "*le vrai n'est pas toujours vraisemblable*" [the truth is not always plausible] we do not deny, but we are prepared to insist that, while the "*vrai*" is the highest recommendation of the historian of real life, the "*vraisemblable*" is the only legitimate province of the novelist who aims at improving the understanding or touching the heart. (*Quarterly Review*, 7 [1812], p. 329, cited in Alexander Welsh, *The Hero of the Waverley Novels* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963], p. 19)

Croker's repetition of the division of purpose—"truth" for the historian, versus the didactic and sentimental function of fiction—exemplifies the stress brought to bear on this separation.

3. See Everett Zimmerman, *The Boundaries of Fiction: History & the 18th-Century British Novel* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996).

4. Catherine Gallagher, *Nobody's Story: The Vanishing Acts of Women Writers in the Marketplace, 1670–1820* (Berkeley, CA: University Press of California, 1994), p. xvii.

5. *Ibid.,* pp. 283–284.

6. "Dedicatory Epistle" (in the voice of Templeton the antiquarian), *Ivanhoe*, Edinburgh Edition of the Waverley Novels, ed. Graham Tulloch, VIII (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), p. 12.

7. *Miscellaneous Prose Works of Sir Walter Scott* (Edinburgh, 1834–1836), III, p. 333, cited in Fiona Robertson, *Legitimate Histories: Scott, Gothic, and Authorities of Fiction* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), p. 62.

8. For the British public's sense of Jews in the early nineteenth century see Sheila Spector (ed.), *British Romanticism and the Jews: History, Culture, Literature* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), especially Mark Schoenfield, "Abraham Goldsmid: Money Magician and the Press," *ibid.*, pp. 37–60. For the public's perceptions of Jews as literary images, see Bryan Cheyette and Nadia Valman (eds.), *The Image of the Jew in European Liberal Culture, 1789–1914* (Portland, OR: Vallentine Mitchell, 2004).

9. This argument is derived from Menachem Brinker, "Le 'Naturel' et le 'Conventionnel' dans la Critique et la Théorie," *Littérature*, 57 (1985), pp. 17–30.
10. Seven separate plays based on *Ivanhoe* opened in 1820 alone. Two productions that opened simultaneously on January 20, 1820, added new subtitles; gone was *Ivanhoe, a Romance*, replaced either by "Ivanhoe, or: the Jew's Daughter" or by "Ivanhoe, or: The Jewess," attesting to the perceived importance (and marketability) of Rebecca. In George Soane's version, called *The Hebrew*, which debuted less than three months after the appearance of the novel, Ivanhoe marries Rebecca instead of Rowena. Soane explains in his prologue, "No longer scoff'd, in peaceful compact blend / Christian and Jew, by turns each other's friend" (cited in Hans-Jürgen Diller, "*Ivanhoe* auf der englischen Bühne des 19. Jahrhunderts," in Herbert Grabes (ed.), *Anglistentag 1980* [Grossen–Linden: Hoffmann, 1981], pp. 72–73). In Thackeray's *Rebecca and Rowena: Romance upon Romance,* perhaps the most famous parodic rewriting of *Ivanhoe*, the author removes impediments to the marriage of Rebecca and Ivanhoe by killing off Rowena and secretly converting Rebecca, thereby facilitating her marriage to the Christian hero. "[A] better Christian than Rebecca now was never said her catechism," Thackeray bitingly concludes. Thackeray, *The Works of William Makepeace Thackeray*, IX, (1899), p. 158.
11. Jerome Mitchell describes numerous adaptations, from a musical drama performed at Covent Garden as early as March 2, 1820, to Sir Arthur Sullivan's 1891 version. In Rossini's *Ivanhoé,* which Scott himself saw in Paris in 1826, the Jews are replaced by Muslims, and Léila (Rebecca) is revealed to be Édith (Rowena) and therefore able to marry the hero. Other operatic adaptations include Heinrich Marschner's *Der Templer und die Jüdin* (with a shift in emphasis reflected in the title); Pacini's *Ivanhoe* (which makes the Rowena character Ivanhoe's sister); Otto Nicolai's *Il Templario* (which has Rebecca openly confess her love to Ivanhoe, who refuses her); Pisani's *Rebecca* (in which Rebecca dramatically dies onstage); and Castegnier's *Rébecca* (whose final scene closely and understatedly imitates Scott's final scene between Rebecca and Rowena). Jerome Mitchell, *The Walter Scott Operas* (Tuscaloosa, AL: Alabama University Press, 1977), pp. 145–200.
12. Walter Scott, Introduction to Magnum Opus Edition of *Ivanhoe* (1830), ed. A.N. Wilson (New York: Penguin, 1986), p. 544.
13. Robert Chambers, *Illustrations of the Author of Waverley, being Notices and Anecdotes of Real Characters, Scenes, and Incidents Supposed to be described in his Works* (third edition; London–Edinburgh: W. & R. Chambers, [1822] 1884). Chambers identified Jean Gordon as the model for the gypsy Meg Merrilies of *Guy Mannering* and Robert Macgregor as that for Rob Roy in the eponymous tale, but he does not touch upon *Ivanhoe*.
14. Lockhart bases this account on the testimony of Skene's wife. J.G. Lockhart,

Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott, Bart. (Edinburgh: 1837–1838), IV, pp. 342–343, cited in Graham Tulloch, "Essay on the Text," Edinburgh edition (above, note 6), p. 405.

15. That is, as soon as *Ivanhoe* appeared in the United States. The story was fleshed out both by W.S. Crockett in *The [Sir Walter] Scott Originals* (London–Edinburgh: T. N. Foulis, 1912), pp. 283–296; and by Joseph Jacobs in "The Original of Scott's Rebecca," *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society*, 22 (1914), pp. 53–60. Jacobs contested Lockhart's claim, arguing:

> If we were to seek for an original of *Rebecca,* from this indication of Lockhart, one would have to search among the brilliant Jewesses of his time in Germany—Rahel Varnhagen von Ense, Dorothea Schlegel, and the rest. They had the dignity and the beauty of Rebecca but they did not, like her, reject the hands of their Gentile admirers. (p. 55)

16. Crockett (above, note 15) adheres to the existence of this note, while Jacobs refutes it, stating:

> Nothing is more striking in Scott's career than the persistence with which he denied his authorship of the Waverley novels up to 1825. . . . It is therefore . . . practically impossible, that he would have directly acknowledged his authorship of "Ivanhoe" over his own signature. (Jacobs, "The Original," [above, note 15], p. 58)

Jacobs suggests that Scott may have sent Irving a message or that this is legendary embellishment. David Phillipson, editor of *Letters of Rebecca Gratz* (Philadelphia: JPS, 1929), develops the story in the following way:

> [I]nterest in Rebecca Gratz arises chiefly from the quite universally accepted tradition that she was the original of the noble Jewess Rebecca in Scott's "Ivanhoe." . . . In 1815 [Irving] went to Europe and learned to know Scott in 1817. Scott had in mind the writing of a novel with Jews as characters. He must have discussed this project with Irving for in a letter to Irving . . . he asked, "How do you like your Rebecca? [etc.]" . . . This clearly establishes the connection between the two Rebeccas. (pp. xix–xx)

17. See Dianne Ashton, *Rebecca Gratz: Women and Judaism in Antebellum America* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1997), p. 243. Ashton, Gratz's most recent biographer, devotes her entire last chapter to "The Legend of Rebecca Gratz."

18. Further instances of the legend's perpetuation include reports such as "The Original of Rebecca in *Ivanhoe*" in 1882, "At Rebecca's Grave: The Burial Place of Miss Gratz the Original of Scott's Famous Heroine" in 1892, and "An American Jewess" in 1896, as well as Crockett's book chapter, and Jacobs's article. In twentieth-century America, reiterations, embellishments, and fictionalizations of the Gratz legend include two plays from the 1920s–30s, two juvenile books from the 1950s–60s, two rabbinic theses, a popular biography, an opera, and a play called "The Gratz Delusion,"

performed as recently as 1993. For all these see Ashton, *Rebecca Gratz* (above, note 17), p. 245 and p. 302, note 24. One could add to this list of good credentials the *Dictionary of American Biography* and the Edinburgh *Ivanhoe*.

