Rachel Blumenthal
Daniel M. Herskowitz
Kerstin Mayerhofer (Eds.)

Constructing and Experiencing Jewish Identity

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Baron Lectures.
Studies on the Jewish Experience

Editors

Armin Lange, Kerstin Mayerhofer

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Constructing and Experiencing Jewish Identity

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Contents

Baron Lectures. Studies on the Jewish Experience

Salo W. Baron was considered the greatest Jewish historian of the twentieth century. He laid the ground work for how Jews perceive themselves and are perceived by others. The present series publishes new perspectives in the research on the Jewish experience of both distinguished and aspiring scholars who continue Salo Baron's work. Contributions to the series focus on the relationship of Jews and non-Jews and perceptions and understandings of Judaism, including but not limited to the history, culture, religion, and institutions of the Jewish people, as well as on their persecution.

The Series Editors

Armin Lange
is Professor for Second Temple Judaism at Vienna University's Department for Jewish Studies as well as a corresponding member of the Austrian academy of sciences. His research specialises in ancient Judaism, the Dead Sea Scrolls, the textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible, ancient antisemitism, and the cultural and religious histories of antisemitism. He has published widely on all of these research areas. He is the executive organiser of the *Salo W. and Jeannette M. Baron Awards for Scholarly Excellence in Research of the Jewish Experience* and series editor of *Baron Lectures: Studies on the Jewish Experience.*

Kerstin Mayerhofer
is a PhD candidate at the University of Vienna's Institute of Jewish Studies. Her research focuses on Christian-Jewish relations and mechanisms of discrimination in pre-modern times, on the conceptualisation of the Jewish body, as well as on gender(s) and sexualitie(s) in Judaism. She has held research fellowships at the IFK Vienna, at the University of St. Andrews and at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Kerstin is series co-editor of *Baron Lectures: Studies on the Jewish Experience.*

Preface

The *Baron Lectures* series brings together important research on the Jewish experience standing in the tradition of the work of its namesakes Salo W. and Jeannette M. Baron. Salo W. Baron (1895–1989) is recognised as "the greatest Jewish historian of the twentieth century."[1] His research spanned Europe, North Africa, America and the Middle East, geographically and across the centuries. Born in Tarnów, Galicia, in 1895, he received his rabbinical ordination from the Jewish Theological Seminary in Vienna and several doctorates from the University of Vienna. In January 1930, Baron accepted the Nathan L. Miller Professorship of Jewish History, Literature and Institutions at Columbia University, the first of its kind anywhere. He was also the first Jewish tenured professor at Columbia and the first director of the innovative Centre of Israel and Jewish Studies, established at Columbia University in 1950.

It was at Columbia University that Baron met his future wife Jeannette, née Meisel (1911–1985). Jeannette soon became Salo's most trusted companion in life and collaborator in his scholarly work. She received her PhD from the Economics Department at Columbia University with a dissertation on the topic of Jewish bankers of Europe. Jeannette contributed extensively to Salo's numerous publications, although she was not cited as an author. Together, the Barons had an enduring influence on the field of Jewish Studies, reflected in the eighteen volume *Social and Religious History of the Jews* (2d ed. 1952–1983) and in many other works. Salo W. Baron's research re-evaluated and argued against what he called the "lachrymose conception" of Jewish history and emphasised the Jewish people's successes, achievements, and their sheer perseverance. While "suffering is part of the destiny" of the Jewish people, "so is repeated joy and ultimate redemption."[2] Salo W. and Jeannette M. Baron thus galvanised a far more nuanced perception of a people that went beyond their mere victimisation. As such they brought a fresh and more comprehensive perspective to the study of Judaism and Jewish history, one which influenced many of the succeeding generation's most important scholars.

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1   P. Steinfels, "Salo W. Baron, 94, Scholar of Jewish History, Dies," *The New York Times*, November 26, 1989, 44, https://www.nytimes.com/1989/11/26/obituaries/salo-w-baron-94-scholar-of-jewish-history-dies.html.
2   I. Shenker, "Professor, 80, looks to Volume 18 of Jewish History," *The New York Times*, May 26, 1975, 31, https://www.nytimes.com/1975/05/26/archives/professor-80-looks-to-volume-18-of-jewish-history.html.

The *Salo W. and Jeannette M. Baron Awards for Scholarly Excellence in Research of the Jewish Experience* were established in 2020, on the occasion of Salo W. Baron's 125th birthday. Administered by the University of Vienna and funded by The Knapp Family Foundation together with the Salo W. and Jeannette M. Baron Foundation, the *Baron Awards* honour distinguished and aspiring scholars who conduct research connected to the Jewish experience. A scholarly award in memory of Salo W. and Jeannette M. Baron aims at honouring path-breaking research and study of the Jewish experience while acknowledging scholarly excellence in the field. These awards are also meant as an incentive for future work by aspiring scholars who will follow the Barons' path in re-assessing Jewish history.

It is therefore not surprising that these awards have an interdisciplinary character. They recognise achievements of researchers from the fields of history, culture, and religion as well as from any other scholarly discipline investigating the relationship of Jews with non-Jews and of the perceptions and understandings of Judaism in the wider societies which they have influenced.

The awards are granted to candidates without regard to their national origin, ethnicity, confession, gender, orientation or other personal circumstances. It is of great importance to the organisers of the *Baron Awards* to reflect *both* of the Barons' outstanding work as well as their two scholarly personalities. Even though Jeannette's name is not known to most of the readers of Salo's work, together they set the highest standards of intellectual integrity and scholarship.

Scholars excelling in their research and work on the Jewish experience have a multitude of possibilities of obtaining funding. Many scholarships, fellowships, awards and prizes have been created during the past decades and they contribute to the growth of Jewish studies. They facilitate the exemplary work of undergraduate and graduate students or honour excellent publications within the field. However, none of these awards or prizes are granted to distinguished scholars who have devoted their professional life to the research of the Jewish experience. In this way, the *Baron Senior Scholar Award* is exceptional as it honours the outstanding lifetime achievements of an individual scholar or recognises the significant impact of an original publication dedicated to an aspect of the Jewish experience that demonstrates excellence in research on a national or international scale. In so doing, the *Baron Senior Scholar Award* "may well be described as a Nobel Prize in the study of the Jewish experience."[3]

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3 "Michael Brenner Wins the First Baron Award," University of Vienna, Press, Media and Public Relations, issued December 7, 2020, accessed January 26, 2022, https://medien-portal.univie.ac.at/presse/aktuelle-pressemeldungen/detailansicht/artikel/michael-brenner-wins-the-first-baron-award/.

The *Baron Lectures* series brings together current research in connection with the *Baron Awards*. Centred around the senior award laureate's research topic, the volumes in this series collect contributions from a variety of research fields focusing on Jewish life and identity and their experience in past and present times. Each volume includes the keynote lecture that the senior laureate gave on occasion of the award ceremony. It is accompanied by contributions of the participants in the Baron Young Scholars Workshops. These workshops facilitate a conversation on important topics within Jewish studies and allow junior scholars to benefit from the experience of distinguished scholars in the field. A range of international scholars, established and aspiring, participate in these workshops. Their inspiring work spans and bridges time and geography as well as various fields of research, from literary history to politics, and is reflected in the *Baron Lectures* series' volumes.

A project like this series surely cannot be completed without the assistance of other individuals. Therefore, we would like to express our deepest gratitude to a list of people who have supported us in shaping this volume and bringing it to life. First, we would like to give a word of thanks to all our colleagues who have contributed to the present volume. Their research documents the richness and diversity of scholarly work on the Jewish experience and credits for the *Baron Awards*' intention of interdisciplinary and intercommunication. Our gratitude also goes to the members of our advisory board. Elisheva Carlebach, Judith Olszowy-Schlanger, Dina Porat and Lawrence H. Schiffman selected this year's laureates. They also provided helpful feedback on the written contributions to this volume. We are grateful to Brill | Schöningh for publishing the *Baron Lectures*. The support of Jörg Persch and Martina Kayser in preparing both the series and the present volume has been exemplary. We are also especially grateful to Rachel Blumenthal and Daniel M. Herskowitz for co-editing the first volume of the series. This present volume reflects their careful reading, curating and copy editing of its contributions.

The *Salo W. and Jeannette M. Baron Awards for Scholarly Excellence in Research of the Jewish Experience* is funded by The Knapp Family Foundation and the Salo W. and Jeannette M. Baron Foundation. Established in 1979 and 1987, both foundations foster and support education in Jewish history and culture. Integral to that goal is the recognition of ground-breaking scholarship that explores important topics in the Jewish experience in original and revealing ways. Hopefully, an examination of the Jewish experience may help to illuminate the human condition more generally and thereby lead to its better understanding. With the *Baron Awards* and their accompanying

Baron Lectures series, we as organisers and editors hope to contribute to this mission. We are indebted to The Knapp Family Foundation and to the Salo W. and Jeannette M. Baron Foundation for their financial support of this project. A heartfelt gratitude is due to Charles Knapp, president of the Knapp Family Foundation, for his vision, assistance and support.

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Vienna, March 9, 2022
Armin Lange
Kerstin Mayerhofer

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Volume 1

In 2021, the first *Salo W. and Jeannette M. Baron Senior Award for Scholarly Excellence in Research of the Jewish Experience* was awarded to Michael Brenner. Like Salo Baron, Michael Brenner bridges Europe and the United States in his life and research. He is Professor of Jewish History and Culture at Ludwig-Maximilians-University in Munich and Seymour and Lillian Abensohn Chair in Israel Studies at American University in Washington, DC. His prestigious career included previous positions at several American universities. Brenner's research focuses on the history of the Jews from the nineteenth to the twenty-first centuries, including the Shoah and the State of Israel. He has written eight books that have been translated into numerous languages. They provide a window into the rich and varied cultural landscape of Jewish life in Europe before the Shoah. Michael Brenner is not only a teacher of Jewish history but also is a forceful advocate of human rights, not only for the Jewish people but for all humankind.

Rachel Blumenthal and Daniel M. Herskowitz received the *Young Scholars Awards* for their outstanding proposals. Each of them was granted a four-month research stay in Vienna to promote their work on current research topics. Rachel Blumenthal completed her PhD at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem on the "Claims Conference, the State of Israel and the Diaspora." She is currently a research fellow in the Institute of Contemporary Jewry at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. In Vienna, Rachel Blumenthal conducted research on the lives of Jewish refugees in post-war Austria. She examined the creation of communities by Jewish refugees after the war and the encounters between refugees and local residents in Upper Austria and Salzburg. The object is to understand how survivors of National Socialist persecution or exile in the

Soviet Union reconstructed normality and planned their future. Blumenthal's study is also intended to illuminate the continuities and ruptures between the case of European post-war refugees and contemporary asylum seekers.

Daniel M. Herskowitz is the British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow at the Faculty of Theology and Religion, University of Oxford, where he also wrote his dissertation on the Jewish reception of Martin Heidegger. In Vienna, he conducted research on the Maimonides renaissance in interwar Germany. Herskowitz' research offers an innovative analysis of the unexplored 'Maimonides Renaissance' that took place during the interwar period in Germany and argues for its importance for the reception history of Maimonides as well as for our understanding of the Jewish experience during this momentous time in Jewish history.

Both Rachel Blumenthal and Daniel M. Herskowitz are the editors of the first volume of the *Baron Lectures*. As a standard procedure, the *Baron Young Scholars Awards*' laureates are given the opportunity to publish a collected volume to help further their academic careers. They are assisted by Kerstin Mayerhofer, series editor of the *Baron Lectures*. Kerstin Mayerhofer is a PhD candidate at the University of Vienna and project member of the *Baron Awards*. She has longstanding experience in editing and publishing collected volumes in Jewish Studies and related fields.

Given the exceptionally high level of scholarship among all applicants to the Young Scholars Awards and to the Young Scholars Workshop, three finalists have been identified and announced in addition to the two official award winners. Two of them have accepted the invitation to present their research in the first volume of the *Baron Lectures*. Verena Hanna Dopplinger is a PhD candidate in Contemporary History at the University of Vienna focusing on the intersection between visual culture and contemporary history with a special interest in the presentation of the Other and its development in film history. Rose Stair is a PhD candidate in Theology and Religion at the University of Oxford examining the engagement of religious symbolism and narratives in early twentieth century German-language cultural Zionist visual art, poetry and essays.

The volume contains contributions from participants in the first Baron Young Scholars Workshop in 2021. Given the interdisciplinary character of their authors' research and their varied advancement in academia, the papers in this volume are diverse and range from lengthy scholarly articles to more essayistic pieces. All of the articles, however, address topics related to senior laureate Michael Brenner's own research on the Jewish identity and experience in past and present times.

Constructing and Experiencing Jewish Identity: Introduction

Rachel Blumenthal, Daniel M. Herskowitz, and Kerstin Mayerhofer

In the twenty-first century, each person has multiple identities. These include gender, origin, faith, culture, ideology, and more. How does Jewish identity fit into these categories? Is each person free to determine for themselves whether they are Jewish? To date, there are no generally accepted answers to these questions. For some, being Jewish is the quintessential element of their existence. Others reject any attempt to label them as Jews at all. The range of possibilities between these two extremes is great. In 1947, the historian Salo W. Baron described Jews as sharing a heritage of a "universalist-ethnic religion."[1] At the same time, he viewed Judaism as more of a way of life than a system of beliefs and doctrines. Baron added that untold numbers of Jews neither profess nor practice their religion but consider themselves and are considered by their neighbours as Jews.[2] The creation of the state of Israel in 1948 added a new layer of complexity together with significant practical consequences to classification as Jew or non-Jew.

Defining who is or is not Jewish depends on who is drawing the lines and for what purposes. According to Jewish law, identity is determined by birth. Anyone born to a Jewish mother, whatever their belief or practice, is Jewish. The Israeli Law of Return extends this definition to include a grandchild of a Jew—the mirror image of the National Socialist category of non-Aryans. Self-identification as a Jew is another method of belonging to a community. Jewish identity matters not only to members of a community but also to those hostile to or prejudiced against Jews. Seven decades after the Holocaust, antisemitism is again on the rise. Individuals from diverse political backgrounds perpetrate acts of violence against total strangers solely because they are Jews. This volume offers a broad range of fresh perspectives on the perennial question of what being Jewish means, both for Jews and non-Jews.

The contributions to the volume are written versions of papers presented at the first Baron Young Scholars Workshop. Taking place at the University of Vienna in May 2021, the workshop was designed and organised to discuss

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1   S.W. Baron, *Modern Nationalism and Religion* (New York, N.Y., and Philadelphia, Penn.: Meridian Books and the Jewish Publication Society of America, 1960), 224.

2   Ibid., 248.

important topics within Jewish studies. International scholars, established and aspiring, from Europe, Israel and the United States, participated in the first workshop. Their research spans time and geography, focusing on the question of Jewish identity addressed from different disciplines. The intriguing work of the workshop participants on the Jewish experience in past and present times is reflected in this first volume of the *Baron Lectures* series. As editors, we are grateful to our colleagues who agreed to publish their workshop lectures in this book. We are also indebted to the organisers of the *Baron Awards* and to the general series editor Armin Lange for the invitation to serve as editors of this first volume.

The book is interdisciplinary in its contents and demonstrates a great variety of creative voices, ranging from classical scholarly papers to more essayistic pieces, in view of our contributors' diverse academic backgrounds and research fields. The book opens with a section on the *Construction of Jewish Identity in Light of Jewish History*. In the first article of this section, Armin Lange examines *Constructions of Jewish and Antisemitic Identities in Antiquity*, based on the example of Paul. Rather than discussing how Jews constructed their own group identity in ancient times, Lange investigates how Jewish identity was constructed by ancient antisemites as a means of strengthening their own group identity. At the beginning of his article, he traces the history of antisemitism back to ancient times, even though the appropriate terminology is missing for this specific period. After a brief examination of the factors that contribute to the construction of group identity, Lange turns to his example of two of the Pauline letters from the Christian Bible (Phil 3:4–9 and 1 Thess 2:13–16). The letters demonstrate how ancient Christian identity was constructed in clear contrast to and rejection of Judaism. Already in Paul's writings, Lange identifies what Jeremy Cohen recognised as the model of the "hermeneutical Jew" for later periods. An image of the Jews is created which is designed to reflect their alterity from a purported Christian ideal. Despite his own Jewish heritage and profound knowledge of Jewish life and tradition in the Graeco-Roman world, Paul paints a picture of the Jews as "misanthropic, godless and deicidal" (24). It is this typology which Christian construction of identity perpetuated over centuries, "guided by the construction of a hermeneutical Jew that itself was informed by pagan Jew-hatred" (4). Lange concludes that this pattern "paved the way for millennia of Jew-hatred in Christianity, the western world, and the world of Islam" (25) up to the present times. He argues that this hatred influenced the identity of Jews constantly trying to free themselves from original Christian antisemitic recrimination and discrimination.

The second article in this section, too, looks at Jewish identity formation from an external Christian antagonistic perspective. Kerstin Mayerhofer

follows Salo W. Baron's notion of antisemitism derived from "dislike of the unlike" and explores *Constructions of Jewish Identity and Alterity in Christian Exempla Stories*. Catholic clerical circles created *exempla* stories for insertion into the daily preaching in a time of theological instability. These stories fostered images of the Jews as inherently different from a good Catholic: erroneous in their belief, antisocial in their behaviour and deformed in their outward appearance. Exempla collections from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries include tales of Jewish ritual murders, of their supernatural practices surrounding festivals like Purim and Passover, of host desecration as well as of Jewish conversions to Christianity upon miraculous encounters with figures like the virgin Mary. In most of these stories, the image of blood plays an important role. Blood serves as an active force, revealing secrets and demonstrating religious power but also hinting at sin and shame. Mayerhofer investigates the figure of the so-called 'men-struating Jew' that symbolises notions of Jewish identity intersecting with constructions of femaleness and femininity within Christian religious and cultural thinking. Closely reading one tale from the famous thirteenth century *Dialogue on Miracles*, Mayerhofer demonstrates that exempla stories featuring genderqueer and cruel Jews "supported a change in society and fostered notions of a general Jewish enmity towards Christianity" (46). They transmitted antisemitic motifs, themes and narratives and reinforced images of Jewish 'unlikeness' to justify their dislike of Jews from the early modern until contemporary times.

Nazi images of the Jews as different and inferior culminated in the atrocities of the Shoah. In her article, Rachel Blumenthal addresses *Holocaust Survivors and Reconstructing Jewish Identity in Postwar Austria*. Austria witnessed a revival of Jewish life in the second half of the 1940s. Many thousands of Jews fleeing the descending Iron Curtain entered Vienna and continued westwards to Upper Austria and Salzburg. There, they joined survivors of Mauthausen, Dachau and Buchenwald. Occupation of this region by the US military administration acted as a magnet. The US presence provided protection and a temporary home for Jewish refugees waiting for visas to a new life far from the European continent. Initially, life in post-war Austria was not significantly better for the survivors than during the war years. Military commanders classified Jews in the occupied territories of Germany and Austria by their former nationality and housed them together with Poles, Hungarians and Ukrainians, some of them collaborators with the Nazis. Jews were not recognised as a separate category. After the damning Harrison report, the US military government established separate Jewish refugee camps throughout the Austrian Alps. In these camps, Jews created new communities and celebrated their Jewish identity. A "shared history of persecution and exile transcended

national, linguistic and ideological differences" (56) and helped them to assert their Jewish identity. The establishment of the state of Israel marked the end of Jewish life in the Austrian Alps. While life in the Austrian post-war camps led to a "a growing sense of commonality" (64) and to a strengthening of Jewish belief and customs, building new lives in Israel and elsewhere also involved building new forms of Jewish identity. Inherently Jewish or less Jewish, as Israeli, American, Canadian or a combination thereof, the refugees could now choose which identity to adopt. This was a crucial moment of free will after years of being treated as objects and not subjects, undeserving of the right to determine their own lives.

In the concluding article of the first section entitled *A Jewish Renaissance?* Michael L. MILLER reflects on *Jewish Life in East Central Europe since 1989.* During the Communist era, a Jewish future in this region seemed unlikely. Israel and Diasporic communities viewed Jews who remained in East Central Europe after the Shoah as assimilated and disconnected from their roots, frequently married to non-Jewish spouses and hardly engaging in Jewish communal life. After the fall of the Iron Curtain, Jewish visitors to Europe discovered a vibrant Jewish life in Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia including Jewish kindergartens, summer camps and schools. Jews living in the countries after the Shoah constituted only a fraction of the pre-war populations but communities came back to life. Furthermore, Jewish identity was increasingly diverse, ranging from the orthodox to secular Jews connected not so much by a shared religion as by a shared fate. Life after the Shoah and the end of Communist rule forced Jews to reconnect and rediscover their Jewish identity. For some, this meant observance of religious rituals. Others developed an emotional connection to Israel or Jewish culture and literature, food and history. The "drive toward discovery and self-discovery" is typical of Jewish communities in East Central Europe. Miller describes the flexibility, versatility, agility and, above all, interconnectedness that characterises the "Jewish renaissance" (74). As such, he argues, East Central Europe may slowly become a place with a Jewish future.

Articles in the second, shorter, section of the book engage with the *Construction of Jewish Identity in Light of Jewish Thought and Tradition.* Elisheva CARLEBACH investigates *The Pinkas as Locus of Jewish Communal Identity in early modern Germany.* Recognising the difficulty of defining identity, a term that is much later than the period of her research, she refers to "the sense of belonging to a distinctive unit that was larger than a family, intentionally constructed, and rooted in a particular locale" (80). Carlebach investigates the *pinkas* (register, *pinkassim* in the plural) as a source that binds all elements of communal identity. The *pinkas takkanot* is a book of regulations for a Jewish community dating from the early modern period. It prescribes a community's

legal regulations, but also testifies to its traditions and embodies the very
"character of the community" (81). *Pinkassim* were highly individual and tai-
lored to the needs of the particular community. Above all, they reflect local
conditions of a community and demonstrate a collective identity bound to a
specific region. This is exemplified by the registers for Hamburg, Altona and
Wandsbek. *Pinkassim* also "outlined the criteria for levels of membership
within a Jewish community" (86). Early modern Jews did not perceive them-
selves as being Jewish but rather as being a Jew from Hamburg or from Fürth
with a clear delineation of their home communities' distinct characteristics.
Their *pinkassim*, custom books, memory books and chronicles are studied not
only as a literary medium reflecting customs and regulations. Rather, Carlebach
calls for their understanding as forming "some of the building blocks of com-
munal character and identity of early modern Jews" (87).

Using the case of Alexander Altmann, Daniel M. Herskowitz analyses
The Maimonides Renaissance in Interwar Germany. The first decades of the
twentieth century marked a renewed interest in Maimonides, the great medi-
eval sage. Yet scholars have largely failed to recognise this preoccupation with
Maimonides' thought as a form of 'spiritual resistance' against the rising tide
of anti-Jewish forces in politics, culture, and the world of ideas. In the first
decades of the twentieth century, "Maimonides was taken up in different ways
and harnessed to different ideological outlooks, echoing the varying ways in
which Jews grappled with the unstable philosophical, religious, and politi-
cal landscape around them" (92). Alexander Altmann (1906–1987) was one of
the thinkers who engaged with Maimonides. A rabbi at the Berlin Orthodox
community in the years, he witnessed how assimilation and secularisation led
many young orthodox men away from their religious faith. Altmann turned
to the works of Maimonides for a fuller understanding of what it meant to
be Jewish. In Maimonides' writing he found a basis for formulating "a philo-
sophically defensible Jewish theology faithful to Torah, Halakhah, and Jewish
tradition in a manner that would address the spiritual needs of the time" (105).
It is both through Maimonides and through Altmann's interpretation of his
teachings that Herskowitz sheds light on the interwar German-Jewish experi-
ence and identity.

The third and final section of the volume contains articles exploring
Construction of Jewish Identity in Light of Zionism and the State of Israel. The
section opens with Michael Brenner's keynote lecture at the first *Baron
Scholars Award* ceremony in the University of Vienna. The title of Brenner's
lecture was *New Ghetto and Emancipation: Theodor Herzl and Salo W. Baron
on Antisemitism*. Brenner reflected upon his own academic journey and
recalled meetings with his advisors and mentors Salo W. Baron and Yosef Haim

Yerushalmi. Brenner highlighted the similarities between two graduates of the University of Vienna, Baron and Theodor Herzl. Both the Feuilleton editor of a Viennese newspaper and the historian recognised the shortcomings of modernity and emancipation. They viewed modern antisemitism as a response to the pressure to emancipate, to become part of a bourgeois European middle class that continued to reject Jews as full members. For Herzl, emancipation indeed was "a prerequisite to modern nationalism and also to its realization in the State of Israel" (118). Baron, despite his criticism of emancipation and modernity, believed in the possibility of a co-existence of both the Jewish diaspora in Europe and the Jewish state. In his effort to research the Jewish experience in past and present, Brenner continues the work of Herzl and Baron in re-affirming Jewish identity and self-confidence.

Zionism is the focus of two further articles in this section. In her article *"The Son and the Stranger": E.M. Lilien, Börries von Münchhausen, and Juda (1900)*, Rose STAIR portrays the dissemination of Jewish art as one of the central goals of cultural Zionism. In 1900, the German nationalist poet Münchhausen (1874–1945) published his book *Juda*, featuring poems on Hebrew, Jewish, and Zionist themes. The book was illustrated by Lilien (1874–1925). Born in Eastern Europe, Lilien's work allowed him to become a "foremost Zionist artist" combining "fashionable modern techniques with ancient Jewish symbolism" (120). This unusual collaboration fuelled the book's success. It became a major publication celebrated by cultural German Zionism engendering "both a swelling of excitement and enthusiasm for Zionist art, and the emergence of debates about the relationship between Jewishness, artistic culture and Zionism that would continue to animate cultural Zionist thought" (137). Stair traces not only the book's production but also offers a close reading of *Juda* in which she demonstrates how, despite their mutual appraisal, Lilien and Münchhausen differed considerably in their political views. The ambiguities are visible in the book *Juda*. Its complexities raised questions about the authenticity of the portrayal of Jewishness in the book and about the general harmony between the contributions of Lilien and Münchhausen. For the emerging cultural Zionists, these questions "demanded the interrogation and re-articulation of their emerging Zionist position" (121).

Laura ALMAGOR engages with *Jewish Territorialism and the Jewish Future beyond Europe and Palestine (1905–1960)* in her article *"The Soul is Greater than the Soil."* She investigates the Jewish Territorialist movement in order to understand how small Jewish political players engaged with Jewish identity formation by considering "changing geopolitical realities especially during the transition from the colonial to the post-colonial geopolitical paradigms" (145). In the 1920s and 1930s, one way to recognise Jewish identity was through the

lens of territory. Changing views on colonialism and Zionism shaped its perception significantly. The Territorialist movement aimed at finding alternative settlement options for Eastern European Jews. They argued that their projects were more feasible and morally acceptable than the Zionist endeavours in Palestine. All these attempts ended before they got off the ground. Almagor argues that the Territorialist movement was of considerable value to the investigation and understanding of the "fraught reality of twentieth century Jewish politics, geopolitics, and the connection between the two" (146).

In the last article of the third section of this book, *Encountering the Other*, Verena Hanna Dopplinger explores the question of Jewish identity in contemporary Israeli television series. Her analysis focuses on film sequences, that is series of scenes that form a narrative unit, that take place outside Israel using three Israeli series as an example: *The Attaché* (2019), *Matir Agunot* [*Permitting the Chained Women*] (2019) and *When Heroes Fly* (2018). These series feature sequences in Paris, Ukraine, and Bogotá which serve as a vehicle for the resolution of difficult questions. The questions centre on belonging and the relation of the Israeli characters to their own identity, both as Jews and as Israelis. After a general overview of the question of identity and alterity in Israeli television series, Dopplinger offers an in-depth sequence analysis for each of the series discussed. Where appropriate, the analyses draw on works by Sigmund Freud, Georg Simmel, and Martin Buber in their understanding of identity, strangeness, and alterity. The respective setting of the sequences analysed "provides a heightened sense of the Other" and, thus, enables an "especially poignant commentary on the identity in question" (167). They make clear how central the topic of Israeli (and Jewish) identity is not only for the analysed series in question but also for Israeli television in general. Passing as an 'Other' in the respective sequences is a way for the Israeli characters to overcome trauma. All the narratives and visuals employed in the respective Israeli television series centre around the question of Israeli identity— "only to conclude that Israeli identity is contingent on an immense variety of identities, hence questioning the whole concept of a homogeneous identity" (167).

The volumes concludes with Dina Porat's laudatory speech to the recipient of the first *Baron Senior Scholar Award*, Michael Brenner. She addresses Jewish identity in the works of Salo W. Baron and Yosef Haim Yerushalmi. Porat compares Brenner to Baron and Yerushalmi. All three scholars devoted their lives to the exploration of Jewish experience, identity and culture and questioned the prevalence of hatred against Jews. Instead of dwelling on the woes of Jewish life, Brenner, like his predecessors, examines the richness of Jewish history and culture, the formation of Jewish identity and the continuation of Jewish life especially after the Shoah. Baron, Yerushalmi, and Brenner

recognise the trauma of the Shoah as a powerful motivation for a continuing shared history and fate. Their works are widely read and discussed and have shed new light on Jewish history and identity. They advocate a positive rather than a lachrymose conception of Jewish experience both in past and present times.

When Salo Baron died, he had written eighteen volumes of his monumental study, *Social and Religious History of the Jews*, reaching to the early modern period. This collected volume of essays should be seen as a continuation of Baron's life's work in that it takes the question of Jewish experience to be an important topic meriting scholarly explorations from social, historical, cultural, political, and religious perspectives. The approach to the question of Jewish experience from such different perspectives and across the historical span stretching from antiquity to the modern world testifies to its multiplicity and richness, but also to its equivocality and difficulty. The aim of this volume, therefore, is to illuminate, to shed new light on old questions and also on new ones, and in so doing, to demonstrate the enduring interest and challenge of the scholarly topic to which Baron dedicated his life.

PART I

Construction of Jewish Identity in
Light of Jewish History

Constructions of Jewish and Antisemitic Identities in Antiquity: The Example of Paul

Armin Lange

Much has been written on the question of Jewish identity in antiquity and late antiquity. Some scholars identify the beginning of Judaism only in the fourth century C.E. when Christianity rose first to a privileged and then official religion of the Roman empire.[1] Others locate the parting of the ways between Judaism and Christianity in the first century C.E. with the writings of Paul and further early Christian literature, probably accelerated by the institution of the *fiscus Judaicus* (a tax imposed on Jews in the Roman empire).[2] Connected with this debate is another discussion. Some scholars think that Jewish identity was construed ethnically during the Second Temple period and that the term *yehudi* designated only the Judean people that lived in Judea or originated from that region. Others think that Jewish identity was determined already in antiquity by both ethnicity as well as cultural and religious elements.[3]

In the present article, I do not want to ask how Jews constructed their group identity in antiquity and late antiquity. Rather, I will address the question of

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1   See e.g., D. Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (Philadelphia, Penn.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

2   See e.g., M. Heemstra, *The Fiscus Judaicus and the Parting of the Ways* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010).

3   For the discussion about the lexeme Ἰουδαῖος (*Ioudaios*, "Jews") and its range of meanings, see P.J. Tomson, "The Names Israel and Jew in Ancient Judaism and in the New Testament," *Bijdragen* 47 (1996): 266–89; R.S. Kraemer, "On the Meaning of the Term 'Jew' in Graeco-Roman Inscriptions," *HTR* 82 (1989): 35–53; ibid., "Jewish Tuna and Christian Fish: Identifying Religious Affiliation in Epigraphic Sources," *HTR* 84 (1991): 141–62; M.H. Williams, "The Meaning and Function of *Ioudaios* in Graeco-Roman Inscriptions," *ZPE* 116 (1997): 249–62; S.J. D. Cohen, "Ἰουδαῖος τὸ γένος and Related Expressions in Josephus," in *Josephus and the History of the Greco-Roman Period: Essays in Memory of Morton Smith*, ed. F. Parente and J. Sievers (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 23–98; ibid., "Ioudaios: 'Judaean' and 'Jew' in Susanna, First Maccabees, and Second Maccabees," in *Geschichte—Tradition—Reflexion: Festschrift für Martin Hengel zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. P. Schäfer (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), 211–20; D.R. Schwartz, "'Judean' or 'Jew'? How Should We Translate *Ioudaios* in Josephus?" in *Jewish Identity in the Greco-Roman World*, ed. J. Frey, D.R. Schwartz, and S. Gripentrog (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 2–27; D.M. Miller, "The Meaning of *Ioudaios* and its Relationship to Other Group Labels in Ancient 'Judaism'," *Currents of Biblical Research* 9 (2010): 98–126; ibid., "Ethnicity Comes to Age: An Overview of Twentieth Century Terms for *Ioudaios*," *Currents of Biblical Research* 10 (2012): 293–311.

how Jewish identity was constructed by ancient antisemites as a group alter-
ity. In doing so, I apply the term *antisemitism* to ancient Jew-hatred although
many claim that it existed only since the late nineteenth century.[4] I will there-
fore open my article with a brief discussion of the meaning of antisemitism
and the mechanisms for construction of individual and group identities. A sec-
ond brief methodological consideration relates to the construction of herme-
neutical Jews by ancient Jew-haters. After these introductory considerations,
I will argue on the basis of two texts from the Pauline letters (Phil 3:4–9 and
1 Thess 2:13–16) that Christian constructions of Jewish identity were guided
by the construction of a hermeneutical Jew that itself was informed by pagan
Jew-hatred.

Antisemitism and Identity[5]

If the term antisemitism is defined as a description of exclusively modern
(racist) Jew-hatred,[6] no antisemitism could have existed in either antiquity
or late antiquity. If antisemitism is understood as a hatred, the modern and
contemporary expressions of which are just the latest form of an age-old
phenomenon,[7] then ancient Jew-hatred could very well have been an expres-
sion of antisemitism. The definition of antisemitism impacts thus the question
of whether antisemitism existed in antiquity significantly. It is therefore impor-
tant to explain how I define antisemitism. The general question "what is antise-
mitism?", however, has as many answers as there were and are researchers

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4   For the non-capitalized and non-hyphenated spelling of the term "antisemitism" in the
    English language, see International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, "Memo on Spelling
    of Antisemitism," issued April 2015, accessed March 28, 2022, https://www.holocaust
    remembrance.com/sites/default/files/memo-on-spelling-of-antisemitism_final-1.pdf.

5   For this part of my article, see also A. Lange, "Jew-Hatred in Antiquity: Cultural, Legal, and
    Physical Forms of Antisemitic Persecution," in *Comprehending Antisemitism through the
    Ages: A Historical Perspective*, eds. A. Lange, K. Mayerhofer, D. Porat, and L.H. Schiffman
    (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021), 41–78.

6   Cf. e.g. W. Bergmann, *Geschichte des Antisemitismus* (München: C.H. Beck, 2002); C. Guillaumin,
    L'idéologie raciste: Genèse et langage actuel (Paris: Gallimard, 1972); J. Heil, "'Antijudaismus'
    und 'Antisemitismus': Begriffe als Bedeutungsträger," *Jahrbuch für Antisemitismusforschung* 6
    (1997): 92–114; G.I. Langmuir, *Toward a Definition of Antisemitism* (Berkeley, Calif.: University
    of California Press, 1990); T. Nipperdey and R. Rürup, "Antisemitismus," in *Geschichtliche
    Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, eds.
    O. Brunner, W. Conze, and R. Koselleck (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1972), 129–53.

7   See e.g. R.S. Wistrich, *Antisemitism: The Longest Hatred* (London: Methuen, 1991).

asking it and the present article can only provide a few brief remarks on this issue.

The word *antisemitism* derives from the terms Semite and Semitism. Both occur in scholarly literature since the eighteenth century and were mostly used with regard to linguistic distinctions.[8] Already in the second half of the eighteenth century however, racist connotations of the term appear.[9] The concept of "antisemitic prejudices" was introduced by Jewish scholar Moritz Steinschneider in 1860.[10] The term *antisemitism* became prominent by the end of the nineteenth century. It is commonly claimed that Wilhelm Marr[11] was the first to use the word in his book *The Victory of Judaism over Germanism: Regarded from a Non-confessional Point of View: Vae Victis!*[12] Moshe Zimmermann showed, however, that the term antisemitism cannot be found in this book, despite its undisputable antisemitic contents.[13]

The definition of the term antisemitism is more important than the identity of the people who coined the word. A popular distinction often made in the study of Jew-hatred is between religiously motivated Jew-hatred and racist Jew-hatred. The former is classified as anti-Judaism while only the latter is regarded as antisemitism.[14] In this line of thinking, all Jew-hatred before the

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8   See e.g. A.L. Schlözer, "Von den Chaldäern," *Repertorium fuer biblische und morgen-laendische Literatur* 8 (1781): 161; F. Bopp, *Ueber das Konjugationssystem der Sanskritsprache in Vergleichung mit jenem der griechischen, lateinischen, persischen und germanischen Sprache* (Frankfurt/Main: Windischmann, 1816).

9   See e.g. C. Lassen, *Indische Altertumskunde*, 4 vols. (Bonn: H.B. König, 1847–1861), 1: 494–96; E. Renan, *Études d'histoire religieuse* (Paris: Lévy, 1880).

10   M. Steinschneider, Review of "Zur Charakteristik der semitischen Völker" by Heymann Steinthal, *Hamaskir: Hebräische Bibliographie: Blätter für neuere und ältere Literatur des Judenthums* 3 (1860): 16. The article by Steinthal was published in *Zeitschrift für Völkerpsychologie und Sprachwissenschaft* 1 (1860): 328–45 and reprinted in a collection of Steinthal's collected essays: *Über Juden und Judenthum: Vorträge und Aufsätze*, ed. G. Karpeles (Berlin: Verlag von M. Poppelauer, 1906), 91–104.

11   For W. Marr, see M. Zimmermann, *Wilhelm Marr: The Patriarch of Anti-Semitism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

12   W. Marr, *Der Sieg des Judenthums über das Germanenthum: Vom nicht confessionellen Standpunkt aus betrachtet: Vae Victis!* (Bern: Rudolph Costenoble, 1879). For examples for this attribution of the word antisemitism see F.R. Nicosia, *Zionism and Anti-Semitism in Nazi Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 23.

13   Cf. e.g. M. Zimmermann, "Aufkommen und Diskreditierung des Begriffes Antisemitismus." in *Ideologie—Herrschaftssystem—Wirkung in Europa: Festschrift für Werner Jochmann zum 65. Geburtstag*, vol. 1 of *Das Unrechtsregime: Internationale Forschung über den Nationalsozialismus*, ed. U. Büttner, W. Johe, and A. Voss-Louis (Hamburg: Hans Christians Verlag, 1986), 63.

14   Cf. Heil, "'Antijudaismus' und 'Antisemitismus,'" 105–06.

predominance of racist Jew-hatred in the (late) nineteenth century should be described as anti-Judaism while all racist Jew-hatred constitutes antisemitism.

This distinction is problematic for three reasons: (1) the assumption that racism and racist antisemitism began in the (late) nineteenth century needs to be questioned given the existence of racist or proto-racist forms of Jew-hatred long before this time; (2) while the term antisemitism is clearly modern and in addition a misnomer that distorts an originally linguistic term, it is not unusual in the study of premodern times to describe ancient or medieval realities with modern terms; and (3) the contention that racist antisemitism is void of religious contents and meaning makes a particular European form of radical right-wing Jew-hatred absolute and elevates it to a paradigm of all other forms of antisemitism.

