

## Defining the Hebrews in Matthew Arnold's Hebraism and Hellenism

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It is, I hope, an appropriate tribute to Addi Wasserstein to explore a theme that is related both to Greeks and to Jews, both to English literature and to German poetry. The theme is the polarity between Hebraism and Hellenism. This sense that there are two contrasting mainsprings of our culture, two worlds of thought and being in perpetual opposition to one another, originated in Greco-Jewish literature (II Maccabees), and evolved within German writing, especially in the poetry of Heinrich Heine. For Classicists more generally, the topic forms part of the extensive story of the reception of the Classics in European thought and society, a field which today has a growing role within the subject, not least at my own University, Reading.<sup>1</sup> And I am aware that Wasserstein was working in his last years on questions of this kind, in his studies of the Jewish tradition of the *Letter of Aristeas*.

In the England of the 1860s, 'a school inspector' made 'Hellenism' and 'Hebraism' terms of common literary and cultural usage'.<sup>2</sup> That school inspector was Matthew Arnold — essayist, literary critic, polemicist, poet, professor (of poetry at Oxford), and Victorian public figure. His father was Dr Thomas Arnold of Rugby, England's most famous public school headmaster, and himself a writer and reformer. The text in which the polarity was enshrined was the collection of essays published in 1869 as *Culture and Anarchy*.

This is, as is well-known, the book which imported into the English language the term 'Philistine' in a broad application;<sup>3</sup> and, in fact, the argument's main purpose was to be a head-on assault on British 'Philistinism.' In the fourth, and probably most famous, essay, entitled 'Hebraism and Hellenism', and also elsewhere in the collection, Arnold expounded his interpretation of the constituent forces in British culture and his prescriptions for getting their balance right. Britain had become too parochial, too concerned with middle-class respectability, and too narrow in outlook, to give full scope to educating its population, to matters of the mind, to the true refinements of life. His criticisms are often seen

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<sup>1</sup> This discussion arises out of a paper read at a seminar in the Classics Department of the University of Reading.

<sup>2</sup> The description is Turner's 1981: 7.

<sup>3</sup> An earlier, less general use by Carlyle is recorded in ApRoberts 1983: 115.

as a response to the consequences of industrialization, but these may not have been present in his mind.<sup>4</sup>

*Culture and Anarchy* (first published in book form in 1869) is still regarded as one of the most influential English texts of social theory and criticism, though it is very hard to gauge its precise influence. Arnold was often attacked, but he was certainly noticed.<sup>5</sup> Perhaps Arnold himself created something of the climate for the attention to his own theories, writing to his mother in the year of the volume's publication that, on the subject of Hebraism and Hellenism, these ideas were 'so true that they will form a kind of centre for English thought and speculation later on' (de Laura 1969: 173). We hear that, by the time a second edition was produced, in 1875, chapter headings 'were supplied', as Arnold put it, 'by the phrases in the book which have become famous', among them 'Hebraism' and 'Hellenism'.<sup>6</sup> These are the chapter headings to be found in Dover Wilson's edition, itself something of a classic, which combines features of Arnold's 1869 edition with features of that of 1875. For this editor, *Culture and Anarchy* 'is at once a masterpiece of vivacious prose, a great poet's defence of poetry, a profoundly religious book, and the finest apology for education in the English language.'<sup>7</sup> Whatever our judgment, Turner (1981: 18) aptly points out that the frequent inclusion of Arnold's discussion of Hellenism in later anthologies of English literature marks out the book's status as 'part of the standard literary canon.'

The distinction of the essays lies in their penetration and in their power to combine ideas and to present them resonantly and forcefully, rather than in the quality of their detailed argumentation. Jenkyns, in the best-known modern British study of the role of the Classics in Victorian England (1980: 270-4), criticizes Arnold's analysis for being 'flat and partial' and 'unsatisfactory', proceeding to detail the 'great mistakes' in it. This may be justified, but such an approach does little to add to our understanding of the impact of *Culture and Anarchy*, an impact which was perhaps even increased by the inconsistencies.

