

Jan Bloemendal (Ed.)

in Collaboration with a Seminar Group  
of the Ruhr University Bochum

Johannes Reuchlin's  
*Scaenica progymnasmata*  
or *Henno* (1498) and  
Jacob Spiegel's Commentary (1512)

Neo-Latin Comedy and Transnational Learning

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Gerhard Binder und Bernd Effe

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Manuel Baumbach, Reinhold F. Gleis,  
Claudia Klodt, Theodor Lindken

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## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	9
Johannes Reuchlin .....	9
Early Comedy in Germany .....	15
<i>Scaenica progymnasmata</i> / <i>Henno</i> —The Play Itself .....	19
Reuchlin’s Sources for <i>Scaenica progymnasmata</i> .....	23
Reception of <i>Scaenica progymnasmata</i> / <i>Henno</i> .....	25
History of Interpretation of <i>Henno</i> .....	29
Jacob Spiegel .....	36
Spiegel’s Commentary on Reuchlin’s <i>Scaenica progymnasmata</i> .....	38
Transnational Aspects of Reuchlin, Spiegel and <i>Henno</i> .....	44
Editions of <i>Scaenica progymnasmata</i> / <i>Henno</i> .....	45
Manuscripts of <i>Scaenica progymnasmata</i> / <i>Henno</i> .....	52
This Edition .....	53
<b>Reuchlin, <i>Scaenica progymnasmata</i> / <i>Henno</i>—Text and Translation</b> .....	55
<b>Preliminary Texts of <i>Scaenica progymnasmata</i></b> .....	89
<b>Jacob Spiegel’s Commentary</b> .....	97
Prologus .....	99
Actus primus .....	109
Actus secundus .....	158
Actus tertius .....	190
Actus quartus .....	208
Actus quintus .....	226
Post scripta .....	244
<b>Notes on Spiegel’s Commentary</b> .....	261
<b>Dictionum index</b> .....	403
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	409
Abbreviations .....	409
Primary Sources Antiquity–16th Century .....	409
Bible Books Quoted .....	417
Other Abbreviations .....	417
References and Editions Used .....	420
Primary Sources .....	420
Humanist Works: Modern Editions, Translations and Commentaries .....	433
Secondary Sources .....	440
<b>Figures</b> .....	459





## Introduction

### Johannes Reuchlin

In 1496, following the death of Duke Eberhard V of Württemberg, the humanist scholar Johann Reuchlin (1455–1522)<sup>1</sup> was forced to leave Stuttgart. His enemy, the Augustinian monk Konrad Holzinger, was released from the imprisonment he had been in because of the famous humanist and appointed advisor to the duke's successor, Eberhard Junior, so Reuchlin had to fear Holzinger's revenge.<sup>2</sup> He then turned to Johann von Dalberg (or Camerarius, 1445–1503), Bishop of Worms and Chancellor of Elector Philip of the Palatinate, who had invited him.<sup>3</sup> In May of the same year Reuchlin entered Dalberg's residence Heidelberg.<sup>4</sup> In this city humanism had found a fertile ground around the bishop, where the centre of the literary circle *Sodalitas litteraria Rhenana* (or *Celtica*), presided over by Dalberg, had hosted the Dutch

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- 1 For these first paragraphs, see Holstein, *Reuchlins Komödien*, pp. 1–9; Reuchlin's biography can be found in, e.g., Geiger, *Johann Reuchlin; Contemporaries*, III, pp. 145–50 (Heinz Scheible) and Pierre Mesnard in *ASD* I, 2, pp. 684–85, n.l. 12; Rhein, 'Johannes Reuchlin'; *HumVL* 2, cols. 579–633 (Gerald Dörner). A biography in English is: Posset, *Johann Reuchlin*; see also Hardin and Reinhart (eds), *German Writers of the Renaissance and Reformation*, pp. 231–40 (David Price); Finke, *Die Tübinger Juristenfakultät 1477–1534*, vol. 2, pp. 153–56; Haller, *Die Anfänge der Universität Tübingen 1477–1537*, vol. 1, pp. 239–43 and 311–15; vol. 2, pp. 89\*–94\* (a *bibliographie raisonnée*); *DLL* 12, cols. 1047–50 (Reinhard Müller); Ludwig, 'Nachlese'. See also Axelle Wille, 'Johannes Reuchlin: Jugendzeit, Schüler- und Wanderjahre' and Julius Birk, 'Der Mann in Amt und Würden (1482–1512)', in Boyé a.o., *Schlüsseltexzte*, pp. 10–12 and 13–16, resp. Early biographies of Reuchlin can be found in Philipp Melanchthon's *Oratio continens historiam Capnionis* (Wittenberg, 1552) (see below, n. 69), on which see Geiger, *Melanthons Oratio continens historiam Capnionis*, and Cornelius Loos Callidius, *Illustrium Germaniae scriptorum catalogus* (Mainz: Caspar Behem, 1582), sig. K2r–K3r (on Loos, see *ADB* 9, pp. 168–69 (Karl Werner) and 52, pp. 67–69 (Sigmund Riezler)). See also Mayerhoff, *Johann Reuchlin und seine Zeit*. The *Henno* is mentioned as follows (K3r): 'Progymnasmata iambis trimetris conscripta'. For parts of this introduction, see also Bloemendal, 'Johannes Reuchlin's *Scaenica progymnasmata*'. On Reuchlin and Württemberg, see also Frauenknecht, Rückert and Volk (eds), *Johannes Reuchlin unterwegs*.
  - 2 On Holzinger, see Heyd, 'Conrad Holzinger', and Stievermann, 'Der Augustinermönch Dr. Conrad Holzinger'.
  - 3 See on Dalberg *Contemporaries*, I, p. 374 (Ilse Guenther); Morneweg, *Johann von Dalberg*; Walter, 'Johannes von Dalberg und der Humanismus'; Wiegand, 'Johann von Dalberg und der oberrheinische Humanismus'; Bönnen and Keilmann (eds), *Der Wormser Bischof Johann von Dalberg*, esp. Walter, 'Der Wormser Bischof Johannes von Dalberg und der Humanismus'; Mertens, 'Bischof Johann von Dalberg'.
  - 4 Posset, *Johann Reuchlin*, p. 171. Dalberg and Reuchlin were on good terms, and Dalberg, who collected Jewish books, sent Reuchlin some manuscripts and books from his library, see Steimann, *Jewish Book – Christian Book*, p. 47.