The claim that in its *origin* the term antisemitism was reserved for racist Jew-hatred is thus clearly wrong. Also, even the most ardent antisemites, including Hitler's own deputy, regard antisemitism as a shared semi-religious sentiment that connects antisemites not only on a social but much more on an emotional and psychological level.[15] Religious and racist antisemitism cannot easily be separated from each other. I have elsewhere argued together with Maxine Grossman that antisemitism, indeed, in itself is a religious phenomenon.[16] The understanding of antisemitism as a form of religion is based on Clifford Geertz's perception of religion as a "system of symbols."[17] Religious founding myths, cultic practice, music, specific communal authority-structure and other "symbols" are the building-blocks of religious cultural formation. A similar process can be observed when looking at the history of antisemitism. Antisemitism, too, is based on a shared system of symbols and its cultural formations, which arose from both biblical and non-biblical ancient sources, and preserve specific motifs and stereotypes transmitted from generation to generation. Similar to religious believers, successive generations of antisemites can

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15   Cf. for example Rudolph Hess, who claims to have "converted" to antisemitism after World War I. Hess views his change of mind towards antisemitism as a movement from one belief system to another. Hess describes this movement from one belief system to another in both rational and religious terms. Cf. A. Lange and M. Grossman, "Jews and Judaism between Bedevilment and Source of Salvation: Christianity as a Cause of and Cure against Antisemitism," in *Comprehending and Confronting Antisemitism: A Multi-Faceted Approach*, eds. A. Lange, K. Mayerhofer, D. Porat and L.H. Schiffman (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019), 140–41.

16   Cf. Lange and Grossman, "Jews and Judaism between Bedevilment and Source of Salvation," 133–64.

17   Cf. C. Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System," in *Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion*, ed. M. Banton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), 1–46.

connect to these symbols on an emotional and psychological level without a personal connection to earlier generations.

Let us turn back to the initial discussion of the usage of the *term* antisemitism. Given the complicated history of how the word antisemitism developed, it can hardly come as a surprise that scholars and activists in the fight against Jew-hatred define the term differently.[18] In this article, I will use the word antisemitism to refer to Jew-hatred based on the definition that many countries and even international organizations and institutions have adopted, that is the so-called working definition of antisemitism proposed by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA):

> Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.[19]

While the IHRA's definition is the outcome of a political and diplomatic process, it incorporates scholarly discourse.[20] Although the working definition of antisemitism is not legally binding, it provides nevertheless an internationally recognized and accepted common ground on how to define antisemitism and is thus applied in my present survey on antisemitism in antiquity. This is all the more appropriate because the working definition consciously avoids distinctions of racially and religiously motivated Jew-hatred by not even mentioning these terms. For the working definition, all forms of Jew-hatred are antisemitism, be it the religious demonization of Jews since antiquity or their racist

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18   See e.g. Steven Beller's discussion of the range of definitions of the term: "Antisemitism is a hatred of Jews that has stretched across millennia and across continents; or it is a relatively modern political movement and ideology that arose in Central Europe in the late 19th century and achieved its evil apogee in the Holocaust; or it is the irrational, psychologically pathological version of an ethnocentric and religiocentric anti-Judaism that originated in Christianity's conflict with its Jewish roots—and achieved its evil apogee in the Holocaust; or it is a combination of all of these." S. Beller, *Antisemitism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 1.

19   "Working Definition of Antisemitism," International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, issued July 19, 2018, accessed September 7, 2020, https://www.holocaustremembrance. com/sites/default/files/press_release_document_antisemitism.pdf.

20   See M. Weitzman, "The IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism," and D. Porat, "The Working Definition of Antisemitism: A 2018 Perception," in *Comprehending and Confronting Antisemitism: A Multi-Faceted Approach*, eds. A. Lange, K. Mayerhofer, D. Porat and L.H. Schiffman (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019), 463–73 and 475–87.

discrimination and persecution by the Nazis or any other variety of enmity against Jews.[21]

All forms of Jew-hatred are necessarily based on concepts of identity and alterity. Jew-haters construe an idea of Judaism that they embody into the Jewish 'other' in total disregard of the realities of Jewish life and Judaism. Jew-haters construct artificial Jewish alterities not for the purpose of understanding Jews and Judaism but to reject them as the ultimate negative 'other.' However, in the process of this rejection, Jew-haters construct not only a negative Jewish alterity. They also create for themselves a positive antisemitic identity in contradistinction from this Jewish alterity. This mechanism was and is one of the key elements of antisemitism since the beginning of Jew-hatred.

Identity implies the sameness of a person or thing and a distinct impression of a person perceived by others as well as a set of characteristics that distinguishes a person from others. The intrinsic link between identity and alterity provokes a set of questions. (1) How can sameness and difference be recognized? (2) How can any individual recognize his or her sameness or difference, i.e. how can an individual recognize who he or she is and who somebody else is? (3) The category of sameness implies furthermore the question of how not only an individual but also a group can construe its sameness in a group context.

The identity and the sameness of a person is commonly experienced as their "self." This experience includes a collection of characteristics that allow the cognizing subject to identify themselves in distinction from other people based on prior patterns of understanding—so-called preconceptions. A perception of the "self" is therefore as much based on the recognition "I am I" as it is based on the recognition "I am not you." Consequently, the process of cognition presupposes the detachment of the cognizing subject from the cognized object perceived as opposite or 'other.' Group identities work the same way. They, too, are constructed by way of distinguishing a collective 'I' from a collective 'other.'[22] In the case of group-identities bound together by religion,

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unifying sets of religious beliefs and doctrines (or, in Geertz's terms "symbols") not only bind together all members of the respective religious group. They also distinguish this religion from all other religions. Religious, moral and ritual rules are practiced to reinforce both the construction of the in-group identity as much as the differentiation from the out-group.[23]

Antisemites, too, use predefined concordant patterns of perception in their cognition of Jews and Judaism. Their set of preconceptions is extensive and over the centuries and millennia have become part of the cultural memories of the world's societies. The concept of cultural identity, or rather cultural-religious identity, seems to me particularly appropriate for the phenomenon of antisemitism. Antisemites are not limited to a particular social class, nor to a particular population group, religion, political party, and so on. They construct antisemitic group identities that are trans-religious, trans-cultural, and trans-national. These identity constructions, based on mechanisms of hate-guided cultural-religious demarcation, occur especially during crisis times and lead again and again to a misguided formation of one's own psychological identity. Of course, antisemitic preconceptions applied to Jews and Judaism do clearly differ from the realities of Jewish life. This difference becomes particularly apparent in the concept of the hermeneutical Jew.

Hermeneutical Jews and Hermeneutical Antisemites

Jeremy Cohen described the term "hermeneutical Jew" in his seminal work as an antisemitically guided interpretation of the Jewish other.[24] In his analysis of late ancient and medieval Christian texts, Cohen noticed that their polemical descriptions of Jews have little to do with the Jews living in late antiquity and the Middle Ages. Rather, they are imaginary constructions of the Jewish other that served to form and maintain Christian group identity(ies). According to Cohen, "Christians perceived the Jews to be who they were *supposed* to be, not who they actually *were*."[25] Based on this finding, Cohen coined the term

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identity theory is classical in fields related to social studies such as psychology, its core concepts are also very helpful for an analysis of the formation of religious group identity in religious studies.

23   Cf. my and K. Mayerhofer's introduction to *Confronting Antisemitism from the Perspectives of Christianity, Islam, and Judaism*, eds. A. Lange, K. Mayerhofer, D. Porat, and L.H. Schiffman (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020), 2–3.

24   J. Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law: Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christianity* (Berkely, Calif.: University of California Press, 1999), 1–17.

25   Cohen, *Living Letters*, 2.

"hermeneutical Jew" for the construction of a demonized Jewish 'other' far removed from the realities of Jewish life. He chose the word "hermeneutical" because he rightly argues that in Christian medieval texts it is not the reality of Jewish life that guides the understanding of the Jewish counterpart, but a conception of everything Jewish that was shaped by the necessities of Christian thought. Such preconceptions of Jews and Judaism subsequently determined 'Jewish identity' from a Christian outside perspective.

Studies following Cohen have shown that the construction of polemically distorted "hermeneutical Jews" is by no means limited to the Middle Ages, but can be found in all epochs and forms of Jew-hatred.[26] Without using the term hermeneutical Jew, David Nirenberg describes for instance a form of hostility towards Jews as anti-Judaism that is guided by the imaginary idea of a Jew rather than Jewish reality.[27] The cultural memories of most, if not all, societies in the Western and Muslim worlds contain preconceptions of Jews that have been and continue to be constructed sometimes in interpretation of sacred texts and sometimes in interpretation of other texts and that are completely alienated from the reality of Jewish life. While constructions of the Jewish identity or alterity may have been guided in medieval Christianity by biblical and patristic ideas of Judaism, they were influenced in the Muslim world by similar ideas formed in the Qur'an, Hadith, and Sira. Furthermore, in modern times, secular, racist, neo-pagan, Germano-manic, and new age antisemitic preconceptions of Judaism shaped and shape antisemitic constructions of Jewish identity.

Both Cohen and Nirenberg overlook another important aspect in the construction of hermeneutical Jews in the ideological history of antisemitism. Antisemites of all orientations do not only construct a fictional concept of the Jewish other. In the negative construction of the Jewish alterity, they simultaneously create an equally fictitious but very positive identity for themselves. The creation of hermeneutical Jews also serves the construction of positive antisemitic group identities. One could speak of hermeneutical antisemites as the counterparts of hermeneutical Jews. These hermeneutical constructions of antisemitic identity, once formed, were and are also kept in stock in the cultural memories of our time and help antisemites to perceive themselves in preconceptualized ways. Both constructions of (group) identities are fictitious and

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26   Thus e.g. D. Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism: The Western Tradition* (New York, N.Y.: W.W. Norton & Company, 2013) and A. Gregerman, "Israel as the 'Hermeneutical Jew' in Protestant Statements on the Land and State of Israel: Four Presbyterian Examples," *Israel Affairs* 23, no. 5 (2017): 773–93.

27   Cf. Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism.*

detached from the lived realities of Judaism and the lives of those antisemites who construct and use hermeneutical Jews, but nevertheless continue to have very real and terrible consequences in the history of the persecution of Jews.

Constructions of Jewish and Christian Identities in Phil 3:4–9 and 1 Thess 2:13–16

The oldest antisemitic texts from the New Testament are the letters of Paul of Tarsus. The Pauline letters are among the earliest surviving Christian texts. Only the source Q reconstructed from a comparison of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke may be even older. Despite the fact that the gospels report about the life of Jesus, they were written decades after the Pauline letters but draw on earlier sources like Q. The Pauline letters are thus the earliest preserved and reliably datable witnesses to a Christian rejection of Jews and Judaism.

Paul was not only born as a Jew in the Cilician city of Tarsus but he was also a Pharisee. Paul was educated most likely both in Cilicia and Jerusalem. The Greek rhetoric of his letters demonstrates that in addition to his Jewish education, Paul knew Greek *paideia* as well. He informs the readers of his letters that as a Jew, he persecuted Christians (Gal 1:13; Phil 3:6; cf. Acts 8:3; 9:1–2; 22:4) and that he converted to Christianity on his way to Damascus (Gal 1:12, 16).

> You have heard, no doubt, of my earlier life in Judaism. I was violently persecuting the church of God and was trying to destroy it. (Gal 1:13)

> as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. (Phil 3:6)

Paul missionized non-Jews in Asia Minor and Greece using Jewish synagogue communities as a starting point for preaching the gospel. Paul wrote several letters to the Christian communities which he founded. At least a part of this correspondence is preserved today in the New Testament (Romans, 1–2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, and Philemon). In these letters, Paul responded to concrete occasions in and questions of the communities he founded. Consequently, Paul's letters give not a stringent account of his theology but shed light on how he expressed his thought in response to various communal problems and needs. It is therefore not surprising that many facets, attitudes, and inconsistencies can be observed in his position on Judaism in his letters.

For my concern, especially interesting is a passage in Paul's letter to the Philippians and another passage in his first letter to the Thessalonians. In

Phil 3:4–9, Paul compares his Jewish past with his Christian present and provides insights into how he constructed his own identity anew after his conversion to Christianity by rejecting his earlier Jewish life. In 1 Thess 2:13–16, he describes a general opposition between all Jews and all Christians, thus constructing both a Jewish group alterity and a Christian group identity.

3.1 Phil 3:4–9

Most scholars regard Paul's letter to the Philippians as a collection of three letters written by the apostle at various times to his Philippian community. Phil 3:4–9 is part of the last letter, which was written by Paul during an unspecified imprisonment commonly dated to the year 55 C.E. The dates of all three letters to the Philippians range between 53 and 58 C.E. depending on whether scholars think Paul wrote these letters during his imprisonments in Caesarea, Ephesus, or Rome.[28]

In Phil 3:4–9, Paul compares his former life as a Jew with his present life as a Christian. The reason for this comparison can be found in the doubts that other missionaries raised with the Christian community of Philippi regarding Paul's interpretation of the gospel. His opponents preached a version of Christianity that regarded the commandments of the Torah, such as the circumcision as valid for both those who converted from gentile religions to Christianity and those who converted from Judaism to the new faith. Paul responds to this criticism with a comparison of his former Jewish life with his new Christian life in Phil 3:4–9. After this comparison, he counters the message of his opponents in verses 9–11 with his doctrine of justification by faith alone. The scholarly discourse about Phil 3:4–9 focuses mostly on the identity of Paul's opponents in Philippi and on the importance of his comparison of his Jewish and Christian lives for his thought. For the latter, Paul's negative characterization of Judaism is of interest only in as much as it highlights his positive characterization of a life in Christ.

The present article is not another exercise in reconstructing Paul's thought or in the reconstruction of his life, work, and fights. My question, rather, is whether Phil 3:4–9 contains information on how Paul constructed his Jewish and Christian identities after his conversion. For this purpose, I want to read

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28   For the debate and the dating of Paul's letter(s) to the Philippians, see J. Reumann, *Philippians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2008), 8–18. Reumann argues for his date on p. 17. Cf. also P.A. Holloway, *Consolation in Philippians: Philosophical Sources and Rhetorical Strategy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 7–33, and idem, *Philippians* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 2017), 10–24, as well as the literature quoted by Reumann and Holloway.

Phil 3:4–9 against the grain of its original intent. This is all the more promising, as Paul provides a list of identity markers in Phil 3:4–9:

> If anyone else thinks that he can be confident in the flesh (ἐν σαρκί, *en sarki*), I can do so more, 5 being circumcised on the eighth day, being from the people of Israel, from the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew among the Hebrews, according to the law a Pharisee 6 according to zeal, a persecutor of the church, according to righteousness through the law, faultless. 7 But whatever was a gain (κέρδη, *kerdē*) for me, these things I regard as a loss (ζημίαν, *zēmian*) because of Christ. 8 More than that, I think, that everything is a loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, through whom I was cut out of all things—and I regard them now as shit (σκύβαλα, *skybala*)—in order to gain Christ 9 and be found in him.[29]

In Phil 3:4–9, Paul construes a principal antithesis between Judaism and Christianity. He achieves this antithesis by comparing his past with his present religious affiliation based on a dualistic world view. Phil 3:4–9 contains what after his conversion Paul regards as markers of his previous Jewish and his current Christian identity. Paul details the former in form of an encomium.[30] As markers of his Jewish identity Paul lists his circumcision on the eighth day, being from the people of Israel and from the tribe of Benjamin, as well as being a Hebrew among Hebrews. Beyond these identity markers he describes himself as a Jew by profession and lists further identity markers for that purpose. He was a Pharisee according to zeal, a persecutor of the church, and faultless in his righteous observance of the law.[31]

Paul describes his Christian existence with different identity markers than his Jewish one. In verses 8–9 he names "knowing Christ," and "to gain Christ and be found in him." In verses 7–9, he uses a cost benefit rhetoric out of the business world[32] to evaluate both his Jewish and Christian existences. What he regarded formally as a "gain" he understands now as a "loss" (verse 7). While he did understand his Jewish achievements as a *kerdos* in the past, i.e. a "gain" or even a "profit," after his conversion the characterizes these achievements as a *zēmia*. The word *zēmia* means both "loss" and "damage." Paul describes Judaism however not only as a damaging loss but, as part of his comparison of his Jewish and Christian existences, he goes so far as employing a curse word. From a Christian perspective, things Jewish are now *skybala* for Paul.

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29   The translation is my own but guided by NRSV.
30   Cf. e.g. Holloway, *Philippians*, 156–57.
31   See ibid., 156–58.
32   See ibid., 156; Reumann, *Phillipians*, 488.

The Greek word *skybalon* means not only trash but also excrement.[33] Paul calls Judaism in Philippians 3—and I apologize deeply for the curse word which is not mine—"shit."

Already in this extreme disavowal of everything in Paul's life that came before Christ, Paul leaves no doubt about the principal hiatus which he construes between Judaism and Christianity. As Phil 3:4–9 does not refer to any personal negative experiences with Jews, the opposition between Judaism and Christianity cannot be understood as a momentary reaction of the apostle to a personal crisis. On the contrary, the pride with which he lists his former Jewish achievements could even point to a certain recognition of Judaism. Given, however, the loss and gain rhetoric and the feces language he employs, such an impression would be misleading.

Phil 3:4–9 marks a radical break between Judaism and Christianity. Paul rejects Judaism as a whole; the former is opposed to the latter. By emphasizing his Jewish origins, Paul leaves no doubt that he regards Judaism as something principally opposed to Christianity. Judaism is part of the negative sphere of being, the world in the flesh, while Christianity marks the positive part of his dualistic equation. Paul's Jewish identity becomes an alterity which he condemns in the strongest terms. It is interesting that much of the rhetoric from Phil 3:4–9 is either devoted to the description of his former Jewish identity or to its rejection. Paul uses few words to describe his new Christian identity: "surpassing value of knowing Christ my Lord"; "to gain Christ and be found in him." Even in these few positive sentences, Paul has to insert a subclause emphasizing that Christ "cut" him "out of all things." In verse 8, he states that his new Christian identity is based on the rejection of his former Jewish identity. He can only gain Christ by being cut out of his Judaism. In a dualistic world view, Paul needs to turn his Jewish past therefore into a condemned alterity. Paul's new Christian identity depends on the reconstruction of his earlier Jewish identity as a negative alterity.

4.2 1 Thess 2:13–16

1 Thessalonians is Paul's earliest preserved letter and dates to the year 50 C.E.[34] Despite claims to the contrary, I regard 1 Thess 2:13–16 not as a later gloss but as a genuine part of 1 Thessalonians.[35] Notwithstanding its harsh polemics

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33   See ibid., 491–92.

34   M. Bockmuehl, "1 Thessalonians 2:14–16 and the Church in Jerusalem," *Tyndale Bulletin* 52 (2001): 17–18.

35   Supposed contradictions between 1 Thess 2:14–16 and other letters of Paul served as evidence to exclude 1 Thessalonians from the genuine Pauline letters (thus first F.C. Baur, *Paulus, der Apostel Jesu Christi: Sein Leben und Wirken, seine Briefe und seine Lehre: Ein*

against Jews, 1 Thess 2:13–16 is widely debated in scholarship. Is Paul's hostility toward Jews part of an inner-Jewish conflict in which one Jew attacks other Jews?[36] Or is this passage one of the earliest, if not the earliest evidence of hostility towards Jews in the New Testament and thus in Christianity at large?[37] If the latter is the case, then 1 Thessalonians would not only mark the opening of a hiatus between Judaism and Christianity,[38] but also the construction of two separate religious group identities by Paul, i.e. a Christian and a Jewish one. As Paul enjoyed an extensive Jewish education at the Jerusalem temple, the question arises whether his construction of a Jewish group identity is informed by his education or by other traditions. In other words, did Paul construct a hermeneutical Jew informed by earlier traditions of Jew-hatred or did he draw on his own experiences of Judaism to distinguish between Christian and Jewish group identities?

Beitrag zu einer kritischen Geschichte des Urchristentums [Stuttgart: Becher & Müller, 1845], 482–83). Other scholars regarded 1 Thess 2:14–16 for the same reasons as a secondary insertion into 1 Thessalonians (thus e.g. B.A. Pearson, "1 Thessalonians 2:13–16: A Deutero-Pauline Interpolation," *HTR* 64 [1971]: 79–94). It needs to be kept in mind though, that the genuine Pauline letters contradict each other in several cases and that Paul made negative statements about Judaism and Jews elsewhere as well. In 1 Thess 2:18, e.g., Paul seems to connect Judaism with Satan (cf. O. Michel, "Fragen zu 1. Thessalonicher 2,14–16: Antijüdische Polemik bei Paulus," in *Dienst am Wort: Gesammelte Aufsätze*, ed. K. Haacker [Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1986], 203). 1 Thess 2:14–16 should therefore be regarded as genuine (cf. e.g. I. Broer, "'Antisemitismus' und Judenpolemik im Neuen Testament: Ein Beitrag zum besseren Verständnis von 1Thess 2,14–16," in *BN* 20 [1983]: 65–69; ibid., "'Der ganze Zorn ist schon über sie gekommen': Bemerkungen zur Interpolationshypothese und zur Interpretation von 1 Thes 2,14–16," in *The Thessalonian Correspondence*, ed. R.F. Collins [Leuven: Peeters, 1990], 137–59; J.C. Hurd, "Paul Ahead of His Time: 1 Thess. 2:13–16," in *Anti-Judaism in Early Christianity*, vol. 1: *Paul and the Gospels*, eds. P. Richardson and D.M. Granskou [Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1986], 21–36; T.D. Still, *Conflict at Thessalonica: A Pauline Church at its Neighbors* [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999], 24–45; Bockmuehl, "1 Thessalonians," 7–17).

36   Thus e.g. Broer, "Antisemitismus," 86–89; R. Kampling, "Eine auslegungsgeschichtliche Skizze zu 1 Thess 2,14–16," in *Begegnungen zwischen Christentum und Judentum in Antike und Mittelalter: Festschrift für Heinz Schreckenberg*, eds. D.-A. Koch and H. Lichtenberger (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), 185–87.

37   Thus e.g. M. Dibelius, *An die Thessalonicher I* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1937), 10–13; Michel, "Fragen," 201–210; Hurd, "Paul."

38   Thus e.g. J.M.G. Barclay, "Hostility to Jews as a Cultural Construct: Egyptian, Hellenistic, and Early Christian Paradigms," in *Josephus und das Neue Testament: Wechselseitige Wahrnehmungen: II. Internationales Symposium zum Corpus Judaeo-Hellenisticum 25.–28. Mai 2006, Greifswald*, eds. C. Böttrich and J. Herzer (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 382–385.

And because of this we thank God constantly, that when you received the word of God by way of preaching from us you accepted it not as a word of humans but as what it truly is, the word of God, which is having an effect in you as believers. 14 Because you, brothers, became imitators of the churches of God, that are Judea in Christ Jesus, because you as well suffered from same things from your own compatriots as they did also from the Jews (ὑπὸ τῶν Ἰουδαίων, *hypo tōn Ioudaiōn*), 15 who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets and (who) drove us away, and who are not acceptable to God (καὶ θεῷ μὴ ἀρεσκόντων, *kai theō mē areskontōn*) and are hostile against all human beings (καὶ πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις ἐναντίων, *kai pasin anthrōpois enantiōn*), 16 who denied us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved, in order to fill up the measure of their sins constantly. But (God's) wrath came over them repeatedly in the end. (1 Thess 2:13–16)[39]

The phrase *tōn Ioudaiōn* ("the Jews," v. 14) leaves no doubt that Paul speaks here about all Jews as an entity in opposition to Christianity.[40] He refers not just to a part of Judaism or a particular Jewish group,[41] but to all Jews. As I have said earlier, the term *Ioudaios* is complex and can describe among many other connotations an ethnic origin as well as a cultural and religious affiliation.[42] In 1 Thess 2:14, the meaning of *tōn Ioudaiōn* is determined by the micro-context in which the term is used, i.e. by the argumentative logic of the verses 14–16. It needs to be recognized that Paul refers to events from different times and even different epochs when he accuses "the Jews" of murdering the prophets and Jesus and of hindering Paul in his preaching. Furthermore, Paul's accusations of Jewish hostility towards God and misanthropy in verse 15 are very general and do not relate to a specific group of Jews. Paul refers thus in 1 Thess 2:14–16 with *tōn Ioudaiōn* to all Jews. That Paul puts not only the gentile Christians of Thessalonica but also himself in opposition to "the Jews,"[43] excludes an ethnic signification for the word *Iudaios*, "Jews," in this context.[44] After all, Paul

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39   If not indicated otherwise, translations of the New Testament are my own.

40   Cf. Broer, "Antisemitismus," 74–77.

41   Thus e.g. F.D. Gilliard, "The Problem of the Antisemitic Comma between 1 Thessalonians 2.14 and 15," *NTS* 35 (1989): 481–502; T. Holtz, "The Judgment on the Jews and the Salvation of All Israel: 1 Thess 2,15–16 and Rom 11,25–26," in *The Thessalonian Correspondence*, ed. R.F. Collins (Leuven: Peeters, 1990), 284–94, esp. 286; S. Schneider, "Kirche und Andersgläubige: Versuch einer Auslegung von 1 Thess 2,13–16," in *Pneuma und Gemeinde: Christsein in der Tradition des Paulus und Johannes: Festschrift für Josef Hainz*, eds. J. Eckert, M. Schmidl, and H. Steichele (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 2001), 167.

42   See above, note 3.

43   For the gentile composition of the Christian community in Thessalonica, see C.H. De Vos, *Church and Community Conflicts: The Relationship of the Thessalonian, Corinthian, and Philippian Churches with Their Wider Civic Communities* (Atlanta, Ga.: Society of Biblical Literature, 1999), 144–47.

44   Cf. Michel, "Fragen," 205.

himself was born into the Jewish ethnicity. If he employs the word *Iudaios* in a purely ethnical sense, he would be part of "the Jews" that he attacks so aggressively. It stands to reason, therefore, that Paul employs the word *Iudaios* in the passage not as an ethnic but as a cultural or religious characterization of his opponents.

This means that in 1 Thess 2:13–16 Paul constructs Jewish identity by way of a principal theological distinction. Jews are characterized by their rejection of his evangelizing and by their rejection of the salvation in Christ (v. 16).[45] The fact that Jews reject the Christian gospel characterizes them in the eyes of Paul as godless and misanthropic. To reach this conclusion, Paul raises accusations against all Jews and Judaism: they killed Jesus and prophets,[46] they attacked him and drove him away; they are not acceptable to God and are the enemies of all humans; they prevented him from preaching to the gentiles. For Paul, this behavior is proof of the Jews' ultimate sinfulness.

Paul ends his argument in v. 16 by claiming that the Jewish efforts to prevent him from missionizing to the gentiles brought the wrath of God upon them. Paul writes "But (God's) wrath (ἔφθασεν δὲ, *ephthasen de*) came over them repeatedly in the end," an eschatological phrase which is used similarly in the *Testament of Levi* (*TestLev* 6:11).[47] The word *ephthasen* is a complex aorist which describes repeated actions in the past.[48] Such a repeated demonstration of the wrath of God in a not so distant past corresponds well with the many smaller and bigger catastrophes which the Jews of Judea and the diaspora

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45 Cf. Bockmuehl, "1 Thessalonians," 15.

46 For the motive of the killing of the prophets, see Neh 9:26 (cf. 1 Kgs 19:10; Jer 2:30; Jos. Ant. 9.265–267; 10.38–39: Matt 23:34–39 par Luke 11:49–50 and 13:34–35) and O.H. Steck, *Israel und das gewaltsame Geschick der Propheten: Untersuchungen zur Überlieferung des deuteronomistischen Geschichtsbildes im Alten Testament, Spätjudentum und Urchristentum* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1967), esp. 274–78.

47 For the complex intertextual relationship between 1 Thess 2:16 and TestLev 6,11, see Tjitze Baarda, "The Shechem Episode in the Testament of Levi: A Comparison with Other Traditions," in *Sacred History and Sacred Texts in Early Judaism: A Symposium in Honour of A.S. van der Woude*, eds. J.N. Bremmer and F. Garcia Martinez (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1992), 11–73; J.S. Lamp, "Is Paul Anti-Jewish? *Testament of Levi* 6 in the Interpretation of 1 Thessalonians 2:13–16," *CBQ* 65 (2003): 408–27.

48 For my above translation and the above interpretation of *ephthasen* as a complixive aorist, see E.W. Stegemann, "Zur antijüdischen Polemik in 1 Thess 2,14–16," in *Paulus und die Welt: Aufsätze*, eds. C. Tuor and P. Wick (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 2005), 70–71. For the discussion about *ephthasen*, cf. also Broer, "Zorn," 152–54, und B.C. Johanson, "Thessalonians 2:15–16: Prophetic Woe-Oracle with ἔφθασεν (*ephthasen*) as Proleptic Aorist," in *Texts and Contexts: Biblical Texts in Their Textual and Situational Contexts: Essays in Honor of Lars Hartman*, eds. T. Fornberg and D. Hellholm (Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1995), 519–34.

suffered during the years 48–49 C.E. Among these catastrophes was the death of 20,000 (Jos. *Ant.* 10.112) or even 30,000 Jews (Jos. *Bell.* 2.227) on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.[49]

It is important to observe Paul's rhetoric in verses 15 and 16. The long list of participles in the genitive masculine plural reminds of hymns which are phrased by way of participles and are paired in the *parallelismus membrorum*.[50] One could even speak of a negative or polemical hymn not praising but slandering the Jews. The first stanza of this negative hymn (v. 15a) states: The Jews killed Jesus, they killed the prophets, and they drove Paul away. The second stanza (v. 15b) follows with more general accusations: the Jews are not acceptable to God and are hostile against all human beings. The third stanza (v. 16) finishes the negative hymn with a tripartite elaboration on Paul's preaching of the gospel. This third stanza discloses the reason for Paul's attack: the Jews prevented Paul from preaching to the gentiles. According to Paul, this act has two consequences. For the gentiles, the consequence is their salvation. For the Jews, it is "to fill up the measure of their sins constantly." In his negative hymn, Paul combines experiences from his time in Thessalonica with general slander against "the Jews." 1 Thess 2:13–16 should therefore be understood as an early—perhaps the earliest—surviving example of Christian *Adversus Iudaeus* literature.

Acts 17:1–9 illuminate the experiences referred to by Paul in verse 16. The passage reports that out of jealousy for his successes, the Jews of Thessalonica tried to sue Paul before the city magistrates. When they could find neither Paul nor his companion Silas, they targeted his host Jason instead:

> These people who have been turning the world upside down have come here also, 7 and Jason has entertained them as guests. They are all acting contrary to the decrees of the emperor, saying that there is another king named Jesus. (Act 17:6–7)[51]

Paul and his companion Silas needed to flee Thessalonica after the magistrates were informed of their missionizing activities. While the historicity of the book of Acts is unclear, Acts 17:1–9 fits in well with the events Paul alludes to in 1 Thess 2:14–16.

What motivated the Jews of Thessalonica to suppress Christian missionizing even by legal means? Was it their jealousy for the successes of Paul's

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49   Bockmuehl, "1 Thessalonians," 18–29.
50   For this form of hymn, see F. Crüsemann, *Studien zur Formgeschichte von Hymnus und Danklied in Israel* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1969), 81–154.
51   Translation according to NRSV.

missionizing among the gentiles as Paul suggests? And why did the Jews of Thessalonica choose legal means? Both Paul (1 Thess 2:16) and Acts refer to the preaching of the gospel. But there is a significant difference between both passages: Acts mentions only members of a synagogue community and God fearers (Acts 17:4) while 1 Thess 2:16 demonstrates that the conflict between Paul and the Jews of Thessalonica was about the preaching of the gospel to non-Jews and hence about missionizing gentiles. The Jews of Thessalonica wanted to impede Paul's ultimate goal, preaching the gospel of the salvation through Jesus Christ to non-Jews. Paul insinuates in 1 Thess 2:16 that the Jews of Thessalonica wanted to keep salvation away from the pagan citizens of their city by means of their legal actions.

A look at the wider historical context allows, however, for a better understanding of the anti-Christian measures of the Thessalonian Jewish community. Acts 18:2 reports about a Jewish couple in Corinth named Aquila and Priscilla. Aquila and Priscilla were banned from Rome together with all Jews of that city by Emperor Claudius. A brief mention of this Claudian banishment of the Jews of Rome can be found in Sueton's *Divus Claudius*: "Since the Jews constantly made disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus, he expelled them from Rome."[52] Sueton leaves little doubt that Christian activities motivated Claudius to ban all Jews from Rome.

Two further banishments of the Roman Jews occurred before the measure of Claudius. In 139 B.C.E., the praetor Hispalus banned all Jews from Rome and in 19 C.E. Emperor Tiberius did the same. The banishment of the year 139 B.C.E. is reported twice by Valerius Maximus:

> The same Hispalus banished the Jews from Rome because they attempted to transmit their sacred rites to the Romans [...] had he cast down their private altars from public places.[53]

> The same praetor compelled the Jews, who attempted to infect the Roman customs (*mores*) with the cult of Jupiter Sabazius (*Sabazi Iovis*), to return to their homes.[54]

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52   Sueton, Claud. XXV:4; text and translation according to M. Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism* (3 vols.; Jerusalem: Jerusalem Academic Press, 1974), 2: 113 (#307). For the Claudian banishment of the Roman Jews, see R. Riesner, *Paul's Early Period: Chronology, Mission, Strategy, Theology* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1998), 157–201; H. Botermann, *Das Judenedikt des Kaisers Claudius: Römischer Staat und Christiani im 1. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1996).

53   Valerius Maximus, *De Superstionibus*; fragment quoted and translated according to Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors*, 1: 358 (#147a).

54   Valerius Maximus, De Superstionibus; fragment quoted and translated according to Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors*, 1: 358 (#147b).

A reference to the banishment of the Jews from Rome during the reign of Tiberius is preserved in the work of Cassius Dio:

> As the Jews flocked to Rome in great numbers and were converting many of the natives to their ways, he banished most of them.[55]

Both banishments are regarded by Valerius Maximus and Cassius Dio as punishments for attempts to convert the population of Rome to Judaism. Valerius Maximus speaks of an attempt "to infect the Roman customs with the cult of Jupiter Sabazius." Jupiter Sabazius should be either regarded as a corrupted version of the Greek *Iao Sabaoth* or as a pagan attempt to identify the Jewish God with Jupiter.[56] Valerius describes the Jewish God as the syncretistic deity Jupiter Sabazius because the word Sabazius echoes both the word *Saboath* and the word Shabbat. Plutarch describes the Sabbath therefore as the festival of Sabazios.[57]

Both Valerius and Dio Cassius describe therefore the banishment of Jews from Rome as a consequence of their proselytizing. It seems more than likely that Claudius acted out of similar motivations when he expelled the Jews from Rome. He simply confused early Christians with Jews as evidenced by Sueton's reference to "Chrestus."

But why were the Roman Jews banned from the city for communicating their religion to non-Jews despite the fact that Judaism was a *religio licita* in the Roman empire? The reason lies in the concept of *superstitio* and the Roman *mores maiorum*. The Roman Senate, the Roman Empire, Roman governments, and Roman officials all regarded Judaism as a *barbara superstitio*.[58] The term implies not the modern idea of a naive superstition but a threat to the Roman ideology of the *mores mairorum*. When Jews started to proselytize Roman citizens, they distanced the newly won proselytes from the *mores maiorum* and drew them closer to the Jewish religion. In the conceptual universe of ancient Rome, this endangered the Roman state, in particular, because both Judaism and Christianity were exclusive religions that prohibited the veneration of non-Jewish or non-Christian divine beings. Participation in the Jewish or Christian religions implied the removal of Roman citizens from the veneration of the Roman deities. Rome, however, made legal treaties with its deities, thus

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55   Cassius Dio, LVII:18,5a; fragment quoted and translated according to Stern, 2: 365 (#419).
56   Cf. P. Schäfer, *Judeophobia: Attitudes toward the Jews in the Ancient World* (Cambridge; Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997), 51.
57   Cf. Plutarch, *Symposiaca* IV:6.
58   See e.g. Cicero, *Flacc.* XXVIII:67. For Cicero's understanding of *superstitio*, cf. *Nat. d.* II,71 and Schäfer, *Judeophobia*, 181–82.

establishing an official religion. Removal of Roman citizens from the official religion was perceived as a violation of Rome's treaties with its deities and thus an endangerment of the Roman Empire. As a consequence, the Jews of Rome lost not only the protection of the Empire but risked persecution by the Roman state whenever they proselytized Roman citizens or whenever Christians did so and were regarded as Jews by the Roman state.

The departure of Aquila and Priscilla from Rome to Corinth demonstrates not only that the Jews of the Greek peninsula and Macedonia knew about the banishment of Roman Jews by Emperor Claudius but also that they were aware of the cause of this banishment. Due to a misconception of Christian missionizing, Jews lost the legal protection of the Roman Empire and suffered its wrath. The fear of such consequences motivated the Jews of Thessalonica to have Paul banished from their city by Roman authorities. It was the fear of Roman reprisals which motivated the Jews of Thessalonica to take action against Paul and Silas and to drive them out of the city before the same happened to them.[59] The Jews of Thessalonica saw that Paul violated the fine line which Roman custom drew in order to delimit the legal protection of the Jewish *religio licita*.

Paul responded to the Jewish actions against him by way of antisemitic slander which drew on both Christian and pagan traditions. An example of the Christian antisemitic traditions which Paul employed in 1 Thess 2:15 is the accusation that the Jews killed, i.e. crucified Jesus (cf. Luke 23:25; Joh 19:16–18). Paul's allegation contradicts both Jewish law (Sanh. vi. 4; Sifre, ii. 221) and Roman law, because the Romans did not allow non-Roman people to practice capital punishment and because crucifixion was a Roman but not a Jewish form of capital punishment. As a Roman citizen and a Pharisaic scholar, Paul must have been aware of the untenable nature of his assertions.

Next to the accusation of deicide which became very popular in the history of antisemitism, Paul also draws on stereotypes from pagan antisemitic literature in 1 Thess 2:15–16 when he reproaches the Jews with misanthropy and by claiming that they are hostile toward God.[60] Examples of the pagan

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59 Similar e.g. M. Goodman with regard to all Jewish communities who worked against Paul ("The Persecution of Paul by Diaspora Jews," in *Judaism in the Roman World: Collected Essays* [Leiden: Brill, 2007], 145–52).