Due to the standing of *Culture and Anarchy* as a definition of culture within British life, and to the practical, exhortatory dimension of the work, Arnold's concepts of Hebraism and Hellenism have as a rule been considered by scholars in relation to their application to the contemporary Victorian environment. When the understanding of the ancients which lies behind them is analysed, this is done more in relation to Arnold's Hellenism than to his Hebraism. Yet the concept of Hebraism, the first element in the antithesis, was the more problematic and it is certainly the more difficult for us to interpret. There is no section on Hebraism in Tollers' bibliography of Arnold.

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<sup>4</sup> This reading is resisted by Collini 1988: 78.

<sup>5</sup> On some of the criticisms, see Coulling 1974: 181-216.

<sup>6</sup> See Super 1965: 413.

<sup>7</sup> Wilson 1932: xii.

It scarcely needs saying that the Hebrew-Hellene antithesis had a significant European pedigree when it reached Arnold. The opposition is one which had found its way into many aspects of thought and scholarship. The formula sums up a common conception about the twin pillars of the European inheritance. It had acquired considerable momentum in the context of the idealist rationalism of the Enlightenment, not least among emancipated Jewish thinkers; and it then figured in the Romantic reactions to rationalism, when religion was brought back into play as a living force alongside the pagan heritage. Frank Turner points out that, in Germany, the polarity was very often discussed in highly abstract terms, while in England, it is located more in the realm of specific, time-bound reference. Matthew Arnold was, however, an exception, and it is no accident that from his youth he was well-versed in German literature, and that he was twice sent by the government to look at school systems on the Continent. He was even sometimes criticized as 'un-English'.

The difference in approach between the German and the British versions is not unexpected. None the less, even in the case of exponents deeply engaged with either the Greeks or the ancient Hebrews, it is regular in these interpretations for very broad cultural stereotypes to be plucked out without regard to specific data, and often irrespective of any specification of time or place. The stereotypes are variable, but, like all such constructs, they are driven primarily, it is fair to say, by modern requirements. Of course, the nineteenth century was simultaneously the period of the emergence in Germany of Classical scholarship in its most developed form, and of the creation of many of its greatest monuments. The two phenomena were not unconnected, and even the purest scholarship was not immune from the influence of idealizations of Greece (Grafton 1992: 239).

The Hebrew-Greek polarity had many dimensions: historical (in explaining the origins and development of culture on a world scale), ethical (in debating values), sociological (in analysing the make-up of contemporary society), theological (especially in debates about the Church, which were, of course, a major mid-nineteenth century problem), and psychological (in interpreting different types of individual temperament). German aesthetic Hellenism, that idealizing conviction about the timeless perfection of the Greeks, with its special emphasis, usually traced back to Winckelmann, on the calm beauty of Greek art, was rarely far from the picture.<sup>8</sup> In the 1780s, Herder had brought the contrast between the Jews and the Greeks into the fields of national and religious identity: in the polit-

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<sup>8</sup> Winckelmann already made brief comments on the limitations of ancient Jewish activity in the sphere of fine art (as Professor Alex Potts has pointed out to me); see *Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums*, Dresden, 1764, 1.2.

ical sphere, he found the Jews sadly wanting — possessing, at the best of times, a small, insignificant land and few political skills.<sup>9</sup>

But the contrasts were manifold and ubiquitous. The Greek-Hebrew opposition could take surprising forms: beauty versus truth; or else beauty and truth versus indifference to the physical; harmony with nature versus disharmony; art and science versus morality; pleasure versus guilt; cheerfulness versus solemnity; optimism versus pessimism; man versus God; an immanent versus a transcendent God; universality versus exclusivity; adaptability versus tenacity; flexibility versus rigidity; reason versus dogma; patriotism versus political helplessness; liberty versus authority; liberalism versus socialism (in Ernest Renan).<sup>10</sup> Many of these are exemplified in Arnold.