19. Ashton, *Rebecca Gratz* (above, note 17), pp. 239–240, 14, 60, and 67.

20. *Ibid.*, pp. 77–78. To be sure, Ashton also writes: "There is little to support the idea that an unfulfilled love affair was the pivotal experience of Gratz's life" (p. 243).

21. Of Rebecca Gratz's nine siblings who lived to adulthood, only five married. Her three married sisters all wed Jewish men, while the two brothers both married non-Jewish women (one of them did so twice). Of the thirty-one surviving offspring of these marriages, twelve never married, ten married Jews, and nine married non-Jews. Ashton, *Rebecca Gratz* (above, note 17), p. 41.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 270, note 113.

23. Sam Ewing married in 1810. In 1809, when he was already engaged, Rebecca wrote to her friend Peggy Ewing, Sam's sister: "[B]etter to wander alone, through the neglected path of single life—than with an ungenial companion traverse a Garden [of wedlock] where every fragrant flower blooms to the eye—but withers to the touch—where every bright prospect is obscured by the cloud of discontent—or lost in the whirlwind of contention." Ashton, *Rebecca Gratz* (above, note 17), p. 85.

24. Phillipson, *Letters of Rebecca Gratz* (above, note 16), p. 22.

25. Ashton, *Rebecca Gratz* (above, note 17), pp. 108. Here is the full passage from the letter:

> I am glad you admire Rebecca, for she is just such a representation of a good girl as I think human nature can reach—Ivanhoes [*sic*] insensibility to her, you must recollect, may be accounted to his previous attachment—his prejudice was a characteristic of the age he lived in—he fought for Rebecca, tho' he despised her race—the veil that is drawn over his feelings was necessary to the fable, and the beautiful sensibility of hers, so regulated, yet so intense might show the triumph of faith over human affection. I have dwelt on this character as we sometimes do on an exquisite painting until the canvass [*sic*] seems to breathe and we believe it is life. (Phillipson, *Letters of Rebecca Gratz* [above, note 16], p. 32)

26. Ashton, *Rebecca Gratz* (above, note 17), p. 111.

27. For readings of Edgeworth's *Harrington* see Gallagher, *Nobody* (above, note 4), pp. 306–327; Michael Ragussis, *Figures of Conversion: "The Jewish Question" and English National Identity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), pp. 65–76; and Neville Hoad, "Maria Edgeworth's *Harrington*: The Price of Sympathetic Representation," in Spector, *British Romanticism* (above, note 8), pp. 121–137. All three critics discuss the exchange between Edgeworth and Rachel Mordecai Lazarus. Gratz and her interlocutors seem to understand the ending of the novel as a conventional conversion-and-marriage rather than a *deus-ex-machina* discovery that, as Hoad puts it, "Berenice

[is] always and already Christian . . . [a fact that] keeps the irrational threat of miscegenation on foreign soil—Spain—and outside the time-span of the novel . . . [allowing the] moment of anxiety [to] be historically and spatially displaced" (p. 128).

28. Ashton, *Rebecca Gratz* (above, note 17), pp. 108–109, emphasis mine. See also Gratz to Maria Fenno Hoffman, October 20, 1817:

> [R]eligious tolerance . . . [is] the message [Edgeworth] would inculcate. . . . I think however a more interesting and *natural* story might have been produced in making the characters of Jew and Christian associate and assimilate in all the respective charities of social life without bringing the passions into contact. I believe it is impossible to reconcile a matrimonial engagement between persons of so different a creed without requiring one or the other to yield. In all instances we have heard of *in real life* this has been the case & where a family of children are to be brought up it appears necessary that the parents should agree. (Ashton, *Rebecca Gratz* [above, note 17], p. 277 , note 81; emphasis mine)

29. Ragussis, *Figures of Conversion* (above, note 27), p. 60.

30. Ashton, *Rebecca Gratz* (above, note 17), analyzes how the legend of "the original of Rebecca" came to be used in the Jewish community after Gratz's death:

> Structurally the legend merges past and present, bringing together two Rebeccas living in different eras but facing the same dilemma: whether or not to marry a non-Jew. As a legend it enables its interpreters to draw various meanings from its central logic. *Ivanhoe*'s setting in medieval England includes instances of Jewish oppression by the English. Even under such circumstances, the fictional Rebecca does not leave her father and marry out when she can. By calling up medieval history, the legend forms a cognitive bridge to the entire Jewish past, including many instances of martyrdom. This act of loyalty by a Jewish woman is, when seen from a culture basing marriage on love, a kind of martyrdom, and is valorized with all the aura of nobility that martyrdom carries. It brings the weight of censure by all Jewish martyrs to bear on each Jewish woman who marries a gentile man. . . . In the logic of the legend, Gratz's spinsterhood implies the traditional response to an intermarriage—the line of future generations has been cut. It says that women who allow love for a Gentile to affect the generational continuity of Judaism will lose either the generations or the man or both. This legendary logic imaginatively re-creates the ghetto wall, the most concrete form of Jewish disenfranchisement. . . . The individualism that upholds the importance of romantic love is effectively trivialized as a foolish and foreign idea that allows personal desire to overrule the needs of family and community. (pp. 251–253)

31. Scott, Edinburgh edition (above, note 6), pp. 71–72. For a more detailed discussion of Rebecca's dress, see my article "The 'Distinction of the Beautiful Jewess': Rebecca of *Ivanhoe* and Scott's Marking of the Jewish Woman," *Jewish Culture and History* (forthcoming).

32. Charlotte Jirousek, “More than Oriental Splendour: European and Ottoman Headgear, 1380–1580,” *Dress*, 22 (1995), p. 25.
33. Diane Owen Hughes, “Distinguishing Signs: Ear-rings, Jews and Franciscan Rhetoric in the Italian Renaissance City,” *Past and Present*, 112 (1986), p. 21.
34. Cf. BT *Ketubot* 72a and *Berakhot* 24a.
35. Marc Shapiro, “Another Example of ‘Minhag America,’” *Judaism*, 39 (1990), pp. 148–149 and 151–152; Michael Broyde, Lilli Krakowski, and Marc Shapiro, “Further on Women’s Hair Covering: An Exchange,” *Judaism*, 40 (1991), pp. 82–83 and 88.
36. C. Willett and Phyllis Cunnington, *Handbook of English Costume in the 19th Century* (third edition; London: Faber & Faber, 1970), pp. 353–376.
37. Todd Endelman, *The Jews of Britain, 1650 to 2000* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), p. 35.
38. See Betty-Bright P. Low, “Of Muslins and Merveilleuses: Excerpts from the Letters of Josephine du Pont and Margaret Manigault,” *Winterthur Portfolio*, 9 (1974):

> [H]ats became the principle means of expressing individuality. . . . Variety was seemingly infinite, with fantasy bonnets, casques (helmets), and turbans the favored shapes for social occasions. . . . During the last two years of the eighteenth century, a turban decorated with “esprit,” a type of feather bouquet, was the epitome of style. (p. 36)

39. Jenna Weissman Joselit, *A Perfect Fit: Clothes, Character, and the Promise of America* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2001), p. 102.

Is a portrait, intended for family use, public or private? It is not public in the sense of being for sale, nor was it originally intended to hang in a museum. However, it is also not private, since it is meant for display (for visitors) in the home. Gratz’s manner of displaying Sully’s portraits of her brother and sister-in-law comes out in a letter written around the end of 1831 to her sister-in-law, Maria Gist Gratz:

> [Two guests] dined here, & I raised the green veil from your & Ben’s portraits, that they might see what Sully could do when he had subjects that pleased him, you would have been amused to see Jo[seph Gratz]’s extacy [*sic*] as he directed attention to the perfection of each. I could scarcely bear to cover them again they look so bright & true. (Phillipson, *The Letters of Rebecca Gratz* [above, note 16], p. 132)

Gratz kept the portraits veiled, presumably for their preservation, but also, effectively, for their privacy.