60 Cf. z. B. Dibelius, *An die Thessalonicher*, 10–13 and in *op. cit.* "Beilagen," 1–13; W.G. Kümmel, "Das literarische und geschichtliche Problem des 1. Thessalonicherbriefes," in *Heilsgeschehen und Geschichte: Gesammelte Aufsätz 1933–1964* (Marburg: Elwert, 1965), 412; Michel, "Fragen," 208; Haacker, "Elemente des heidnischen Antijudaismus im Neuen Testament," *EvT* 48 (1988): 406–08; Barclay, "Hostility," 379–80; G.H. van Kooten, "Broadening the New Perspective on Paul: Paul and the Ethnocentrical Debate of His

antisemitic slander on which Paul draws can be found in Apollonius Molon and Diodorus Siculus. In his apology *Against Apion* (2.148), Josephus argues against the antisemitic agitation of Apollonius Molon, that the Jews would be *atheous kai misanthrōpous*, "godless and misanthropic." Diodorus Siculus reports in his *Historic Library* about a disfigurement of the Exodus story which was widespread in Greco-Roman literature since Manetho and which Josephus refuted as well:

> Now the majority of his friends advised the king (scil. Antiochus VIII) to take the city by storm and to wipe out completely the race of the Jews, since they alone of all nations avoided dealings (ἀκοινωνήτους εἶναι, *akoinōnētous einai*) with any other people and looked upon all men as their enemies (καὶ πολεμίους ὑπολαμβάνειν πάντας, *kai polemious hypolambanein pantas*). They (scil. the friends of the king) pointed out, too, that the ancestors of the Jews had been driven out of Egypt as men who were impious and detested by the gods (ὡς ἀσεβεῖς καὶ μισουμένους ὑπὸ τῶν θεῶν, *hōs asebeis kai misoumenous hypo tōn theōn*). 2 For by way of purging the country all persons who had white and leprous marks on their bodies had been assembled and driven across the border, as being under a curse; the refugees had occupied the territory round about Jerusalem, and having organized the nation of the Jews had made their hatred of mankind into a tradition (παραδόσιμον ποιῆσαι τὸ μῖσος τὸ πρὸς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους, *paradosimou poiēsai to misos to pros tous anthrōpous*), and on this account had introduced utterly outlandish laws: not to break bread with any other race nor to show them any good will at all.[61]

In the above passage, Diodorus Siculus most likely reproduces a source text and does not express his own view. Like 1 Thess 2:15, this source text accuses the Jews of godlessness and misanthropy. The rhetoric of the sources of Diodorus and Paul is different. Diodorus' source describes supposed Jewish misanthropy with the terms *akoinōnētous einai*, "to be socially incompetent," *kai polemious hypolambanein pantas*, "to look upon all men as enemies," *to misos to pros tous anthrōpous*, "hatred of mankind." Paul employs the phrase *pasin anthrōpois enantiōn*, "hostile against all human beings," instead for the same purpose. Diodorus' source uses the phrase *hōs asebeis kai misoumenous hypo tōn theōn*, "impious and detested by the gods," in designation of supposed Jewish godlessness while Paul speaks of *theō mē areskontōn*, "those who are not acceptable to

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Time—The Criticism of Jewish and Pagan Ancestral Customs (1 Thess 2:13–16)," in *Abraham, the Nations, and the Hagarites: Jewish, Christian, and Islamic Perspectives on Kinship with Abraham*, eds. M. Goodman, G.H. van Kooten, and J.T.A.G.M. van Ruiten (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 319–44. Extensive lists of the parallels between Paul's accusations and pagan antisemitic literature can be found in the articles by Haacker and van Kooten.

61   Diodorus Siculus, Bibliotheca Historica, 34.1.1–2; translation according to Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors*, 1: 183 (#63).

God." These differences in rhetoric show that Paul expresses traditional prejudices against Jews in his own terminology.[62] He thus did not simply repeat the slanders of earlier writers but incorporated their thought and hatred into his own thought, making them his own.

It is likely that Paul alluded consciously to the common Hellenistic antisemitic slander of Jewish misanthropy and godlessness because he had an education in Greek *paideia*.[63] This is all the more probable because Josephus, who had an education similar to Paul's, documents in his tractate *Against Apion* his broad knowledge of pagan antisemitic literature. But not only did Paul employ common Hellenistic slander against Jews. He addressed this slander to a Greek audience in Thessalonica who saw none other than the founder of their Christian community confirming the antisemitic prejudice of their Hellenistic culture.[64] Paul must have been aware of how his addressees would understand his use of antisemitic rhetoric. Klaus Haacker concludes rightly that Paul "turned an ingredient of the spirit of the ancient hostility against Jews into a part of the normative document of the Christian faith."[65] In this sense, too, 1 Thess 2:15–16 should be seen as an early example of Christian *Adversus Iudaeus* literature.

To summarize so far: I think that 1 Thess 2:13–16 marks a principal gap between Judaism and Christianity already in the middle of the first century C.E. Probably provoked by Roman legal practice and the need for self-preservation, the Jews of Thessalonica distanced themselves from Judaism's daughter religion, Christianity, and instigated legal measures to drive Paul out of their city. The founder of gentile Christianity employed in response antisemitic prejudice and slander against Judaism. He attacked all Jews, across-the-board and without distinction. Judaism as such is put in opposition with Christianity. For Paul, Jews are Christ killers despised by God and the enemies of humans. They block the spreading of the gospel and are the enemies of Christians and Christianity. 1 Thess 2:13–16 is thus far from an inner-Jewish conflict. But what does all of this mean for Paul's construction of a Jewish group alterity and a Christian group identity?

In his construction of what Jews are, Paul is informed by two traditions: the Christian tradition of deicide and Jewish persecution of Christians on the one hand and the pagan tradition of Jewish misanthropy and godlessness. Both

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62   Cf. Broer, "Antisemitismus," 79–80.

63   Cf. ibid., 82.

64   Cf. ibid., 81; Bockmuehl, "1 Thessalonians," 15.

65   Haacker, "Elemente," 411: "ein Stück vom Ungeist der antiken Judenfeindschaft zum Bestandteil der normativen Urkunde des christlichen Glaubens."

traditions are deeply antisemitic in nature and are far removed from the realities of Jewish life during the first century C.E. In his construction of a Jewish group alterity, Paul draws thus on both Christian and pagan antisemitic traditions although his own education should have informed him otherwise. In using these traditions, he appeals to preconceptions of Judaism of his gentile Christian audience. For their sake as much as for the sake of his own Jew-hatred, out of these pagan and Christian preconceptions, Paul constructs a hermeneutical Jew that is misanthropic, godless, and deicidal, i.e. a Jewish group alterity that paints Judaism in the most negative of pictures. He does so despite his extensive knowledge of both Judaism and the Graeco-Roman world that should have informed him otherwise.

At the same time, Paul constructs a Christian group identity that characterizes Christianity as the victim of evil Judaism. For this purpose, he compares the suffering of the Thessalonian Christians from their "compatriots" in Thessalonica with the persecution of Christians by Jews in Judea (verse 14). This approach compares well with what I have observed in my analysis of Phil 3:4–9 where Paul constructed his new identity as a Christian convert in rejection of his Jewish past. In 1 Thessalonians, he constructs a Christian group identity for himself and the Christian community of Thessalonica by designing an evil hermeneutical Judaism from both pagan and Christian antisemitic traditions. In light of these antisemitic preconceptions, Paul interpreted the Jewish attempts to block himself and the Christians of Thessalonica from missionizing non-Jewish inhabitants of the Roman Empire as an anti-Christian persecution. However, to inform the Roman authorities about Christian proselytizing was in reality an act of Jewish self-defense against the dangers which Christian missionizing provoked to the Jews of Thessalonica.

Paul invents a group identity in 1 Thess 2:13–16 that depicts Christians as victims of Jewish persecution beginning with Jesus and ending with himself and the Thessalonians. As much as the deicide charge is a Christian invention, so are his claims of a Jewish persecution of Christianity. Preventing Paul from preaching the gospel in a Jewish community and handing him over to the Roman authorities for missionizing non-Jews does not equal a persecution of Christians by Jews and is far removed from the invented deicide of Jesus by way of crucifixion.

In the end, Paul constructs a negative Jewish group alterity to develop a positive Christian group identity. Both are hermeneutical constructs informed by Christian and Jewish traditions and are completely detached from the realities of the lives of either group. Paul is thus an early example of the construction of both a hermeneutical Jew and a hermeneutical Christian. His writings demonstrate that from the very beginning of Christianity, its identity was constructed

in rejection of Judaism. Antisemitic constructions of Jewish alterity are thus part of the origins of Christianity. This explains why such constructions of Jewish alterity became a vital part of the Christian heritage throughout the ages and are still virulent in many parts of contemporary Christianity. Furthermore, Paul and the early Christians established a pattern of constructing both hermeneutical Jews and hermeneutical antisemites in their rejection of Judaism. This pattern paved the way for millennia of Jew-hatred in Christianity, the western world, and the world of Islam.

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Creating an Unlike to Dislike: Constructions of Jewish Identity and Alterity in Christian Exempla Stories

Kerstin Mayerhofer

In his article *Changing Patterns of Antisemitism*, Salo Baron found a succinct explanation for the cause of antisemitism: "dislike of the unlike."[1] Throughout history, the "fervent desire to get rid of them [sc. the Jews]" is based in the fact that Jews were considered different from the majority society, be it Persian, Roman, Visigoth, Muslim, or Christian. Constructing, shaping and maintaining an identity by way of distinction and differentiation is a common practice. The affirmation of the self is based not only on the recognition of the "I am me" but also on the contention that "I am not you/You are not me." Differentiation and distinction help to situate oneself in a social context, both as an individual and as a group. The formation of group identity is supported by the creation of a certain set of values and beliefs that help to bind individuals together. As a basis, the process of othering is crucial. Creating an 'other' or an 'unlike' who is different helps to strengthen and reinforce the identity of an individual or group. By the end of the first millennium, Christianity had already established a discourse of Jewish hereditary inferiority by stressing their blind belief in the wrong faith and their stubborn clinging to an out-dated and false interpretation of the scripture. Christian core beliefs such as the saving role of Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary's mercy were strengthened by the allegation of the Jews' hostility to these newly established doctrines. After Christianity had risen to its full religious, cultural, and political power in central Europe, the Jews were consequently systematically subordinated in all socio-economic and socio-political contexts. Jews were considered subordinate to Christians based on their construction as inferior—both spiritually and on corporeal, societal and political levels.

The pre-modern era, and especially the thirteenth century, saw a rise of Christian polemic directed against Jews in an effort to establish and reinforce the notion of their 'otherness' or 'unlikeness.' Narratives of Jews as asocial evil-doers spread to sustain and explain their continuous discrimination and marginalisation in societal, political, and economic contexts. Allegations against

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1 S.W. Baron, "Changing Patterns of Antisemitism: A Survey," *Jewish Social Studies* 38, no. 1 (1976): 5.

the 'inferior Jew' were manifold and manifested in theological disputes, in conspiratorial fantasies uttered in preaching, and in gruesome admonitions of physical deformation and murderous cultic practices. These, in turn, helped to strengthen Christian core beliefs and prove their rightfulness. A very specific genre incorporated all these allegations and miraculous tales about Jewish impiety: *exempla* stories. These evolved throughout the early thirteenth century and quickly gained success. This article focuses on exempla of Cistercian and Dominican origin, composed in the thirteenth century, and on their construction of a Jewish identity from an outside perspective with a very distinct intention: creating an unlike to dislike. This principle is especially manifest in the perception of Jewish sex and gender in those miracle stories. Caesarius of Heisterbach and Rudolph of Schlettstadt portrayed figures of 'men-struating'[2] Jewish men that serve as specific examples of the Christian notion of Jewish spiritual inferiority embedded and reflected in a distortion of their bodies.

Images of Jews in Exempla Stories

Exempla stories arose as a new clerical literary genre in a time of theological instability. The Catholic Church was faced with the rise of religious heretic lay movements and anti-churches questioning some of their core values. Most of all, they queried the doctrines of transubstantiation and the divinity of Christ. To confront these critiques and in order to re-establish a firm priesthood and preaching, the Fourth Council of the Lateran in 1215 focused on new methods of religious instruction and on the codification of theological doctrines. Following its resolutions, mendicant orders such as the Franciscans and Dominicans were formed to engage in preaching, evangelising activities and ministry. These orders played a crucial role in underpinning Catholic spirituality and establishing new structures of theological and social order.[3] In their continuous effort to reach out of monastic life and into the secular world, mendicant orders helped to shape a new liturgical category in the form of the exemplum.

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2   The term "men-struation" was coined by Gloria Steinem in her famous essay "If Men Could Menstruate," in *Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions* (New York, N.Y.: New American Library, 1983).

3   Cf. J. Burkhardt, "Die Welt der Mendikanten als Bienenschwarm und Vorstellung: Zum Ideal religiöser Gemeinschaften bei Thomas von Cantimpré," in *Die Klöster der Franziskaner im Mittelalter: Räume, Nutzungen, Symbolik*, ed. G. Melville, L. Silberer, and B. Schmies (Berlin: Lit-Verlag, 2015), 75–6.

The exemplum is a moralised tale or anecdote with an instructive purpose. Drawing on contemporary reality and often using the image of a realistic figure in a daily life situation as a basis of their moral conclusion, these brief illustrative narratives were inserted into the sermons in church in an attempt to persuade the listeners and to "hold the attention of the audience while conveying an important religious message."[4] Their moral concepts of good conduct were often based on earlier authorities, mostly one of the famous church fathers. The exempla tried to propound the Roman Catholic Church's conception of the universe and the individual's role in a lively yet cogent way. In doing so, they also accounted for their future applicability of a belief in eternal condemnation and the pursuit of salvation as the ultimate human condition and goal.[5] Behind their seemingly simple entertainment value, exempla followed a logical organisation and used concrete iconography and images to make an otherwise abstract notion or doctrine easily understood. Many exempla claimed to be recorded from oral accounts and, as such, asserted their historical accuracy of the events reported on. Making their audience believe in the 'truth' of these accounts helped to strengthen the 'truthfulness' of the story itself as well as its significance.[6] This resulted in and aided the continuous repetition of specific motifs which in their turn buttressed concrete theological and socio-cultural notions.

Reflecting the increase of social and economic change especially in the thirteenth century, exempla not only mirrored contemporary situations and tenets but also helped shape them. This is especially true for the shaping and continuous transportation the of the image of 'the Jew.' The repetition of different motifs and stereotypes reinforced the image of the Jews as clear opponents to Christians, not only in a theological but also in a socio-cultural context. The latter is in itself shaped by religious doctrine and moral concepts, many of which are reflected especially in exempla on Jews. They also documented a general deterioration of social relations between Jews and Christians in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Jews were now depicted not only as the religious 'other' of Christians' but even as their social and moral antidote. The Jews' clinging to a false belief resulted in their social misdeeds. In her extensive study on medieval exempla, Joan Gregg has identified various motifs reinforcing this image of the Jew. They can be subsumed into the following three categories:

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4   J. Lackner, "Violent Men and Malleable Women: Gender and Jewish Conversion to Christianity in Medieval Sermon Exempla," *Nashim: A Journal of Jewish Women's Studies & Gender Issues* 30 (2016): 24.

5   Cf. J.Y. Gregg, *Devils, Women, and Jews: Reflections of the Other in Medieval Sermon Stories* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1997), 21–2.

6   Ibid., 11; 15.

(1) religious motifs, (2) socio-cultural or socio-economic motifs, and (3) corporeal motifs, that is focusing on a 'Jewish body.'

Religious motifs had already been applied in ancient pre-Christianity times, accusing the Jew of impiety due to their rejection of the religious system or cult of their socio-religious environment. This notion was further emphasised in the motif of the Jew as the murderer of Christ, as blind, stubborn, and clinging to the 'Old Law.' Herein, Christianity designated the Jews as its "archetypal Other."[7] This image was further shaped by applying the motif of the Jew refusing conversion and rejecting the belief in the divinity of Christ and the Virgin Mary's mercy. Both motifs were often combined in stories of Jewish converts who eventually turned to the 'true faith' after a convincing Marian encounter experience.[8] The last motif, which had been established already in earlier Christian homiletics and found its way into exempla literature, is the bedevilment and subsequent demonisation of the Jew, first as friend and companion of the devil only, and later as the general personification of Satan.[9] This motif was kept alive especially in later medieval and early modern drama on the Passion of Christ.

Motifs concerned with an alleged antisocial behaviour of the Jews served a higher purpose. Images of the Jews as living in secluded societies allegedly plotting against Christianity,[10] as economic exploiters, combining the impurity of money with the Jews' own alleged impurity,[11] and of the Jews as murderers of children[12] were exploited to justify Christian violence and bloodshed directed against Jews. They helped to both ground in reason the Christian maltreatment of Jews and, in turn, to rationalise it. Myths about the generally corrupt social, cultural, and religious nature of the Jew and their consequent plot against Christianity underpinned this effort.

The last category of motifs, constructed in connection to Jewish corporeality, is probably the most difficult to grasp. The overarching aim of all the motifs in question was to produce an image of the Jew as carnal in contrast to the disembodied Christian whose spirituality had freed him from "the oppression of

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7   Gregg, *Devils, Women, and Jews*, 175.

8   Ibid., 195–6.

9   Cf. A. Lange and M. Grossman, "Jews and Judaism between Bedevilment and Source of Salvation: Christianity as a Cause of and a Cure against Antisemitism," in *Comprehending and Confronting Antisemitism: A Multi-Faceted Approach*, vol. 1 of *An End to Antisemitism*, ed. A. Lange, K. Mayerhofer, D. Porat and L.H. Schiffman (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019), 142–53.

10   Gregg, *Devils, Women, and Jews Reflections*, 183–4.

11   Ibid., 199–201.

12   Ibid., 197–9.

fleshly desires."[13] This notion manifested itself in detailed descriptions of the 'Jewish body.' Already in the Pauline writings, we find the idea that the corruption of their spirit had manifested itself in the Jews' diseased and disabled bodies.[14] Medieval exempla present us with various other corporeal concepts of the Jew. Most of them are combined with the motif of the Jews' sexual depravity, reflected not only in increased sexual appetite but also obscene abnormal sexual practice. Alleged aggression against the body of Christ, first and foremost, deeply rooted in the bodily mutilation of Christ's circumcision, but also in the form of host desecration and icon profanation were also often read as forms of the Jewish trespassing of Christian sexual and spiritual realms.[15]

Most of all, however, the sexual threat to Christian religious order manifested itself in the diversion of Jewish roles of sex and gender altogether. While depicting the Jewish male as both aggressive in his anti-Christian behaviours and lascivious in his sexual desire, the feminisation of his sex and gender played a crucial role. The Jewish male appeared as uncontrollable, melancholic, and symbolically castrated. He was unfit to exert his male power and authority and was therefore a social subordinate. On a corporeal level, the feminisation of the Jewish male was echoed in, for example, his beardlessness. It was also echoed in an aberrant regular bleeding of the Jewish male that we encounter not only in exempla texts but in other pre-modern and early modern sources from various generic backgrounds as well. Starting in the twelfth century, a figure of a Jewish man was established and described as suffering from a "fluxus sanguinis." This specific blood flow appeared spontaneously and at regular intervals with no connection to injury or to chronic illness. Rather, the "Jewish flow" was associated with menstruation and alluded to religio-cultural understandings of sex and gender connected to this female biological process. Descriptions of this specific blood flow varied over time, and with the evolution of different genres various imagery pertained to the motif of Jewish 'male menstruation.' Its verbalisation in textual witnesses was sometimes implicit, for example by indicating the overall weakness of Jews similar to women. Other texts, however, presented more direct imagery and used quite explicit vocabulary, for example when they described Jews as "menstruosi […] quam mulieres,"[16] ("menstruous […] like women") or claim that "omnes homines Iudei ut mulieres

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13   Ibid., 177.

14   Ibid., 177–8.

15   Cf. M. Rubin, *Gentile Tales: The Narrative Assault on Late Medieval Jews* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1999); Gregg, *Devils, Women, and Jews*, 189–90.

16   "The Computus Iudaicus of 1342," in *Medieval Latin Christian Texts on the Jewish Calendar: A Study with Five Editions and Translations*, ed. C.P.E. Nothaft (Leiden and Boston, Mass.: Brill, 2014), 427.

menstrua patiuntur"[17] ("all Jewish men, like women, suffer from menstruation"). Especially the sources stemming from a more 'scientific' background, medical and natural philosophical treatises alike, established the notion of a permanence of 'otherness' through the continuity of the (male Jewish) body which appeared distorted and cross-gendered.

The Jewish female, too, is cross-gendered, often appearing as an alluring and wanton creature in harsh contrast to the Christian ideal of modesty, purity and passivity. In the exempla stories, Jewish women were often depicted as being more active than Jewish men, both in their male gender performance when seducing a Christian male, and in their female gender performance in their stronger inclination to and experience of spirituality and devoutness. The latter often led them to actively reject their 'old faith' and to turn to Christianity for conversion.[18] The motif of wantonness played a significant role not only in the shaping of the image of Jewish women but also in reinforcing the image of Jewish men. Clearly associated with femaleness, both Jewish women and Jewish men could be conceptualised as "seducers of the soul."[19] Their carnality forever bound the Jews, irrespective of their sex and gender, to the earthly sphere and a priori excluded them from spiritual salvation, a notion that originated in Augustine's exegesis of the Pauline writings.

The Cross-Gendered Jew: Constructions and Implications of the Unlike

An example from the early thirteenth century presents its audience with both a feminised Jew and a lustful Jewess. Caesarius of Heisterbach's Cistercian sermon manual *Dialogus Miraculorum*, or *Dialogue on Miracles* was composed in 1220 and reached tremendous success already with its contemporaries. The collection brought together moral teachings and tales that had circulated widely in the German lands, mostly orally. The story of a love affair between a Jewish maiden and a Christian clerk incorporated in the text is the first account of a specific Jewish "fluxus sanguinis" of German origin.

The *Dialogue on Miracles* was commissioned as a written version of Caesarius' teachings, not only for the Cistercian novices, but also for monks

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17   Cecco d'Ascoli, "Cicchi esculani viri clarissimi in Spheram Mundi enarratio," in *The Sphere of Sacrobosco and Its Commentators*, ed. L. Thorndike (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1949), 409.

18   For more details on the role of gender in conversion stories cf. Lackner, "Violent Men and Malleable Women."

19   Gregg, *Devils, Women, and Jews Reflections*, 186.

and lay brothers. The book is structured in the form of a dialogue between a novice and a monk, with a variety of exempla stories, collected between 1214 and 1222, embedded in it.[20] The work has been recognised as a key example "of the Cistercian literature whose aim it was to educate and to convert."[21] Thus, the *Dialogue* has to be understood as part of monastic literature that was compiled with a clear intention of persuasion and "making believe" (*faire croire*), to which the *exempla*, in their immediacy, contributed substantially.[22]

The *Dialogue* is divided into twelve parts, or *distinctions*, and contains almost eight-hundred exempla stories. Caesarius was the first to systematically incorporate these exempla into his sermon preaching.[23] One of the characteristics of this literary sub-genre is its originality and personal tone. Caesarius claims to have experienced the stories first-hand or through a messenger who had been present at the event he reported on. This strengthened not only the credibility of the exempla stories but also helped to appeal to the audience's "emotions and values."[24] Caesarius drew from a great variety of stories that formed part of the cultural memory of the thirteenth century, from the flood disaster in Frisia in 1219 (*DM* VII, 3) and the great famine of 1197 (*DM* IV, 65), to the sack of Constantinople during the Fourth Crusade in 1204 (*DM* I, 6).[25] Together with a rhetorical technique of persuasion, Caesarius thus created a memorial and moral pathos which in turn contributed to the *Dialogue*'s vast success inside and outside the Order of the Cistercians.

In the second distinction of the *Dialogue*, in chapter twenty-three, Caesarius told the story of a "clerk who debauched a Jewish maiden, and how the Jews were struck dumb in the Cathedral, when they tried to accuse the offender who was now contrite." The story is part of the distinction "On Contrition": already its heading makes it clear that the essential moral of the tale is the necessity of repentance after a moral downfall in turn leading to redemption. However, it is also interesting with regards to Christian perceptions of Jews and gender in the thirteenth century. We find a couple of classical notions about Jews and their

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20 On the exact dating of the collection of the Dialogue's exempla stories and the finalisation of the work see H. Schneider, "Einleitung," in Caesarius von Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum: Dialog über die Wunder: Erster Teilband*, ed. N. Nösges and H. Schneider, (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), 59–66.

21 V. Smirnova, M.A. Polo de Beaulieu, and J. Berlioz, "Introduction," in *The Art of Cistercian Persuasion in the Middle Ages and beyond Caesarius of Heisterbach's Dialogue on Miracles and Its Reception*, ed. ibid., (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 1.

22 Ibid., 1–6.

23 Cf. Schneider, "Einleitung," 57.

24 Smirnova, Polo de Beaulieu, and Berlioz, "Introduction," 15.

25 Schneider, "Einleitung," 58.

genders in the tale when we focus on the acting personage rather than on the moral meta level.[26] The story begins as follows:

> In civitate quadam Angliae puella quaedam habitavit, Judaei cuiusdam filia, et secundum genus suum satis speciosa. Hanc iuvenis quidam clericus, Episcopi eiusdem civitatis cognatus, et ecclesiae maioris canonicus, ut vidit, concupivit, et verbis amatoriis ad consensum suae libidinis cum multo labore inclinavit.[27]

> In a city of England there lived the daughter of a Jew, who, like many of her race, was a very beautiful girl. A young clerk, a relative of the bishop of that city and a canon of the cathedral saw her and fell in love with her, and after much difficulty persuaded her at last to consent to his desires.[28]

We hear that the story took place in a city in England without any further detail disclosed. The Jewish maiden is described as very beautiful "like many of her race." Here, the reader is presented with the image of the "beautiful Jewess," a motif that has been widely employed, much explored and transmitted well into the modern ages. Linked to this motif are images of the Jewish (young) woman as "sexually available, physically dangerous and open to conversion."[29] Blinded by both the beauty of the Jewess and his own passion, a young Christian clerk abandons his moralities and persuades the Jewish maiden to engage in extra-marital sexual relations. Here, two further images of the motif of the "beautiful Jewess" become apparent. First, her beauty, and, implicitly, her sexual allure are strong enough to seduce even the most abstinent and morally obliged men. Second, her decisions and actions are ruled by her corporeality: the Jewish maiden gives in to physical contact rather easily whilst being aware of the consequences for both members of the couple. Extra-marital relations at the time were prohibited by both religious communities, Christianity and Judaism. The Jewess' willingness to give in to the Christian clerk's desire is proves two things

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26   Of course, I. Marcus is right when he reads the story about the Christian clerk and the Jewish maiden as "confrontation between symbolic images of each religious culture presented as two individuals as they interact with members of each religious commu-nity." I.G. Marcus, "Images of the Jews in the Exempla of Caesarius of Heisterbach," in *From Witness to Witchcraft: Jews and Judaism in Medieval Christian Thought*, ed. J. Cohen (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1997), 249–50. However, in a naïve reading of the text that takes the individuals reported on into its focus, we can unearth yet another layer of Christian-Jewish relations and their resulting perceptions of each of the groups towards one another.

27   Caesarius Heisterbacensis, *Dialogus Miraculorum*, ed. Strange, 1: 92.

28   Caesarius of Heisterbach, *The Dialogue on Miracles*, ed. Scott and Swinton Bland, 1: 102.

29   A. Bale, "The Female 'Jewish' Libido in Medieval Culture," in *The Erotic in the Literature of Medieval Britain*, ed. A. Hopkins and C. Rushton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 95.

for the Christian reader: her weak-mindedness as a *woman* in general, and her disdain for the virtues of virginity and chastity as a *Jewish* woman. What Caesarius implicitly presents us with here is a thirteenth century Christian understanding of Jewish gender(s) as multiply distorted. The behaviour of a Jewish woman not only differs greatly from that of a Christian woman and her ideal of virginity, chastity, and conjugal faith. The Jewess, in contrast, has her own will and does not hesitate to succumb to her own sexual desires. On the other hand, she is "pliant and impressionable"[30] enough not only to succumb to false desire, but eventually also to be led onto to the righteous path which is conversion to Christianity (as we shall see later).

It is interesting to focus on the perception of the male Jew in Caesarius' exemplum. He, too, appears distorted with regards to both his sex *and* gender. The account continues:

> Patri meo multum sum dilecta, qui in tantum custodit me, ut neque ego ad te, neque tu possis venire ad me, nisi in nocte sextae feriae, quae Pascha vestrum praecedit. Tunc enim Judaei laborare dicuntur quadam infirmitate, quae fluxus sanguinis dicitur, circa quam occupati, aliis tunc minus intendere possunt.[31]

> 'I am very dear to my father, who watches over me so carefully that neither can I come to you or you to me, unless it be on the night of the Friday before your Easter.' For then the Jews are said to labour under a sickness called the bloody flux, with which they are so much occupied, that they can scarcely pay attention to anything else at that time.[32]

Of course, the Jewish maiden still lives in the household of her father and under his custody. While we do not learn anything about her mother, the Jewess herself goes on to describe her father. He is loving and protective of his daughter, which in a way allows for speculations of his distorted male gender already in his filling of a rather motherly role. The most important part, however, is the explanation the Jewess gives for choosing a specific time for her meeting with the Christian clerk. Her father, like all Jewish men, suffers from a bleeding disease, the "fluxus sanguinis," on the night of Good Friday. This affects him so much that he cannot pay attention to his daughter's whereabouts. Although any further explanation or theological proof-text is missing here, it is clear to the audience that the linking of the affliction with an annual reoccurrence on Good Friday is a hint to the crucifixion. Many sources figuring the 'men-struating' Jew refer to the so-called 'blood curse' in Matt. 27:25. This

30   Rubin, *Gentile Tales*, 71.

31   Caesarius Heisterbacensis, *Dialogus Miraculorum*, ed. Strange, 1: 92.

32   Caesarius of Heisterbach, *The Dialogue on Miracles*, ed. Scott and Swinton Bland, 1: 102.

verse alludes to the Jews' willingness to accept liability for the death of Jesus at the cross, and serves as foundation for linking the Jew's sinfulness with the symbol of blood. As the Jews had spilled Christ's blood, they were now afflicted with a bleeding from their bodies in return. Caesarius omitted a direct reference to the passage, but there is no other explanation for setting this specific time frame other than to recall the Jews' 'blood curse' and guilt for the death of Christ on Good Friday. As a direct consequence, the Jewish father's body is depicted as diseased and corrupted.

The period of recurrence of the bleeding only once a year also makes the notion of menstruation unlikely. However, another moment of feminisation of the bleeding can be constructed in juxtaposition with the behaviour of the father's young daughter. In Judaism, sexual relations for menstruants are forbidden; the young woman's father, now afflicted with a bleeding disease, enables a sexual relation for the young woman in the story. This is a clear distortion of the contemporary valid gender roles. The male figure in the story is passive and bound to the private sphere of the home, afflicted with a physical condition connected to femaleness. The female, on the other hand, performs a much more active role and follows her own plans to fulfil her (sexual) desire. The figuring of the 'men-struating' Jew in the *Dialogue* does not only imply a distortion of Jewish gender roles.

On a larger scale, it points to the narrative context of the human body as a symbol for a larger bound unit such as a religious community. Within this frame, corporeal images and constructions are used as means for the representation of particular social or religious values. The menstruating (female) body was generally believed to be uncontrollable since the process of a regular bleeding indicating both life and death was largely feared. Menstruants were thus kept at distance from anything sacred and were largely excluded from the spiritual communal body, both in Judaism and, increasingly, in Christianity. In the case of Jewish 'male menstruation,' a notion of unlikeness is established and a general inferiority inscribed into the body is implied. The 'men-struating' Jew is considered as crossing two borders at the same time. He is neither fully male nor female, neither fully a Jew nor a non-Jew. Its juxtaposition with femaleness makes clear that both, Jews and women (Jewish and Christian), were considered inferior when measured against a discursive and normative image of mankind being male and Christian.

The distortion of gender roles and the fluidity of gender boundaries in this story become apparent again in the following sequence. Giving in to the Jewish maiden's invitation on the night of Good Friday, the Christian clerk spends all night with her with the inevitable consequence; in the morning, the father uncovers the couple and is furious:

Judaeus vero pater puellae ante lucem cum lumine cubiculum intrans, venit ad lectum filiae, volens videre quomodo iaceret, vel si forte operiri necesse haberet. Vidensque ad latus eius iam dictum iuvenem cubantem, expavit et infremuit, utrumque occidere cogitans.[33]

Now the Jew, her father, in the early hours before the dawn, entered his daughter's room, and wishing to see if she were sleeping quietly or if by chance she needed warmer covering, came up to her bed. When he saw this youth lying by her side, he was aghast and cried out with rage and grief, and was on the point of killing him.[34]

Again, the first part of the sentence depicts the Jewish father in a caring and rather motherly way. He is carefully watching over his daughter even in her sleep, anxious about her well-being. On the other hand, a furious reaction and aggression about what he has uncovered evokes a strong masculine image of the Jewish father in this sequence. The uncontrollability of his emotions, however, can again be connected to femininity. Just as his daughter is blinded by her emotions and desire, the father, too, is washed away by his fury and can no longer control his senses and reactions. He is so infuriated that he even considers murdering the penetrator.

In the end, the Jewish maiden's father refrains from his murderous idea after recognising the clerk as the local bishop's relative. He does not dare to raise his hand against a clergyman of higher status, which all the more affirms his inability for a masculine gender-performance. Following the moral of the story, the murder is of course prevented both by the impact of the Christian church ("I would kill you now like a dog, if I were not afraid of my lord the bishop"[35]) and by the effect of contrition (the young man begging for mercy and being thrown out of the Jew's house as sole retribution for his action). Both these notions are strengthened in the second part of the exemplum, in which the initial private event is made public. The young clerk seeks repentance from the bishop in church, which he is granted. However, not only does he call for his own retribution, but he also follows the bishop's proposal to bring the Jewish girl for conversion and subsequently make her his legitimate wife. While through conversion and marriage the sin of extra-marital sexual contact might be remitted, this is not the bishop's main concern. Rather,

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33   Caesarius Heisterbacensis, *Dialogus Miraculorum*, ed. Strange, 1: 92.
34   Caesarius of Heisterbach, *The Dialogue on Miracles*, ed. Scott and Swinton Bland, 1: 103.
35   Idem.

> Episcopus, Domini misericordiam admirans et glorificans, ... legitime duceret, malens illum, sicut vir pius et iustus, ecclesiasticis carere beneficiis, quam illam multis expositam periculis in paternis manere delictis.[36]

> The bishop, admiring and glorifying the loving kindness of the Lord ... was a man both merciful and just, and preferred that his young relative should lose all hope of ecclesiastical preferment, than that the girl should be exposed to peril by remaining in her father's sins.[37]

It is not only the image of the permeability of the young Jewish woman's faith, mind and heart that is corroborated. Her pliancy, initially leading to a morally reprehensible action, now forms the basis for contrition at an even higher level, that is, through conversion to Christianity. Also, the bishop's concern about her father's sins supports the image of the distorted Jewish male who is aggressive and uncontrolled and thus will remain sinful throughout his entire (Jewish) existence.

This tale demonstrates perfectly how a canon of motifs was used by Christian clerics to establish and strengthen a notion of Jewish difference, manifested in the Jews' sexual depravity and gender fluidity. Male Jews were depicted as both aggressive and, symbolically, castrated. Both features pointed to the need for their subordination within the Christian majority society. The Jewish female, on the other hand, was contrasted with the Christian ideal of modesty, purity, and passivity. However, her general mutability and permeability—overall associated with the female gender—also made her an easy target for Christianisation.

Following the enormous success *of the Dialogue on Miracles*', it is likely that it was through Caesarius' report that the motif of Jewish 'male menstruation' appeared in similar later works, such as the *Historiae memorabiles* by Rudolph of Schlettstadt. In this collection of exempla, Rudolph aimed at providing a justification and clarification for a range of violent mass attacks against Jews, current during his life. As a Dominican, he was also committed to the mendicant orders' goal of eradicating heresies and strengthening Christian beliefs and doctrines with the lay.[38] The *Historiae* are a collection of fifty-six miracle tales, exempla, and conversion stories. While tales about Jews in Caesarius' *Dialogue*

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36   Caesarius Heisterbacensis, *Dialogus Miraculorum*, ed. Strange, 1: 93.

37   Ibid., 104.

38   Cf. F. Lotter, "Das Judenbild im volkstümlichen Erzählgut dominikanischer Exempelliteratur um 1300: Die Historiae memorabiles des Rudolf von Schlettstadt," in *Herrschaft, Kirche, Kultur: Beiträge zur Geschichte des Mittelalters. Festschrift für Friedrich Prinz zu seinem 65. Geburtstag*, ed. G. Jenal (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1993), 431; and M. Rubin, "Rudolph of Schlettstadt, O.P.: Reporter of Violence, Writer on Jews," in *Christ*

of Miracles were only marginally featured, they make up almost half of the Rudolph compilation. Most of them appear consecutively in the work and convey themes of the Jews as evil, as Satan's allies, as wanton and as murderous and overall inferior to a good Christian. The tales are mostly stylised in narratives of ritual murder and of host desecration, both of which serve as symbols for the re-enactment of the passion of Christ.[39] Both accusations of ritual murder and of host desecration were transmitted to the German lands and spread throughout the thirteenth century. They consequently corroborated attempts of concrete action against Jews culminating in the massacres of 1287 in the Rhineland and of 1298 in Franconia. In an "attempt to lend coherence and justification to the banality of violence around him,"[40] Rudolph collected and arranged his exempla to demonstrate that by constantly doubting, testing and mocking Christian core doctrines and exerting violence against Christ's body in the form of the Eucharistic host or against bodies of good Christian people, the Jews were themselves responsible for the violence brought upon themselves.

The 'men-struating' Jew figures in Rudolph's story in a rather short snippet. Rudolph reports of a Jewess coming to Colmar to seek refuge in the house of a Christian widow. She had fled from Würzburg because she had witnessed miraculous happenings among the local Jewish men and now feared that she would be killed. In a dialogue with the widow, the Jewish refugee reports of the following:

> Audivi a Judeis, quod quidam Judeorum, scilicet qui in passione Cristi clamaverunt coram Pilato: sanguis eius super nos et filios nostros, quod omnes Judei, qui de eorum genere processerunt, singulis mensibus sanguine fluunt et dissenteriam sepius paciantur et ea ut frequencius moriuntur.[41] (*HM* 16, fol. 206v)

> I have heard of the Jews that some of them, namely those who at the Passion of Christ had said to Pilate: His blood be upon us and our sons [Matt 27:25], that all Jews, who descend from those [who have cried out to Pilate], have blood flowing every month and suffer from dysentery and, as a cause of this, they die very frequently.

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among the Medieval Dominicans: Representations of Christ in the Texts and Images of the Order of Preachers (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998), 283.

39   Cf. Lotter, "Das Judenbild im volkstümlichen Erzählgut," 434.

40   Rubin, "Rudolph of Schlettstadt," 283.

41   Rudolf von Schlettstadt, *Historiae memorabiles: zur Dominikanerliteratur und Kulturgeschichte des 13. Jahrhunderts*, ed. E. Kleinschmidt (Cologne/Vienna: Böhlau, 1974), 65. Translation into English is my own.

Rudolph's report differs from that of Caesarius in three important aspects. First, Rudolph stated that the bleeding occurred every month. Rudolph must have been aware of earlier traditions and motif strands which regarded the bleeding as a form of menstruation, following a fixed cycle. We find these traditions in the earliest text witnesses figuring the 'men-struating' Jew and belonging to the genre of historiography. Rudolph described the bleeding in very much the same way and even more precisely as appearing "singulis mensibus," rather than only figuratively as following the "changing of the moon" ["singulis lunationibus"] as earlier authors wrote. This suggests that the motif was already quite established and had reached other genres by the thirteenth century, maybe also supported by the contemporary evolvement of medical knowledge. In contrast to the tale of Caesarius of Heisterbach, the bleeding here is no longer restricted to a singular person and a specific time but rather afflicts all male Jews.

Second, the regular bleeding is connected to dysentery and both are said to possibly lead to early death. Implicitly, both conditions are considered filthy and shameful. Disease, filth, and bodily fluids were considered impure as they implied that the body was bound to earth and time. This was in harsh contrast to the Christian ideal of freedom from the body through spiritual practice and which tried to negate bodily functions consequently. In this passage, the Jews are construed as carnal and connected to uncleanliness and impurity. Mary Douglas has convincingly demonstrated that notions and images of filth, pollution, and impurity were employed to define a religious other. They justified separation of members of different religious groups from one another by evoking feelings of disgust and abhorrence. These, in turn, reinforced distance between the groups, both emotionally and theologically. Sexual disgust was especially emphasised to avoid relations outside of the religious and cultural norm (that is, both inter-faith and same-sex).[42] For Rudolph, connecting the peculiar Jewish blood flow with filth and disease fell into a canon of very concrete imagery of unlikeness, shamefulness, and inferiority.