The Hebrew side of the equation is particularly prone to manipulation at a basic level of meaning. Commentators have often written as though the issue at stake was merely the tension between pagan culture and Christian belief. But there are other dimensions. Naturally, the Old Testament is the primary point of reference when contrasts are drawn; it is seen as the great repository of moral law and prophetic justice. But, beyond this, the formula could be turned in different directions. On the one hand, the exponents of the Hebrew system, that is to say, the Jews, were still around, and, in Germany of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, were becoming uncomfortably visible (in social terms it did not necessarily help, although it may have done theologically, if, like Heine, they converted to Christianity). So the question of the Jews and their character, consciously or unconsciously, made the insistent demands of the Bible all the more difficult to deal with. On the other hand, the Bible for the Christian majority comprised the New Testament as well as the Old. Christianity had from its inception claimed to be the new and the true Israel, and so the demands of the biblical world could equally be perceived as the demands of Christianity. Hebrew could mean, simply, Christian.

Arnold's proposals of 1869 were presented, as we might expect, in terms of synthesis, rather than of any violent confrontation between the two forces. The Hellenic tradition represented life's graces. These graces, however, were more than just graces, for culture had a moral claim almost equal to that of morality itself, and a relevance to the whole of society. It was 'sweetness and light', a phrase Arnold took from the fable of the bees and the spider in Jonathan Swift's *Battle of the Books*. It was his revered Homer; it was the simplicity of Greek art; it was Sophocles' capacity to 'see life steady and see it whole'; it was the clarity and rationalism of Plato and Aristotle; all of them ideals which could be attained in his own world. Hebraism, the other vital ingredient of civilized life, entailed

<sup>9</sup> See *Ideen zur Geschichte der Philosophie der Menschheit*, 1787, chap.12.3, 'on the Hebrews', and also chapters 14, 16 and 17.

<sup>10</sup> Renan, *History of the People of Israel II*: 454.

the complexity of the old law and that sense of sin without which, equally, human beings could not flourish:

Both Hellenism and Hebraism arise out of the wants of human nature and address themselves to satisfying those wants. But their methods are so different...To get rid of one's ignorance, to see things as they are, and by seeing them as they are to see them in their beauty, is the simple and attractive ideal which Hellenism holds out before human nature...and, human life in the hands of Hellenism, is invested with a kind of aerial ease, clearness and radiancy; they are full of what we call sweetness and light...Hebraism, — and here is the source of its wonderful strength, — has always been preoccupied with an awful sense of the impossibility of being at ease in Zion...the space which sin fills in Hebraism as compared with Hellenism is indeed prodigious (Super ed. 1965: 167-8).

England therefore needed to redress the balance in favour of Hellenism. In European history, according to Arnold, the two forces had, as Lionel Trilling describes it (1949: 156), 'like buckets in a well ... been passing each other through the ages': from the pagan world, through early Christianity, the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Enlightenment and the Revolution. Now, modern England required a new dose of Hellenism.

Arnold's 'Hebraism' exemplified precisely that instability of interpretation which we have observed. There are moments in his writings when Christianity is overtly included in the term. In *St Paul and Protestantism*, he puts the matter as decisively as it is possible to put it, with the assertion — 'Moses Hebraises, Isaiah Hebraises, John Hebraises, Jesus Christ himself is, as St Paul truly styles him, "a minister of the circumcision to the truth of God"' (Super ed. 1968: 124). Indeed, Arnold goes to considerable trouble to effect this merger. In the process, he minimizes and denigrates the Jewish legacy in the time-honoured (or dishonoured) terms of Christian theology. The new dispensation universalized Hebraism:

Then was seen that astonishing spectacle...when men of all languages and nations took hold of the skirt of him that was a Jew, saying:—'We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.' And the Hebraism which thus received and ruled a world all gone out of the way and altogether become unprofitable, was, and could not but be, the later, the more spiritual, the more attractive development of Hebraism. It was Christianity, that is to say Hebraism aiming at self-conquest and rescued from the thrall of vile affections...