humanist Rudolf Agricola, who had taught there until his death in 1485, as well as Jakob Wimpfeling (from 1471 to 1483). In this *Sodalitas* the famous poet and scholar Konrad Celtis, the learned Konrad Peutinger, the Nuremberg humanist Willibald Pirckheimer and the Freiburg scholar Ulrich Zasius were regular guests.<sup>5</sup> The humanist and theologian Adam Werner von Themar (Rector of the university) and the humanist and monastic Jakob Trach (Jacobus Dracontius) were also part of the Dalberg circle.<sup>6</sup> The members of this *Sodalitas* welcomed Reuchlin warmly in his exile. His arrival in turn enhanced its prestige.<sup>7</sup> Although the *Sodalitas* was founded on 7 November, Plato's birthday, as an *Academia platonica*—and also as a counterpart to Italian *accademie*—its members imitated the dinner parties described in Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistae* (*Learned Men at a Banquet*), of which excerpts were sent to Dalberg shortly after 1494.<sup>8</sup> Some of the members not only shared their enthusiasm for the 'new learning' (i.e. humanism) but also for Hebrew and Jewish books.<sup>9</sup> Dalberg, like other members of the *Sodalitas*, had studied in Italy or at least visited the country and brought Italian humanism—in their own way—to the German lands. They did so as law students, since the study of law was by then best pursued in Italy, where it included humanism itself and rhetoric.<sup>10</sup> Humanism gained its own function in society:

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- 5 On Zasius, see *DLL* 36, cols. 693–706 (Mario Müller). On the Italian inspiration, see Klaniczay, 'Celtis und die Sodalitas litteraria per Germaniam', esp. pp. 82–83. On the *Sodalitas litteraria* in Germany, see the Wikipedia page with further references: [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sodalitas\\_litteraria](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sodalitas_litteraria), as well as Walter, 'Johann von Dalberg und der Humanismus', pp. 142–44; Wiegand, 'Phoebæ sodalitas nostra'; de Boer, *Die Gelehrtenwelt ordnen*, pp. 233 and 427; on humanist *sodalitates*, see Garber, Wismann and Siebers (eds), *Europäische Sozietätsbewegung*. See also Hummel, *Die humanistischen Sodalitäten*, and Lutz, 'Die Sodalitäten im oberdeutschen Humanismus'.
- 6 On Adam Werner, see *HumVL* 2, cols. 1277–89 (Franz Josef Worstbrock); *ADB* 42, pp. 39–41 (Karl Hartfelder) and Hartfelder, 'Werner von Themar', id., 'Adam Werner von Themar', and id., 'Briefe'; Jungkenn, 'Johann von Dalberg und Jakob Köbel'; on Track see *ADB* 38, p. 488 (Karl Hartfelder).
- 7 Posset, *Johann Reuchlin*, p. 171.
- 8 Ibid., pp. 171–72. See also Greschat (ed.), Dall'Asta and Dörner, *Johannes Reuchlins Bibliothek*, pp. 54–55, who give a detailed description of the Athenaeus manuscript and offer further references, and p. 85, containing a facsimile of a page. See further Aldick, *De Athenaei Dipnosophistarum epitomae codicibus*, pp. 4–8; Preisendanz, 'Eine neue Handschrift aus Johann Reuchlins Bibliothek'; Hommel, 'Der Würzburger Athenäus-Codex aus Reuchlins Besitz'; Harlfinger and Barm, *Graecogermania*, pp. 218–21 (Giuseppe De Gregorio); Thurn and Williams-Krapp, *Die Handschriften der Universitätsbibliothek Würzburg*, p. 195. The handwritten catalogue of the Hebrew and Greek books in Reuchlin's library is preserved in the Codex Vaticanus, Pal. lat. 1925, fol. 147r–154r (see [https://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/bav\\_pal\\_lat\\_1925/0001/image\\_info](https://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/bav_pal_lat_1925/0001/image_info), thumbs accessed 26 November 2022).
- 9 Steimann, *Jewish Book – Christian Book*, pp. 45–49.
- 10 See, e.g., Mertens, 'Bischof Johann von Dalberg', pp. 42–43. On the role of Italy in the development of humanism in the German countries and the role of Erfurt in this devel-