Finally, Rudolph harked back to the motif's religious foundation in referencing the 'blood curse' from Matt. 27:25. While Caesarius had only implicitly alluded to this passage, Rudolph made an effort to cite the original verse. However, he did not only reference the crucifixion and evoke the notion of the hereditary nature of the bleeding and of genealogical guilt connected with it. In understanding the bleeding as shameful and humiliating, he implicitly referred also to another exegesis of Matt. 27:25 in reference to Ps 78:66

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42 Cf. M. Douglas, *Purity and Danger an Analysis of Concept*[*s*] *of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge, 2002).

[Vulgate 77:66]. This verse accounts for God's punishment of the Philistines with some sort of anal disease: "et percussit hostes suos retrorsum obprobrium sempiternum dedit eos"—"And he smote his enemies in the hinder parts: he put them to a perpetual reproach." This passage, in turn, had previously often been read in the light of 1 Sam 5:6, and the disease mentioned in Ps 78:66 was often interpreted as bleeding haemorrhoids.[43] Many varieties of the motif of Jewish 'male menstruation,' evoking images of bleeding haemorrhoids take their basis in this specific reading of Matt. 27:25.[44] In referring to the 'blood curse,' both Rudolph and similar sources constructed Jewish 'male menstruation' as a divine punishment in vengeance for the passion of Christ—the abnormal bleeding was considered congenital. In the further course it was also regarded as the source of the Jew's physical weakness, such as presented by Caesarius, their sickly pallor,[45] and specific 'Jewish' ailments such as dysentery and dropsy, as mentioned by Rudolph. All of these were equally shameful.

Rudolph concluded his tale with another allegation against the Jews. He claimed that in order to cure themselves from their peculiar infirmity, Jews collected Eucharistic hosts, mutilated them and collected the blood they effused upon being pierced. Host desecration stories are part of a larger narrative of Christian blood libels in which the Jews were accused of murdering Christian children or mutilating Eucharistic hosts to obtain and use their blood for magical purposes. This image, again, strengthens the notion of their false understanding of Scripture. When mentioning "pro sanguine Christo" as a cure for disease, Christian doctrine referred to the acceptance of Christ's passion through conversion, rather than to actual Christian blood. The Jews, however, were claimed to be too obstinate, blind, and unwilling to accept this Christian reality and core belief. Instead, they believed that the abuse of an actual Christian body—an actual body of a Christian person or the figurative body of Christ himself—would serve them as a remedy for their ailments. According to Rudolph, this substantiated the Jews' depravity; both of their bodies and of their morals. Thus, not only was their regular bleeding a proof of their hereditary culpability. Their trying (and failing) to find a cure for the

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43   1 Sam 5:6 (KJV): "But the hand of the LORD was heavy upon them of Ashdod, and he destroyed them, and smote them with emerods, *even* Ashdod and the coasts thereof." While the Hebrew עפלים ('oᵉfᵃlim) simply means something growing where it shouldn't, e.g. a lump or a tumour, most passages in the Hebrew Bible using the term are commonly read as referring to haemorrhoids (throughout 1 Sam and in Deut. 28:27).

44   Cf. e.g. Hugh of St. Cher's report of 'men-struating' Jews in his *Repertorium apostillarum* (1240), or Bernard de Gordon's *Lilium Medicinae* (1303/5).

45   Cf. Hugo Cardinalis, *Repertorium apostillarum utriusque testamenti Hugo Cardinalis* (Basel: Ioannes Amerbachius, Ioannes petri & Ioannes froben, 1503–4), 2: 187v.

infirmity, too, affirmed and reiterated their guilt. Also, the bleeding condition and dysentery did not only plague but shame them; yet, the Jews were unwilling to turn to Christianity for actual cure. By continuously engaging in abusive and even murderous behaviour, they sacrificed their wellbeing and the wellbeing of their families and community members facing Christian violence as an act of revenge.

Calling to Dislike the Unlike

Accusations of ritual murder and host desecration were not foreign to earlier exempla collections. However, Rudolph's work is different from earlier works such as those of Thomas de Cantimpré or Caesarius of Heisterbach.[46] Rudolph's tales appear less learned, less scholarly, and less remote. Rather, they are placed in contemporary times and report contemporary events. They are studded with journalistic skills like direct speech, sex scenes, populist attitude, and banal misogyny. They represent a new type of exempla which had suggestive force, helped readers to identify with the persona in the texts and, eventually, take actions themselves.[47] Violent acts against Jews such as the ones related by Rudolph were not only seen as revenge but as a means of strengthening Christian belief and identity. Essentially, freeing the Christian lands of their evil Jewish neighbours continuously became an obligatory and "good Christian" deed.[48] Rudolph's text calls for reassurance and self-justification: as such, it does not necessarily follow cogent argumentation but is rather a mosaic of earlier tales and contemporary news reports to demonstrate the Jews' devilish character, their misdeeds and, ultimately, to call to and justify violent action against them.

A practice like this was even taken further by later writers of atrocious anti-Jewish polemic. One of the key works is Alonso de Espina's *Fortalitium fidei*, written in Castile between 1458–64. In five books, Espina elaborated on the enemies of Christianity—heretics, Jews and Muslims, The works called for their condemnation and sought to establish ways to eradicate them from the Castilian society. Coming from a Franciscan background, Espina wrote in the classical tradition of mendicant preaching in an attempt to shape society's morale and establish civic order. Espina, however, took his polemic further as

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46 Cf. Thomas Cantipratanus, *Bonum Universale De Apibus* [1259], ed. G. Colvenere (Douai: Baltazar Beller, 1627), https://archive.org/details/bub_gb_UM5bV2AYqGAC/page/n9.

47 Cf. Rubin, "Rudolph of Schlettstadt," 291.

48 Cf. Lotter, "Das Judenbild im volkstümlichen Erzählgut," 444.

he addressed it to an even broader audience. While the religious, culture and social atmosphere in fifteenth century Spain had already become increasingly malevolent against non-Christians (including converts to Christianity), Espina now aimed directly at the political rulers of society. Widely popular opinions and prejudices, such as the ones Rudolph had intended to fuel, were now turned by Espina into a set of "guiding principles for the actions of rulers."[49] Espina regarded the presence of Jews and other non-Christians as a threat to Castile and a trigger for its decline and decay. He expressed this opinion harshly in Book III of *Fortalitium fidei* by highlighting Jewish attacks against Christianity, both spiritually and physically. In his exempla stories, Espina evoked narratives of ritual murder, host desecration, and blasphemy in very much the same way as his mendicant predecessors. Again, the narratives substantiated the claim of the Jew's eternal spiritual blindness, which, in turn, was understood to be a result of sinful behaviour. Referring back to Dominican Thomas de Cantimpré's *Bonum Universale de Apibus* (1240), Espina stressed the notion of the Jew's sinfulness reflected in his body, for example in the form of a peculiar blood flow the Jews are tormented by: "ut per hanc fluidam importune prolex impia inexpiabiliter crucietur."[50] The source of this blood flow was identified as "vena facinoris per maculam sanguinis," a 'vein of evildoing in a stain of blood,' which is a clear reference to the image of the Jews forever staining their hands with the blood of Christ which Jews while crucifying him. Their persistence in erroneous hermeneutic of Scripture, Espina continued, prevented the Jews from finding cure from their tormenting disease. In a misunderstanding of the redemptive quality of the blood of Christ in the Eucharistic celebration, Jews believed that they only could find healing in actual Christian blood which led them to regular physical attacks against Christian children to obtain their blood. Crimes like these, according to Espina, did not only affirm the spiritual blindness of Jews then and now ("ceci semper […] et impii," 'blind and wicked as always'), but, eventually, proved that any societal action of Jews was exclusively motivated by obstinacy and cruelty. Therefore, Espina claimed, they should be denied any useful function in society—and finally be eradicated from it altogether.

Exempla stories, like those presented, supported a change in society and fostered notions of a general Jewish enmity towards Christianity. The authors used different discursive registers, many deeply rooted in the construction of

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49   R. Vidal Doval, *Misera Hispania: Jews and Conversos in Alonso de Espina's Fortalitium Fidei* (Oxford: The Society for the Study of Medieval Languages and Literature, 2015), 29.

50   Alonso de Espina, *Fortalitium fidei* (Nuremberg: Anton Koberger, 1494), III, cons. VII, ex. 5, fol. 144a.

Jewish identity as different, criminal, carnal, and, overall, unlike Christian: old theological controversy, pseudo-historical and legendary memory, miracle tales, and actual stories of crimes and societal uproars. Language, arguments, themes and recipients of these registers varied over time and context, from academic theological discussion to fervent and widely held antisemitic resentments.[51] The message, however, remained clear: the Jewish unlike must be disliked, marginalised in their societal and economic advancement and cast to the borders of Christian society—destitute, powerless, and living in fear of constant physical attacks. Only so would they not pose a threat to the stability of Christian sovereignty and to Christian society as a whole. The belief in 'Jewish cultural terror' had changed radically from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century, as the sources discussed above show. While Caesarius addressed his polemic to a learned audience, Rudolph turned to lay Christians and called for a constant fight for the faith as part of a universal Christian obligation. For Espina, this fight was no longer a solely religious obligation, but a political one: defending the Christian faith and the Christian body politic which were continuously threatened by the presence of Jews.[52] Reports about alleged ritual murders, sorcery, and poisoning directed against Christians were used to reinforce the link between the Jews' past and present criminality. The Jews had acted violently and criminally against Jesus Christ and by refusing to accept Christianity's truthfulness and spiritual superiority, they continued their assaults. Their criminality had a collective character and became understood as representative of Jewish social behaviour and their identity. Their sinfulness had become embodied, eternally connected to their outward appearance reflecting their inferior inward disposition. As such, the Jews were marked through generations, from the time of Jesus Christ until all days.

Espina laid some of the groundwork for the establishment of the Spanish Inquisition and for the eventual expulsion of the Jews from the Iberian Peninsula. Not only for the Iberian Peninsula, however, the call to dislike the unlike had been successful. Persecution and physical violence against Jews in early modern Ashkenaz, too, were explained and justified by referring to the pre-modern canon of antisemitic motifs, themes, and narratives. The theological, literary, and legendary construction of the Jew as an unlike, as spiritually, morally, and physically corrupted, continued and continues to serve as basis for antisemitic hatred until today.

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51   Cf. J.M. Monsalvo Antón, "Algunas Consideraciones Sobre El Ideario Antijudío Contenido En El Liber III Del Fortalitium Fidei de Alonso de Espina," *Aragón En La Edad Media* 14–15, no. 2 (1999): 1083.

52   Cf. Vidal Doval, *Misera Hispania*, 105.

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Holocaust Survivors and Jewish Identity in Postwar Austria

Rachel Blumenthal

Introduction

The Holocaust robbed survivors of their families, homes and communities. At the end of the Second World War, many victims sought to rebuild their lives far from the European continent. However, restrictions on entry into Palestine, the United States and elsewhere stymied these plans. As a result, 200,000 Jews found themselves trapped in Austria in a state of limbo. They joined other refugees, including *Volksdeutsche* (ethnic Germans) exiled from their homes in Eastern Europe, and Yugoslavs and Hungarians who had collaborated with the Third Reich. The total almost doubled the local population in the American zone of occupied Austria, Upper Austria and Salzburg.[1]

During the war, being Jewish in territories governed by Germany meant starvation or death, whether by firing squad or in a gas chamber. German policies targeted individuals who met the definition of a non-Aryan prescribed by the 1935 Nuremberg Race Laws, namely a person with at least three Jewish grandparents: how the victims defined themselves was irrelevant. Some who escaped the clutches of the Third Reich drew what seemed to them the logical conclusion, namely that a Jewish identity endangered their lives and so was best avoided. In her famous 1943 essay "We Refugees", Hannah Arendt wrote: "Whatever we do, whatever we pretend to be, we reveal nothing but our insane desire to be changed, not to be Jews."[2] Among victims of persecution who were unable to flee, there were those who continued to reject a Jewish identity until their death. Irène Némirovsky, the Russian-French writer murdered in Auschwitz because of her Jewish origins, described the German occupation of France in her book *La Suite Française*: "however, Jews and their persecution are strikingly absent from this otherwise perceptive and accurate

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1   See M. Staudinger, "Als Oberösterreich kurz zwei Millionen Einwohner hatte," *Oberös-terreichische Nachrichten*, May 8, 2015. https://www.nachrichten.at/nachrichten/politik/70-jahre-zweiter-weltkrieg/Als-Oberoesterreich-kurz-zwei-Millionen-Einwohner-hatte; art173463,1788336.

2   H. Arendt, "We Refugees," in *The Jew as Pariah*, ed. R.H. Feldman (New York, N.Y.: Grove Press, 1978), 62–3.

account."[3] Another example is that of the five thousand Christians of Jewish origin who lived in the Warsaw ghetto until their deportation to Treblinka in 1942.[4] This group included members who believed, mistakenly, that conversion to Christianity would save them. Other recent converts refused to accept the persecutor's definition of their identity.

The defeat of the Axis powers ended not only the genocide but also the forced imposition of identity on the victims: survivors could now choose how they wanted to define themselves. According to Elie Wiesel, to be a Jew during the Holocaust may have meant not to understand but "for the survivor, the question presented itself differently: to remain or not to remain a Jew."[5] The term 'Jewish identity' defies simple definition.[6] In this article it embraces any form of identification with Jews, their culture or religion.

The choices made by Jewish refugees in postwar Austria are the subject of this study. In the light of the destruction of their communities and the shattering of their former way of life, survivors were confronted with such questions of how to find a home, a group with which to identify and even a cause to fight for. The detachment from their past and the uncertainty of the future strengthened this search for an identity. How did the survivors see themselves in the immediate aftermath of the war and what motivated them to form Jewish communities?

Studies of Jewish refugees in postwar Austria are limited. They focus on operations of the Zionist emissaries and the underground movement created to smuggle refugees into Palestine, fraught relations with local residents and the selective memories of the survivors.[7] Existing accounts of displaced

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3 I. Némirovsky, *Suite Française* (London: Vintage Books, 2007); S. Rubin Suleiman, *The Némirovsky Question: The Life, Death and Legacy of a Jewish Writer in Twentieth Century France* (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 2016), 41–4.

4 P.F. Dembowski, *Christians in the Warsaw Ghetto: An Epitaph for the Unremembered* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 56–7 and 95.

5 E. Wiesel, *A Jew Today*, (New York, N.Y.: Vintage Books, 1979), 14.

6 See, for example, A. Montefiore, *A Philosophical Retrospective: Facts, Values and Jewish Identity* (New York, N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 2011), 56–78; Y. Tamir, "The Quest for Identity," *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 15 (1996): 175–91.

7 See, for example, *Escape through Austria: Jewish Refugees and the Austrian Route to Palestine*, ed. T. Albrich and R. Zweig (Great Britain: Frank Cass, 2002); N. Ramp, "Prejudices and Conflicts between Locals and Jewish DPs in Salzburg and Upper Austria," *Journal of Israeli History* 19, no. 3 (2008): 63–82; M. Reiter, "'In unser aller Herzen brennt dieses Urteil.' Der Bad Ischler 'Milch-Prozess' von 1947 vor dem amerikanischen Militärgericht," in *Politische Affären und Skandale in Österreich. Von Mayerling bis Waldheim*, ed. M. Gehler and H. Sickinger (Thaur: Studien Verlag, 1996): 323–45; M. John, "Dislocation, Trauma and Selective Memory: Austria 1945–50. Recollections of Jewish Displaced Persons," *Holocaust Studies* 19, no. 3 (2013): 73–104.

persons in Austria and Germany treat the Jewish identity of the protagonists as self-evident and unquestionable.[8] They do not examine the significance attached to being Jewish by the survivors of death camps, forced labor and exile to the Soviet Union and the consequences of their choice.

Archival documents of the United Nations and welfare organizations are the main source of information for this article. In the first decade after the war, only a small number of institutions and individuals conducted interviews with survivors and they tended to focus exclusively on the years of persecution.[9] Thirty years later, institutions such as the USC Shoah Foundation began to collect testimonies from survivors about experiences during and after the war. The interviews frequently contain brief and rather rose-colored descriptions of life in the refugee camps. From the distance of thirty years, memories of life in the picture-book provinces of Austria omitted food shortages and other deprivations, hostile locals and insensitive welfare workers. As Michael John has written, "the overwhelmingly positive and/or neutral reminiscences of the DPs provide a sharp contrast to a large number of contemporary documents."[10] Archival documents of welfare organizations admittedly portray the day-to-day life of Jewish refugees in Austria through the eyes of outsiders—welfare workers and administrators—but they also provide a wealth of uncensored information collected at the actual time of the events.

Jews in Austria after the Second World War

The annexation of Austria to Germany led to a complete transformation of its Jewish population. The original community numbered some 200,000 Jews. Almost all of these lived in Vienna. On August 26, 1938, Adolf Eichmann set up the Central Office for Jewish Emigration with offices at the Palais Rothschild. Within one year, 126,445 Jews had emigrated after being stripped of their

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8   D. Nasaw, *The Last Million: Europe's Displaced Persons from World War to Cold War* (New York, N.Y.: Penguin Press, 2020); M. Wyman, *Displaced Persons: Europe's Displaced Persons, 1945–1951* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1989); G.D. Cohen, *In War's Wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); A. Grossmann, "Victims, Villains and Survivors: Gendered Perceptions and Self-Perceptions of Jewish Displaced Persons in Occupied Postwar Germany," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 11, no. 1/2 (2002): 291–318.

9   L. Jokusch, "Early Chroniclers of the Holocaust: Jewish Historical Commissions and Documentation Centers in the Aftermath of the Second World War," in *Als der Holocaust noch keinen Namen hatte*, ed. R. Fritz, É. Kovács, and B. Rásk (Vienna: New Academic Press, 2016): 23–44.

10   John, "Dislocation, Trauma and Selective Memory," 74.

citizenship and their property.[11] In the years 1941 to 1944, 65,000 Jews were deported to ghettoes and death camps in Eastern Europe. Only six thousand members of the original community (just three percent) survived the war in Austria.[12]

The Allied occupation of Austria led to the liberation of several hundred Jewish inmates of the Mauthausen and Ebensee camps.[13] Jewish survivors from Dachau and Buchenwald also arrived in Salzburg in May 1945.[14] In addition, an unknown number of the 55,000 Hungarian Jews deported to Austria as forced laborers in the autumn of 1944 remained alive in May 1945.[15] These numbers quickly increased in the following months. Polish Jews who had spent the war years in the Soviet Union were permitted to return to their homes after the signing of the Polish-Soviet Repatriation Agreement on July 6, 1945.[16] Many of these repatriated Jews together with survivors liberated from camps in Poland continued westwards and crossed the border into Austria. This group and the individuals who spent the war years in hiding in Eastern Europe, referred to by the authorities as "infiltrees," made up the majority of the Jewish population in Austria in the years 1945 to 1949. After registration, medical examination and "dusting" (with DDT) in Vienna, again at the Palais Rothschild, they continued their journey to the provinces of Upper Austria and Salzburg.[17] The US military administration of this region acted as a magnet for both Jewish and non-Jewish refugees.

11   G. Botz, "The Dynamics of Persecution in Austria, 1938–45" in *Austria and the Jews in the Twentieth Century*, ed. R. Wistrich (New York, N.Y.: St. Martin's Press, 1992), 206.

12   J. Moser, *Demographie der jüdischen Bevölkerung Österreichs 1938–1945* (Vienna: Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes, 1999), 55; O. Karbach, "The Liquidation of the Jewish Community of Vienna," *Jewish Social Studies* 2, no. 3 (1940): 255–78.

13   In January 1946, US army chaplain Abraham Klausner listed two hundred and thirty Jews at Ebensee. See A. Klausner, *Sharit Ha-Platah* [*Counted Remnant*] (Munich: Central Committee of Liberated Jews in Bavaria, 1946), 2: 46–7.

14   Helga Embacher, "Nach dem Holocaust: Jüdische Mitbürgerinnen in Salzburg," in *Geschichte der Juden in Stadt und Land Salzburg*, ed. A. Altmann (Salzburg: Otto Mueller Verlag, 1990), 383.

15   On the Jewish Hungarian deportees to Austria see K. Frojimovics and É. Kovács, "Jews in a 'Judenrein' City: Hungarian Jewish Slave Laborers in Vienna (1944–1945)," *Hungarian Historical Review* 4, no. 3 (2015): 705–36.

16   Y. Litvak, "Polish-Jewish Refugees Repatriated from the Soviet Union at the End of the Second World War and Afterwards," in *Jews in Eastern Poland and the USSR, 1939–46*, ed. N. Davies and A. Polonsky (London: Macmillan, 1991): 227–39.

17   Narrative and Statistical Report for August 1946, United Nations (UN) Archives, UNRRA file S-1253-0000-0032-00001.

The Allies and the Jewish Question

Initially, the Allied forces that occupied and governed Austria did not recognize Jews as a separate category. One of their guiding principles was impartiality: a lack of discrimination on the basis of race, creed or political beliefs.[18] This was the mirror image of the racist policies of National Socialist Germany. So, for instance, the *Handbook for Military Government in Austria* issued by the Allied Forces made no mention of Jews.[19] Instead, the Allies classified the millions of people uprooted from their homes, first by Germany and at the end of the war by Stalin and the Red Army, according to their original country of citizenship. Holocaust survivors in Austria were simply included in the categories of Poles, Hungarians, Czechs, Russians, Romanians, etc.

The Allies offered a one-size-fits-all solution for individuals uprooted from their homes who found themselves in Central Europe at the end of the war: "collection and dispersal of displaced persons."[20] The recently created United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) was charged with performing the task of repatriation. Accordingly, the occupying forces together with UNRRA officials organized transportations to take the vast majority of foreigners in Austria back to their country of origin within a short period and with great (arguably excessive) efficiency.

Jewish refugees and other aliens did not fit in with Allied plans. Holocaust survivors refused to return to a home where all their relatives had been murdered, sometimes with the active or passive assistance of their neighbors. Moreover, violent attacks against Jews in Poland did not end with the exit of German forces from the country.[21] Ethnic Germans, Eastern Europeans who had served in the *Wehrmacht* and other former collaborators with the Third Reich also rejected the proposed repatriation.[22] UNRRA housed Jewish and non-Jewish refugees together in assembly centers that included former military barracks and camps built for slave laborers during the war. Another example is liberated inmates who remained in Mauthausen for months due to a lack of alternative accommodation. For Holocaust survivors, life in cramped and

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18   P. Weintraub, "UNRRA: An Experiment in International Welfare Planning," *The Journal of Politics* 7, no. 1 (1945): 7.

19   *Handbook for Military Government in Austria* (Vienna: Allied Forces Headquarters, 1945), chapter 11, section 80.

20   Ibid., section 89.

21   Cf. J.T. Gross, *Fear: Anti-Semitism in Poland after Auschwitz* (New York, N.Y.: Random House, 2005).

22   See, for example, T. Zahra, "'Prisoners of the Postwar': Expellees, Displaced Persons and Jews in Austria after World War II." *Austrian History Yearbook* 41 (2010): 191.

dirty quarters behind barbed wire together with former perpetrators or in a concentration camp prolonged the horror of recent persecution, albeit without the fear of murder by gas or shooting.

The trigger for change was a report prepared by the lawyer Earl G. Harrison on his visit to the camps in Germany and Austria. In July 1945, President Truman appointed Harrison to examine and report back on the conditions and the needs of the displaced persons. The envoy described the "deplorable" living conditions, a diet composed of bread and coffee, and survivors dressed in "concentration camp garb" because of a lack of clothing.[23] Harrison called for the recognition of the special status of Jews and the establishment of separate camps for them. The reason, according to the report, was that this was what a great majority of the Jewish survivors wanted.[24] Moreover, segregation would enable the administration to handle their special needs.

Life in Jewish Camps in Austria

Separate camps for Jewish refugees began to appear in Austria in the autumn of 1945. According to an UNRRA report, in September 1946, there were eighteen static camps and nine transit camps for Jewish refugees in the US Zone.[25] The main camps were located at Bad Gastein, Bad Ischl, Bindermichl, Ebelsberg (referred to by the refugees as the Magen David Camp), Ebensee, Enns, Hallein, Steyr, Wegscheid and Wels. Jewish chaplains in the US army were instrumental in creating many of these camps. They assisted fellow Jews and mediated between the military and the survivors.

The famous spas in the Austrian Alps were ideal sites for camps for displaced persons. There was no tourism in the years 1945 and 1946 and the empty hotels provided lodging for refugees. In October 1945, Jewish refugees marched through the city of Linz to draw attention to their poor living conditions. Rabbi Eli Bohnen, US chaplain to the 42nd Infantry Division, suggested to his superiors the transfer of Jewish refugees from Linz to the spa town of Bad Gastein.[26] The military government requisitioned five hotels to serve as a temporary home for between one thousand and two thousand Jewish survivors. The number of

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23   The Harrison Report, issued September 1945, accessed July 12, 2021, http://german historydocs.ghi-dc.org/pdf/eng/Harrison_Report_ENG.pdf.

24   Ibid.

25   Monthly Report for September 1946 from Acting Director in Salzburg in UN Archives, UNRRA File S-1253-0000-0032-00001.

26   Rabbi Eli Bohnen in an interview given to the Hebrew University Oral History Division ("HUJI") on August 12, 1962.

camp inmates fluctuated with the constant arrival and departure of refugees. Furthermore, the number was not exact because many refugees avoided registration with military or local authorities. Three hundred Jewish displaced persons found accommodation in a hotel in Bad Ischl. In Bindermichl, a suburb of Linz, US forces ordered former SS men to assist in the eviction of locals from 371 apartments for the benefit of Jewish refugees.[27] Rabbi Aaron Kahan, the US chaplain to the 83rd Infantry Division, promoted the interests of survivors in Bindermichl and provided religious welfare.[28]

Jewish refugees chose to move into the new segregated camps of their own free will. They came from many different countries, mainly in Central and Eastern Europe. UN documents state that in December 1945, 1,247 Jews lived in the Bad Gastein camp including 886 inmates from Poland, 143 from Romania, 137 from Czechoslovakia, 38 from Hungary, 19 who were defined as Germans or Austrians (mainly infants of Polish parents) and 13 as Palestinians.[29] The majority were aged between eighteen and forty-four and sixty inmates were children under the age of fourteen.[30] A shared history of persecution and exile transcended national, linguistic and ideological differences.

Holocaust survivors asserted their Jewish identity in the refugee camps. With the aid of the Jewish welfare organization, the Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), they set up synagogues, a communal kosher kitchen (and a non-kosher kitchen), kindergartens and schools. In the Chaim Nachman Bialik school at Bad Gastein, refugees taught eighty-five children Hebrew, Jewish history, mathematics, geography, science and religion. The local culture commission established a people's university (*Volksuniversität*). Seven teachers, residents of the camp, taught 156 refugees Hebrew and other languages. They also conducted public meetings on "religious, moral and educational subjects."[31] The culture commission sent fifty-five members of the camp to a Jewish sports tournament in Vienna in 1946 where the delegation won second place. The camp had a Yiddish-language newspaper with the poignant name *Le'an* ("Where to"). In November 1946, the inmates of the Bad Gastein camp organized a "*Blau-Weiss*"

27   John, "Dislocation, Trauma and Selective Memory," 83.

28   Ibid., 84.

29   D.P. Repatriability Report dated December 28, 1945 in UN Archives, UNRRA file S-1510-0000-0010-00001. The classification of refugees as Palestinians is unclear and reflects, possibly, wishful thinking as opposed to actual citizenship.

30   D.P. Repatriability Report dated April 30, 1946 in UNRRA file S-1494-0000-0372-0001.

31   UNRRA Team 322, Bad Gastein, Austria—Narrative Report for the Period July 1–31, 1946 in UN Archives, UNRRA file S-1494-0000-0338-00001.

ball to raise money for the Jewish National Fund with a rich buffet and various attractions.[32]

Religious rites were an essential feature of life in camps for Jewish refugees. Survivors in the Bad Gastein camp celebrated Jewish festivals including the festival of Passover. UNRRA officials discovered that for eight days, the inmates could not eat bread but only "unleavened bread called matzos."[33] They secured permission to use a "proper grade of wheat" ground in a St. Johann mill that was wholly taken over for the required period of time. A bakery in Hofgastein was thoroughly cleaned and the survivors baked the unleavened bread day and night "so that all the camp occupants can celebrate their first Passover in six years—and without hunger."[34] Later in the year, the local Rabbinate posted a sign with the times of the beginning and end of the fast of *Tisha Be'av* that commemorates the destruction of both temples.[35] Rabbis also officiated marriages between refugees.

Holocaust survivors in postwar Austria reached out to Jewish communities for assistance and support. The UNRRA team that administered the Bad Gastein camp requested a permit for a local rabbi (Rabbi Moses Adler) both to travel to Munich to participate in a rabbinical conference and to obtain religious items for the local synagogue and Torah school. Subsequently, the camp sent three representatives to a "Festival of the World Jewish Congress" that took place in Vienna in August 1946.[36] A Jewish Aid Committee, elected by refugees in Austria, met representatives of the JDC in September 1945 and complained about the "failure of the Joint to provide adequate supplies through them for the Salzburg Area."[37] Leaders of the committee that had been elected by the inmates of Bad Gastein also met a JDC representative in March 1946 and complained again—this time against the UNRRA team director.[38] They also sent a letter to the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry on the problems of European Jewry and Palestine, demanding the establishment of an

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32   Announcement: Blue-White Ball on May 8, 1947 in the YIVO Archives, Center for Jewish History (CJH) in Displaced Persons Camps and Centers Post Collection, Folder 23, Object AUS 202 (RG 294.6).

33   Bad Gastein—Assembly Center 46—Monthly Report—March 31in UN Archives, UNRRA file S-1494-0000-0338-00001.

34   Ibid.

35   Records of the Displaced Persons Camps and Centers in Austria, 1938–1960, RG 294.4., YIVO Archives, CJH, RG 294.4., folder 306.

36   Ibid.

37   Ibid.

38   Report of Leon Fisher dated March 12, 1946, JDC Archives, Item ID # 660980.

independent Jewish state.[39] Solidarity with Jewish communities (notwith-standing the criticism against the JDC) and Jewish causes provide further evidence of the Jewish identity of the Holocaust survivors.

Motivations behind the Assertion of a Jewish Identity

UNRRA documents and the testimonies of survivors treated the decision to live with Jews and conduct a Jewish life as a fact that did not require justification. In retrospect, the circumstances of life in postwar Austria offer a number of explanations for the strong Jewish identity of Holocaust survivors. Clearly, life in a Jewish camp had material benefits. In addition, a shared history of persecution and forced displacement contributed to the desire to live together. The antagonism of the local population to the refugees in general, and Jews in particular, as well as the collaboration of certain groups of aliens in the wartime persecution of Jews, were further incentives.

The defeat of the Third Reich signified the end the confinement of multinational groups of prisoners and forced laborers in camps. Within a few months, all refugees in Central Europe were living together with people of the same origin. Jews did not differ from non-Jews who created their own homogenous socities. A US Army document dated March 18, 1947 lists separate camps for Yugoslavs, Romanians, *Sudetendeutsche* (ethnic Germans from the Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia), Hungarians, Yugoslavs, White Russians and Baltic collaborators, mixed *Volksdeutsche* and Jews.[40] Against this background, life in all-Jewish communities was the most viable option for Holocaust survivors.

In addition, there were clear material benefits attached to being Jewish after the war. This was a time of food shortages and hunger. The basic ration for an Austrian was 1,700 calories a day but this sometimes dropped to 110 calories.[41] Recognition of the special suffering and starvation endured by Jews during the war entitled them to a larger ration. UNRRA supplemented the diet of Jews with two Red Cross parcels a month. Moreover, the JDC sent thousands of kilos of food, as well as clothing, soap, bed linen and antiseptics to improve the quality of their life.[42] According to a report dated February 1947, the JDC

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39   Records of the Displaced Persons Camps and Centers in Austria, 1938–1960, YIVO Archives, CJH, RG 294.4., folder 315.

40   Document of the Headquarters, Land Upper Austria Command dated March 18, 1947 in YIVO Archives, CJH, RG 294.4., folder 550.

41   *UNRRA At Work – UNRRA in Austria* (London: European Regional Office, 1946).

42   JDC Report for American Zone Operations dated February 18, 1947 and Report of Leon Fisher dated March 12, 1946, JDC Archives, Items ID # 660423 and 660980, respectively.

sent 150,733 kilos of food to 27,575 Jewish inmates of institutions (orphanages) and camps and 11,501 kilos of food to Jews residing temporarily or permanently outside camps.[43] This monthly supply was intended to augment the meager rations provided by the military government. The JDC also supplied 30,767 items of new and used clothing to the destitute refugees, 219 kilos of soap, bed linen, cigarettes (a substitute for money due to the collapse of the Austrian economy) and medicine. In addition, the JDC provided sewing machines and carpentry tools for workshops in Jewish displaced persons camps.[44] Esther Bratt who was born in Vilna in 1929 and spent the war in a labor camp and in hiding described life in the Bad Gastein camp: "We had very nice accommodation there. The HIAS (sic), the UNRRA provided us with food. I have good memories."[45]

Allied policy on eligibility for aid contributed to the strong Jewish identity of the Holocaust survivors. The occupying forces required all non-natives to renounce their former citizenship if they wanted to remain in Austria. Testimonies of refugees indicate that they did not take this waiver lightly. For instance, Helen Fagin who was born in Radumski, Poland in 1922, survived the war in hiding and afterward crossed the border into Austria, described the available options:

> Well in the displaced persons camp of Bad Gastein, we were given two choices. One, to return to the country of our origin and become repatriated. Or to remain in the camp, in that case we have to pronounce ourselves and declare ourselves stateless. Without any right of belonging to any country any longer. That was a choice that many of us decided in favor of, becoming stateless. At that moment of our decision I think we suffered a very tremendous anguish … It was a period of feeling tremendous anguish, even despair. Liberation was a very bittersweet concept for us at that moment.[46]

Another survivor, Murray Pantirer, described the pain of losing his country of citizenship. Born in Krakow in 1926 and saved by Oskar Schindler, he also found himself in a camp in Linz after the war. In a 1990 interview he said:

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43   Report for the American Zone Operations for the period January 1 to 31st, 1937 (this is a typographic error and should be 1947), JDC Archives, Item ID 744087.

44   See the JDC Reports for the U.S. Zone Operations dated September 10, 1946 and October 4, 1946, YIVO archives, CJH, RG 294.4.

45   Esther Bratt, interview 36788, tape 4: 14:28–15:31. USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive. December 29, 1997. Accessed July 12, 2021.

46   Oral History with Helen Fagin on February 21, 1995, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM), Accession Number: 1995.A.1269.4 | RG Number: RG-50.470.0004, pages 11–12 of the transcript.

> I became an orphan twice. Once, I lost my father and mother, and the next time I lost my country. Poland didn't want me. To Palestine, I couldn't go [in 1945–6] and a person without a country is like a child without a father and mother. I absolutely had no place to go.[47]

To be a person without a country deprived the survivor of at least part of their identity. According to Arendt: "The loss of citizenship deprived people not only of protection but also of all clearly, established, officially recognized identity."[48] Life in a Jewish community filled a void and was the only identity available in the immediate aftermath of the war.

Another possible explanation for the strength of the Jewish identity of Holocaust survivors in Austria was the search for a means to overcome recent trauma. Oppression by Germany and its allies during the twelve-year reign of the Third Reich united the survivors. They wished to live with people who had undergone similar persecution and could relate to their experiences. This was a time when the Holocaust had no name; it was not even an idea. Ruth Klüger who was born in Vienna and survived Theresienstadt, Auschwitz and the Gross-Rosen forced-labor camp described how on her liberation in Germany, her mother had walked up to the first American uniform in view, a military policeman directing traffic, and told him that they had escaped from a concentration camp. In response, the policeman said he had had his fill of people who claimed they had been in camps, put his hands over his ears and turned away.[49]

Living together with fellow victims and affirming the identity that had formerly served as the reason for persecution were means of dealing with the past. In his 1947 article, Koppel Pinson, a representative of the JDC in the camps, described a community united by a common fate—a *Schicksalsgemeinschaft*. In his words:

> The Jewish DPs, who are a group by themselves because they were so set off by the Nazi rulers, irrespective of the degree of Jewish national consciousness of the individual, and so have become a true *Schicksalsgemeinschaft*.[50]

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47   Oral History with Murray Pantirer on April 23, 1990, USHMM Accession Number: 1990.373.1 | RG Number: RG-50.030.0174, page 16 of the transcript.

48   H. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York, N.Y.: Schocken Books, 2004), 364.

49   R. Klüger, *Still Alive: A Holocaust Girlhood Remembered* (New York, N.Y: Feminist Press, 2001), 149.

50   K.S. Pinson, "Jewish Life in Liberated Germany: A Study of the Jewish DPs," *Jewish Social Studies* 9, no. 2 (1947): 102.

Fagin described how survivors in the Bad Gastein camp tried to help one another, boosted each other's hopes and "formed extended families for those who didn't have any families left."[51] Survivors posted signs seeking information on missing relatives and also searched for testimonies on perpetrators to bring them to justice.[52]

Antisemitism also played a factor. Ironically, the postwar Jewish renaissance occurred in a region that was especially hostile to Jews. Hitler was born in Braunau am Inn. Adolph Eichmann grew up in Linz and the far-right Freedom Party of Austria, the FPÖ, was created in Salzburg after the war. Before 1938, only approximately one thousand Jews lived in Upper Austria and two hundred and fifty in Salzburg. During the war, the region became, what John called "concentration camp territory."[53] Defeat did not alter the attitude of inhabitants of the region to Jews. According to Fagin, the population was not very happy with the refugees' presence and the latter did their best to stay out of their way.[54] Another survivor stated that the locals were very angry with Jews for having survived and receiving "a lot of help from America."[55] The Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry noted the local hostility towards Jewish displaced persons in its report.[56]

Living together gave the refugees a sense of security. Encounters with hostile neighbors, sometimes violent, occurred on buses and in shops. In one recorded case, a shopkeeper refused to serve Jewish customers.[57] In Bad Ischl, Austrians threw stones at the windows and doors of buildings that housed Jewish displaced persons. The local police force refused to intervene.[58] In response, the survivors created self-defense units. Victor Lewis, who had been interned in Theresienstadt, set up a police force to protect the residents of the

51   Oral History with Helen Fagin, USHMM, page 14 of the transcript.

52   Records of the Displaced Persons Camps and Centers in Austria, 1938–1960, YIVO Archives, CJH, RG 294.4., folders 300 and 371.

53   John, "Dislocation, Trauma and Selective Memory," 78. See also "Review of the Year 5706—Central Europe," *The American Jewish Year Book* 48 (1945–7/5707): 317–18, https://www.jstor.org/stable/23602815?seq=3#metadata_info_tab_contents, accessed July 13, 2021.

54   Oral History with Helen Fagin, USHMM, pages 11–12 of the transcript, page 10 of the transcript.

55   Victor Lewis, interview 353, tape 4: 19:05–20:00. USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive– December 5, 1994, USC Shoah Foundation. December 5, 1994. Accessed on July 12, 2021.

56   Report of the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry regarding the problems of European Jewry and Palestine (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1946).

57   See Minutes of the Central Committee of July 15, 1946. Yad Vashem Archives, Item 3685750.

58   Reiter, "'In unser aller Herzen brennt dieses Urteil'," 324.

camp against the "five, six hundred people [who] protested against the Jews of Bad Ischl with signs. I used to lock the DP camp so our people shouldn't attack them and they shall not attack us. It would come to war."[59] Another survivor, Mira Shelub, described how her husband established a "Partisanski Gruppe" in Bad Gastein.[60] Life in an all-Jewish camp enabled the survivors to protect themselves against antisemitic attacks.