Yet, at other times, Hebraism is genuinely the system of the Hebrews, and Christianity's contribution was to add Hellenism to it, a contribution achieved above all through the agency of Paul. Arnold offers the reader a would-be historical understanding of the old Jewish legalism and its supercession: '[Christianity] transformed and renewed Hebraism by criticising a fixed rule' (Wilson ed.:

159). From this mechanical conception St Paul, in Arnold's understanding, rescued humanity.

Concluding *Literature and Dogma* (1873) — the work which sold more than any of his other writings during his own lifetime — Arnold feels able to offer his readers a recipe which quantifies the desirable proportions of Hebraism and Hellenism in life.<sup>11</sup> Here he is writing a programmatic statement, not merely part of a narrow polemic.

Greece was the lifter-up to the nations of the banner of art and science, as Israel was the lifter-up of the banner of righteousness ... But conduct, plain matter as it is, is six-eighths of life, while art and science are only two eighths (Super ed. 1968: 407).

This, as he explicitly points out, is a reversal of the judgment he had previously expressed (mainly in *Culture and Anarchy*), when he had endorsed his vision of culture by criticizing an excess of Hebraism. It is clear that, to make this sort of equation work, Arnold required a conception of the old Hebrew virtues — and vices — as an entity entirely separate from the influence of Christianity.

Beyond this, Arnold's 'Hebraism' has a third, highly distinctive dimension: it is used in his writings as a label for groups within the Church. Hebraic legalism is the brush with which to tar dissenters; and Arnold has hard-hitting points to make against Puritans and about the separation of such groups from the established Church. The value of a broad Church and the challenge of non-conformism were acute problems in the vigorous mid-Victorian religious debate, and Arnold's involvement is evident from the fact that in *Literature and Dogma*, as well as in other essays, he attacked sectarians head-on.

None the less, the assertion, frequently made, that Arnold's Hebrews were always non-conformists, never Jews, is doubly misleading.<sup>12</sup> For one thing, the argument in *Culture and Anarchy* goes well beyond the affairs of the Church. A far broader purpose emerges than any critique of narrow Protestantism, that is the balancing act of preserving religion *tout court* while building British education along civilized, liberal lines. The clash between Hebraism and Hellenism is thus an eternal one, far transcending any domestic dispute. Hebraism in Arnold cannot always mean Protestantism. Yet we have seen that it does not necessarily mean Christianity more generally. At points the reference is specifically to the inescapable legacy of the Jews, with all its strengths and defects.

This is not to claim that the position of the Jews in society was something which occupied Matthew Arnold directly, even if he can scarcely have forgotten that the great Dr Arnold, his father, had been a highly visible opponent of their admission to Parliament.<sup>13</sup> Though a Liberal in religious and social thought,

<sup>11</sup> On the reasons for this, see Coulling 1974: 235ff.

<sup>12</sup> See e.g. Turner 1981: 21.

<sup>13</sup> Stanley 1844: 402; on these debates, see Roth 1964: 260-6.

Arnold senior had also expressed considerable indignation when he was not allowed to refer to Jesus as the Christ in the history examination of a Jewish student at London University — presumably at University College, the new, godless institution in Gower Street (Trilling 1949: 60).

But there is good evidence that Matthew Arnold was occasionally responsive to the Jewish heritage in the abstract: he was able to write eloquently about its meaning for Heine, as we shall see; and, in the opening of his essay on 'Spinoza and the Bible', he conjured up with fascination the dramatic text of the philosopher's excommunication by the Spanish-Portuguese synagogue in Amsterdam. Arnold was apparently taken with the talents of the French Jewish actress Rachel, whom he watched repeatedly on the Paris stage in 1846-7. Of the three sonnets composed some time after her early death in 1858, the second speaks of her as 'a radiant Greek-souled artist', but it is in the third that the poet bursts forth on the subject of Rachel's origins, acclaiming her in the opening line as 'sprung from the blood of Israel's scattered race.' The sonnet culminates in what might be described as an anticipation of the Judaism/Hellenism concept:

In her, like us, there clashed contending powers,  
Germany, France, Christ, Moses, Athens, Rome.  
The strife, the mixture in her soul are ours;  
Her genius and her glory are her own.