40. Letter written by a German mercenary during the Revolutionary War, cited in Hasia Diner and Beryl Lief Benderly, *Her Works Praise Her: A History of Jewish Women in America from Colonial Times to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), pp. 28–29. Diner describes late eighteenth-century portraits of prominent married Jewish women such as Grace Mears Levy and Sarah Lopez, of New York and

Newport respectively, as showing plunging necklines and "their dark, lustrous hair." In an example almost simultaneous with the Sully portraits, married Isabel Rebecca Lyons Mordecai of Charleston, Gratz's contemporary in age and counterpart in class, was painted in 1835 by Theodore Sidney Moïse with her head uncovered. See Marie Ferrara et al., "The Diary of Joseph Lyons, 1833–1835," *American Jewish History*, 91 (2003), p. 522.

41. If the eighteenth century was "'one of the few times in history that almost total beardlessness was ever practiced,' . . . [and] shaving became a sign of Western civilization, . . . [then] the elimination of the beard could also erase cultural difference. For example, in Europe the beard could signify Jewish ethnicity." Therefore, its removal, in conformity with Western fashion, signified acculturation, or a desire to erase difference. Angela Rosenthal, "Raising Hair," *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 38 (2004), pp. 2–3, citing Richard Corson, *Fashions in Hair* (1965), p. 302.

42. Anthony Synnott, "Shame and Glory: A Sociology of Hair," *The British Journal of Sociology*, 38 (1987), p. 403. See also Kaufmann Kohler et. al., "Bareheadedness" and "Reform Judaism from the Point of View of the Reform Jew," and Cyrus Adler et al., "Wig," in *The Jewish Encyclopedia* [1905], on the site www.jewishencyclopedia.com (The Kopelman Foundation, 2002); and Joselit, *Perfect Fit* (above, note 39), Chapter 4.

43. Honoré de Balzac, *Lost Illusions* (1837–1843):

> At this moment Mme de Bargeton appeared in the full glory of a studied toilette. She was wearing a Jewish turban, adorned with an oriental brooch [*un turban juif enrichi d'une agrafe orientale*]. . . . This theatrical get-up Lucien thought enchanting. (English transl. by Kathleen Raine; New York: Modern Library. 2001, p. 79)

Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (1847):

> The Dowager [Lady Ingram] might be between forty and fifty: her shape was still fine; her hair (by candle-light at least) still black; her teeth, too, were still apparently perfect. Most people would have termed her a splendid woman of her age: and so she was, no doubt, physically speaking; but then there was an expression of almost insupportable haughtiness in her bearing and countenance. . . . She had, likewise, a fierce and a hard eye . . . her voice was deep, its inflections very pompous, very dogmatical,—very intolerable, in short. A crimson velvet robe, and a shawl *turban* of some gold-wrought Indian fabric, invested her (I suppose she thought) with a truly imperial dignity. (Chapter 17, www.gutenberg.org/etext/1260, emphasis mine)

44. Rebecca Gratz to Maria Gist Gratz, January 20, 1835, in Phillipson, *Letters of Rebecca Gratz* (above, note 16), p. 220.

45. The congregation retained Sephardic practice after the first Jewish settlers, as did Shearith Israel in New York and Bevis Marks in London, from which the Philadelphia

