

Willem Surenhuys' Latin Translation of the Mishnah: The Ideal City of Panel 10  
Reflective Essay  
THST 3101.01 Judaism  
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For my research paper, I wanted to academically challenge myself in two ways. First, I wanted to study Jewish art to expand my knowledge on the religion since my studies in art history have been rooted in Catholic imagery. Secondly, I wanted to research an area that possesses little scholarship yet is deserving of attention from art historians and theologians. To begin, I searched for a primary source within Archive and Special Collections. There, I found Willem Surenhuys' Latin translation of the Mishnah and selected panel 10 from one of the many etchings in the edition.

With the Mishnah primarily being in Latin and of a completely unfamiliar subject matter, I consulted Gil Klein, an expert in Jewish Studies and Architectural History. He confirmed that indeed there are very few secondary sources on Surenhuys' Mishnah. To gather sources, I creatively implemented search strategies. With language playing an essential part and Surenhuys' identity of a Dutch Christian writing a Latin Mishnah, I searched multiple spellings of his name. By doing so, I was met with more successes in collecting scholarship. His work is known as "The Amsterdam Mishnah" which is a search term I also utilized. One source of my interest was not available in the library. The source was Peter van Rooden's chapter, "The Amsterdam Translation of the Mishnah." I intended to request the book through Illiad, however Gil Klein shared a copy of the chapter (Evenso, I requested the chapter through Illiad to show my ability to use the library's resources). Peter van Rooden an expert in Theology, Biblical Scholarship and Rabbinical Studies in the Seventeenth Century, obtained his Ph.D. in 1985 at Leiden University and has lectured at various universities. Due to his expertise, extensive coverage on Surenhuys' Mishnah, focus on rabbinic studies from time period, and currency, I found his scholarship credible and relevant. His writing was the most comprehensive and useful

for my research. While I found other sources that mentioned Surenhuys' translation enlightening to read, they often pulled information from van Rooden or deviated in relevance to my work. For example, one source emphasized Hebrew printing, and while it expanded my knowledge on the context of Amsterdam and values of publication at the time, it was not necessary to include. Van Rooden's contribution is indeed unique and above others. When solidifying my bibliography, I narrowed down the sources that were most comprehensively relevant. I obtained various articles through onesearch+ that were peer reviewed and published by scholars.

Throughout the course of writing, which began in January 2019 until April 2019, I completed three opposing drafts. The secondary sources constantly challenged my position on the panel. I spent a great deal of time reading, learning, and revising my analysis of the architecture in the illustration. Scholarship on the Mishnah did not state how to interpret the etchings, but through my creative gathering of sources I drew my own conclusions. By reading and conversing with Klein, I was able to have a foundation for understanding panel 10. My understanding grew deeper as I spent more and more time with Surenhuys' Mishnah. Ultimately, through expert use of sources, I successfully make a creative, scholarly, and accurate argument.

During my research Archives and Special Collections prohibited scanning to prevent damage on the edition. I made multiple and extensive visits to examine the source in person, however, one evening, I decided to consult editions of Surenhuys' Mishnah that were available through Google Books. I found that LMU's edition has the etchings and its text misplaced and attached to *Seder Zeraim*, volume 1, when the section belongs in *Seder Mo'ed*, volume 2. When realized, the manner in which this section is attached to volume 1 becomes apparently peculiar as it is not bound like other pages. To understand the subject matter of the etchings, it is important

that they are placed in *Seder Mo'ed* as the rabbinic legal rulings of the illustrations belong to that volume. This discovery was the highlight of my university level research experience. I truly discovered a significant find on my own and look forward to sharing my research.