Here, we may say, Rachel is as much symbol of her people, Israel, as she is individual woman, and we may perhaps detect a certain strained excitement at the exposure that she is 'like us.'<sup>14</sup>

There are parallels between Arnold's awareness of the historic continuity of Jewish tradition and that of George Eliot: Daniel Deronda, in which the eponymous hero discovers his Jewish origins, was published in 1876. It is revealing to discover that the publication of *Literature and Dogma* stimulated rumours to the effect that the Rothschilds had employed Arnold for a fee of a million francs, to cast aspersions on Christ and the Trinity (Faverty 1951: 185). Oddly, the same rumour is associated with Ernest Renan.<sup>15</sup> In Arnold's case, what plausibility there was in the notion presumably came from his association with Lady Louisa de Rothschild, a powerful personality with whom he sometimes corresponded and with whose household at Aston Clinton he was familiar.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> On Arnold and Rachel, see ApRoberts 1983: 167.

<sup>15</sup> Almog 1988: 257.

<sup>16</sup> It is tempting to speculate as to whether Lady de Rothschild influenced Arnold's views on the 'Hebrews'. She herself had attended the debate in the House of Lords on the 'Jews' bill' on 30 May 1848 (which revolved around the capacity of her brother-in-law, Baron Lionel de Rothschild, to take up his parliamentary seat as a Jew, and she wrote that the speeches were 'intolerant, bigoted and calumnious' (Murray 1996: 203-4).

Matters Jewish seem to have become to a modest extent fashionable in the literary London of the 1860s and 1870s.<sup>17</sup> Arnold was not immune. He relates, in one of the letters to Louisa de Rothschild, written in 1867, the great stir created in 'the English religious world' by the publication in the *Quarterly Review* of an article on the Talmud (Russell I: 373), and later he records his own meeting with its author, Emanuel Deutsch. Deutsch, who taught George Eliot Hebrew, was very well regarded, and Arnold readily shared the common opinion. But there is more to it than that, for we find Arnold eager to link Deutsch with his own doctrine of Judaism and Hellenism: 'I met Mr Deutsch the other day and had a long talk with him about Hebraism and Hellenism. I was greatly interested in seeing him, and any diffidence I felt in talking about my crude speculations to such a *savant* was set aside by his telling me that he was distinctly conscious, while writing his article on the Talmud, that if it had not been for what I had done, he could not have written that article in the *Quarterly* and the British public could not have read it'.

In the introduction to *Literature and Dogma*, Arnold shows again, with a touch of wit, that the Hebrews of old and the Jews of his day were not unconnected in his mind. In this case, his dealings were with one particular member of the race (if not of the religion), for he takes issue with Lord Beaconsfield (Disraeli), criticizing him for 'treating Hellenic things with the scornful negligence natural to a Hebrew' (Super ed. 1968: 164).

There is evidence, then, of curiosity about Judaism and a certain romantic, if strained interest on Arnold's part. His feelings were especially warm, it may be suggested, towards certain particular Jews who had placed themselves in some respects outside the confines of Jewish life and were concerned with building bridges to Christians and Christianity. Both Lady de Rothschild, with her daughters, and Deutsch fell into this category. In Rachel's case, when he describes her dying rites in a letter, he expresses satisfaction that, while these were wholly Jewish, she herself was reading the *Imitation* (of Thomas à Kempis), one of his own favourite works. The role of such figures in the process of Jewish emancipation in Europe requires no comment here.