A New Beginning and the Question of Identity

The opening of the gates to Israel and the United States resulted in the dispersal of Holocaust survivors. Reliable information on where the survivors went is not available. According to one estimate, forty percent of all Jewish refugees from Central Europe settled in Israel.[61] The remaining sixty percent emigrated to the United States, Canada, Australia and other countries. By 1951, the Jewish population of Austria had fallen to 18,000, most of them former residents of Vienna who returned from their enforced exile.[62]

A very small minority of Jews who survived the war on the Continent remained in Austria. Their Jewish identity frequently played a role in the decision to stay. Simon Wiesenthal, born in Buchach (then Poland, now Ukraine) set up a documentation center in Linz to track perpetrators immediately after his liberation from Mauthausen. In 1960, he moved to Vienna where he dedicated his life to searching for members of the SS and the Gestapo and bringing them to justice. Marko Feingold, an Auschwitz survivor who found himself in Salzburg after the war, described how the general refusal to acknowledge the Holocaust made him decide to stay and educate them. In his words "You have to explain to people, you must inform them how it really was."[63]

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59   Oral History with Victor Lewis, Tape 4, 21:05.

60   Mira Shelub (née Raznov), interview 22959, tape 5: 0.53. USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive–December 5, 1994, USC Shoah Foundation. November 4, 1996. Accessed on July 12, 2021.

61   J. Grodzinski, *Homer Enoshi Tov: Yehudim mul Tsionim, 1945–1951* [*Good Human Material: Jews vs. Zionists, 1945–1951*] (Or Yehuda: Hed Artzi, 1998), 185; A. Patt, *Finding Home and Homeland: Jewish Youth and Zionism in the Aftermath of the Holocaust* (Detroit, Mich.: Wayne State University Press, 2009), 16–7.

62   "World Jewish Population" *American Jewish Year Book* 52 (1951) 234. See http://www.ajcarchives.org/AJC_DATA/Files/1952_6_WJP.pdf. On the Jews who returned to Vienna see, E. Anthony, *The Compromise of Return Viennese Jews after the Holocaust* (Detroit, Mich.: Wayne State University Press, 2021).

63   M. Feinglod, "Niemand war da, uns zu begrüßen," in *Befreit und besetz: Stadt Salzburg 1945–1955*, ed. E. Marx (Salzburg-München: Verlag Anton Pustet, 1996), 79.

Survivors who left the Continent could now choose a new identity. The attitude to their Jewish origins varied markedly. For some survivors, Jewish culture and religion remained the most important features of their life. Professor Israel Gutman, who had been a prisoner in Majdanek and Auschwitz and was liberated from Gunskirchen, a sub-camp of Mauthausen in the vicinity of Wels in Upper Austria, emigrated to Israel. There he became a world-renowned expert on Jewish life in Poland before and during the war.[64] Pantirer left the camp for displaced persons at Linz and rebuilt his life in the United States. He described his doubts about giving his children a religious upbringing but was proud that they and his grandchildren were "very Jewish minded."[65]

Other survivors were intent on building a new identity and blending into their new surroundings. The decision to leave behind a painful past and cut ties with Jewish communities and institutions made it hard to track them. Frequently, the desire to start anew clashed with the centrality of the role that the Holocaust had played in the lives of survivors. Peter Kenez was born in Budapest in 1937. His father was murdered in Auschwitz but he and his mother avoided deportation. In 1956, they crossed into Austria. Before his departure from Budapest, he decided that on reaching the Hungarian border, he would stop being Jewish. He had "almost twenty years of being Jewish, which was enough for anyone ... I wanted to cease to be Jewish, but not so much as to become Christian; I fervently desired to be nothing."[66] Subsequently, he emigrated to the United States and became a professor of history at the University of California specializing in the Soviet Union, but he also taught classes on Jewish social history and the Holocaust. Klüger also emigrated to the United States and became a professor of German studies. She described how in her new home "Jews were running away from themselves—that, too, perhaps a reaction to the undigested Holocaust in Europe."[67] She befriended Liselotte from Frankfurt and Kit, born in America, at the University of Vermont. Both were Jewish, and at the same time "sincere Christians, albeit with some skepticism."[68] Her mother criticized Klüger for hanging out with "*geshmate* [baptized Jews]."[69]

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64   On his liberation see Israel Gutman, Oral History dated November 21, 1991, USHMM, Accession Number: 1995.A.1272.56 | RG Number: RG-50.120.0056, Tape 11, 39:50 to Tape 12, 2:30.

65   Oral history with Murray Pantirer, pages 17–18 of the transcript

66   P. Kenez, *Varieties of Fear: Growing up Jewish under Nazism and Communism* (Washington, D.C.: American University Press, 1995), 179.

67   Klüger, *Still Alive*, 196.

68   Ibid., 194

69   Ibid., 197.

Conclusion

Jewish life played a central role for survivors stranded in camps in Austria at the end of the war. UNRRA soon abandoned its original policy of mixing displaced persons with different backgrounds since the refugees preferred to live with people who had undergone similar wartime experiences. In the case of Holocaust survivors, the majority chose to live together in Jewish camps in Upper Austria and Salzburg.[70] They did not want to compound the pain of detachment and loss by living with people who had been on the side of the enemy and perpetrator during the Third Reich.

The history of the survivors indicates that the affirmation of their Jewish identity was related to the specific circumstance of having nowhere to go. Life in a Jewish camp entitled you to greater food rations and (usually secondhand) clothing at a time of great deprivation. More fundamentally, proximity to people who had undergone similar persecution was therapeutic: people who had been treated as slaves by Germany or who were exiles without rights in the Soviet Union could now take control of their lives and celebrate their Jewish identity. All-Jewish communities further provided protection against the still intense hatred of Jews in the region. In the words of Dan Diner, life in the camps led to "a growing sense of commonality."[71]

A new and permanent home offered the survivors many more options. They could live as Jews, non-Jews, Israelis, Americans, Canadians or a combination of their many identities. The choice was theirs now, not that of other people or governments.

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70   Jewish refugees who chose not to live in camps left behind much less of a paper trail and therefore it is difficult to estimate their numbers or explain their motives.

71   D. Diner, "Banished: Jews in Germany after the Holocaust: An Interpretation," in *A History of Jews in Germany since 1945: Politics, Culture and Society* ed. M. Brenner (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2018), 9–10.

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A Jewish Renaissance? Reflections on Jewish Life in East Central Europe since 1989

Michael L. Miller

November 9, 1989. I remember exactly where I was on that day. It was one of those rare occasions that everyone recognized as a world-historical event, not after it had already played out, but while it is actually happening. It may not have been the "end of history," but it was certainly a turning point, not only for the former Eastern Bloc—a term that is seldom heard today—but also for my own intellectual development. Until then, I had been studying Egyptology and Old World Archaeology and Art at a college in the United States, but the events of 1989 propelled me three thousand years ahead, as I started taking courses in Modern European History with a particular focus on the history of Eastern Europe. In 1992, after graduating from college, I traveled to Czechoslovakia to teach English in a small Slovak coal-mining town, where I was welcomed as a major curiosity and a minor celebrity, based solely on my American citizenship and my native English. Before my departure, I made sure to visit Schoenhof's Foreign Books, which still had a brick-and-mortar shop in Harvard Square, and there, I purchased the recently-published *Beginning Slovak: A Course for the Individual or Classroom Learner*.[1] Then, I visited a larger bookstore chain and purchased Charles Hoffman's *Gray Dawn: The Jews of Eastern Europe in the Post-Communist Era*, which was fresh off the press.[2] Keep in mind that at the time, the "post-communist era" was less than three years old.

While preparing to write this article, I thought it would be interesting to open *Gray Dawn* and read it again three decades later. Its author, the late Charles Hoffman, was a "feared and respected" Israeli-American journalist who had left journalism to work for the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee ("the Joint").[3] In this latter capacity, he visited six countries in Eastern Europe between May 1989 and November 1990 and reported on their

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1   O.E. Swan, S. Gálová-Lorinc, *Beginning Slovak: A Course for the Individual or Classroom Learner* (Pittsburgh, Ohio: Slavica Publishers, 1990).
2   C. Hoffman, *Gray Dawn: The Jews of Eastern Europe in the Post-Communist Era* (New York, N.Y.: Harper Collins, 1992).
3   "Charles Hoffman Dies," *The Washington Post*, August 5, 2000.

Jewish communities. Two of these countries—Czechoslovakia and the German Democratic Republic ("East Germany")—no longer exist, and Hoffman was fully convinced that many of these Jewish communities that he visited would meet the same fate. He titled his book *Gray Dawn* because his optimism about the future was quite restrained. "[I]t was a new day ... for all the Jews of Eastern Europe," he wrote. "But, like the gray dawn hovering over the Carpathians, it was filled with foreboding as well as hope."[4]

In the introduction, Hoffman described the situation as follows:

> Now, with the fall of Communism, there were signs of a Jewish awakening all over Eastern Europe. Were these simply the last sparks of dying embers, or could the Jews of Eastern Europe summon the collective will to ignite the flame of self-renewal? The small Jewish population in most of these communities and the formidable obstacles to regeneration did not give much cause for optimism. Perhaps for the Jews the liberation from Communism had come several decades too late.[5]

Hoffman's pessimism, or rather, his muted optimism, can be explained, above all, by basic demography. According to estimates of the Jewish population in Eastern Europe in 1989, there were 4,100 Jews in Poland, 7,900 in Czechoslovakia, 19,000 in Romania, and to the surprise of many, 58,000 Jews in Hungary.[6] These Jews were not the remnants of once thriving and glorious communities, but rather the remnants of a remnant. Many of them were elderly Jews with non-Jewish spouses who had survived the Shoah and remained behind the Iron Curtain that had descended across the continent.

They did not emigrate in the immediate post-war period, sometimes for family reasons, sometimes for health reasons, and sometimes because they wanted to take part in building a more just society. They did not join the smaller waves of emigration in the 1950s and 1960s; they remained after Soviet troops crushed the Hungarian Revolution of 1956; they remained after the Warsaw Pact invaded Czechoslovakia and crushed the Prague Spring in 1968; they remained after Poland's anti-Zionist campaign in 1968. And they were not among the approximately 40,000 Romanian Jews who were allowed to emigrate to Israel between 1968 and 1989 in exchange for a hefty "ransom" paid by the State of Israel and international Jewish organizations.[7]

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4 Hoffman, *Gray Dawn*, 4.

5 Idem.

6 U.O. Schmelz and S. DellaPergola, "World Jewish Population, 1989," *American Jewish Yearbook* 91 (1991): 456.

7 R. Ioanid, *The Ransom of the Jews: The Story of the Extraordinary Secret Bargain between Romania and Israel* (Chicago, Ill.: Ivan R. Dee, 2005).

Before the fall of Communism, no one really considered the possibility of a Jewish *future* in Eastern Europe. In 1988, the photographer Edward Serotta traveled behind the Iron Curtain in order to "witness the last days of Jewish life in the region." He planned to gather material for a book, which was tentatively titled *The Last Autumn: The Last Jews of Eastern Europe*, but he encountered a problem. As he put it: "No one wanted to be the last Jew."[8] Three years later, Serotta's book appeared, but under a totally different title: *Out of the Shadows: A Photographic Portrait of Jewish Life in Central Europe Since the Holocaust.*[9] Instead of documenting Jewish communities teetering on the verge of extinction, he photographed Jewish kindergartens, Jewish summer camps, Jewish schools, and Jewish balls. These were certainly not evidence of a dying community harboring no hope for the future. "Since when do the last Jews go to summer camp?" Serotta asked rhetorically.

After the fall of Communism, Jewish visitors streamed to East-Central Europe and experienced a kind of cognitive dissonance. They expected cemeteries, concentration camps, abandoned and neglected synagogues, and perhaps a few "leftover" elderly Jews, but not much more. A few years later, Konstantin Gebert, at the time a 36-year-old Polish Jew, observed their genuine surprise when they met real-life Jews. As he put it: "They just can't imagine that in Poland, we actually exist."[10] Gradually, people started speaking about an "unexpected rebirth" in Poland, a "rebirth of Jewish life in both parts of the former Czechoslovakia," a "renaissance of Hungarian Jewry."[11] The historian Diana Pinto described the situation in the following words: "Communities believed to be dead came back to life, even if the number of members did not even come close to the number before the Holocaust."[12]

Renaissance. Rebirth. Resurrection. These words were conjured up with great enthusiasm, but the raw numbers painted a more sobering, even pessimistic, picture. Indeed, demography is destiny. Can one imagine a full-fledged

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8   E. Serotta, "Die letzten Juden Osteuropas haben gerade Nachwuchs bekommen," in *Jüdische Gemeinden in Europa: Zwischen Aufbruch und Kontinuität*, ed. B. Ungar-Klein (Vienna: Picus, 2000), 94–97. In 1986, the photographer Yale Strom published a book entitled *The Last Jews of Eastern Europe* (New York, N.Y.: Philosophical Library, 1986).

9   E. Serotta, *Out of the Shadows: A Photographic Portrait of Jewish Life in Central Europe since the Holocaust* (New York, N.Y.: Birch Lande Press, 1991).

10   K. Gebert, "Eine unerwartete Wiedergeburt—Judentum in Polen," in *Jüdische Gemeinden*, ed. Ungar-Klein, 145.

11   Ibid., 136–46; J. Lion, "Prag und Bratislava—neuerwachte jüdische Gemeinden," in *Jüdische Gemeinden*, ed. Ungar-Klein, 147–154; E. Lazarovits, "Das ungarische Judentum in der Zeit von 1945 bis 1999," in *Jüdische Gemeinden*, ed. Ungar-Klein, 160–70.

12   D. Pinto, "Von jüdischen Gemeinden in Europa zu europäischen jüdischen Gemeinden," in *Jüdische Gemeinden*, ed. Ungar-Klein, 183.

rebirth without a critical mass of Jews? Charles Hoffman certainly could not. He looked into the future and saw more gray than dawn. In the best case scenario the small Jewish communities, but also the large Jewish community of Budapest, would survive as "caretaker communities." A small number of Jews, half-Jews and non-Jews would serve as custodians of their country's Jewish heritage and take responsibility for the upkeep of synagogues, cemeteries and other Jewish sites, not for the sake of the local Jews, but rather for the sake of Jews from Israel and the West (and, of course, for the benefit of domestic tourism).[13]

Interestingly, Hoffman, Pinto and other observers worried about another threat: the colonization of the "newly awakened" Jewish communities by Jews from Israel and North America. No one was afraid of actual physical colonization. No one imaged American and Israeli Jews settling *en masse* in East-Central Europe. They feared an ideological or religious colonization that would brush aside the distinctive Jewish customs and lifeways that had emerged under Communism (or in its aftermath); they feared that forty years of Communism would be denigrated and dismissed as a meaningless detour or a distorted aberration that had contributed nothing of lasting importance. Israelis and North American Jews would try to "save" the younger generation by importing Zionism and Orthodoxy as the only legitimate expressions of Jewishness. Israeli and North American Jews might try to "redeem" the younger generation by removing them from the region and resettling them in Israel, Western Europe or North America.

These fears also pertained to the cultural and material heritage of East-Central European Jewry. For example, in the early 1990s, the National Library of Israel wanted to send librarians to Hungary to help catalogue the famous library of the Rabbinical Seminary in Budapest. In return, the National Library of Israel asked for copies of any duplicate books that the library in Jerusalem did not have in its own collection. The response to this offer (as reported by a friend) was: "These books survived the Holocaust and Communism, and now the National Library of Israel wants to take our heritage away from us." The Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People, which holds the archives of hundreds of former Jewish communities, also wanted to bring the Hungarian Jewish Archives to Jerusalem as a way of rescuing or redeeming Hungary's Jewish heritage. The message was loud and clear: the Jewish past and the Jewish future belong to (and belong in) Israel, not Hungary.

But what about the situation in East-Central Europe today? To answer this question, we must first grapple with two perennial questions: Who is a Jew?

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13   Hoffman, *Gray Dawn*, 319.

What is Judaism? There are no unequivocal answers to these questions, but in order to understand the situation in East-Central Europe, we must examine the ways in which the Jewish communities themselves grapple with these questions and their real-life consequences.

Who is a Jew? For decades, Jewish demographers have been trying to define the main object of their research. Sergio DellaPergola, an Italian-born demographer at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, employs three different categories to describe the Jewish population of a given country.[14]

1. *Core Jewish Population* includes all persons who, when asked in a socio-demographic survey, identify themselves as Jews; *or* who are identified as Jews by a respondent in the same household, *and* do not have another monotheistic religion.
2. *Enlarged Jewish Population* includes the sum of: (a) the *core* Jewish population; (b) persons reporting they are *partly Jewish*; (c) all others of Jewish parentage who—by *core* Jewish population criteria—are not currently Jewish (non-Jews with Jewish background); and (d) all respective non-Jewish household members (spouses, children, etc.)
3. *Israel's Law of Return* defines a Jew as any person born to a Jewish mother or converted to Judaism (regardless of denomination—Orthodox, Conservative, Reconstructionist, or Reform), who does not have another religious identity.

These categories are based on a mixture of various criteria—biological descent, ancestry, religion, self-ascription and external ascription. Until recently, these three categories all had one thing in common: none of them were used by the official Jewish communities in East Central Europe. Prior to 2013, only *halakhic* Jews could be admitted as members of the Federation of Jewish Communities in the Czech Republic, and this is still the case with regard to the Jewish community of Prague. Prior to 1997, only *halakhic* Jews could be admitted as members of the Union of Jewish Religious Communities in Poland. And to this day, the Federation of Jewish Communities in Slovakia only admits *halakhic* Jews, and this is the case in Hungary, too, where there are three umbrella organizations: Neolog, Orthodox and Chabad-Lubavitch. In the Autonomous Orthodox Jewish Community of Hungary (MAOIH), only men have the right to vote.

A *halakhic* Jew is someone who has a Jewish mother or has undergone an Orthodox conversion. In East-Central Europe, *halakhic* Jews are a dying breed. And this is one of the reasons why a number of communities have expanded membership criteria in recent years. In Poland and the Czech Republic (except

14   S. DellaPergola, "World Jewish Population 2014," *American Jewish Yearbook* 114 (2014): 307–09.

for Prague), the membership criteria are more or less identical to those set out in Israel's Law of Return.

When Charles Hoffman spoke of Zionist "colonization," he certainly was not thinking of the implantation and dissemination of a more inclusive definition of Jewishness in the region. But, to a certain extent, this is exactly what has happened. And the wider, more inclusive definition of Jewishness has also had an impact on the definition of Judaism.

Now, to the second question: What is Judaism? Since the nineteenth century, Jewish scholars have tried to define the "essence of Judaism" (*das Wesen des Judentums*). Is belief the essence of Judaism? Religious practice? Racial belonging? National belonging? Ethnic belonging? Today, this is a question that does not only interest scholars of Judaism, but also the many thousands of Jews (and descendants of Jews) who feel a sense of belonging to the Jewish past, present or future. The results of a recent sociological survey in Hungary reveal that 95 percent of the respondents identify as Jews according to descent, but only 46 percent as Jews according to belief.[15] They are not three-day Jews, i.e., Jews who attend synagogue on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, or even two-day Jews or one-day Jews. They are what I would call "no-day Jews," namely, Jews who never set foot inside a synagogue.

The Shoah is the strongest pillar of Hungarian Jewish identity. Three-fourths of the respondents have a strong emotional connection to Israel, and 81 percent consider Jews to be a recognizable group.[16] For the majority, Judaism does not constitute a religious community, but rather a community of fate. The official Jewish communities in Hungary are religious communities (or congregations) that can hardly represent the interests of the "enlarged Jewish population." Not surprisingly, when a small group of Hungarian Jews spearheaded a campaign in 1990 to have Jews recognized as an official *national* minority (alongside Germans, Romanians, Slovaks, Roma, etc.), their efforts fell on deaf ears. Eighteen years ago, the question of who is a Jew divided the Prague Jewish community so profoundly that the chairman of the community fired the strictly Orthodox rabbi because he did not recognize the majority of Prague's Jews as Jews. Afterwards, the chairman himself was fired, and he barricaded himself in his office and refused to relinquish his post.[17] It is no wonder that

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15   Cf. A. Kovács and I. Barna, eds., *Zsidók és zsidóság Magyarországon 2017-ben: Egy szociológiai kutatás eredményei* [*Jews and Judaism in Hungary in 2017: Results from a Sociological Survey*] (Budapest: Szombat, 2018), 213.

16   Ibid., 218–21.

17   Cf. B. Kenety, "Stand-Off Continues over Prague Jewish Community Head Posting," *Radio Praha*, December 20, 2004, https://www.radio.cz/en/section/curraffrs/stand-off-continues-over-prague-jewish-community-head-posting.

there are so many "no-day Jews" in Prague, Budapest, Bratislava and Warsaw. Indeed, it is no surprise that the modest, Jewish renaissance in these cities has taken place primarily *outside* the confines of the religious communities.

For decades, mistrust of the "official" Jewish institutions—due to collaboration with the Communist regimes, due to the stuffy, uninviting atmosphere, or due to rampant corruption—led people to search, discover and develop their Jewish identities in alternative spaces. Without the internet, without connections to Jewish communities in Western Europe, North America and Israel, and often without the participation, support or knowledge of parents, many Jews cobbled together their own Jewish identities during the Communist era. Konstantin Gebert refers to these as "homemade" Jewish identities.[18] Usually, the emphasis was placed on culture and literature, food and history, and the search for roots. These Jewish identities were not deeply rooted. How could they be, when many individuals—perhaps even the majority—first discovered their Jewish ancestry when they were already teenagers or young adults?

This drive toward discovery and self-discovery continues to this day and typifies the activities of the Jews, half-Jews, quarter-Jews, and non-Jews who send their children to Jewish kindergartens, organize Jewish cultural festivals in Krakow, Budapest, Třebíč, Szeged, Kiskunhalas and many other places and established Jewish community centers in Budapest, Krakow and Warsaw. They set up new Jewish NGOs, perform in Jewish theater troupes or musical groups in Bucharest, Budapest, Bratislava and Warsaw, publish Jewish books and journals, study Jewish Studies at universities in Budapest, Szeged, Prague, Pilsen, Olomouc, Bucharest, Cluj, Warsaw, Krakow and Wroclaw. In addition, they take care of the upkeep of abandoned cemeteries and synagogues and cultivate relations with relatives and kindred spirits in Western Europe, Israel, Australia, North America and South America.

This Jewish renaissance is characterized by its flexibility, versatility, agility and, above all, its interconnectedness. Budapest is an important node, because there are so many Jews among its inhabitants—as many as five percent of the city's total population according to the most all-encompassing definition of a Jew. But Budapest is just one node in a highly ramified network. What the Jews of East Central Europe have learned—and perhaps can even teach others—is that interdependence, reciprocity, mobility and a bit of humility may not always be enough to resuscitate communities that have been left for dead, but are certainly enough to reenter the global Jewish community, or even a global, transnational community. Not surprisingly, one-third of Hungarian Jewish

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18   Gebert, "Ein unerwartete Wiedergeburt," 141.

respondents identified themselves, first and foremost, not as Hungarians or as Jews, but as Europeans.[19]

Jewish tourists visit East-Central Europe in ever-growing numbers, and they still expect to see cemeteries, concentration camps, abandoned and neglected synagogues, and perhaps a few "leftover" elderly Jews. They come to see the Jewish past, but perhaps they are actually looking at the Jewish future. In Western Europe, North America and South America, the non-Orthodox Jewish population is declining rapidly, and as intermarriage rates increase and synagogue membership decreases, these Jewish communities are gradually coming to resemble, in many respects, the communities in East-Central Europe. Who knows? Perhaps the feared "colonizers" from the West actually have something to learn from the recent experiences of their fellow Jews in East-Central Europe.

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19   Cf. Kovács and Barna, eds., *Zsidók és zsidóság Magyarországon*, 215.

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PART II

Construction of Jewish Identity in Light of Jewish Thought and Tradition

Character and Community: Aspects of Jewish Identity in Early-modern Germany

Elisheva Carlebach

Identity and its formation, its lived experience and cultural, biological, and intellectual aspects, are notoriously complex subjects. The topic of the workshop and this collective volume "Constructing and Experiencing Jewish Identity," presents a challenge to any historian, and perhaps more profoundly so for historians of the Jews. The chronological and cultural focus of my remarks are primarily Central European Jews in the early modern period. These Jews articulated various types of identity: individual, communal, and collective, each in turn comprised of many layers.

They formed individual identities out of a complex tangle of personal memories, traits, experiences, and associations. The early burgeoning of auto-biographical writing among central European Jews of this period testifies to the coming of age of self-consciousness as individuals, embedded within networks, expressed in literary form.[1] Communal identity is even more difficult to delineate, an amalgam of associations local to a particular place, enfolding a Jewish population organized to form a cohesive unit over time. Finally, Jewish collective identity was congruent with a larger sense of belonging to the Jewish people, its history and destiny. This latter form of identity transcended the borders of time and place. Of course, this artificial division into layers of identity cannot be taken as fixed and separate categories. These are fluid concepts whose elements shifted, overlapped, and intersected constantly. For example, almost all the autobiographical writings of early modern Jews express a deep sense of the individual's role within a communal and kinship network. Communal and collective identities appear to embody contradictory

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1   A voluminous scholarly literature has arisen on this subject. See M. Moseley, *Being for Myself Alone: Origins of Jewish Autobiography* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2006); M. Stanislawski, *Autobiographical Jews: Essays in Jewish Self-Fashioning* (Seattle, Wash.: University of Washington Press, 2004). For some notable examples, see *Glikl: Memoirs, 1691–1719*, annotated and introd. C. Turniansky, transl. S. Friedman (Waltham, Mass.: Brandeis University Press, 2019); D. Kaplan, "The Self in Social Context: Asher ha-Levi of Reichshofen's Sefer Zikhronot," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 97, no. 2 (2007): 210–36; J.J. Schacter, "History and Memory of Self: The Autobiography of Rabbi Jacob Emden," in *Jewish History and Jewish Memory: Essays in Honor of Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi*, ed. E. Carlebach, J.M. Efron, and D.N. Myers (Hanover, N.H., and London: Brandeis University Press, 1998), 428–52.

tendencies in Jewish self-conception. Community was intertwined with a deep sense of rootedness in a particular space and place, while collective Jewish identity transcended time and place. Both were articulated in the sources produced by early modern Jews. Although Christian European polities classified Jews as aliens under the law, and treated them socially as pariahs, Jews never ceased to express a deep sense of belonging to the particular land, region, city, or village in which they lived—the spaces they called home. In his essay, "Exile and Expulsion in Jewish History," historian Yosef Yerushalmi coined the dialectic of "exile and domicile" which captures the tension of being "ideologically in exile and existentially at home."[2]

These brief remarks focus on the 'intermediate,' communal layer of Jewish identity, the sense of belonging to a distinctive unit that was larger than a family, intentionally constructed, and rooted in a particular locale. Early modern Jews produced many expressions of communal identity, notably, customs and liturgy rooted in their particular region or city, built environment such as cemeteries, synagogues and *mikva'ot* (ritual baths), names and linguistic expressions tied to their location, and many others. One genre that was unique to the period was that of written records, unique to each community. Such civic writings burgeoned in the late medieval to early modern period across Europe. In a suggestive essay, Andrew Butcher wrote, "The kinds of these writings considered here are not personal. They are intended rather to express the community to and for itself."[3] Jewish communities similarly came to see in their civic records a reflection of their collective, local identity. To illustrate the intersection between communal records and community identity, we can begin with a passage from 1816 in which the scribe of the community of Deutschkreutz (in Burgenland, not far from Vienna) recounts the case of a lost and then recovered record book of regulations (*pinkas takkanot*) of the community:

> It has been several years since the regulations (*takkanot*), which we heard had been issued and promulgated by the five sages of the land, have gone missing. This was the cause of many disturbances in our community, as each man did as he pleased. Whenever a question arose whose resolution depended upon the regulations, each person had a different opinion [as to what the regulations contained], even the elders of the community remembered it as in a dream, for they did not know clearly what was said in the regulations…. So the people of our community did not rest until we received our communal regulations back. The

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2   Y.H. Yerushalmi, "Exile and Expulsion in Jewish History," in *Crisis and Creativity in the Sephardic World, 1391–1648*, ed. B. Gampel (New York, N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1997), 11.

3   A. Butcher, "The Functions of Script in the Speech Community of a late Medieval Town, c. 1300–1550," in *The Uses of Script and Print, 1300–1700*, ed. J. Crick and A. Walsham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 157.

> substance of the regulations testifies that these were legislated for our community according to the status and conditions that were at that time **characteristic of our community.**[4] (my emphasis)

Community officials felt assured of the authenticity of the recovered communal book of regulations because it reflected the characteristics of the community (*tekhunat hakehila*). In this passage, the contents of the pinkas itself were said to embody the character of the community, even decades after it was written. The term "tekhuna" and the sense in which it is used in this passage recalls the German term *Eigenschaft*. This word entered common usage in the early modern period as a label for qualities of "national character" that began to coalesce around the slowly evolving national polities. The advent of strong ideas about the uniqueness of individuals in the Renaissance period provided the typology for proto-national collective identities, modelled on the same template as that of individuals. (An idea with charged consequences by the nineteenth century, as these embodied attributes of nations excluded people, such as Jews and other minorities, who fell beyond those defined boundaries.)

Assigning temperaments or characteristics to ethnic groups or "nations" became a trend among seventeenth and eighteenth century European writers. In the late seventeenth century, Dominican priest Johann Zahn published a formal matrix of the national characteristics *Specula physico-mathematico-historica notabilium sciendarum* (= Physical-mathematical and historical mirrors of noteworthy and marvelous things to know). Spanish monk and scholar Benito Feijoo (1676–1764) later elevated this genre in his *Teatro critic universal* (1726–1739).[5] Such lists of the attributes of various peoples were often depicted in the form of illustrated charts. *Völkertafel* (Tableaux of Nationalities) painted and printed in southern Germany and in Austria in this period became quite popular.[6] The tableaux depicted "European nationalities exemplified by men in representative garb," arranged in order roughly running west to east from Spanish to French, Welsh, German, English, Swedish, Polish, Hungarian, Muscovite, to Levantine (the latter identified as "Turk or Greek"). The ethnic/national columns form a matrix intersecting with rows of geographical,

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4   S. Litt, *Jüdische Gemeindestatuten aus dem aschkenasischen Kulturraum 1650–1850* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014), 431, cited from Pinkas Deutschkreutz, Burgenländisches Landesarchiv Eisenstandt, AII/1, fol. 106 v.

5   Translation of titles from J.T. Leerssen, *National Thought in Europe: A Cultural History* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), Zahn at 62–63, Feijoo at 64.

6   On the images that represented the nations in embodied forms, see F. Stanzel, W. Zacharasiewicz and I. Weiler eds., *Europäischer Völkerspiegel: Imagologisch-ethnographische Studien zu den Völkertafeln des frühen 18. Jahrhunderts* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1999).

social, and moral characteristics of the nationalities in question."[7] No spaces could be left blank. Depending on the coordinates, every climate, diet, religion, dress style, etc. contributed to the end result: the assignment of stereotypical characteristics unique to each national group. Ethnographic literature, travel accounts, epistolary collections, and compendia of folk wisdom, all of which flourished in this period, nourished these ideas of collective character. While none of the tables that I have perused included Jews as one of the nations, mostly negative characterizations of Jews of Europe pervaded the culture. Simone Luzzatto, Menasseh ben Israel, Isaac Cardoso and a host of other Jewish writers defended the Jewish people against the calumnies as loyal, peaceful, and profitable subjects.[8] But how did Jews characterize themselves? Or to paraphrase French anthropologist Marc Augé, what was the inner logic (ideo-logic) of the representation of self that Jewish society made to itself?[9] Ashkenazic Jewish communal and collective identity is far less studied for the pre-modern period than for that of the nineteenth century and beyond, the age of antisemitism and nationalism.[10] What follows is an attempt to identify some of the sources for Jewish communal identity before the modern age.

A new form of the literature of rituals and customs (*minhag*) emerged in the early modern period in Western Ashkenazi culture. Rachel Mincer documented the expansion of customs literature in late medieval Ashkenazic culture. She traced the growing reliance on texts, rather than mimetic observation, as the source for the minutiae of ritual observance.[11] While the classical handbooks of customs from the late medieval period were often based on the interpretations and traditions of individual rabbinic figures, and were organized around calendrical and or lifecycle rituals, in the early modern period, the Jewish *space* in which the rituals occurred became the organizing principle for such ritual guidebooks. While the concept of the custom of a particular place (*minhag*

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7   J. Leerssen, "The Poetics and Anthropology of National Character (1500–2000)," in *Imagology: The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters: A Critical Survey*, ed. M. Beller and J. Leerssen (Amsterdam and New York, N.Y.: Rodopi, 2007), 76.

8   Simone Luzzatto, *Discorso Circa Il Stato De Gl' Hebrei …* (Venice, 1638); Menasseh ben Israel, *Vindiciae Judaeorum … Touching the Reproaches Cast on the Nation of the Jews* (Amsterdam, 1656); Isaac Cardoso, *Las excelencias de los hebreos* (Amsterdam: David de Castro Tartas, 1679). These works exemplify of the apologetic literature that proliferated in this period.

9   *Oxford Reference*, s.v. "Marc Augé," accessd August 31, 2021, https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095433961.

10   This is not the case for Sephardic Jewry of the early modern period.

11   R.Z. Mincer, "The Increasing Reliance on Ritual Handbooks in Pre-Print Era Ashkenaz," *Jewish History* 31 (2017): 103–8.

hamakom), dates to Talmudic times, collections of *minhagim* and liturgy focused almost exclusively on one particular Jewish community were an early modern expression of the deep affinity between local Jews as a cohesive body and the significance of the place in which they resided.[12] Notable among these are the custom compendia based on the practices in the community of Worms and those based in the rituals of Frankfurt.[13] Rachel Greenblatt has written on the multiple ways that the Jews of Prague preserved their local memory. These included the spatial arrangements of cemeteries and synagogues, family chronicles, folk songs and commemorations of local events specific to Prague.[14] Jay Berkovitz has argued that the collections of texts related to local customs came as a response to ruptures from medieval traditional patterns.[15] This is undoubtedly true, but it should not obscure the novel elements within these works, particularly the specificity and concentration on a community and its space as a locus of religious ritual and identity.

Jewish community logbooks (*pinkas* in singular, *pinkassim* in plural) materialized in and reflected the early modern period in Jewish communal life.[16] Unlike other genres that evolved from the medieval period this form of communal records and logbooks are a distinctive product of the early modern period. Inscribed by officials appointed by the community, they touched upon many areas of communal activity and recorded aspects of its life on a nearly daily basis. No two communities or record keepers included the same materials; each is a unique reflection of its place, its time, and its creator. They are a prime expression of the construction of *communal* Jewish identity. The excerpt from

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12   For a model analysis of the role of place and local context in the evolution of one particular ritual, see D. Kaplan, "Rituals of Marriage and Communal Prestige: The *Breileft* in Medieval and Early Modern Germany," *Jewish History* 29 (2015): 273–300.

13   Among the local compendia of customs published in the early modern period, see for Worms Loewe Kircheim, *Minhagot Vermaiza*, ed. I.M. Peles (Jerusalem, 1987); Juzpa Shamash, *Minhagim de k.k. Vermaiza*, eds. B.S. Hamburger and Y. Zimmer, 2 vols. (Jerusalem: Mif'al Torat Hakhme Ashkenaz, 1988–1992); for Frankfurt, Juzpa Hahn Neuerlingen, *Sefer Yosef ometz* (Frankfurt am Main: Johann Kellner, 1723); Yosef Juzpa Kosman, *Noheg katzon Yosef* (Hanau: Jacob Basang, 1718).

14   See R.L. Greenblatt, *To Tell their Children: Jewish Communal Memory in Early Modern Prague* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2014).

15   Jay Berkovitz, "Crisis and Authority in Early Modern Ashkenaz," *Jewish History* 26 (2012): 179–99.

16   On the genre of *pinkassim*, see S. Litt, *Pinkas, Kahal and the Mediene: The Records of Dutch Ashkenazi Communities in the Eighteenth Century as Historical Sources* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 92–113; G. Hundert, "Communal Record Books (Pinkassim)," in *A Commitment to Scholarship: The American Academy for Jewish Research, 1920–2020*, ed. D. Sorkin (New York, N.Y.: American Academy for Jewish Research, 2020), 192–207.

Deutschkreutz cited earlier affirms a community's sense that the logbook of regulations (*pinkas takkanot*) did not only contain ordinances that were necessary for the successful governing of the community, but that these regulations reflected and embodied the specific character of that particular community as it evolved over time. While sets of regulations (*takkanot kehillah*) are known from the early middle ages, the ongoing record books of community activity (*pinkasse kehillah*) that are distinctive to the early modern period asserted a deep sense of communal identity connected to a particular place.

The triple community known by the acronym AHU (Altona, Hamburg, Wandsbek) generated possibly more *pinkas* literature than any other in Western Europe because of its complex structure.[17] The single Jewish communal structure (with one chief rabbi and one cemetery) straddled two sovereign polities: the free Hanseatic city of Hamburg governed by its Senate, Wandsbek under the Duchy of Holstein, while Altona belonged to the Danish crown, governed from Copenhagen. These loci of Jewish settlement shared one communal governance structure. The complicated rules of citizenship and membership (at one point Ashkenazi Jews of Hamburg could claim either the Hamburg or Altona residency privileges), and the power and revenue sharing necessitated by their unified communal governance, resulted in meticulous documentation of every action and transaction that pertained to the common welfare.[18]

How did such documentation shape Jewish communal identity? We can begin to answer the question by examining one of the dozens, if not hundreds, of records produced within this communal confederation.[19] When Itzik Lelov assumed his father's place as *shamash*, record-keeper and executive secretary of the triple community in the autumn of 1760, he purchased a new blank book in which to inscribe his notes. On the opening leaf, he proudly wrote the word "Renewed" followed by the day, month, and year, in strong square letters.[20] For added measure, he enclosed the final word with a small decorative flourish on either side. Itzik did not open his logbook by recording that day's events, nor by mentioning his own appointment to this important position in the community. Instead, he reached back in time and copied

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17   For an example of its earliest records, see H.M. Graupe, *Die Statuten der drei Gemeinden Altona, Hamburg und Wandsbek*, 2 vols (Hamburg: Institut für die Geschichte der deutschen Juden, 1973).

18   On the judicial relationship between the Jews of Hamburg and those of Altona in the mid-eighteenth century, see D.H. Horowitz, "Fractures and Fissures in Jewish Communal Autonomy, 1710–1782," Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 2010.

19   Many of these records are becoming digitally available on the National Library of Israel's Ktiv website.

20   New York, Jewish Theological Seminary, Ms. 10772.

some entries from previous records from earlier decades. Among these, Itzik included a list of eight customs that pertained to liturgical and other matters, each paragraph opening with, "Here in Altona it is the custom ..."[21] Coming at the beginning of this *shamash*'s *pinkas*, the local *minhagim* set the tone for the mission of the communal scribe. These entries reflected his understanding that his assignment did not consist only of recording daily events pertaining to the governance of the community, but also to maintain the sense of local collective identity.

The Altona shamash's self-assigned role as recorder and preserver of local customs, and sometimes of historical events, is a tendency he shared with other Ashkenazi scribes of the early modern period. We can call to mind two additional famous examples. Leyb b. Oyzer Rosencranz (d. 1727), appointed "shamash hakehilla" in the Ashkenazi community of Amsterdam in 1708, wrote a historical account of the Shabtai Zevi messianic movement in Yiddish, focusing on the members of the community and their involvement.[22] In seventeenth-century Worms, where chroniclers of local *minhagim* proliferated, first Loewe Kircheim (first half seventeenth century) and then Juzpa shamash (early eighteenth century) chronicled the customs of Worms extensively.[23] This overlap between the scribes of community records, *pinkassim*, and the authors of *minhagim* and local chronicles is significant because these literatures collectively formed a sense of Jewish identity tied to a particular place, and they originated from the same hand in some cases.