community obtained their translated prayer books. Ashton, *Rebecca Gratz* (above, note 17), p. 33.
46. Ismar Schorsch, "The Myth of Sephardic Supremacy," *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, 34 (1989), pp. 47–66.
47. Ashton, *Rebecca Gratz* (above, note 17), pp. 189–190, 125.
48. Hannah London, "Portraits of Rebecca Gratz by Thomas Sully," *Antiques*, 98 (1970), p. 115.
49. Monroe Fabian, *Mr. Sully, Portrait Painter: The Works of Thomas Sully, 1783–1872* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Exhibition Catalog, 1983), p. 86. The Malbone miniature depicts Gratz bareheaded, in curls and classical dress (1806); see Ashton, *Rebecca Gratz* (above, note 17), illustrations (n.p.). The whereabouts of the Sully copy are unknown. For more on fancy pictures, see below.
50. Ashton, *Rebecca Gratz* (above, note 17), p. 77.
51. London also lists the Gratz family portraits that Sully executed after 1830: Benjamin, Rebecca's youngest brother, and his wife, Maria Gist Gratz (1831); Sally Minis, the wife of a nephew (1833); Rachel Gratz, a first cousin (1835); and Major Alfred Mordecai, the husband of a niece (1836). London, "Portraits of Rebecca Gratz," (above, note 48), p. 116.
52. Fabian says the first portrait was for Benjamin (*Mr. Sully* [above, note 49], p. 86); London does not say for whom the portrait was commissioned ("Portraits of Rebecca Gratz" [above, note 48], p. 116); Edward Biddle and Mantle Fielding list this portrait in the register as #672, "painted for her brother" (*The Life and Works of Thomas Sully, 1783–1872* [1921; reprinted Charleston, SC: Garnier, 1969], p. 162).
53. London, "Portraits of Rebecca Gratz," (above, note 48), p. 116.
54. John Sartain, *Reminiscences of a Very Old Man, 1807–1897* (1899), cited in London, "Portraits of Rebecca Gratz" (above, note 48), p. 116.
55. Ashton, *Rebecca Gratz* (above, note 17), p. 61.
56. *Ibid.*, p. 126.
57. Biddle and Fielding, *Life and Works* (above, note 52), p. 162.
58. London, "Portraits of Rebecca Gratz" (above, note 48), p. 115–117.
59. Ashton, *Rebecca Gratz* (above, note 17), p. 170. Apparent signature, upper right: *TSully 58.* London, citing Biddle and Fielding, says that Sully marked his paintings with the mongram TS and the date on either the face or the back of each of his paintings, but that not all of his work is recorded in his register. London, "Portraits of Rebecca Gratz," (above, note 48), p. 115.
60. See Jewish Women's Archive, "Resource Information for Portrait Believed to be of Rebecca Gratz," March 24, 2005 <http://www.jwa.org/archive/jsp/gresInfo.jsp?resID=226>.
61. This image appears in Conover Hunt-Jones, "'Remember the Ladies': Women

in America, 1750–1815" (*Magazine Antiques*, 111 [1977]), as an example of how women were able to fulfill their religious impulses in America (unlike in Europe). The biographical caption lists Rebecca Gratz's considerable achievements:

> Philadelphia heiress Rebecca Gratz . . . at the age of only twenty helped to found the Female Association for the Relief of Women and Children in Reduced Circumstances . . . also was one of the founders, in 1815, of the nonsectarian Philadelphia Orphan Asylum, and in 1819 she created the Female Hebrew Benevolent Society. She is perhaps best remembered as the founder of the first American Jewish Sunday School in 1838 . . . [and] is believed to have been the prototype of the Rebecca in Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*. . . . *Delaware Art Museum*. (p. 763)

My thanks to Kathryn Glettler and Mary Cahill for alerting me to and helping me trace this image.

Joyce K. Schiller, curator of the Delaware Art Museum, was kind enough to fill in one gap in the issue of provenance:

> The Sully came "from the collection of Mr. Benjamin Shaw of Rehoboth Beach, Delaware[, who] gave the portrait to the Delaware Art Museum in October 1971." Mr. John Gribbel sold it at auction in Philadelphia on November 8, 1941. Our *Rebecca Gratz* was bought at auction in the 1940s by Mr. Shaw's mother, Mrs. Clara Shaw Herrmann. She gave it to her son as a gift shortly after its purchase. The only thing we cannot determine is if Mrs. Shaw Herrmann bought at the 1941 auction or some other time and place in the 1940s.

62. Hogarth, *Analysis of Beauty* (1753), pp. 34–35 and 39, cited in Gill Perry, "Staging Gender and 'Hairy Signs': Representing Dorothy Jordan's Curls," *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 38/1 (2004), p. 150.