That real Jews were not wholly outside Arnold's mind when he spoke of Hebraism emerges also from a number of far more ambivalent statements in his work. These are statements of a rather familiar type, and some of them have recently been highlighted by Cheyette (1993: 14-22). One statement, published in 1873 in *Literature and Dogma* (Super ed. 1968: 199), deserves to be cited. Here the Hebrew-Hellene contrast, in its traditional terms, is implicit; within Arnold's formulations, the Jews of history and the despised, unmodernized Jewish stereotype of the European present mingle indissolubly, and with the utmost vagueness:

<sup>17</sup> These developments are usefully if uncritically documented by ApRoberts 1983: 164ff.



In spite of all which in them [the Jews] and in their character is unattractive, nay, repellent, — in spite of their shortcomings even in righteousness itself and their insignificance in everything else, — this petty, unsuccessful, unamiable people, without politics, without science, without art, without charm, deserve their great place in the world's regard, and are likely to have it more, as the world goes on, rather than less.

Faverty offers an appropriate comment on Arnold's ambivalence: 'the Jews would have been justified in asking, with Samson Agonistes, "What boots it at one gate to make defence, and at another to let in the foe?"' (1951:191). This material is relevant here, as exposing one of the strands in Arnold's conception of Hebraism, a direct response to the Jews as a people. The contrast with Hellenism is marked here by the choice of negative attributes for Hebraism.

The so-called 'Aryan myth'<sup>18</sup> is also not absent from Arnold's arguments. He falls back without hesitation on interpretations of national characteristics in terms of Indo-European or Semitic racial origins, although it is perhaps a moot point how central this ingredient is to Arnold's thought. Certainly, he is prone to resort to formulations such as the following (Super ed. 1965: 173-4) — 'Hebraism is of Semitic growth; and we English, a nation of Indo-European stock, seem to belong naturally to the movement of Hellenism.'<sup>19</sup> But there can, in any event, be no doubt that Arnold was drawing on that pool of theories which were widely favoured throughout Europe in the period: his formulation is not dissimilar to Ernest Renan's in comparing the Hebraic with the Greek heritage.<sup>20</sup> That Arnold finds this theorizing in terms of race at all relevant to his concerns serves, again, as a demonstration that a picture of the Jews as the creators of Hebraism was somewhere in his mind.

Finally, there is the link between Arnold and Heine. In spite of the vast differences in tone and temperament between the two writers, we can trace some direct influence of the German poet's influence on the British writer's ideas on Judaism and Hellenism. Arnold admired Heine. He sought to promote an appreciation of his poetry in England at a time when its reputation was far from established, through a detailed evaluation in *Essays in Criticism* (1865), and he discussed him also in the essay entitled *Pagan and Mediaeval Religious Sentiment*. There is one revealing paragraph in the former, which shows Arnold reacting directly to Heine's sense of the eternal antithesis. Arnold comments with his usual mellifluous certainty on a passage from *Doktor Faustus*:

he [Heine] has excellently pointed out how in the sixteenth century there was a double renaissance — a Hellenic renaissance and a Hebrew renaissance — and how both have been great powers ever since. He himself had in him both the spirit of

<sup>18</sup> To use the term now popularized by Bernal 1987.

<sup>19</sup> Arnold's response to this repertoire of ideas is analysed in Faverty's study.

<sup>20</sup> Almg 1988; Hadas-Lebel 1993. Arnold thought well of Renan, especially as an exponent of their common Celtic heritage.

Greece and the spirit of Judaea. Both these spirits reach the infinite, which is the true goal of all poetry and all art — the Greek spirit by beauty, the Hebrew by sublimity. By his perfection of literary form, by his love of clearness, by his love of beauty, Heine was Greek; by his intensity, 'by his untamableness', by his longing which cannot be uttered', he is Hebrew... (Super ed. 1962: 127-8).<sup>21</sup>