In addition to preserving records and customs, Altona's scribes referred often to the character of the community. By affixing characteristics to their community they defined it and claimed its place within the larger Jewish collective. Thus when paying for the life sustenance of poor orphaned children, the *shamash* noted "because *we Jews are merciful* we have no choice but to pay for the cost of upkeep for the ... child;" similarly about another orphan, "for he is a big *rachmonus* and *we are very merciful* and the Altona council cannot stand to see such a pitiful thing." Here the *shamash* casts the community as

21   JTS Ms. 10772, fol. 4r.

22   On Leyb ben Ozer Rosencranz (d. 1727) see E. Tal, ed. *The Ashkenazi Community of Amsterdam in the Eighteenth Century: Transcripts, Translation, Introductions and Notes.* (Jerusalem: Shazar Center/ Center for Research on Dutch Jewry, Hebrew University, 2010). On the chronicle Rosencranz edited, P. Radensky, "Leyb Ben Ozer's 'Bashraybung fun Shabsai Tsvi': An Ashkenazic Appropriation of Sabbatianism," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 88 (1997): 43–56.

23   On the writing of these collections of customs, see L. Raspe, "On the Fate of Two Minhagim Manuscripts from Worms," *Zutot* 5, no. 1 (2008): 111–20. Although Kircheim was not a community scribe, it was Sinai Loans, an eighteenth century communal scribe, whose copy of Kircheim's *minhagim* has survived the depredations of time (Raspe, 117).

extremely merciful and thereby in alignment with the highest ideal of Jewish collective life.[24] In addition to mercifulness, the *shamash* of community often referred to the community as a place where justice could be obtained for all its members and residents. By proclaiming "justice is to be found here" (*yesh kan mishpat*), the *shamash* linked his community to another set of cardinal Jewish virtues, the pursuit of justice.[25] Thus the *pinkas* embodied the history of the community and its customs, it archived its daily life, and it expressed the virtues that characterized it and allowed it to claim a premier place within the constellation of Ashkenazi communities in the West.

The *pinkas* embodied communal identity and linked it to individual identity in another significant way. It outlined the criteria for levels of membership within a Jewish community. The most coveted and valuable status was that of one who held permanent membership (*hazakah*), in a community. In most communities of the early modern period, due to restrictions on the number of Jews permitted residence, only a fraction of Jews who resided in a place inherited or attained this status. Many of the community founders and their selected descendants were granted *hazakah*. Others and latecomers could sometimes attain it by virtue of bringing a significant profit to the community as a result of their professional or commercial achievements. For the remainder, various designations of full or temporary residency, such as *beisitzer/ toshav*, sufficed to acquire a foothold within the community. Entire classes of communal employees had only temporary permission to reside in the community in order to fulfil their duties. Once their employment terminated, the community would force them to leave, in some cases for a life on the periphery of one place or another in search of stability. Given its centrality in communal life, the rootedness of individuals and families as members of the community was a primary preoccupation of the communal leaders. Membership status served as an important marker of Jewish identity in the early modern period; an entire array of privileges or penalties depended on it. One's status with regard to communal membership (*hezkat kehillah*), sometimes referred to in the Hebrew as *ironut*, or in the German *Stättigkeit*, marked a person's claim on a place within the embrace of community.[26] Thus *pinkassim* reflect one of the

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24   See BT Yevamot 79a, where three praiseworthy qualities are attributed to the people of Israel: mercifulness, bashfulness, and performance of acts of loving kindness.

25   Mishna Avot 1:18 lists justice, truth, and harmony as the three pillars of the world. Needless to say, beyond the abstract value, he also invoked the actual system of Jewish courts available in the community.

26   For an overview of membership policies, see D. Kaplan, *The Patrons and their Poor: Jewish Community and Public Charity in Early Modern Germany* (Philadelphia, Penn.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020), 71–8.

most salient aspects of community: its mechanisms of self-fashioning, its self-perceptions, and the process by which it constructed its borders, defining who was in and who was out, thereby creating a sense of "domicile within exile." Early modern Jews may have been highly mobile: geographically, intellectually, and religiously they were all over the map—but they created spaces of the imagination that they called their own, and these books were the physical manifestation of that locus.

Finally, *pinkassim* often made claims for the antiquity of the community even when it was not extant for that long, using phrases such as this is an 'ancient rule' (*tikkun yashan*), or this is the practice of our forebears (*hanhagah mi-kadmonim*) in this place.[27] As in the case of the revival of Roman legal systems in Europe, Jewish communities tried to identify with their own claims of antiquity, in a loose sense. The entire body of regulations governing communal existence aims to create the impression that the laws/ or local customs regarding self-governance were ancient, reaching back to a distant time, precisely and paradoxically because many of these communities were newly founded in the early modern period. Communities that did not retain unbroken links to their past, in some cases because they were recently founded, some formed by refugees from many different places, sometimes with no local history, would be especially concerned to link their political structure to a usable antecedent from the past.[28]

Jewish communal governance reached its fullest power and complexity of structure in the early modern period. Jews integrated communal belonging and status into the other components that shaped their sense of their place in their world. Communities expressed their characters through various literary mediums, such as *pinkassim*, custom books, and chronicles. These works form some of the building blocks of communal character and identity of early modern Jews.

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27   CAHJP AHW 121/1, fol. Xx.

28   R.A. Schneider, *Public Life in Toulouse, 1463–1789: From Municipal Republic to Cosmopolitan City* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1989), 70–1, described a process by which the scribal class performed the "lexical sleight of hand" by which the city was transformed into a continuation of Roman antiquity. The honor of the magistrates resided in their desire to put aside their own benefit, their own business and attend to the public good.

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The Maimonides Renaissance in Interwar Germany: The Case of Alexander Altmann

Daniel M. Herskowitz

Introduction

The remarkable burst of intellectual and cultural productivity by European Jews during the tumultuous interwar years has rightfully attracted the attention of scholars. One feature that deserves a more sustained critical examination is the repeated return to and reconstruction of the figure and thought of Maimonides. The concerted interest in Maimonides peaked around 1935, when a spree of studies, conferences, biographies, articles, sermons, translations, and anthologies marked the 800th anniversary of his birth.[1] A state-sponsored event to mark the occasion took place in Spain and a convention celebrating Maimonides eight hundredth anniversary, attended by Albert Einstein, was reported in the *New York Times*.[2] Other intellectual gatherings were organized in Palestine, France, England, Australia, Germany, Egypt, and more.

Attesting to the scale of engagement with Maimonides is the long line of published work dedicated to him. A partial list of significant studies published in the year 1935 alone is: Abraham Joshua Heschel's *Maimonides: Eine Biographie*, Oskar Goldberg's *Maimonides—Kritik des jüdischen Glaubenslehre*,

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1   Similar celebrations, albeit of a smaller scale, took place in 1835, celebrating Maimonides' 700th anniversary, and around 1905 to mark the 800th of his death. Michael Meyer narrates the following scene, which took pace twenty years after 1935, in a very different Germany: "It was the most extraordinary scene […] that took place in the city of Düsseldorf on July 7, 1954. A large and distinguished crowd that included politicians, members of the diplomatic corps, and leading academics, had gathered in the assembly room of the regional parliament of Nordrhein-Westfalen. Among them sat the president of the German Federal Republic, Theodor Heuss. They had come together to mark the 750th anniversary of the death of Moses Maimonides. The speaker for the occasion, brought over from England, was Leo Baeck, then eighty years old." M.A. Meyer, "Maimonides and Some Moderns: European Images of the Rambam from the Eighteenth to the Twentieth Century," *CCAR Journal* 44, no. 4 (1997): 14. See also L. Baeck, *Maimonides, der Mann, sein Werk und seine Wirkung* (Düsseldorf: Verlag Allgemeine Wochenzeitung d. Juden in Deutschland, 1954). A few years earlier, in 1929, Jews in Germany marked the 200th anniversary of Moses Mendelssohn's birth.

2   "Maimonides Work Honored by 1,000; Einstein Praises Scholar at Meeting here Marking 800th Anniversary of his Birth," *The New York Times*, April 15, 1935, https://www.nytimes.com/1935/04/15/archives/maimonides-work-honored-by-1000-einstein-praises-scholar-at-meeting.html.

Ben Zion Dinur's Hebrew work *Rabbenu Moshe ben Maimon*, Fritz Bamberger's *Das System des Maimonides. Eine Analyse des More Newuchim vom Gottesbegriff aus*, Ismar Elbogen's *Das Leben des Rabbi Mosche ben Maimon. Aus seinen Briefen und anderen Quellen*, Solomon Zeitlin's *Maimonides: A Biography*, Hirsh Melamed's Yiddish work *Der bilbul oyfn rambam, der mishpet tsum 800 yorikn yoyvl fun rambam (1135–1935)*, Nahum Glatzer's edited anthology *Rabbi Mosche ben Maimon. Ein systematischer Querschnitt durch sein Werk*, Alexander Altmann's edited anthology *Des Rabbi Mosche ben Maimon More Newuchim (Führer der Verirrten) im Grundriss*, Leo Strauss's *Philosophie und Gesetz: Beiträge zum Verständnis Maimunis und seiner Vorläufer*, and Joseph Sarachek's *Faith and Reason: The Conflict over the Rationalism of Maimonides*. David H. Baneth published a new edition of Maimonides's *Treatise on Logic*. This work was translated into French that year as well. Another translation published in 1935 was Shemuel Even Chen's Hebrew translation of *The Guide for the Perplexed*. Isidore Epstein published an edited volume in London, *Moses Maimonides: Anglo-Jewish Papers in Connection with the Eighth Centenary of His Birth*, and Salo Baron published a major essay, "The Historical Outlook of Maimonides" and an edited volume a collection of essays titled *Essays on Maimonides: An Octocentennial Anniversary*.[3]

To date, scholars have recognized isolated instances of this 'Maimonides Renaissance' but it has not been treated as a distinctive intellectual moment warranting rigorous historical, political, and conceptual analysis.[4] Exploring this important and untold chapter in the *Rezeptionsgeschichte* of this towering medieval sage can shed light not only on Maimonides, but on the Jewish

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3   Emmanuel Levinas published an essay on Maimonides in 1935 as well: "The Contemporary Relevance of Maimonides" (1935), translated by M. Fagenblat, *Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy* 16, no. 1 (2008): 91–4.

4   Some studies on Maimonides modern reception are J.M. Harris, "The Image of Maimonides in Nineteenth-Century Jewish Historiography," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 54 (1987): 117–39; A. Berliner, "Zur Ehrenrettung des Maimonides," in *Moses ben Maimon: Sein Leben, Seine Werke und Sein Einfluss*, ed. W. Bacher et al. (Leipzig: Fock, 1908), 104–30; M. Stanislawski, "The Tsarist Mishneh Torah: A Study in the Cultural Politics of the Russian Haskalah," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 50 (1983): 165–83; J.H. Lehman, "Maimonides, Mendelssohn, and the Me'asfim: Philosophy and the Biographical Imagination in the Early Haskalah," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 20 (1975): 87–108; the collection *Maimonides after 800 Years: Essays on Maimonides and his Influence*, edited by J.M. Harris (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007); W.Z. Harvey, "The Return of Maimonideanism," *Jewish Social Studies* 42, nos. 3–4 (1980): 249–68; Meyer, "Maimonides and Some Moderns"; G.Y. Kohler, *Reading Maimonides' Philosophy in 19th Century Germany: The Guide to Religion Reform* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2012); *The Cultures of Maimonideanism: New Approaches to the History of Jewish Thought*, ed. J.T. Robinson (Leiden: Brill, 2009).

experience and identity at the time. Indeed, it appears that the recourse to Maimonides was not simply motivated by intellectual curiosity and historical admiration but also by an existential urgency and a strong sense of his bearing on the present world. This was particularly true with respect to Jews in Germany, where the hopes for equality around the *fin-de-siècle* quickly gave way to disillusionment, distress, and even horror after the German debacle in the First World War and the gradually deteriorating condition throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Especially during this period, in which Jewish existence and identity were under attack, the effort to revitalize the figure and teachings of Maimonides constituted a form of 'spiritual resistance.'

Throughout these years, Maimonides was taken up in different ways and harnessed to different ideological outlooks, echoing the varying ways in which Jews grappled with the unstable philosophical, religious, and political landscape around them. The shifting situation of Jewish existence in Germany was projected onto the figure and thought of Maimonides, who often emerged as both reflecting their worsening condition and offering its remedy. Indeed, one can trace the transition from hope to disillusionment from the promises of enlightenment, liberalism, and emancipation through the evolving depictions of Maimonides. At the end of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, Hermann Cohen, the great Jewish neo-Kantian philosopher, painted an intellectual portrait of Maimonides as a proto-Kantian and paragon of progress, reason, and universalism. Thus depicted, Maimonides was the model figure of the 'German-Jewish synthesis' which Cohen advocated. In fact, Cohen's essay *Charakteristik der Ethik Maimunis*, his most sustained analysis of the medieval thinker, was itself published in the context of the marking of the 700th anniversary of Maimonides' birth. With the rise of Jewish and German nationalism, the resurgence of anti-Semitism, and corresponding shifts in the intellectual currents, the nineteenth century liberal worldview undergirding Cohen's depiction of Maimonides came under attack, and the figure of Maimonides was re-construed accordingly. For example, throughout the late 1920s and 1930s, Leo Strauss countered the interpretation of modern Jewish liberals such as Julius Guttmann and developed his own account of Maimonides as a non-liberal and elitist thinker focused on the political and legislative element of revealed religion.[5]

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5   On Strauss and Maimonides, see among many, K.H. Green, *Jew and Philosopher: The Return to Maimonides in the Jewish Thought of Leo Strauss* (New York, NY: State University of New York Press, 1993); ibid., *Leo Strauss and the Rediscovery of Maimonides* (Chicago, Ill., and London: University of Chicago Press, 2013); ibid., *Leo Strauss on Maimonides: The Complete Writings* (Chicago, Ill., and London: University of Chicago Press, 2013).

A generally overlooked instance in the Maimonides interwar renaissance is that of Alexander Altmann (1906–1987). Altmann is best known as one of the towering scholars of Jewish studies in the twentieth century. His contributions included important studies on medieval Jewish and Muslim philosophy and mysticism, as well as on modern Jewish thought (especially Moses Mendelssohn).[6] Altmann is not commonly thought of as a German-Jewish figure worthy of historical study, and while he has written influential studies on Maimonides, he is rarely considered in the context of Maimonides' interwar reception.[7] This is not entirely without reason. As the center of his activity at the time was communal leadership and adult education, he did not publish much before he was forced to leave Germany in 1938, and his output at the time consisted mainly of published speeches and articles in Jewish Orthodox journals. This essay explores Altmann's contribution to the interwar Maimonides Renaissance.

Altmann and the *Rambam Lehrhaus*

During the interwar period Altmann was a rabbi in the Berlin Orthodox community as well as a philosophy lecturer at the Hildesheimer Orthodox rabbinical seminar, from which he received his rabbinic ordination. He received his doctorate from the Berlin university in 1931 with an award-winning dissertation on the philosophy of Max Scheler. In May of 1935 he founded a center for

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6   On Altmann see D. Swetschinski, "Alexander Altmann: A Portrait," in *Mystics, Philosophers, and Politicians: Essays in Jewish Intellectual History in Honor of Alexander Altmann*, ed. J. Reinharz and D. Swetschinski (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1982), 3–14; I. Twersky, "Alexander Altmann (1906–1987)," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 55 (1988): 1–8. For Altmann's bibliography, see M. Altman, "Updated Bibliography of Alexander Altmann's Published Writings," *AJS Review* 19, no. 1 (1994): 61–65. See also the collection in Altmann's honor: *Perspectives on Jewish Thought and Mysticism*, ed. A. Ivry, E.R. Wolfson, and A. Arkush (Amsterdam: Harwood, 1998).

7   See for example A. Ivry, "Hermann Cohen, Leo Strauss, Alexander Altmann: Maimonides in Germany," in *The Trias of Maimonides: Jewish, Arabic and Ancient Culture of Knowledge*, ed. G. Tamer (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2005), 175–83. The analysis of Altmann in this essay focuses on his scholarly articles on Maimonides from the 1970s and 1980s and mentions his earlier writings only in passing. Altmann is also absent from J.A. Diamond and M. Kellner, *Reinventing Maimonides in Contemporary Jewish Thought* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2019). A rare exception to the general neglect of Altmann's early work on Maimonides is J.A. Bernstein, *Leo Strauss on the Borders of Judaism, Philosophy, and History* (Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press, 2015), 35–44. A comprehensive analysis of Altmann's early years is T. Meyer, *Zwischen Philosophie und Gesetz: Jüdische Philosophie und Theologie von 1933 bis 1938* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 107–65.

adult education in Berlin, the *Rambam Lehrhaus*.[8] It is no coincidence that Altmann's institution was founded in this year and adorned the Great Eagle's name. Maimonides embodied what Altmann believed can foment an inner renewal in contemporary Jewish life: an uncompromising Jewish learning focused on and committed to Jewish tradition and law that at the same time was informed by the best of general philosophy. He saw how assimilation and secularization led many young orthodox men away from their religious faith and believed that the best way to address this challenge was to follow the educational attitude driving Maimonides' *Guide for the Perplexed* and to directly address the perplexity of the student by demonstrating the inherent meaning of Jewish existence. In the inaugural gathering of the institution, Altmann declared: "The symbol of this attitude is the name of the great master, whose [eight hundredth birthday] the Jewish people celebrated several weeks ago: Rambam […] The new *Lehrhaus* of Berlin's Torah-true Jews could find no other name that would give a more fitting expression to its program."[9] His institution was to serve Orthodox Judaism to self-assert itself and begin to take pride in its commitment to Torah. The times called for it: "Many are the perplexed of the time who call for leadership." The curriculum of Rambam *Lehrhaus* was modelled accordingly to realize Altmann's vision of Orthodox Judaism and to reaffirm what he took to be the intellectual, moral, and existential task of Jewish life. This vision was that of a vital form of life firmly based in Jewish tradition, nourished from its classical sources, and thoroughly committed to the divine commandments, but at once also receptive and responsive to the general world around it. "As Torah-true Jews," he stated, "we feel the obligation to establish a place […] in which the world of tradition will not be a mere objective, but a point of departure, not just an idea, but a living phenomenon."[10] The *Rambam Lehrhaus* was to demonstrate that approaching "the world of the religious tradition (of Judaism) from the standpoint of the tradition itself" could offer a meaningful experience for the contemporary Jew. Maimonides was the model for the institution's self-understanding and mission. "The name of Rambam," Altmann noted, "embraces the idea of the *Lehrhaus*: to enroot in the soil of

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8   Altmann's *Rambam Lehrhaus* is not mentioned in M. Brenner's chapter "A New Learning: The Lehrhaus Movement" in his *The Renaissance of Jewish Culture in Weimar Germany* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1996), 69–99. It is briefly mentioned in A. Barkai and P. Mendes-Flohr, *Aufbruch und Zerstörung, 1918–1945*, vol. 4 of *Deutsch-jüdische Geschichte in der Neuzeit* (München: C.H. Beck, 1997), 284–85.

9   Quoted from P. Mendes-Flohr, "Theologian before the Abyss," in *Alexander Altmann: The Meaning of Jewish Existence, Theological Essays 1930–1939*, ed. A. Ivry (Hanover, N.H.: Brandeis University Press, 1991), 40. Page numbers in parenthesis in the body of the text will henceforth refer to this work.

10   Ibid., 41.

supratemporal Judaism individuals who stand in the turmoil [*Erschütterung*] of the time. Not only knowledge and education [*Bildung*] alone, but the true Jewish form of life [*Lebensgestaltung*] should thereby be rendered possible."[11] During the short-lived existence of the *Lehrhaus*, Altmann taught courses on Maimonides, and as noted he was also the editor of an anthology of Maimonides' works, published by Schocken Verlag in 1935.[12]

The Image of Maimonides in Altmann's Writings during the 1930s

The reader of Altmann's essays from the 1930s will surely be struck by the breadth of his learning and versatility of his sources. Edmund Husserl, Ernst Cassirer, Nicolai Hartmann, Max Scheler, Martin Heidegger, and others were harnessed to mould new meaning into traditional religious concepts and offer an informed Jewish response to the pressing matters of the day.[13] As we shall now see, Maimonides was embroiled into the fabric of Altmann's constructive thinking during this time.

Altmann's interpretation of Maimonides can be seen as intermediating between that of Samson Raphael Hirsch and that of Hermann Cohen. In Hirsch's assessment, the determinative impulse in Maimonides' thought was Greek and Arabic philosophy and *The Guide* was full of non-traditional interpretations of basic Jewish precepts. The result, Hirsch concluded, was a highly rationalized account of Judaism that was far removed from the Torah's true teachings. Cohen, on the other hand, drew almost exclusively on *The Guide* to depict Maimonides as a Jewish thinker of the highest rank who expressed the true rational, ethical, and universal spirit of Judaism. In some respects, the young Altmann was the spiritual successor of Hirsch, open to the best of

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11   Ibid., 40.

12   The notes for these lectures can be found in digitized form here: https://digipres.cjh. org/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps_pid=IE10191396. Preceding Altmann's anthology was the 1931 Maimonides anthology, *Sendung und Schicksal. Aus dem Schrifttum des nachbiblischen Judentums*, ed. N. Glatzer and L. Straus (New York, N.Y.: Schocken, 1931). Glatzer was the editor of another anthology of Maimonides' writings published by Schocken in 1935, as noted. On the political challenges and significance of these anthologies, see M. Urban, "Persecution and the Art of Representation: Schocken's Maimonides Anthologies of the 1930s," in *Maimonides and His Heritage*, ed. I. Dobbs-Weinstein, L.E. Goodman, and J.A. Grady (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 2009), 153–80. In 1936 Altmann published a pathbreaking study, "Das Verhältnis Maimunis zur jüdischen Mystik,"*Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums* LXXX, Neue Folge XLIV (1936): 305–30.

13   For Altmann's account of the intellectual climate at the time, see A. Altmann, "Theology in Twentieth Century German Jewry," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 1, no. 1 (1956): 193–216.

European culture and thought while also fervently committed to the obser-
vance of the *mitzvot*. Their attitude toward Maimonides, however, differed
significantly. Unlike Hirsch, Altmann attributed to Maimonides an important
role in revitalizing Jewish orthodoxy identity and emphasized Maimonides's
Jewishness and traditionalism despite his strong philosophical, intellectual-
ist, and universalistic tendencies. He asserted that notwithstanding some
tensions, Maimonides's thought was a cohesive whole in which halakhist and
philosophical facets were two sides of the same coin. On the other hand, while
he agreed that Maimonides thought was an authentic and forceful articulation
of the beating heart of Judaism, as did Cohen, he did not interpret Maimonides
as promoting 'ethical monotheism' and a 'religion of reason' but a particular-
istic and halakhically committed Judaism. In general, Altmann objected to the
Jewish liberal tendency to depict Maimonides as a universalist philosopher of
religion and ignore his halakhic work. This was part and parcel of the liberal
disposition to universalize Judaism and "to transfer the specifics of Judaism to
the universally human" (106) to which Altmann objected.

Altmann argued that in the key moments in which Aristotelianism and
Judaism clashed, Maimonides consistently sided with Jewish tradition. For
example, in the debate over Maimonides' true stance on the creation of the
world, Altmann rejected the view that the sage secretly held the Aristotelian
theory of the eternity of the world. In his 1935 "Maimonides' *Guide of the
Perplexed*," Altmann contended that Maimonides followed traditional Jewish
faith and believed in the creation of the world ex-nihilo. For Altmann, the
question of creation was where "the inner workings of [Maimonides'] mind"
were revealed most openly and "his tie to Jewish thinking so clearly evident"
(120). Indeed, "[t]he concern of faith here wins the battle over his inclination
toward pure philosophy" (120). Altmann insisted that while Maimonides refor-
mulated Judaism in accordance with a philosophical and rationalistic frame-
work, the universalism of his thought should not be exaggerated. "[W]e must
not overlook the fact," he wrote,

> that even where Maimonides undertakes the most daring interpretations, for-
> eign to the original meaning of the text, his intention is directed, in genuine
> faith, toward Scripture […] His great concern is not only the conciliation of rea-
> son and revelation. Maimonides is a theologian. He is solemnly earnest about
> correct beliefs, which he understands as being true convictions, in sharp con-
> trast to naive and primitive ideas. For him, only the philosopher is the trueel-
> iever. Without conceptual clarity about God no truthful relationship to him is
> possible. This is how Rambam understands his responsibility as the educator of
> his people (118).

Over against the common liberal depiction of the medieval thinker, Altmann repeatedly reminded his readers that Maimonides was not just the philosopher who authored *The Guide*, but also, indeed, especially, the rabbi who wrote *Mishneh Torah*, the major halakhic codex. Altmann claimed:

> Whoever undertakes the task of interpreting Rambam as a spiritual figure must know him above all as a halakhist. Philosophy had enriched his existence and awakened his reflections about this existence. But this reflection takes place for the sake of an existence that, even though it looks beyond the 'four ells of halakhah,' has its center, its breadth, and its atmosphere within the halakhah (122).

This position recalls Altmann's vision of true Jewish theology and identity. For him, Judaism can benefit from the speculations of philosophy, but it must not be consumed by its abstractness and transhistoricality. Insofar as Judaism is geared toward the actualization of the eternal revelation of the Torah through the commitment to, and observation of, halakhah, in the historical reality of everyday mundane life, then Jewish theology ought to reflect this cardinal and particularistic role of halakhah in Jewish life. In his programmatic essay "What is Jewish Theology?" he maintained that a Jewish theological system that grants halakhah a secondary rather than primary status is "wrong." Maimonides's thought is rightly seen as Jewish theology only when considering both *Mishneh Torah* and *The Guide*. As Altmann put it: "Maimonides is a theologian as the author of the *Yad ha-Hazaka* (The Code of Jewish Law or *Mishneh Torah*), but as the author of the *More Nebukhim* (*Guide of the Perplexed*) he is a philosopher of religion" (100). *The Guide* certainly "stands entirely in relation to revelation" but in addition to an appeal to revelation a theology must have halakhah at its center to be considered Jewish theology proper. Thus, despite the tensions, unity and coherence characterize Maimonides' program. Altmann wrote:

> no one who has studied his halakhic writings and, above all, has felt his living breath issue from his personal correspondence and missives, would venture to speak of an inner break. Orthodox Judaism—of which Rambam has been the master and guide in halakhah for eight hundred years, and which daily and hourly, in ever new concentration, explores and analyzes, loves and admires him—has always felt that in spite of apparent breaks he represents a wholly consistent personality (122).

That Altmann believed that Maimonides' thought reflected genuine Jewish spirituality can be seen from another point. As part of his effort to flesh out the philosophical respectability of Orthodox Judaism, Altmann claimed that one

pressing theoretical task was to restore the possibility of ontology and metaphysics for philosophical and theological thought, after Kant and Hegel had made the 'absolute' a limit concept rather than a reality. In his essay "Metaphysics and Religion" (1930) Altmann stated that "[t]he central philosophical problem of our time is the question of the possibility of an absolute metaphysics" (55). Altmann appreciated the contributions of Scheler and Hartmann to restore the possibility of metaphysics, but it was above all Heidegger's notion of 'nothing' [*Nichts*] developed in his lecture "What is Metaphysics?" that truly opened the door to such a recuperation.[14] The reason the restoration of the possibility of metaphysics was so urgent was that it enabled philosophy of religion to return to, or reformulate, the position of 'negative theology'—the view that truly respecting divine transcendence means opposing all attempts to force God into immanence through knowledge, experience, or otherwise, and that therefore nothing positive can be said about God. Altmann considered negative theology the only conceptually rigorous stance on the question of the knowledge of God and the most apt description of what he called 'the religious attitude.' It was, he believed, the quintessential stance of Jewish philosophy and theology. Of *docta ignorantia* Altmann wrote that "it is Jewish philosophy that has held fast to this thought most emphatically and has elevated it to the cardinal tenet of its theological conviction" (67). In particular, "Maimonides' doctrine of negative attributes is, with all its consequences, merely the radical final conception of this standpoint, which characterizes the whole of the philosophy of religion prior to Maimonides" (67). In the essay "Two Authorities: Image and Writ" Altmann asserted that the doctrine of negative attributes, formulated most notably by Maimonides, "characterizes, with few exceptions, the entire range of Jewish–religious–philosophical thinking" and "is the legitimate continuation of the biblical-talmudic tradition" (153).

Perhaps surprisingly, Altmann interpreted Maimonides' intellectualism as aligned with Jewish tradition with regards to the question of dogmas in Judaism as well. This question was at the heart of a heated debate that occupied some prominent German-Jewish thinkers during the early decades of the twentieth

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14   Altmann is thus another case of 'reading Maimonides after Heidegger.' Cf. B.A. Wurgaft, "How to Read Maimonides after Heidegger: The Cases of Strauss and Levinas," in *The Cultures of Maimonideanism: New Approaches to the History of Jewish Thought*, ed. J.T. Robinson (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 353–83. See also E.R. Wolfson, *Giving Beyond the Gift: Apophasis and Overcoming Theomania* (New York, N.Y.: Fordham University Press, 2014), 290 note 37. On Altmann's reading of Heidegger, see D. M. Herskowitz, *Heidegger and His Jewish Reception* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 116–26.

century, including Leo Baeck, Julius Guttmann, Max Wiener, and Altmann.[15] In his 1937 essay "Are there Dogmas in Judaism?" Altmann approached the matter not from a theological-systematic perspective but from the perspective of history of religion, inspecting the reception history of Maimonides' formulation of the thirteen basic principles or teachings ['*ikkarim*].[16] Such an endeavour of formulating Judaism's articles of faith had precursors in Jewish history, but Maimonides' was the most influential and authoritative. On the face of it, Maimonides' thirteen '*ikkarim* manifested the dogmatic elements familiar from Christian tradition, featuring a confessional style, exact formulation, and the presumption of exclusivity and exhaustivity, in the sense that the denial of any one of these basic teachings places the individual outside the acceptable boundaries of Jewish faith. And yet Altmann claimed that Maimonides' formulation of the thirteen '*ikkarim* was non-dogmatic. Rather than setting in stone articles of faith (like some later readers of Maimonides, such as Joseph Albo in his *Sefer Ha'Ikkarim*), Maimonides's motivation was above all pedagogical. He sought to articulate not propositional axioms or intellectually purified forms but the inventory of the living reality of Jewish life. Altmann buttressed his interpretation of Maimonides' anti-dogmatic impulse by invoking the sage's egalitarian and organic view of the whole of Torah. According to Maimonides, there are no different levels within the Torah that would permit distinguishing between primary and secondary principles, as necessitated by a dogmatic account. Judaism is a "living organism that can be grasped solely in its totality" (162) and as such is fundamentally averse to conceptual systematization and dogmatic structuring. Thus, Altmann claimed, "even Rambam himself must be understood at a deeper level than his formulation of the dogmas seems to demand" (161).

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15 A prequel to this debate took place in the nineteenth century in response to Moses Mendelssohn. On this see K. von der Krone, "Jüdische Wissenschaft und modernes Judentum: eine Dogmendebatte," in *Die "Wissenschaft des Judentums": Eine Bestandsaufnahme*, ed. T. Meyer and A. Kilcher (Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink, 2015), 125–38; M. Gottlieb, "Does Judaism Have Dogma? Moses Mendelssohn and a Pivotal Nineteenth-Century Debate," in *Yearbook of the Maimonides Centre for Advanced Studies*, ed. Y. Meyrav (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019), 219–42.

16 On this see, among many, M.B. Shapiro, *The Limits of Orthodox Theology: Maimonides' Thirteen Principles Reappraised* (Oxford and Portland, Oreg.: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2004); L. Jacobs, *Principles of the Jewish Faith: An Analytical Study* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1964); M. Kellner, *Dogma in Medieval Jewish Thought: From Maimonides to Abravanel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986); ibid., *Must a Jew Believe Anything?* 2nd ed. (Oxford and Portland, Oreg.: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2006).

How, then, do the various attempts at dogmatic systematization of Judaism square with the fact that Judaism is not a religion of dogma? Altmann's answer is that the attempts to articulate some kind of core principles or dogmas in Judaism are always a sign of a struggle with the outer world or sects within its own midst. In Maimonides' case, for example, his thirteen principles aimed to educate the Jewish people through the form of articles of faith by drawing a clear line of demarcation between the threatening Aristotelian and Islamic doctrines and authentic Judaism. In other words, dogma is fundamentally foreign to the authentic spirit of Judaism and attempts at systematization through propositions of faith are externally caused; but they exhibit, at the same time, a form of resistance and self-assertion. Moreover, unlike in Christianity, Jewish dogma are rooted in the organic community of faith rather than in an ecclesiastical authority and they are proclaimed in response to an external spiritual threat rather than charismatically. Jewish dogma thus springs from *emunah*, faith, and is a manifestation of it. "Emunah and dogma stand in a reciprocal relation, but *emunah* is prior to dogma" (165). This can be seen most clearly in the fact that it is not the quasi-dogmatic thirteen *'ikkarim* of Maimonides that gained prominence and popularity in Jewish communities, but their poetic liturgical rendition, the *Yigdal*. With this transformation of dogmatic formulas to congregational liturgy, "the *Yigdal* is no longer dogma but Emunah" (165). As we can see, even in moments when Maimonides stance appeared not to match what is taken to be the genuine Jewish view, Altmann defended the sage's traditionalism and alignment with the spirit of Judaism.

And yet, while Maimonides "is decidedly on the side of Jewish faith" (121), Altmann recognized that there is a price for the deeply intellectualized version of Judaism he advocated. The common line in Altmann's critique was that Maimonides' penchant for philosophical abstraction and systematization occasionally led him away from the organic vitality of Judaism and generated some faulty interpretations of basic Jewish concepts. In Altmann's view, the universal breadth of Maimonides' thought led him to downplay some of the particularistic elements of Judaism in *The Guide*, including the centrality of the 'mitzvah' and the election of Israel. Maimonides' philosophical posture and commitment to de-personalized objectivity also impaired his interpretation of the reasons for the commandments. In the essay "The Meaning of Religion Action" Altmann argued that the history of Jewish thought has not paid sufficient attention to the problem of the meaning [*Sinn*] of religious action as a subjective, engaged experience. This is certainly the case with Maimonides, he suggested. In *The Guide* Maimonides explained that the six hundred and thirteen mitzvot all distribute useful truths or serve educational purposes of imparting justice and morality. This rational justification focused on the

objective significance [*Bedeutung*] but ignored "the immanent meaning" and "content" of the commandments, which focuses on "the attitude toward actual experience" (73–74). In "What is Jewish Theology?" Altmann went so far as to claim that the rationalistic constructions of Maimonides' *ta'amey hamitzvot* "ultimately devalue halakhah" (100) because they neglect to explain the particularities of Jewish rituals and instead focus solely on their objective form. The section dedicated to the reasons of the commandments in *The Guide* is therefore not a chapter "of Jewish theology but of the psychology of religion chapter in Jewish theology" (100). On the other hand, in the *Mishneh Torah* "the unique nature and intensity of what is specifically Jewish" (121) is expressed. In the essay "Maimonides and Halakhah" (1935) Altmann claimed that Maimonides "lifted halakhah, as it were, out of the typical atmosphere of the *bet ha-midrash* into the air of the academy. Even as halakhist he remains a philosopher, i.e., a lover of impersonal wisdom" (123). Ultimately, Maimonides "is the aristocrat of halakhah" (123).

However, while the particularity and suprahistoricity of Judaism is minimized in Maimonides' philosophical rendition of Judaism, Altmann proclaimed that his "lasting achievement" was "to have shown that Jewish thought is integral to European intellectual history, and thereby to prove the historicity of the Jew" (121). This achievement—among others—"impels us to follow him" for it "contributes to building Jewish messianism" (121). Altmann thus criticized Maimonides' when he sensed that the sage's philosophical and universalizing tendencies skewed his perception of Judaism, but he nevertheless insisted that *The Guide* remained a "courageous and pious book" (121).

Altmann's Image of Maimonides in Context

In addition to Altmann's explicit statements about Maimonides, a fuller understanding of his understanding of the medieval sage can be gained by exploring Altmann's critical engagement with the Swiss Protestant theologian Karl Barth and the movement of dialectical theology that rose to prominence in the Christian world at the time.

During the 1920s and 1930s, Barth gave voice to his generation's discontent with the intellectual heritage of nineteenth century Christian thought, which was considered synthetic, middle-class, overly abstract, and inauthentic. Objecting to its faith in reason and progress, Barth called for a wholesale denunciation of theology's attachment to culture and morality and the strands of idealism, liberalism, and historicism that had infiltrated it. Together with fellow theologians Emil Brunner, Friedrich Gogarten, Eduard Thurneysen and

others, Barth posited as an alternative a system centred on a breach, indeed, opposition, between God and the world. This radical view gave expression to the overarching pessimism marking the unsteady times in Europe, particularly in light of the devastation of the First World War, and the increasing social alienation, disenchantment of the world, and sense that God does not reside in the fallen, profane modern world. In his influential work, *Römerbrief* (1919, revised second edition 1922), Barth highlighted the utter contrast between God and the world and the inability to know God through human concepts, culture, ethics, history, or nature. The radical otherness of the divine meant that God can be known only by means of revelation, a top-down form of self-revealing from without. God's unknowability meant that nothing can be said of him outside of what was revealed by him through Christ. However, even revelation did not compromise divine transcendence and otherness.

The Jewish world immediately took notice of dialectical theology not only because it represented the most recent development in Christian thought but because the rebellion against nineteenth century liberalism executed by Barth and his circle was one which many young Jewish rabbis and intellectuals emulated in their own world. In its Jewish vein, the rebellion was against what was seen as an overly detached and inauthentic form of nineteenth century Judaism that reflected the values and ethics of the Enlightenment. Given this parallelism, it is not surprising that various young Jewish thinkers explored the promises and perils of Barthian theology for articulating Jewish thought and identity during that time. Interestingly, Maimonides was commonly inserted into the discussion. Probably the most enthusiastic Jewish Barthian was Hans Joachim Schoeps, who endorsed Barth's perspective wholesale, claiming it was the authentic perspective of the Hebrew bible. As part of his construction of Jewish Barthianism, Schoeps attacked Maimonides for what he claimed to be his Hellenization of Judaism and for forcing it into an inauthentic, rationalistic model. A more moderate case was rabbi Max Wiener, who legitimized his endorsement of the Barthian perspective for Jewish renewal by claiming that Barth's understanding of God's radical otherness was basically the same as Maimonides'.[17]

In a number of essays throughout the 1930s, Altmann, too, grappled with dialectical theology. He shared with it the rejection of the liberal synthesis of God and culture and he likewise agreed with the emphasis on divine transcendence and revelation. However, in addition to its obvious Christian layers, such

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17   M. Wiener, "Begriff und Aufgabe der jüdischen Theologie," *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums* 77 (1933): 3–16.

as the general distinction between gospel and law and the notion that revelation was Christ, Altmann fervently rejected the devaluation of history and the denigration of the created status of the world that he took to be the consequence of Barth's radical emphasis on divine transcendence. From Altmann's perspective, the challenge was to develop a parallel stance from the sources of Judaism that upheld divine otherness and centred on revelation, but which was particularistically and appropriately Jewish. He sought to highlight the particularity of the Jewish conceptuality and develop an intellectually rigorous and informed account of Judaism that advanced the notion of God's radical otherness with an understanding of revelation as *halakhah* and which did not devalue the world and history, but rather perceived the world as God's creation and history as the arena of religious life.