63. Fabian, *Mr. Sully* (above, note 49), p. 86, note 3.

64. In the Salon of 1830 in France, no fewer than thirty paintings based on Scott were displayed. In England, the total number of recorded and exhibited Scott paintings was around 1,000, of which 100 are from *Ivanhoe*, 32 of them taking Rebecca as their subject. Richard Altick, *Paintings from Books: Art and Literature in Britain, 1760–1900* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1985), pp. 25–26, 36, 426–433.

65. Ashton, *Rebecca Gratz* (above, note 17), p. 134.

66. Many thanks to my anonymous reviewer for this private communication.

67. London, "Portraits of Rebeeca Gratz," (above, note 48), p. 116.

68. Phillipson, *Letters of Rebecca Gratz* (above, note 16), p. xx.

69. Ashton, *Rebecca Gratz* (above, note 17), p. 24.

70. Aside from Gratz family "tradition," we cannot be absolutely certain that the second, "erased" portrait had a turban in it at all.

71. Fabian's catalogue includes reproductions of a Sully portrait of Sarah Reeve

Ladson Gilmor of Baltimore, presumably non-Jewish and married, depicted in 1823 in a turban and furs. Fabian calls the painting "luscious" and "among the most appealing of Sully's likenesses of women" (Fabian, *Mr. Sully* [above, note 49], p. 31 and 77). Seven years before the three portraits of Rebecca Gratz, the Gilmor portrait combines several elements found in them (if we accept the turban one as the missing Sully): The lady appears in a Turkish turban; she wears a white dress with a stand-up tulle collar (although hers has an open décolletage); and over it she wears a fur-trimmed mantle, like in the first painting of Gratz. Gilmor's portrait is called a "likeness" rather than a "fancy picture."

72. As Alide Cadigemetrio suggests, Scott "both makes a Jewess representative of nineteenth-century national values and denies that representative quality when resorting to an otherwise forgotten principle of historical verisimilitude"; idem, "A Plea for Fictional Histories and Old-Time 'Jewesses,'" in Werner Sollors (ed.), *The Invention of Ethnicity* (New York–Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 20.

73. Other critics have made similar distinctions between the "real" and the "unknowable," using romantic definitions of the beautiful and the sublime. Cagidemetrio writes:

> The gulf—an image of the unbridgeable, between equal and alien, between the nation's "self-evident truths" and threatening reality—is suitably identified as a racial metaphor. It still remains a stereotyped image of sublimity, of romantic attraction and repulsion. ("A Plea" [above, note 72], p. 43)

74. With the popularity of historical fiction after Scott, heroines continued to be devised and read in Rebecca's shadow. For two recent and provocative readings see Jefferson Chase, "The Homeless Nation: The Exclusion of Jews in and from Early Nineteenth-Century German Historical Fiction," in Cheyette and Valman (eds.), *The Image* (above, note 8), pp. 61–74, and Elizabeth Fay, "Grace Aguilar: Rewriting Scott Rewriting History," in Spector (ed.), *British Romanticism* (above, note 8), pp. 215–234.

75. Gallagher, *Nobody* (above, note 4), pp. 283–284, 277.

76. Marilyn Orr, "'Almost Under the Immediate Eye': Framing Displacement," in J.H. Alexander and David Hewitt (eds.), *Scott in Carnival: Selected Papers from the Fourth International Scott Conference, Edinburgh 1991* (Aberdeen: Association for Scottish Literary Studies, 1993), p. 309.

Jonathan Freedman, in *The Temple of Culture: Assimilation and Anti-Semitism in Literary Anglo-America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), adds that the Jew offers a special case for identification:

> The Jew is also that border or boundary figure that calls into question the viability of any model of racial, national, or cultural identity (including . . . the Jew's own).

> Hence the Jew may be . . . identified *with* as a kind of figure of bounded boundlessness, one who can image the very possibility of existing within a social or a national or an ethnic identity without being completely subsumed by it. (p. 45)

A recent summary of the dynamics of identification can be found in Gary Woodward, *The Idea of Identification* (Albany: SUNY University Press, 2003).

77. Ashton, *Rebecca Gratz* (above, note 17), p. 245.
78. Phillipson, *Letters of Rebecca Gratz* (above, note 16), p. 32.