That is not to say that Arnold's antithesis is Heine's antithesis. While Carroll (1982: 241)<sup>22</sup> writes 'this is the closest Arnold ever comes to admitting that his own dichotomy of Hebraism and Hellenism derives from Heine' and Jenkyns (1980: 270) likewise insists that Arnold took his terms from Heine,<sup>23</sup> these are oversimplifications. For one thing, Arnold had certainly read and admired the writings of Herder too (deLaura 1969: 184), and he will have discovered the dichotomy there. For another, there are few or no direct echoes. Heine's was often a world of merging or warring mythologies, which scarcely concerned the paedagogic Arnold (unless we sense an echo in the third Rachel sonnet). None the less, there are visible points of contact, especially Arnold's reading of the two elements as embodied in psychological types. Heine's Hebrew images, too, somewhat surprisingly to us, could include Christian symbols, and his conception of the Nazarene influence was a strange merger of the two strands.

Thus, it is not only Hellenic and biblical but also New Testament images which merge and perish together, in cataclysmic fashion, in Heine's disturbing last unpublished poem, known as *Für die Mouche*. There he conjures up a tragic dream — 'es träumte mir von einer Sommernacht' — in which he describes the carvings on a sarcophagus, eaten away by time, 'the worst syphilis'. Those discordant scenes include, in a jumble, Adam and Eve in fig-leaves, the fall of Troy, Moses and Aaron, Judith and Holofernes, Esther and Haman, Bacchus with Priapus and Silenus, Lot getting drunk with his daughters, a lecherous Jove seducing Leda and Danae in his different guises, the chaste Diana hunting, Hercules spinning in women's clothes, Abraham's binding of Isaac; but also Herodias with the Baptist's head, Jesus teaching in the temple 'among the orthodox', Peter with the keys to heaven; and, as we later hear, at the poet's head, a passion flower whose religious symbolism co-exists with an erotic association. For the poet has realized that the sarcophagus is his own, and that he is looking down on himself lying in it. The figures depicted start warring with one another, creating a scene of havoc until all breaks apart, to the accompaniment of the braying of Balaam's ass. 'This strife', writes the poet, 'will never end.

<sup>21</sup> On Arnold's reading of Heine's meaning of 'renascence' here, see Bullen 1994: 246.

<sup>22</sup> Following the investigation of Tesdorpf 1971. But the latter's does not succeed in her case for a heavy and pervasive dependence of Arnold on Heine's dichotomy.

<sup>23</sup> Turner (1981: 24) makes the same claim, somewhat more moderately. Prickett 1989: 148, on the other hand, in listing German influences on Arnold, omits Heine altogether.

Truth will always contend with beauty. The hosts of men will always be divided into two camps: barbarians and Hellenes.'

One idea Arnold may have taken from Heine, then, is the natural accommodation of Christianity to the bipartite opposition. But what is above all important for our purposes is to have caught Arnold, in his essay on the poet, in the very act of relating to the supposedly Hebraic aspect of Heine's literary *persona*, and to observe that he defines this in terms of intensity and of yearning. The portrait, deriving, again, perhaps, from Heine himself, is evidently that of the archetypal Jew who carries his age-old suffering with him. It was an ambivalent picture, and one should not exaggerate Arnold's sympathy for it. Nor is it easy to separate out this strand from Arnold's unstable amalgam, 'the Hebrew'. His theory was not a wholly coherent one.

But there can be no doubt that what Arnold meant when he talked about 'Hebraism' was something which was separate from the Christian faith, something which was echoed in the Puritanism of the dissenters but was not simply that; something which was, in fact, the legacy of the historical authors of the Old Testament, and which was defined by what were believed to be their enduring characteristics. Arnold's Hebrews were thus parallel with his Hellenes, the creators of the art and literature of Classical Athens. But only up to a point. He was often made to notice that the old Israel was not gone, that Hebrews, for him not far removed from those of old, were still walking the streets, with all their strange power and sad fascination. This awareness yielded additional ingredients to the complex mix which was Hebraism. In turn, this sense may even have influenced the terms in which the Greeks, who had to be the exact polar opposite, came to be defined, accentuating their openness, their brightness, their capacity for pleasure, or, as Arnold chose to put it, their 'sweetness and light'.

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