Altmann's critical engagement with dialectical theology was colored by his strict understanding of the Jewish-Christian difference. It was impossible to appropriate Barth's theology into Judaism, he believed, not only because the particularistic and non-generalizable nature of Judaism, but because dialectical theology was animated by theological presuppositions that were fundamentally Christian. For this reason, Altmann was critical of Schoeps' and Weiner's attempts to bridge over the Jewish-Christian divide. His critique of Weiner is of special interest because it touches directly on his perception of Maimonides.[18] Wiener claimed that the most urgent task for Jewish theology was to comprehend and elucidate properly its dualism of particularism and universalism—'universal philosophy of religion—halakhah tied to a people.' On Wiener's understanding, nowhere was this dualism found more seamlessly than in Maimonides, who mastered the particularistic thinking of halakhah and the universal thinking of philosophy of religion. For Altmann, however, Wiener was mistaken to think that Jewish theology featured a duality of particularism and universalism. For him, Jewish thought is entirely homogenous and insofar as it is dependent on halakhah, it is also fundamentally particularistic. Halakhic demands cannot be universalized into ethical demands or construed as part of a 'religion of reason.' Relatedly, Altmann protested against Wiener's identification of the Barthian version of God's radical transcendence and Maimonides's negative theology. Barth's "qualitative difference" between God and the world, Altmann argued, produced a paradoxical account of the negativity of God vis-à-vis the world that was not formal or neutral but sprang from

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18   On Altmann and dialectical theology, and on his critique of Schoeps, see D.M. Herskowitz, "An Impossible Possibility? The Promises and Perils of Jewish Barthianism," *Modern Theology* 33, no. 3 (2017): 348–68.

a theological necessity grounded in the Christian notion of the original sin. On the other hand, Maimonides' doctrine of negative attributes sprang from a logical necessity. The two should not be conflated; they are in fact dramatically dissimilar. One was rooted in Christian assumptions, the other expressed a basic Jewish conviction.

Unlike Wiener, Altmann did not explicitly invoke Maimonides in the context of his grappling with dialectical theology. Yet it is difficult to deny that Altmann's depiction of Maimonides during this period exhibits some of the key features he found compelling in dialectical theology—without its theological faults and with the appropriate Jewish correctives. It can be said that for Altmann, Maimonides served the role that Barth did in Christian circles while also functioning as the 'negative' of Barth. Thus in "Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed*" Altmann claimed that the medieval sage's thinking was dominated by "the supremacy of revelation" and spoke of *Mishneh Torah* as "the fundamental dogmatic work" (120). In both the *Guide* and *Mishneh Torah* the Torah of Moses was "the document of biblical revelation" which "retain[ed] its special dogmatic position" (ibid.). This dogmatic position, however, was of particularly Jewish vein. It promulgated a robust notion of divine transcendence and situated revelation at its center, but its conception of revelation was halakhic and its conception of divine transcendence did not devalue history or the historicity of Jewish life and it upheld the created status of the world. "Only a theology standing in relation to revelation and, at the same time, having halakha at its center is entitled to be called Jewish theology" (46), Altmann proclaimed. Indeed, the portrait of Maimonides echoed Altmann's view that a life of observance of God's commandments as developed historically in halakhah was the true kernel of Judaism. In Altmann's view, Jewish thought should not follow the likes of Schoeps and Wiener and consult Barth's theology—not only because its decisive non-Jewish nature but because Jewish tradition itself possesses more suitable resources for its own particularistic aims and needs. An especially rich and pertinent resource, he believed, was Maimonides.

Conclusion

This essay aimed to recover and shed some light on the young Dr. and Rabbi Alexander Altmann and his engagement with Maimonides as a constructive thinker, before these were foreshadowed by Prof. Altmann's better known engagements with Maimonides as a scholar. While his views developed and even changed, the roots of Altmann's life-long and prolific scholarly occupation

with Maimonides can be found in these early writings of a young rabbi trying to make sense of the present world with the assistance of the great thinkers of the past. In his early constructive writings Altmann's task was to formulate a philosophically defensible Jewish theology faithful to Torah, halakhah, and Jewish tradition in a manner that would address the spiritual needs of the time. Maimonides was decisive to the attempt to articulate and actualize this vision and ideal of modern orthodox Judaism. The young Altmann presented an interpretation and assessment of Maimonides that defended the Jewish core of his thought and his traditionalism. While he acknowledged that at times Maimonides' intellectualist and philosophical impulse got the better of him, Altmann nevertheless denounced attempts at unduly universalizing Maimonides legacy and minimizing its particularistic nature and its basic agreement with Jewish tradition. Thus, in his own participation in the rich and varied interwar reception of Maimonides, Altmann too grappled with the burning spiritual issues of the day through a recourse to the medieval sage, and likewise found in the great thinker an admirable model for contemporary Jewish identity. In this way, the reception of the great medieval thinker sheds light on the modern German-Jewish experience and identity, demonstrating that Maimonides continued to be, in the twentieth century as well, a *Guide for the Perplexed.*

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PART III

Construction of Jewish Identity in Light of Zionism and the State of Israel

New Ghetto and Emancipation: Theodor Herzl and Salo Baron on Antisemitism

Michael Brenner

What an honor it is for me to be the first recipient of the first Salo and Jeannette Baron Award! It brings me back to the fall of 1988, when as a young graduate student at Columbia University, my academic advisor Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, asked me if I wanted to deliver a few books to Professor Baron who lived about three blocks away from campus on Claremont Avenue. Of course, I was very excited to meet the person who was the first professor of Jewish history at a Western University and whose 18-volume *Social and Religious History of the Jews* I had just acquired for a good part of my fellowship money at the second-hand bookshop of legendary Mary Rosenberg. I had heard Professor Baron speak once before, when I attended the ninth World Congress of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem in 1985, where the 90-year-old doyen of Jewish History gave an impressive speech in flawless Hebrew.

But now I was to meet one-on-one the last scholar who dared to write a multi-volume Jewish history in the vein of Jost, Graetz and Dubnov and whose last, his eighteenth volume barely made it to the middle of the seventeenth century. I climbed up the stairs and a very short, friendly nonagenarian opened the door. Jeannette, his companion and scholarly partner of over five decades, was no longer alive. Baron's housekeeper had prepared tea and cookies, and in a second, I felt the old-world spirit emerge. This feeling intensified when we started to talk. I asked him: "Professor Baron, what are you writing at the moment?", secretly hoping he would add at least one other volume to his magnum opus, perhaps reaching into the eighteenth century. He told me that he was writing his memoir, and that at the moment he was in the year 1906 when he and his parents went to the Bohemian resort town of Marienbad where they encountered British king Edward VII. strolling through the streets.[1] While his recollection came from a bygone era, I could vaguely imagine the scenery, as I grew up, seventy years later, just fifty miles west of Marienbad, on the

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1 Baron's still unpublished memoirs, which extend much beyond the year 1906, can be found in his collection at Stanford University Archives. For a biography of Baron, see R. Liberles, *Salo Wittmayer Baron: Architect of Jewish History* (New York, N.Y.: New York University Press, 1995).

other side of the Iron Curtain, and had visited as a child what was then called Mariánské Lázně in Communist Czechoslovakia.

Baron was born in Galician Tarnov. When in the year 2000, I took my Munich students on a trip to Poland we made sure to stop in Tarnov, visit the remnants of the main synagogue and talk to the town's archivist about the Baron family. It was then that I realized that Tarnov was just one hour away from my father's hometown of Chrzanov. I had learned more about the Baron family during the memorial service for Salo Baron in 1989, when Baron's former student, Professor Zvi Ankori, who like Baron was born in Tarnov, gave a moving account of how Baron's family—and his own—were deported and perished during the Holocaust.

Baron was more than a great scholar of a bygone generation for me. In a sense he was indeed my academic *zeyde* or grandfather, as he was the *Doktorvater* [supervisor] of my own *Doktorvater* Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi. I remember well when Yerushalmi mentioned in a very different context, speaking about the medieval philosopher Abraham Ibn Daud, the belief in a *shalshelet ha-kabbalah*, a chain of tradition, which is handed on from one scholar to the next generation. Maybe, a little bit of such a secular *shalshelet ha-kabbalah* exists also in modern academia. Moreover, whenever I entered Yerushalmi's office, his own teacher was actually very much present. A picture of Baron was placed on Yerushalmi's desk and his eyes looked straight at the students.

People familiar with Baron's writings will understand the title of my article "New Ghetto and Emancipation." Although Baron wrote an 18-volume Jewish history, and almost as many monographs, and hundreds of articles, he is remembered mainly for one very brief essay he wrote in 1928 entitled "Ghetto and Emancipation." In it appears the phrase which has been quoted over and over again, expressing his opposition to what he termed the "lachrymose conception of Jewish history."[2] In a paper entitled, "Newer Emphases in Jewish History," published in 1963, Baron wrote:

> All my life I have been struggling against the hitherto dominant 'lachrymose conception of Jewish history' … because I have felt that an overemphasis on Jewish sufferings distorted the total picture of the Jewish historic evolution… .[3]

Thus, Baron always insisted that Jewish history was full of joy as well as suffering. And in contrast to Hannah Arendt, with whom he had worked very closely

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2   S.W. Baron, "Ghetto and Emancipation," *Menorah* XIV, no. 6 (1928): 515–26.

3   S.W. Baron, "Newer Emphases in Jewish History," *Jewish Social Studies* 25, no. 4 (1963): 245–58. Reprinted in ibid., *History and Jewish Historians: Essays and Addresses* (Philadelphia, Penn.: Jewish Publication Society, 1964), 96.

both as part of the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction effort in immediate post-war Europe and during the Eichmann Trial, the eminent Jewish historian never thought of Jews as objects, but rather as subjects of history.

I called my article "New Ghetto and Emancipation," in an attempt to bring together the paths of two graduates of the university where this ceremony takes place: Theodor Herzl and Salo Baron. One year before Baron was born, in 1894, the cultural editor of Vienna's most important newspaper, the *Neue Freie Presse*, Theodor Herzl published his play *Das Neue Ghetto*, The New Ghetto. The historian Jacques Kornberg described the play as a story of "ostracism and betrayal" among the Jews of Vienna.[4] It portrays the devastating effect of modern antisemitism on assimilated Jews, like Herzl himself. Herzl depicts a Christian Viennese society unattainable for Jews, who were thrown back into a new, invisible ghetto. With the election of the outspoken antisemitic Karl Lueger as mayor of Vienna in 1895 and his confirmation by Emperor Franz Joseph II in 1897, this ghettoization seemed sealed. As historian Dina Porat pointed out, Herzl, in his complex relationship with his own community, came to the conclusion that because of their particular economic structure and their attachment to education, Western Jews remained a distinct community even after detaching themselves from religious beliefs and practices.

In *The New Ghetto* Herzl fictionalized his own dilemma. As he would make clear in his *Judenstaat* of 1896, he did not become a Zionist because of Jewish belief systems or traditions, or because he was in any way an active member of the Jewish community, or for that matter wanted to become a member, but for one simple reason: because the larger society rejected him and all other Jews. As he wrote:

> We have honestly endeavored everywhere to merge ourselves in the social life of surrounding communities, and to preserve only the faith of our fathers. It has not been permitted to us. In vain are we loyal patriots, our loyalty in some places running to extremes; in vain do we make the same sacrifices of life and property as our fellow citizens; in vain do we strive to increase the fame of our native land in science and art, or her wealth by trade and commerce. In our native lands where we have lived for centuries, we are still cried down as strangers ... If we could only be left in peace ... But I think we shall not be left in peace.[5]

For Herzl, the answer was real emancipation, self-emancipation, in the sense that the Russian Zionist Leon Pinsker had in mind when he entitled his 1882

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4 J. Kornberg, *Theodor Herzl: From Assimilation to Zionism* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1993), 103.

5 T. Herzl, *A Jewish State: Proposal of a Modern Solution for the Jewish Question*, trans. S. d'Avigdor and J. de Haas (Hofenberg online publishing, 2015), 7.

pamphlet, unknown to Herzl, *Auto-Emancipation*. Herzl believed that the Jews could overcome the new ghetto by their efforts to emancipate themselves not *in* Europe, but *from* Europe. The *Judenstaat* would be the Jewish answer to those who confined the Jews to a new ghetto. For Herzl, the establishment of the *Judenstaat* meant much more than just the emancipation of the Jews and the elimination of antisemitism. As he envisioned in his 1902 utopian novel, *Altneuland*, the "New Society" was to serve as a model for all humanity and as the signal for the emancipation of all suppressed peoples. Herzl explicitly included the full emancipation of the former enslaved population of the Americas.

Herzl's plan of redemption was a universal plan. The solution of what he called in the language of his time the "Jewish Problem" was only the first step in his plan. He called his Jewish state not Israel or Judea, but referred to it as "The New Society" or "The Seven-Hour-State," because its citizens would only work a seven-hour-day. This was so important for him that the flag of the new state, as he himself drew it, would consist of seven stars for the seven-hour-workday.

This phantasy state was decidedly cosmopolitan. He certainly recognized the symbolic power of Jerusalem, but utterly disliked the actual city. In a diary entry Herzl expressed his disgust at the dirty old city of Jerusalem:

> When I will remember you, oh Jerusalem, in days to come, it won't be with pleasure. The dark residues of two millennia full of inhumanity, intolerance, and uncleanliness are engrained in your foul-smelling alleys.[6]

To Herzl, Jerusalem smelled way too much of the ghetto.

An ideal city in Old-New Land's "New Society" looks very different. It features electricity, broad avenues, a subway, French, Italian and German theaters, opera houses, English boarding schools, and of course Vienna-style coffee houses. There was nothing particularly Jewish in Herzl's description. His "New Society" did not just mean Jewish sovereignty restored, but humanity emancipated.

Old New Land was translated into Hebrew by the Zionist leader Nachum Sokolov in the year of its publication in German. Sokolov gave it the title *Tel Aviv*. When the city of Tel Aviv was founded seven years later, in 1909, it might have well been the first city named after a novel. Herzl of course never visited Tel Aviv. He had died five years before its founding.

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6   T. Herzl, *The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl*, ed. R. Patai, trans H. Zohn (New York, N.Y.: Herzl Press 1960), 2: 741.

Still, Tel Aviv is a city in which his spirit lives on. The city represents moder-
nity, technology, openness of mind, architectural innovation, world class
museums, theaters, and an opera. Herzl would not have been thrilled that all
of this would take place in Hebrew, as he did not know any Hebrew and pro-
vocatively asked how anyone could even purchase a train ticket in Hebrew.
But who knows—maybe even Herzl would have attended Ulpan, together with
immigrants from all over the world had he lived longer. He definitely would
have been a regular guest in the city's many coffee houses.

We do not know, however, what Herzl would have thought about the mate-
rialization of the Jewish State he envisioned, even though there is no lack of
experts who have claimed to know exactly that, including the late Shimon Peres
who wrote a book on Herzl's imaginary journey through the State of Israel in
the 1990s.[7] One thing, though, is clear. Herzl's hope that this state would elimi-
nate antisemitism in the world and exist in peaceful co-existence with its Arab
neighbors has not been fulfilled. In a certain ironical sense, anti-Zionism has
replaced antisemitism, and Israel today serves for many as the Jew among the
nations, thus continuing the century-old tradition of a universal scapegoat to
be blamed for all that is wrong in the world.

Would Herzl, were he alive today, regard Israel as the realization of his
dream of the Old New Land or rather as a New Ghetto? I remember vividly
being a witness to a lively debate in a conference in the heart of Jerusalem in
January, 2005, between two of the brightest Jewish intellectuals, the cosmo-
politan literary scholar George Steiner and the Israeli novelist A.B. Yehoshua.[8]
Yehoshua argued passionately that the path of diaspora Jewry was a cul-de-sac
ending in assimilation, antisemitism and ultimately in disappearance. Steiner,
on the other hand, claimed with equal passion that the State of Israel was a
new ghetto, even surrounded by walls. It was a quite emotional if not hostile
exchange at the *Mishkenot Sha'ananim* conference center, and at the dinner
following the discussion the two great old men refused to sit at the same table.
I don't know at which table Herzl would have placed himself. Maybe he would
have chosen to sit with neither of them.

At first sight, Herzl seems to have little in common with Baron, as he adhered
to the common "lachrymose conception" of Jewish history so much criticized
by Baron. In *Der Judenstaat* he writes: "No nation on earth has survived such
struggles and sufferings as we have gone through."[9] When it comes to the

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7   S. Peres, *The Imaginary Voyage: With Theodor Herzl in Israel* (New York, N.Y.: Arcade, 1999).

8   The Conference was organized by the Spinoza Institute and entitled "What Enabled the Jews
    to Survive in History?"

9   Herzl, *A Jewish State*, 7.

evaluation of pre-modern Jewish history, Baron clearly deviated from Herzl and from Zionist views in general. But a closer look at Herzl's depiction of antisemitism shows that to some extent he pre-shadowed Salo Baron's analysis of thirty years later. As David Engel and others have shown, the common rendering of Baron's thesis has often been abbreviated to the first part of his essay "Ghetto and Emancipation," in which he claimed that Jewish existence in the Middle Ages was not as dark as commonly assumed and that Jews often fared better than Christian peasants, the vast majority of Europe's medieval population. What is often overlooked is the second part of Baron's essay, namely his criticism of modernity and emancipation. While the ghetto was not as dark as commonly painted, emancipation was not as bright as it is usually seen.[10]

And here Baron and Herzl are indeed not that far apart from each other. This is how Herzl described modern antisemitism:

> Modern Anti-Semitism is not to be confounded with the religious persecution of the Jews of former times. It does occasionally take a religious bias in some countries, but the main current of the aggressive movement has now changed. In the principal countries where Anti-Semitism prevails, it does so as a result of the emancipation of the Jews. When civilized nations awoke to the inhumanity of discriminatory legislation and enfranchised us, our enfranchisement came too late. It was no longer possible to remove our disabilities in our old homes. For we had, curiously enough, developed while in the Ghetto into a bourgeois people, and we stepped out of it only to enter into fierce competition with the middle classes. Hence, our emancipation set us suddenly within this middle-class circle, where we have a double pressure to sustain, from within and from without.[11]

This reads like a quite sophisticated historical analysis even though it was written by a Feuilleton editor of a Viennese newspaper. Baron's conclusion, in fact, is very much in line with this analysis. After describing in detail the darker side of modern Jewish existence, Baron makes clear "that Emancipation has not brought the Golden Age" as had been claimed so often. In fact, only the age of emancipation opened the door to the official persecution and bloodshed of Jews by the state. As John Efron recently pointed out, Baron made clear in the first edition of his *A Social and Religious History of the Jews* of 1937 "that we may have to revaluate [*sic*] radically our notions of Jewish progress under Western

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10   D. Engel, "Crisis and Lachrymosity: On Salo Baron, Neobaronianism, and the Study of Modem European Jewish History," *Jewish History* 20 (2006): 243–52; see also: A. Teller, "Revisiting Baron's 'Lachrymose Conception': The Meanings of Violence in Jewish History," *AJS Review* 28, no. 2 (2014): 431–39.

11   Herzl, *A Jewish State*, 16.

liberty" and that he now even regarded emancipation as "a permanent source of new conflicts."[12]

As the only witness historian in the Eichmann Trial, Baron pointed out in his detailed account of the history of antisemitism that while Jews had suffered from persecution over centuries, if not millennia, systematic bloodshed had never been a pattern of anti-Jewish behavior of either the state or the church. The Nazi-instigated November pogrom of 1938 was for him in fact the very first instance in history where a *state* officially orchestrated bloody anti-Jewish persecutions, and the Holocaust was the first instance in history were a *state* attempted to physically eliminate the entire Jewish community.

There was one awkward moment in the trial, when Eichmann's defense lawyer Robert Servatius asked Baron the question, which all Jewish history professors are used to hear at some point after most of our lectures: But how do you explain this long history of antisemitism, professor, and what is the reason that so many people over time hated the Jews? Baron of course gives a long and detailed answer, listing all the different layers of religious, economic, and political prejudice, but in the end he comes to the conclusion that if you want an explanation in a nutshell, it is "the dislike of the unlike." As long as Jews are a minority and conceived as "others" they will be disliked.[13]

One might assume that such a theory would have made Baron a Zionist who would have settled in pre-state Palestine or later in the State of Israel. But Baron never did. Just as Herzl had moved as a young man with his family from Budapest to Vienna, Salo Baron moved from Tarnov to Vienna to take up his studies at the same university at which Herzl had obtained his law degree. Baron acquired three doctorates—one in philosophy, one in political science, and one in law—and he obtained rabbinic ordination in Vienna. Like Herzl, Baron too believed that the future of Jewish life was located outside of Europe. When he decided to move on, he of course could have gone to Tel Aviv already, the culturally thriving First Hebrew City or to Jerusalem, where the Hebrew University had just been established in 1925. In contrast to Herzl, Baron was fluent in Hebrew after all and sympathetic to the Zionist cause. But he was no Zionist in his heart and believed not only in the past but also in the future of the Jewish diaspora. He moved on to the new center of Jewish life and of Jewish Studies at the time, to New York City.

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12   J.M. Efron, "Modern Jewish History in the Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research," in *A Commitment to Scholarship: The American Academy for Jewish Research, 1920–2020*, ed. D. Sorkin (New York, N.Y.: American Academy for Jewish Research, 2020), 162.

13   S.W. Baron, "Testimony at The Eichmann Trial," in *The Trial of Adolf Eichmann: Record of Proceedings* (Jerusalem: Israeli Ministry of Justice, 1992), 1: 187–88.

In contrast to Herzl, Baron believed in the possibility of the co-existence of a Jewish diaspora and a Jewish state, and as a historian he knew how much this Jewish state grew out of the emancipation of diaspora Jews. When re-evaluating the affiliation between the Diaspora and Zion in a speech given in Hebrew in Jerusalem in 1957, Baron tried to harmonize the relationship between Zionism and Emancipation. He claimed, "The modern 'non-ghettoish' national movement was able to arise out of the emancipation." Emancipation, he made clear, "was a prerequisite to modern nationalism and also to its realization in the State of Israel."[14]

In an obituary of the Israeli historian and one-time minister of education Benzion Dinur in 1973, Salo Baron described with a certain sense of discomfort how during his visit to Jerusalem in 1946 he had

> the unerring feeling that I was universally pitied. I sensed that Dinur, and his associates, both old and young, looked askance at me, as to why, having a chance to settle in Jerusalem right then and there, I preferred to return to the United States.[15]

Ironically, Baron left Zion only to return to New Canaan, the name of the small town in Connecticut that called home. America, for him, was indeed an alternative Canaan, and symbolized the true continuation of a history of the Jewish people that had seen many different centers before. The rise of antisemitism in this New Canaan in recent years would have troubled him deeply, but I believe that if he were among us today, he would not be surprised either.

In expanding his historian's account of the Eichmann Trial in a 1976 article on "Changing Patterns of Antisemitism" he was very clear that he had no illusions about the disappearance of antisemitism in a post-Holocaust world:

> In short, the 'dislike of the unlike' will in all probability continue to affect Judeo-Gentile relations, especially in the dispersion, for the foreseeable future. The only question is whether antisemitism will assume virulent or relatively mild forms. This difference in both degree and quality will, in the main, depend on the general socioeconomic, religious, and cultural conditions prevailing in different areas and periods.[16]

Unfortunately, in this, as in so many other respects, Salo Baron proved right.

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14   S.W. Baron, "Diaspora and Zion," *Jewish Frontier* 25, no. 7 (July 1958): 11.

15   S.W. Baron, "In Memoriam: Benzion Dinur (1884–1973)," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 41–42 (1973–1974): xxi.

16   S.W. Baron, "Changing Patterns of Antisemitism: A Survey," *Jewish Social Studies* 38, no. 1 (Winter 1976): 38.

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"The Son and the Stranger": E.M. Lilien, Börries von Münchhausen, and *Juda* (1900)

Rose Stair

With the sound of children's singing drifting in through the windows, two men worked side-by-side in a quiet castle in the German countryside. One was a ballad-writing member of the German aristocracy, whose family owned the castle; the other was a struggling Jewish artist from humble beginnings in Eastern Europe. So recalled the former individual, Börries von Münchhausen (1874–1945), in his account of an artistic collaboration he undertook with E.M. Lilien (1874–1925) in 1900. Prone to self-mythologising, and also to exaggerating the impoverished background of his partner, Münchhausen reflected that despite the pair's physical proximity in the castle, their collaboration was marked by a profound difference: "during our work, we told each other our life stories: one full of undeserved suffering, of struggles, the other an ample fulfilment of every wish …"[1] The result of this exchange was *Juda*, a richly illustrated book of poems on Hebrew, Jewish and Zionist themes, which bore the traces of both of its creators' distinctive commitments to Zionism.[2] Münchhausen's balladic poetic style was a formal celebration of nobility and valour, and the splendid collective qualities that he ventured Zionist Jews could share with the proud and nationalist German aristocracy to which he belonged. Lilien's *Juda* drawings marked the beginning of his rapid emergence as the foremost Zionist artist, whose works combined fashionable modern techniques with ancient Jewish symbolism.

This unusual pairing appears all the more intriguing in light of the subsequent trajectories of the two men. While Lilien continued making art for the rest of his life, by the end of the decade, he had ceased his active involvement in the Zionist movement and begun to turn away from his use of the graphic ink style that characterised his *Juda* drawings.[3] Münchhausen's involvement in Zionist circles also drew to a close, and in later decades he became an apologist

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1 B. Münchhausen, "Wie das Buch 'Juda' entstand," *Die Welt* 5, no. 14 (1901): 22.

2 B. Münchhausen and E.M. Lilien, *Juda* (Berlin: E. Fleischel, 1900). This book is available to view and download online from the Goethe Universität Frankfurt am Main Digitale Sammlungen: https://sammlungen.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/judaica//urn/urn:nbn:de:hebis:30:1-100003.

3 For a review of the different chapters of Lilien's artistic career, with reproductions of various works, cf. L. Brieger, *E.M. Lilien: Eine künstlerische Entwicklung um die Jahrhundertwende* (Berlin/Vienna: Benjamin Herz, 1922).

for the Nazi party and a celebrated cultural figure of the Third Reich.[4] *Juda*, then, offers a window into a time when such a collaboration was not only possible but widely praised; illuminating a moment in early Zionism when the coming together of these radically different individuals was heralded as opening a new chapter in the visibility and viability of Zionism.

Juda was a publishing sensation, receiving widespread acclaim in the Jewish and Zionist press. Lynne Swarts estimates that within two years of its publication, more than 12 per cent of the Jewish reading public of Berlin had purchased or read the book.[5] In his chapter "Börries von Münchhausen and E.M. Lilien: The Genesis of *Juda* and its Zionist Reception," Mark Gelber asserts that the excitement following the publication of the book marked a transformation in the conception of Jewish art so significant that "the parameters for contemplating cultural and artistic production, which had existed in the general consciousness of German Jewry and of Zionism, changed radically from this point onward."[6] Despite its impact, both early twentieth century critics and present-day scholars have come to diverse conclusions about the artistic merit of the work as a whole, with figures such as Gelber concluding that its poems and drawings lack coherence and often do not complement one another.[7] In this article, I acknowledge the scope for reading both harmony and discord into *Juda* and the story of the collaboration that produced it, arguing that the very ambiguities of the book were part of its significance, and generated debates that furthered the development of early German-language cultural Zionist thought.

Examining Münchhausen's accounts of the collaboration, the subtle reflections upon the Münchhausen-Lilien relationship captured in Lilien's *Juda* drawings, and several reviews of the text, I demonstrate how the complexities and intrigue of *Juda* raised questions for the cultural Zionist community, which demanded the interrogation and re-articulation of their emerging Zionist position. Primary amongst these questions were: how authentic Münchhausen and Lilien's respective poetic and artistic representations of Jewishness were or claimed to be, and whether there was genuine dialogue and harmony between their contributions. The diverse responses to these questions reveal an emerging fascination with and anxiety over the concept of Jewishness and its artistic representation, and an ongoing struggle to define the category of Jewish art

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4   M.H. Gelber, *Melancholy Pride: Nation, Race, and Gender in the German Literature of Cultural Zionism* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2000), 88–90.

5   L.M. Swarts, *Gender, Orientalism and the Jewish Nation at the German Fin de Siècle: Women in the Art of Ephraim Moses Lilien* (London: Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2020), 40.

6   Gelber, *Melancholy Pride*, 87–124, here 93.

7   Ibid., 108.

that was so central to the German cultural Zionist vision. A highly influential publication, *Juda* was the first major creative work celebrated by the movement, and raised debates over the nature, limits and purpose of Jewish creativity, which continued to characterise cultural Zionist thought over subsequent years. As discussions unfolded about whether Münchhausen could capture Jewish experience and the emotional heart of Zionism, *Juda*'s Zionist critics were forced to reflect not only upon the qualities that defined Jewish art, but on what Jewishness itself meant for Zionism.

Background: Münchhausen, Lilien and their Collaboration

Börries von Münchhausen

Börries von Münchhausen was a German nationalist poet from a prominent aristocratic family and a descendent of the famous "Lügenbaron," whose adventures were much mythologised.[8] Münchhausen is primarily known for spearheading the twentieth century revival of the maligned ballad poetic genre, and for being a cultural figure celebrated by the Nazi party.[9] Although Münchhausen did not join the Nazi party, he was a sympathetic and sometimes vocal defender of it until the late 1930s.[10] His acclaim as a poet during the 1920s and 30s hinged on a perception of his poetry as embodying German nationalist values and the spirit of the German *Volk*. This was something that he aspired to achieve through his use of the traditional ballad form, which had fallen out of favour in the late nineteenth century in light of more fashionable impressionist or symbolist poetry. Münchhausen opposed these and other artistic movements that he viewed as "decadent," and promoted the ballad as a corrective, arguing that it was a suitable genre for preserving traditional and highly conservative German values.[11] Characterised by stirring tales of heroes and moralistic narrative conclusions, Münchhausen's ballads offered an

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8   On Münchhausen's biography and career, cf. J. Ditfurth, *Der Baron, die Juden und die Nazis: Reise in eine Familiengeschichte* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 2013).

9   On Münchhausen's use of ballads, cf. H. Scher, "The German Ballad: Tradition and Transformation: Muenchhausen and Brecht," (PhD diss., Yale University, 1967); T.F. Schneider, "'Heldisches Geschehen' und 'reiner blaublonder Stamm': Die 'Erneuerung' der Ballade und Instrumentalisierung durch Börries von Münchhausen (1874–1945) seit 1898," in *Literatur im Zeugenstand: Beiträge zur deutschsprachigen Literatur- und Kulturgeschichte: Festschrift zum 65. Geburtstag von Hubert Orłowski*, ed. H. Orłowski, et al. (Frankfurt am Main; Oxford: Lang, 2002).

10   Gelber, *Melancholy Pride*, 88–89.

11   Ibid., 96.

idealised picture of aristocratic nobility, in whose membership he was proud to share.

Both Münchhausen's Nazi reception and his later social and political commitments led to a retrospective erasure of *Juda* from his literary biography, although as Gelber notes, he never publicly disowned or distanced himself from the work.[12] Münchhausen's early Jewish poems could perhaps be seen as a part of his wider poetic tourism, with forays during the 1890s into such themes as Nordic mythology and Vedic traditions.[13] Unlike the latter two traditions, which were subjects of enduring interest in German nationalist thought, Münchhausen's focus on Judaism was more unusual.[14] In the following years, he exhibited a particularly intense and sustained interest in Judaism and Zionism, writing poetry on Jewish themes, befriending and corresponding with Zionists, publishing in Jewish newspapers, and participating in Zionist cultural events.[15] In his numerous autobiographical essays and articles, Münchhausen repeatedly asserted a special draw to Judaism, describing his *Juda* poems as part of his attempt to capture the "wonderful magic of that ancient [Jewish] glory, the solemn splendour of the history of the ancient people."[16]

Münchhausen's support for Zionism and admiration of elements of Jewish history and tradition did not preclude his sometimes antisemitic views and expressions of disdain for portions of the contemporary Jewish community.[17] Sharing in common prejudices towards urban and assimilating Jews, Münchhausen's enthusiasm for the Jewish community extended only to those he saw as espousing "aristocratic" attitudes similar to his own:

> The first Jews—not the metropolitan Jews who deny their nature and their tribe—are a purely aristocratic people [rein aristokratisches Volk] [...] They have become great through the practice of the purely aristocratic fundamental principle: human breeding by keeping the race [Rasse] pure, breeding of certain, desired qualities [...] This is the origin of the historical consciousness among the

12   Ibid., 98.

13   Scher, "The German Ballad," 98–99.

14   On the development of racial-linguistic categories such as Nordic and Indo-European and their relationship to emerging nationalist thought, cf. G.G. Harpham, "Roots, Races, and the Return to Philology," *Representations* 106, no. 1 (2009).

15   B. Münchhausen, *Fröhliche Woche mit Freunden* (Stuttgart: Deutsche-Verlags Anstalt, 1922), 21–22.

16   Münchhausen, "Wie das Buch 'Juda' entstand," 21. All translations from German are mine.

17   On the simultaneous existence of philosemitic and antisemitic ideas in Münchhausen's thought in the wider context of German philosemitism, cf. M. Brenner, "Gott schütze uns vor unseren Freunden: Zur Ambivalenz des Philosemitismus in Kaiserreich," *Jahrbuch für Antisemitismusforschung* 2 (1993): 186–88.

Jews as well as among the nobility. And this is what has always attracted me so much to this people, the courageous assertion of this particularity.[18]

Münchhausen's support for Zionism was predicated on his positive evaluation of Jewish cultural and ethnic distinctiveness. He praised Lilien and other Zionist Jews who were "racially conscious individuals" [Rassisch-bewußten], an assessment that formed the logical counterpart to his contemptuous attitude towards those Jews who did not wish to identify with a distinct national or racial identity.[19] By remaining self-conscious and distinct from one another, Münchhausen argued, racial groups like Jews or the German nobility could be considered "aristocratic," possessing distinctive collective characteristics rooted in "historical consciousness."[20] His poems in *Juda* can therefore be read as an attempt to vocalise elements of this Jewish particularity, marking difference and an admiration for that difference so long as it was bounded and acknowledged. In so far as it was properly delimited, he believed, the Jewish *Volk* could begin to attain a proud collective identity that might even be deemed aristocratic, and could therefore be expressed through the aristocratic balladic form.

E.M. Lilien

E.M. Lilien, commonly referred to as the "first Zionist artist," produced some of the most iconic and enduring works of Zionist art and iconography.[21] Born in 1874 in Drohobycz, Austrian Galicia, to a Jewish family of modest means, Lilien spent his late teens and early twenties moving between European cities in search of art education and opportunities to earn money through his draughtsmanship and photography.[22] After spending several years contributing to *Jugendstil* [German Art Nouveau] publications in Munich and participating in artistic societies with such figures as Else Lasker-Schüler and Stefan Zweig, Lilien moved to Berlin in 1900 and produced his first major collection of Zionist drawings for *Juda*. These drawings marked the beginning of Lilien's distinctive fusion of *Jugendstil* with explicitly Jewish and Zionist themes. Writing in 1903, Zweig called *Juda* "a document not only of the most accomplished works of German book art but also the first page in the history of a nationally

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18   B. Münchhausen, "Geheimnis des geistigen Schaffens [Excerpt]," *Ost und West: Illustrierte Monatsschrift für das gesamte Judentum* 4, no. 10 (1904): 724.

19   Münchhausen, *Fröhliche Woche mit Freunden*, 55.

20   Münchhausen, "Geheimnis des geistigen Schaffens," 724.

21   H. Finkelstein, "Lilien and Zionism," *Assaph* 3 (1998): 195.

22   Swarts, *Gender, Orientalism and the Jewish Nation*, 37–40.

conscious art."[23] More recently, Michael Stanislawski similarly remarked upon *Juda*'s seamless blend of German *Jugendstil* traditions with a distinctive Zionist visual language, in his playful description of Lilien as an artist who moved "from Jugendstil to 'Judenstil.'"[24]

According to Münchhausen, the impetus for creating *Juda* came from Lilien, whom he had met in Berlin. After he shared some of his poems on Jewish themes with Lilien, his new friend suggested compiling the poems into a single illustrated volume.[25] This type of venture was also new for Lilien who, despite having produced many similar style graphic drawings for various publications, had not yet turned his focus to any explicitly Jewish subjects. Little is known about the genesis of Lilien's involvement in the Zionist movement, and unlike Münchhausen, he left no written record of his early years and emerging Zionist commitments. Lilien was nevertheless a key member of the so-called *jungjüdisch* cultural Zionist movement.[26] He played a central role in the group's famous activities at the Fifth Zionist Congress in 1901, participating in the event's discussions and co-organising an art exhibition with Martin Buber to accompany the Congress.[27] The following year, he was involved in founding the *Jüdischer Verlag* publishing house established by the *jungjüdisch* community.[28] He oversaw many of the graphic design elements of the publications and his own works were featured extensively in several of their volumes celebrating the emerging work of Jewish artists.[29] Such volumes often included reproductions of Lilien's drawings from *Juda*, as did newspapers such as the cultural monthly magazine *Ost und West*.[30]

23   E.M. Lilien and S. Zweig, *E.M. Lilien, sein Werk* (Berlin: Schuster & Loeffler, 1903), 21.

24   M. Stanislawski, "From Jugendstil to 'Judenstil': Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism in the Work of Ephraim Moses Lilien," in *Zionism and the Fin-de-Siècle: Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism from Nordau to Jabotinsky* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2001), 98–115.

25   B. Münchhausen, "Autobiographische Skizze," *Das Literarische Echo* 20 (1917/18): 771.

26   M.H. Gelber, "The Jungjudische Bewegung: An Unexplored Chapter in German-Jewish Literary and Cultural History," *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 31, no. 1 (1986).

27   G.G. Schmidt, *The Art and Artists of the Fifth Zionist Congress, 1901: Heralds of a New Age* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2003), 14–31.

28   On the *Jüdischer Verlag* cf. A. Schenker, *Der Jüdische Verlag 1902–1938: Zwischen Aufbruch, Blüte und Vernichtung* (Tübingen: M. Niemeyer, 2003).

29   Publications featuring Lilien's work included: B. Feiwel, E.M. Lilien, and M. Buber, *Juedischer Almanach 5663* (Berlin: Jüdischer Verlag, 1902); M. Buber, *Juedische Kuenstler* (Berlin: Jüdischer Verlag, 1903).

30   On *Ost und West*, cf. G. Rosenfeld, "Defining 'Jewish Art' in Ost Und West, 1901–1908: A Study in the Nationalisation of Jewish Culture," *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 39 (1994); D.A. Brenner, *Marketing Identities: The Invention of Jewish Ethnicity in Ost Und West* (Detroit, Mich.: Wayne State University Press, 1998).

The tendency of newspapers and publications to reproduce Lilien's *Juda* drawings in isolation meant that many of the drawings entered the Zionist consciousness untethered from their original context in the volume. Some of Lilien's contemporaries preferred to treat his drawings this way, viewing them as artworks of merit independent from the poems that they had originally accompanied.[31] Although the reception history of Lilien's drawings in their own right is a rich source of interest for scholars of Zionism, their context within *Juda* offers further points of intrigue when considered alongside Münchhausen's poems. In addition to the differences in background between the book's two creators, which Münchhausen and contemporary scholars have sometimes exaggerated, there was also a profound difference in their respective artistic orientations.[32] The artistic communities within which Lilien had previously participated and whose influence endured in *Juda* represented the exact types of so-called "decadent" art against which Münchhausen promoted the traditional German ballad form as a defence and corrective. More than their differences in socio-economic class, artistic affiliation, or even religious orientation, however, the question of the differing national or racial identities of Münchhausen and Lilien was a topic of particular concern to reviewers of *Juda.* Later in this article I will consider examples of such reviews, which reached diverse conclusions about the degrees to which their creations were able—on racial grounds—to resonate with one another.

