

**OBITUARY****Giacoma Limentani (1927–2018)****Ephraim Nissan**

A previous issue of this journal included a paper of mine about humour in an essay by Giacoma Limentani: “A Comic Vision in a Folk-Taxonomy of Folk: Considerations about Giacoma Limentani’s *Un’identità ebraica romana* (A Roman Jewish Identity)”, *International Studies in Humour*, 5(2), 2016, pp. 95–133.



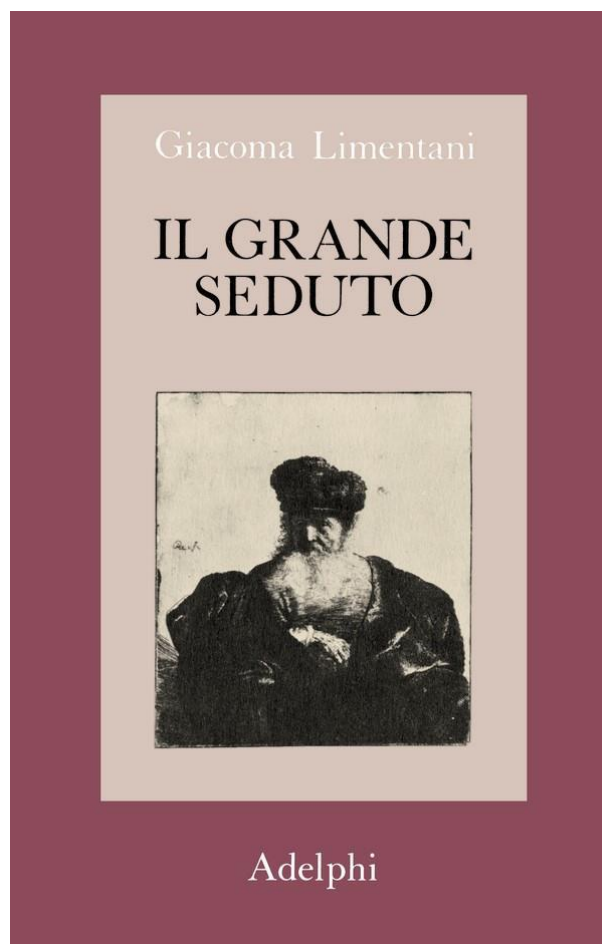
Giacoma Limentani was born in Rome on 11 October 1927, and passed away in Rome on 18 February 2019. She was a translator from English and French, a literary writer, and an essayist. She was also associated with Jewish studies at the Collegio Rabbinico in Rome (in this connection, she was especially interested in the rabbinic *midrash*). As a child aged 11 in an anti-Fascist family, she suffered rape on the part of four Fascist thugs (she related this in her book *In contumacia*, Milan: Adelphi, 1967). Other times, her father and her uncle were beaten (this pushed that uncle to commit suicide). In 1938, like the other Jewish pupils, she was expelled from school because of the newly introduced Racial Laws. This was the time when *squadristi* (death squad members) who used to beat her father, raped her in the presence of her grandmother.

Among her books, a laughing Moses appears in *...e rise Mosè*, published in 1995 in Turin by the publisher Einaudi, in the series “Einaudi ragazzi”. A jubilee volumes

in her honour was edited by Paola Di Cori and Clotilde Pontecorvo, *Parole e silenzi: scritti per Giacoma Limentani*, published in 2002 in Turin by Trauben. Another book in Giacoma Limentani's honour was edited by Adriana Chemello, *Il mosaico della memoria: Omaggio a Giacoma Limentani* (Iacobelli, 2017).

Giacoma Limentani's books of essays include *Il midrash: come i maestri ebrei leggevano e vivevano la Bibbia* (Milan: Edizioni Paoline, 1996); *Scrivere dopo per scrivere prima: riflessioni e scritti* (Florence: Giuntina, 1997); and *Fiabe e leggende abruzzesi* on folktales from the Abruzzi region of Italy (Milan: Mondadori, 1982).<sup>1</sup>

Authored books by Giacoma Limentani on Jewish culture include *Il midrash: come i maestri ebrei leggevano e vivevano la Bibbia*, published in Milan by the Edizioni Paoline, in 1996. This concern with the late antique and medieval rabbinic genre of the Midrash Aggadah, parascriptural narratives filling in narrative gaps of the Hebrew Bible, has also seen Limentani lead learning groups, the subject being the Midrash. Also consider her books *I discorsi della Bibbia*, being texts for two audio-books, published in Milano by Mondadori in 1979, and *Il vizio del faraone e altre leggende ebraiche*, published in Turin by Stampatori, in 1980. She also wrote *Gli uomini del libro: leggende ebraiche* (a retelling of Midrashic narratives), illustrated by Emanuele Luzzati, and published by Adelphi in Milan, in 1975.



Cover of Giacoma Limentani's *Il grande seduto* (*The Great Sitting One*). The cover image is by Rembrandt, *An Old Man in a Black Velvet Coat* (1632). This book is about the character of Job in rabbinic homiletics.

<sup>1</sup> [https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giacoma\\_Limentani](https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giacoma_Limentani)