In Münchhausen's numerous reflections upon the project, there is no indication of any such tension or discord characterising *Juda*, however. He acknowledges and even emphasises their differences in background, while asserting that both their friendship and their artistic collaboration hinged upon a deep mutual understanding. In a 1905 article entitled "Lilien und ich" [Lilien and I], which Münchhausen gave permission to be reprinted in 1925 after Lilien's death, he retells the story of the two working together in the romantic setting of his family's castle in the German countryside.[33] Addressing Lilien, he again

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31 Dolorosa, "Jüdische Kunst. Mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Maler Lesser Ury und E.M. Lilien," *Magazin für Litteratur: Vereinsorgan der Freien Litterarischen Gesellschaft zu Berlin* 71, no. 2 (1902): 13.

32 As Stanislawski notes, Lilien family's poverty and Drohobycz's status as a socially and culturally isolated shtetl have often been exaggerated. Stanislawski, "From Jugendstil to 'Judenstil,'" 101–2.

33 B. Münchhausen, "Lilien und ich," *General-Anzeiger für die gesamten Interessen des Judentums* 4, no. 4 (1905). This piece was reprinted with only very minor changes of phrasing in the year of Lilien's death: B. Münchhausen, "Lilien und ich," *Central Verein Zeitung* 4, no. 35 (1925). He had earlier shared the story of the two working together in the Münchhausen family castle in his 1901 article, discussed above: Münchhausen, "Wie das Buch 'Juda' entstand."

emphasises the stark contrasts in their backgrounds, describing Lilien's "dark, joyless youth" in the "miserable little Drohobycz," characterised by "struggles," "suffering" and "inner homelessness."[34] Despite feeling self-conscious in front of Lilien because of the abundant riches and ease of his own "splendid, happy youth," Münchhausen recounts that the two nevertheless gradually came to understand one another, and that this mutual understanding generated *Juda*.[35] He concludes the article by asserting that this information about the pair's biographies and friendship was essential for readers wishing to understand the book. Not only was knowledge of an artist necessary to comprehend their work, he claimed, but "without a certain personal concordance, a unified work by two artists cannot be created at all."[36] In this article, printed twice within Münchhausen's lifetime, he therefore asserts a strong unity between the pair's contributions to *Juda* and the deep mutual understanding that transcended their differences in background. While Lilien published no comparable written reflections on *Juda*, I argue that his drawings for the volume contain subtle assertions about his and Münchhausen's differing identities and experiences. Unlike Münchhausen's reflections, which focus on the pair's friendship and interpersonal understanding, Lilien's drawings hint at broader questions of Jewish and non-Jewish inheritance, raising the question of what degree of understanding of Jewish experience was possible for a German like Münchhausen.

Juda: Content

Structure and Opening Pages

Juda contains fifteen Münchhausen poems on Jewish and biblical themes, some written for the publication and some composed over the previous decade. Many of these poems use transliterated Hebrew terms, names, and liturgical fragments. Münchhausen demonstrates an intimate familiarity with the Hebrew Bible in the poems that retell biblical stories, although in several cases he chooses to depart from established narratives. Lilien produced *Juda*'s decorative page borders, cover art, and full-page black and white illustrations paired with many of the poems.[37] While some of his drawings directly illustrate the poems' themes, others diverge significantly from them in content and tone.

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34   Münchhausen, "Lilien und ich" (1905).

35   Ibid.

36   Ibid.

37   A PDF of the whole book can be viewed and downloaded from the URL in footnote 2.

In Münchhausen's rather sensationalist retelling of the biblical story of Rahab, for instance, the poem ends with Rahab being found dead after the siege of the city.[38] Lilien's illustration, by contrast, shows a humbled but nevertheless living Rahab prostrated before a figure whose relation to Münchhausen's poetic narrative is unclear. Similarly departing from the biblical story, Münchhausen's dramatic ballad on Samson recounts his betrayal by Delilah and rewrites the conclusion so that she dies beside him at the end.[39] Although Samson's earlier solo battle with the lion is barely mentioned in the poem, this is the scene that Lilien chooses to depict in his drawing, giving no reflection of the complex interpersonal narratives that Münchhausen dwells on in his poem, but focusing rather on Samson's muscular physique and his display of bravery and strength in combat with the lion.[40]

Juda contains no introduction or essays, and no substantial text aside from the poems. Its cover features a large Star of David, a Zionist symbol then being used with increasing prominence in the Zionist Congresses.[41] Behind the Star of David is a wreath of roses, with the top portion bearing flowers and the bottom portion bearing only thorny stems. The motif of thorns recurs throughout Lilien's drawings for the book, featuring in both the border illustrations and the full-plate drawings. He also employed the motif regularly in subsequent years, with thorny vines often associated with exilic suffering. Within the wreath, a dark silhouette of the two tablets of the Ten Commandments is inscribed with the word "Juda" in a lighter colour, written in capital letters and a Hebrew-style square font. Setting the tone for the content of the volume, this cover synthesised naturalistic elements typical of Art Nouveau drawings with references to the text and symbolism of Jewish religious tradition, viewed literally through the framing lens of the emerging Zionist symbol of the Star of David. On the title page that follows, a border repeats several aspects of the cover imagery, with an angel holding the tablets of the law, and an open Torah scroll emblazoned with minute Hebrew letters, accompanied with ritual objects including

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38   B. Münchhausen, "Rahab, die Jerichonitin," in *Juda*, Münchhausen and Lilien. The biblical story of Rahab, from which Münchhausen's poem diverges, is recounted in Joshua 2:1–22 and 6:15–25.

39   B. Münchhausen, "Simson," in *Juda*, Münchhausen and Lilien. The biblical story of Samson is found in Judges 13–16.

40   This drawing resonated with the popular early Zionist idea of *Muskeljudentum* [muscle Jewry] promoted by Max Nordau. Todd Samuel Presner deems Lilien's numerous drawings of such muscular male figures "the greatest visual expressions of the regenerated muscle Jew." T.S. Presner, *Muscular Judaism: The Jewish Body and the Politics of Regeneration* (London: Routledge, 2007), 4.

41   M. Berkowitz, *Zionist Culture and West European Jewry before the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 23–26.

a *keter Torah* [Torah crown] featuring a Star of David on its front. From the front cover onwards, Lilien asserted that the book of *Juda* was rooted in the body of Jewish tradition and symbolism.

Nameplates

The first full-plate drawing in *Juda* is Lilien's nameplate, which follows the contents page and precedes Münchhausen's first poem. Like the cover and title page, this drawing engages elements from Jewish religious practice and tradition. The central portion of the drawing features an ornamental *Aron HaKodesh* [Torah Ark], the chamber in a synagogue that holds the Torah scrolls. In the foreground is an eight-armed menorah with eight burning candles, invoking the festival and story of Hanukkah, which was of great symbolic significance to the early Zionist movement.[42] The border of the drawing employs Lilien's characteristic *Jugendstil* style, with decorative entwined vines, angels playing musical instruments, and numerous large white lilies. These lilies nod to Lilien's own name and also invoke the symbolic association of purity, complementing the angelic figures clad in white. Lilien's name is featured in Hebrew on the *parokhet*, the curtain covering the *Aron Kodesh*, reading: "Ephraim Moshe ben Jacob the Cohen Lilien, of the faithful sons of Zion."[43] This statement of Jewish identity and membership of the priestly Cohen lineage marked a transition in Lilien's self-presentation as an artist and a new stage of his career that began with *Juda*, characterised by engagement with explicitly Jewish subject matter. Lilien's choice to introduce himself in this way also ties together his Jewish inheritance with his relationship to Zion, an amalgamation of ancient Jewish symbolism and future orientated Zionist commitment that recurs in his illustrations for the volume.

The last page of the volume serves as a nameplate for Münchhausen, and casts him in a contrasting light to Lilien. Like Lilien's nameplate, it is written in Hebrew; with the two plates comprising the only Hebrew text in the volume aside from one drawing that features the Hebrew word "Zion." Münchhausen's nameplate effectively resumes the Hebrew text of Lilien's nameplate by opening with the word "and," allowing the two plates to bracket the book by offering

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42   The Temple of ancient Judaism featured a seven-armed menorah. Lilien's eight-armed menorah in the drawing suggests a Hanukkah menorah, although these typically have eight branches with a raised ninth branch. On the symbol of the menorah within Zionism, cf. S. Fine, *The Menorah: From the Bible to Modern Israel* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2016), 99–133. On Hanukkah and the Maccabees in early Zionist culture, cf. Berkowitz, *Zionist Culture and West European Jewry*, 83, 108.

43   אפרים משה בן יעקב הכהן ליליען מבני ציון הנאמנים; efraim moshe ben yaqov hacohen lilien mᵉbnei tsion ne'amnim.

a preliminary introduction of the illustrator and a retrospective introduction of the poet. It reads: "and the stranger who is within your gates / Börries of the house of Münchhausen."[44] A smaller and simpler drawing, the text is surrounded by a decorative form emblazoned with leaves and orbs of fruit, and is framed by the German word "Ende" [end]. In the Hebrew text panel there is a small crown, two of the spokes of which have decorative features resembling the Star of David. This crown, differing substantially in form from the *keter Torah* which appears in many of Lilien's other drawings for the volume, has several possible and not mutually exclusive referents. As a depiction of a baronic crown, it gestures to Münchhausen's aristocratic status.[45] It also recalls Münchhausen's status as a "stranger," evoking the halakhic idea of the *ger toshav*, the resident alien or righteous gentile, a non-Jewish resident of the land of Israel who obeys the Noahide laws. By indicating that Münchhausen was "within your gates," with a second-person address to the presumably Jewish Hebrew-speaking reader, Lilien acknowledged the fact that Münchhausen's sojourn within Jewish tradition during *Juda* was that of a stranger who was personally alien to the tradition. The idea of the *ger toshav* nevertheless raises the real possibility that this was not a negative appellation, but a respectful acknowledgement of difference. Nevertheless, the contrast between the two nameplates strongly asserts the different statuses of Münchhausen and Lilien with respect to Jewish tradition. While Lilien had a direct and inherited share within this tradition, Münchhausen was a foreign visitor, albeit one who may have been warmly welcome.

Lilien makes several choices in transliterating Münchhausen's name into Hebrew characters, which further emphasise Münchhausen's status as other to Judaism and the Jewish traditions he invokes in his poetry. The name "Börries von Münchhausen" is given in Hebrew, with the forename and family name transliterated into Hebrew, and the conjoining "von" translated to "לבית" [l\ebeit; of the house of]. Lilien's nameplate was written with consonants alone as was customary for both Modern Hebrew writings and the text within a Torah scroll. Münchhausen's nameplate, by contrast, featured certain pronunciation markers, comprising a mixture of Hebrew and German diacritic signs. Whereas "Börries" is rendered using the Hebrew dagesh and seghol [בֶּאררִיעס], "Münchhausen" is transcribed with the highly unusual use of a Germanic umlaut over the Hebrew letter vav [מֹונכהוֹיזען]. This inconsistent and uncommon blend of vowel and sound signs suggests that while the poet's forename could be captured with Hebrew consonants and vowels, his surname

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44 .והגר אשר בשעריך בארריעס לבית מונכהוֹיזען; v\ehager asher b\esharikha berries l\ebeit munkhhoizen.

45 Martin Buber identifies it as such. M. Buber, "Das Buch 'Juda,'" *Die Welt* 4, no. 50 (1900): 11.

was impossible to render accurately in Hebrew, or would not be intelligible or meaningful without the characteristic German umlaut.

Gelber reads Lilien's use of this umlaut as "radical or daring," and as a logical extension of other attempts within *Juda* to bridge the gap between Hebrew and German and form an "imaginative Germanic-Hebraic symbiosis"; from Münchhausen's transliterated Hebrew terms to Lilien's use of a Hebrew-style square font for the book's title on the front cover.[46] I suggest, by contrast, that Lilien's diacritical innovation stops short of an assertion of complete symbiosis. The umlaut of "Börries" was approximated using Hebrew sound markers, whereas the umlaut of "Münchhausen" was directly imported into the Hebrew text. This hybrid transliteration resists consistency or a seamless blend of the two languages, emphasising that even in Hebrew transliteration or Hebrew-style balladic verse, Münchhausen, by both name and poetic activity, retained the status of one who could not be completely assimilated into the Jewish text and tradition he was sojourning within.

Also suggesting that the name plate's identification of Münchhausen as a "stranger" asserts a difference between him and Lilien, Eva Edelmann-Ohler nevertheless views the contributions of both of *Juda*'s creators as harmonious. She suggests that the "gates" that Münchhausen is within delimit a "poetic-narrative space" of reflection upon the possibility of Zionism.[47] Defined by the poetic rather than the political, this Zionist space was one concerned with the aesthetic appeal and resonance of Zionist expression. This mode of relating to Zionism, she argues, was inclusive of Jews and non-Jews alike, with Münchhausen's philosemitic poetic expression functioning in a similar manner to Lilien's Zionist art. By suggesting that the "gates" in which Münchhausen resided marked a collaborative and creative Zionist realm, Edelmann-Ohler reads Lilien's claim to difference between himself and his collaborator as neutral. This minimises the potential for reading tension and invocations of hierarchy into the nameplate, however. Even if Münchhausen was a welcome visitor into this Jewish or Zionist space, the nameplate's second person address suggests that this space was nevertheless the possession of the Hebrew literate audience, rather than of Münchhausen himself.

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46   M.H. Gelber, "The Hebraic Poetics of German Cultural Zionism: An "Umlaut" over the "Vav"," in *Integration und Ausgrenzung: Studien zur deutsch-jüdischen Literatur- und Kulturgeschichte von der frühen Neuzeit bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. D. Bitzer, et al. (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2009), 178.

47   E. Edelmann-Ohler, "Philosemitismus als Textverfahren: Zum Verhältnis von 'poetischen Zionismus' und Philosemitismus in Börries von Münchhausens *Juda* (1900)," in *Philosemitismus: Rhetorik, Poetik, Diskursgeschichte*, ed. P. Theisohn and G. Braungart (Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink, 2017), 291.

The ambiguity in Lilien's pair of nameplates opens up a range of interpretative possibilities, which scholars such as Gelber and Edelmann-Ohler mark in their varying readings of Lilien's claims to harmony or difference between himself and Münchhausen. This diversity of interpretation also marked the immediate critical reception of *Juda*, with reviewers variously claiming that the book offered a unified and authentic representation of its Jewish and Zionist themes, or that the differences between its creators rendered it a mosaic of fragments of varying quality and compatibility. Considering two reviews from cultural Zionist critics at different ends of this spectrum, I argue that the differences of opinion on Münchhausen's ability to truly capture Jewish themes, and the corresponding relationship of his poems to the presumed authentically Jewish depictions of Lilien, highlight the role that *Juda* played in prompting some of the significant debates of early German-language cultural Zionism. Many of these debates crystallised around the relationship of Zionism to Jewishness and its artistic representation. For those that viewed Jewishness as akin to other forms of national belonging, Münchhausen's German aristocratic status could be interpreted as sympathetic grounds for understanding his Jewish colleague, whereas for those that asserted lived Jewish experience to be as the heart of Zionism, Münchhausen's insights were of limited relevance to the movement.

Juda as a Prompt for Developing Cultural Zionist Thought

As the first major volume of creative work celebrated by the German-speaking cultural Zionist community, *Juda* left a substantial mark on the group's developing thought. In addition to generating numerous articles and reviews, the book's poems and drawings were frequently reproduced in publications and often served as a point of comparison or reference in subsequent discussions of the role and nature of Zionist art. Debates also emerged about the nature of the book itself, fuelled by Münchhausen's unusual status, the discrepancies between text and image, and Lilien's overt acknowledgement of the difference between himself and Münchhausen. These debates were of particular significance for emerging cultural Zionist thought, because they demanded an examination of the qualities and nature of the then still emerging category of Jewish art and its relationship to Zionism.

Two significantly contrasting takes on the relevance of *Juda* to the Zionist movement can be found in a pair of early reviews by Theodor Zlocisti and Martin Buber, both of whom were involved in the *jungjüdisch* cultural Zionist community with Lilien in the years following *Juda*'s publication. Their differing

opinions hinge, in part, on the justifications they give for their divergent interpretations of the coherence of the book. Zlocisti was a physician with an enduring interest in Eastern European Jewry, whose 1901 review tempered its praise with an assertion of *Juda*'s substantial limitations. Although Münchhausen's poetry attempted to capture the "spiritual condition of the desire for Zion," and his engagement with Jewish history paved the way for a greater non-Jewish understanding of the "spiritual structure of our people," Zlocisti concluded that Münchhausen's position as a German aristocrat meant that he could never truly penetrate his Jewish subject matter.[48] He asserted that the profound gulf between Münchhausen and Lilien, reflected in "the individualities of their distinct minds, distinct past, different present, different tribal character [Stammestum]," meant that *Juda*'s poems and drawings never truly cohered.[49] Whereas Münchhausen, who had never known suffering, "tries to live it" through his poetry, Lilien, as a Jew without a national land, continued to experience a form of suffering inconceivable to Münchhausen.[50] This was because unlike Lilien, the latter was "firmly rooted in his own soil, which his ancestors have cultivated for centuries."[51] As a German, Münchhausen could derive strength from German soil, while Lilien, as a Jew, had to work to build a homeland.

The visceral anguished need for a Jewish soil, Zlocisti argues, is for instance missing in Münchhausen's Zionist poem "Passah" [Passover], which strikes too serene and hopeful a note, unlike Lilien's accompanying drawing, which truly reflected the pain of separation from Zion and the many years of Jewish bondage. Münchhausen's poem includes the stanza:

Koste die Kräuter, wie Gott es gebeut,	Taste the herbs, as God commands,
Bald wird er wieder uns lösen!	Soon he will release us again!
Jerushalajim, einst wird es erneut,	Yerushalayim, one day it will be restored,
Einst, einst	One day, one day
Feiern wir dorten das Passah wie heut!	We will celebrate Passover there like today![52]

Demonstrating knowledge of Passover customs with his mention of the bitter herbs eaten during the *seder*, Münchhausen also evokes the Hebrew pronunciation of "Jerusalem" with a transliteration of the Hebrew name into his German

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48   T. Zlocisti, "Juda," *Ost und West: Illustrierte Monatsschrift für das gesamte Judentum* 1, no. 1 (1901): 64–65.
49   Ibid., 65.
50   Ibid., 66.
51   Ibid.
52   B. Münchhausen, "Passah," in *Juda*, Münchhausen and Lilien.

verse. Written in the first-person plural, the poem asserts a share in the emotions that Münchhausen imagines crystallise during Passover for Zionist Jews.

Lilien's striking accompanying drawing is awarded prominence by its position at the centrefold of *Juda*. It debuts a compositional structure that Lilien would go on to use in numerous other drawings including his famous souvenir postcard for the Fifth Zionist Congress, where an elderly male representative of exilic life and suffering is placed in the lower left corner and a symbolic representation of Zion or the Zionist future is in the upper right-hand corner.[53] In his "Passah" drawing, the elderly figure, dressed in a striped kaftan, looks mournfully at the viewer with a tear falling from his eye, encircled by the thorns that in Lilien's symbolic vocabulary represented exilic suffering. The pyramids and sphinx of Egypt loom behind him, while a great chasm separates him from the light of the sun emblazoned with the Hebrew word "Zion." In the excerpt from Münchhausen's poem noted above, which Zlocisti singled out for attention in his article, the transliteration of the Hebrew pronunciation of "Jerusalem" resonates with the Hebrew text in Lilien's image. For Zlocisti, however, such knowledge of Hebrew terminology or Passover customs did not allow Münchhausen to adequately appreciate or capture the emotional resonance of the longing and hope for a return to Zion articulated by the Passover story. While Münchhausen may have attempted to give voice to this relationship to the land in his hebraicised German verse, only the Jewish hand of Lilien could truly capture it.

Zlocisti's ultimately negative assessment of Münchhausen's poetic achievement and the corresponding harmony of *Juda* as a volume hinged upon his reading of the gulf between the experiences that Münchhausen and Lilien had attained as members of distinct racial groups, with contrasting historical and present-day experiences. Zlocisti believed that meaningful Zionist art that captured the true experience of Jews was not based on knowledge but on lived experience. Foregrounding the longing for a homeland as a central underlying motivation of Zionism, he allows for no possibility that a German could understand, yet alone artistically capture, this emotional aspect of Zionism. The lack of coherence between poem and art in *Juda* was, for Zlocisti, evidence of the inaccessibility of Jewish experience to an outsider, and the fact that authentic Zionist expression was predicated on this uniquely Jewish experience.

By contrast, in a 1900 article, the then emerging leader of the *jungjüdisch* cultural Zionist movement Martin Buber argued that the distinct racial

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53   E.M. Lilien, "Von Ghetto nach Zion" [From Ghetto to Zion], souvenir postcard for the Fifth Zionist Congress, 1901. This image is reproduced and discussed in: Berkowitz, *Zionist Culture and West European Jewry*, 128–9.

identities of Lilien and Münchhausen were crucial to the success of the volume. For Buber, on each page of *Juda*, "the son and the stranger unite to testify to the life of the people of pain [Schmerzenvolkes] and to its future," a formulation making explicit reference to Lilien's two nameplates.[54] Buber suggested that the strengths of the volume lay in the "fruitful interaction of these two young men from such different tribal nature [Stammesart] and such similar tribal pride—I mean the feeling of racial capability [Rassentüchtigkeit] and beneficial inheritance."[55] The shared characteristic of identifying with their respective "tribes" meant that Münchhausen and Lilien had an inherent foundation for fruitful mutual understanding. For Buber, this is what allowed each of them to develop and articulate their commitment to Zionism in dialogue with the other:

> In the Jew, the idea of shaping the agony and hope of his blood gained ever-firmer form through the heartfelt understanding of the other. The German, who originally only wanted to give a cycle of biblical songs, received knowledge of the great idea of a self-redemption of this people, which he had considered dead and whose sons he had considered degenerate."[56]

In distinction to Zlocisti, who viewed Münchhausen and Lilien's different racial identities as a barrier to mutual understanding, and Münchhausen's identity as prohibiting his appreciation of the emotional resonance of Zionism, for Buber, the very gap between Münchhausen and Lilien's identities as "German" and "Jew" became the precondition for a substantiated articulation of Zionism itself. Like Münchhausen, who viewed collective aristocratic qualities as something that the Jewish people and German nobility could share, Buber saw similarities between German and Jewish pride that allowed the Münchhausen-Lilien collaboration to be undergirded by meaningful and instructive mutual understanding.

As noted, Buber's description of Lilien and Münchhausen as the "son" and the "stranger," respectively, refers to Lilien's nameplates, in which he introduces himself as one of the "faithful sons of Zion," and Münchhausen as "the stranger who is within your gates." For Buber, these two plates reflected the harmony of both the Münchhausen-Lilien relationship and the collaboration it spawned, with the Temple scene of Lilien's name plate complementing the "baron's crown" of Münchhausen's plate, reflecting their distinct but equally

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54   Buber, "Das Buch 'Juda,'" 11.
55   Ibid.
56   Ibid.

noble and proud racial identities.[57] The suggestion that Münchhausen was a welcome stranger reflects Buber's overarching assessment of the success of the poems and their engagement with Jewish sources and ideas. Zionism, Buber claimed in his review of *Juda*, was an expression not of uniquely Jewish experiences, but of a pride in a collective national identity. Comprehensible to a German nationalist like Münchhausen, this view of Zionism essentially presented it as a translation of other forms of national pride into a Jewish context. Because of Münchhausen's deep lived knowledge of such national identification as a German, Lilien, and by extension, Zionism as a whole, had a great deal to learn from him. Buber still deeply valued Lilien's lived experiences of Judaism, asserting the following year that as the "most conscious of our artists," Lilien had "penetrated into the wonder of our people," "experienced Zionism in himself," and "completely absorbed it."[58] In his review of *Juda*, however, it was not Lilien's uniquely Jewish experiences that were the precondition for the Zionist artistic achievements of the volume, but rather the collaboration built on the fruitful similarities in difference that he shared with his non-Jewish collaborator.

Conclusion: "Jewishness" and Zionism

In subsequent years, as Buber, Lilien and others continued to promote the production and dissemination of Jewish art as a central goal of cultural Zionism, the question of "Jewishness" and its authentic artistic depiction remained a topic of recurring concern. In 1903 the *Jüdischer Verlag* published *Juedische Kuenstler*, a volume celebrating the work of six Jewish artists including Lilien.[59] It was edited by Buber, whose introduction grappled with the question of which qualities defined Jewish art, a theme that also recurred throughout the book's essays on the featured artists. Alfred Gold's essay on Lilien argued that his "modern and European art" was nevertheless permeated by the fact that he was a "Jew through and through, a Galician, [and] a Yiddish speaker," a synthesis of East and West that made his specifically Jewish artworks so relevant to

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57   Ibid.

58   These comments come from Buber's speech at the 1901 Fifth Zionist Congress. Zionist Congress, *Stenographisches Protokoll der Verhandlungen des V. Zionisten-Congresses in Basel*: 26., 27., 28., 29. und 30. December 1901 (Wien: Verlag des Vereines "Erez Israel", 1901), 162.

59   Buber, *Juedische Kuenstler*.

the contemporary Zionist movement.[60] With his insistence upon the significance of Lilien's lived Jewish experiences, Gold here recalls Zlocisti's arguments for the authenticity and importance of Lilien's art for the Zionist movement. Unlike Zlocisti, however, when he comes to discuss *Juda*, Gold chooses not to mention Münchhausen. Describing Lilien's skill at laying out the text of the book's poems, Gold mentions neither the author nor the content of the poems, focusing rather on Lilien's achievements in page design. In Gold's account, the synthesis of German and Jewish qualities achieved in the book was not the result of the collaboration between Münchhausen and Lilien, but of Lilien's own possession of both "Jewish racial characteristics" [jüdische Rasseeigenart] and his "specifically German craftsman's manner," visible in influences on his graphic style such as the aesthetics of traditional German woodcutting.[61] Just a few years after the publication of *Juda*, Lilien's contributions to the volume were now being discussed in isolation from their original collaborative context. Nevertheless, questions about the relationships between Jewish experience and identity, the authentic expression of Jewishness, and meaningful Zionist art, which had been raised so urgently by the creation and reception of *Juda*, continued to dominate cultural Zionist writings.

Marking the first major publication celebrated by German cultural Zionism and the debut of Lilien as the foremost Zionist artist, *Juda* engendered both a swelling of excitement and enthusiasm for Zionist art, and the emergence of debates about the relationship between Jewishness, artistic culture and Zionism that would continue to animate cultural Zionist thought. The story of the unusual collaboration between the German nationalist poet Börries von Münchhausen and Eastern European born Jewish artist E.M. Lilien helped to fuel interest in the book, and also invited reflection upon the questions of whether and how both Jewish and non-Jewish individuals could participate in Zionism or Zionist artistic expression. While Münchhausen confidently reflected upon the harmony between his collaborator and himself in his romantic musings about their communication despite their differences, I have argued that Lilien's own quieter reflections upon their roles in the book, articulated across the two name plates, open up a range of interpretative possibilities about the nature of the contributions of the "son" and the "stranger."

Contemporaneous reviewers of the book were divided on the question of whether Münchhausen could understand Zionism as an outsider, with the disagreements of figures such as Zlocisti and Buber stemming from their

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60   A. Gold, "E.M. Lilien," in *Juedische Kuenstler*, ed. M. Buber (Berlin: Jüdischer Verlag, 1903), 87.

61   Ibid., 90.

different identifications of the impulse at the heart of the movement. For those who viewed lived Jewish experience as the basis of Zionism, the outsider Münchhausen's work was necessarily limited in relevance, whereas those who suggested that Zionism hinged upon a feeling of national pride and identification allowed for the possibility that Münchhausen's German nationalist commitments were recognisable to and instructive for Zionists. The gap between the poems and drawings in *Juda*—the result of not only difference of media but also Lilien's choices to deviate from the narrative line and atmosphere of Münchhausen's poems in his accompanying illustrations—made the radical differences between the book's two creators even more visible. The varying conclusions on the harmony between text and image in *Juda* reached by both contemporaries of Münchhausen and Lilien and present-day scholars reflect more than just interpretative diversity, but reveal the role that *Juda* played in prompting the development and interrogation of cultural Zionist ideas. The very conditions upon which readers of *Juda* determine similarity or difference between its component parts derive from their assessment of the goals and ultimate meaning of Zionist artistic expression. This reflection was invited by the book itself, and particularly by Lilien, whose illustrations and subtle textual cues appeal to the reader, asking them to contemplate the significance of a stranger stepping into their gates.

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"The Soul is Greater than the Soil": Jewish Territorialism and the Jewish Future beyond Europe and Palestine (1905–1960)

Laura Almagor

"The soul is greater than the soil, and the Jewish soul can create its Palestine anywhere, without necessarily losing the historic aspiration for the Holy Land." These words were spoken by Anglo-Jewish writer Israel Zangwill at the sixth Zionist Congress in 1903. The Congress was historic as it provided the stage for the first presentation of the so-called Uganda proposal: the British offer to the Zionist movement of a stretch of colonial land for Jewish settlement in current-day Kenya. Zangwill was mostly known for his literary accomplishments but at the time, he was also one of the most prominent English Zionists and in fact the right-hand man of Zionist leader Theodor Herzl. After his visit to Palestine some years earlier, he was not impressed by the opportunities for Jews there. Nevertheless, he was a staunch believer in the Zionist cause and saw 'Uganda', an offer from his own government, as an important opportunity.

Zangwill was subsequently severely disheartened when the Zionist movement rejected the proposal at the following Zionist Congress in 1905. In the meantime, Herzl had passed away, strengthening Zangwill's conviction that the movement was going astray. After the vote against Uganda, Zangwill and about fifty other Zionists promptly left the conference hall to form the Jewish Territorial Organisation (ITO), claiming to continue Herzl's true legacy. This event marked the birth of a political and cultural movement that would be active for over half a century and undergo several incarnations. The movement's main aim remained the same throughout its existence: the search for places to resettle Jews outside both Europe and Palestine.

In this short article, I will frame the Territorialists' engagement with Jewish identity formation through the lens of their focus on territory, on soil. I will review changing attitudes towards colonialism, and also the changing relationship between Territorialism and Zionism. However, I also want to underline that the territorial question is only one way in which the connection between the Territorialist and Jewish identities can be understood. This connection was also defined by moral messianism, diaspora nationalism, and the relationship of Territorialism with other non-Zionist movements and projects, as well as by the movement's dealings with Yiddish and Yiddishism.

Returning to Zangwill's quotation with which I set out, even before the formal birth of Territorialism, these words suggested that alternative Jewish settlement places would not merely be practical but would carry moral significance as well. Admittedly, in 1903 Zangwill still underlined the value of the 'historical aspiration for Holy Land', suggesting that any alternative scheme was to exist parallel to the Zionist project. However, after 1905, Territorialist projects were increasingly presented as more feasible and morally acceptable than the Zionist endeavours in Palestine. Territorialism was an explicitly colonial project from the outset, with an initial focus on the British Empire as the wished-for context for settlement options for Eastern European Jews. Nevertheless, the first locations that were seriously explored were located elsewhere, in Angola, Mesopotamia (Iraq), and Cyrenaica (Libya). The most concrete immigration project that the ITO became involved in, however, was to transport Russian Jews to North America. This Galveston plan, initiated by the American-Jewish philanthropist Jacob Schiff, was aimed at redirecting the stream of Jewish immigrants from the congested arrival point on Ellis Island in New York, to the Texan port city of Galveston. From there, the new arrivals were to disperse across the sparsely populated American states in the South and the Midwest. The Galveston project was not colonial, and because of its expressly formulated aim *not* to create Jewish concentrated settlements it went directly against the Territorialist ambition to establish such settlements. Nevertheless, Galveston represented the biggest practical success in the history of the ITO, which took care of the European end of the endeavour. In the end, the Galveston project managed to resettle about 10,000 Jews. For the purpose of my focus in this talk on Jewish political self-identification, what Galveston demonstrates is the inherent tension in Territorialism between its ideological ambitions and the practical realities it came to face.

The outbreak of the First World War ended the Galveston project and in effect terminated the ITO's activities. The 1917 Balfour Declaration, containing the British promise to promote the establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine is often seen as the formal end of early Territorialism. Indeed,

Zangwill initially welcomed the Balfour Declaration as a source of hope for the Jewish political and cultural future. However, he quickly realised the document's limitations, as well as what he considered to be the Zionist movement's failure to proactively seize the opportunities offered to it. Contrary to most existing scholarly wisdom, Zangwill therefore did not return to Zionism, but neither did he manage to achieve further successes with the ITO, which he disbanded in 1925, a year before his own death.

As a result of the pressure of rising antisemitism and especially of Hitler's rise to power in 1933, several ex-ITO members together with various new Territorialists reinstated the movement in the early 1930s as the Freeland League for Jewish Territorial Colonization. This 'rebirth' of the movement was based on plenty of continuity in terms of the ITO's earlier ambitions, but these were now further sharpened to fit the geopolitical context of the late interwar period. The movement's aim was now rephrased as wanting to create agro-industrial settlements, still preferably on colonial lands. Before the outbreak of war, the Freelanders held discussions with French and British political leaders regarding options in Madagascar, French Guiana, New Caledonia, and British Guiana. Between 1939 and 1943 negotiations centred on establishing a settlement in the Australian Kimberley District.

Towards the end of the 1930s, several shifts in leadership eventually culminated in the emergence of the former Russian socialist revolutionary leader Isaac N. Steinberg as the movement's new leader and its main ideologue. Steinberg's rise to prominence also represents the more general shift within the movement's leadership from being dominated by Western ex-Zionists to its core consisting of Eastern European 'never-Zionists'. This focal change defined both the souring relationship between Territorialism and Zionism and the Freelanders' ideas about how to obtain land. These developments did not just take place within a Jewish political context but were equally shaped by the more generally changing Zeitgeist, most notably regarding attitudes towards colonialism. As a result, Territorialism now moved from self-defining as offering a territorial alternative to the equally territorial Zionist project in Palestine, to offering a *morally superior* alternative to Zionist ideology. After the establishment of the State of Israel in May 1948, Steinberg published fierce attacks on what he considered the detrimentally militaristic Zionist state-building project. Part of Steinberg's criticism was rooted in his own experience as a central actor in what he saw as the failed Soviet state-building endeavour following the Russian Revolution. As a member of the Left Socialist Revolutionaries, Steinberg had briefly served as Commissar of Justice under Lenin in 1917 and 1918. After political developments in the Soviet Union drove him into exile he looked back on his former ideals as shattered by the violent realities of

statehood. Based on this traumatic past he now argued that any state-focused movement was by definition heading for moral bankruptcy.

So in what concrete ways did the Territorialist outlook regarding Jewish self-identification and territory change over time? One important point of divergence between early and later Territorialism was the changing way in which the world's colonial contexts came to define the Freelanders' approach: before the outbreak of war the Freeland League still predominantly engaged in discussions with (colonising) state representatives; indigenous peoples were ignored. As time progressed, however, Steinberg introduced a new bottom-up approach, focussing on winning over local hearts and minds. This strategy was first tested in Australia, where Steinberg himself acted as the Territorialists' emissary from 1939 until 1943, trying to obtain permission to settle large groups of Jews in the Kimberleys. During his time down under, Steinberg was fairly successful in getting on board civil society: church representatives, labour unions, local governments, and segments of the non-Zionist Jewish cultural sphere all eventually supported the Kimberley plan. However, conspicuously absent from Steinberg's activities were any connections to communities of indigenous communities.

This oversight was not the reason why the Kimberley project was eventually rejected by the Australian federal government. The rejection had more to do with the context of the war and the change in political priorities that it generated, as well as with the longer Australian tradition of maintaining stringent immigration policies. Zionist pressure and a whiff of antisemitism was also part of the mix that led to the plan's failure. Nevertheless, amongst the lessons learned by the Territorialists was the potential importance of gaining support from a broad ethnic cross-section of society. This proved to be much more relevant during the next stage of the Freelanders' saga, namely their activities in Suriname. Between 1946 and 1948, the Freeland League—now headquartered in New York after relocating from London—engaged in serious negotiations with both the increasingly independent local government of this Dutch Latin American colony, as well as with the also still influential politicians in The Hague. The multi-ethnic make-up of Surinamese society awoke in the Territorialists the realisation that they might do well to invest in 'good race relations' on the spot if they wanted the establishment of their desired Jewish settlement in the so-called Saramacca district to stand any chance of success. A Freeland League delegation headed by Steinberg travelled to Paramaribo twice during the period that the project was on the table, and reports were drawn up—and even a short documentary shot—to show the American-Jewish audience back home what daily life in Suriname was like. All in all, in Suriname the Territorialists for the first time developed a fully mixed approach that included

both top-down (focused on colonial governmental powers) and bottom-up (focused on indigenous populations' interests) elements. This approach was partially driven by an emerging anti-colonial ideology, especially cherished by Steinberg and his closest circle. However, the decision to increasingly turn to decolonising government representatives also displayed a more pragmatic understanding on the part of the Freelanders of the rapidly changing colonial structures in the postwar period.

Nevertheless, at the end of the day, those colonial structures were not changing as rapidly and drastically as Steinberg and his cohort may have believed. In Suriname, it was eventually the Dutch government that pulled the plug in the summer of 1948. The establishment of the State of Israel just a few months earlier, the ongoing Dutch colonial wars in the Dutch East Indies, growing Cold War anxieties directed at the potential Eastern European Jewish settlers, as well as basic antisemitism eventually amounted to a combined death stab to the Freeland League's ambitions in Latin America.

This brings us back to the complicated relationship between Territorialism and Zionism. It is through this comparison that we can most clearly distinguish the inherent tensions defining Territorialist history in relation to the crucial issue of territory. Throughout its existence, the Territorialist movement claimed to be offering an alternative or even a competing territorial solution, all the while promoting this solution as more feasible and morally acceptable than anything the Zionists were able to offer. However, as time progressed, these claims became less and less convincing. This process culminated in the Zionists' successful establishment of the State of Israel. According to the Freelanders, this achievement did not absolve the Zionists from their moral sins vis-à-vis the Palestinian Arabs, nor did it diminish the detrimental effect on Jewish society of the young state's militarizing tendencies. At the same time, Territorialism never fully came to terms with its own stance towards the native populations of its prospected settlement areas.

The history of the Jewish Territorialist movement offers insights into the way small Jewish political players made efforts to adjust their own discourse to changing geopolitical realities especially during the transition from the colonial to the post-colonial geopolitical paradigms. In the case of the Freeland League, this change-over reached its zenith with the advent of the 1955 Asian-African Conference, better known as the Bandung conference, hosted by the Indonesian president Sukarno and aimed at promoting Afro-Asian economic and cultural co-operation. The fact that the conference was organized and attended exclusively by non-Western countries—formerly colonized peoples, now newcomers to the geopolitical stage—heightened the symbolic meaning and novelty of the event. This was the moment, Steinberg argued,

for Jews to forge relationships with the Muslim and post-colonial worlds. Unfortunately, he concluded, the chauvinistic and militaristic State of Israel was unsuited for this task. That was why other Jews should take it upon themselves to make peace with these non-Western forces: "'Bandung' is not merely a fact; it is a challenge to us, to our sense of justice and to our understanding."

Despite these lofty moralistic words, the Territorialist endeavours, especially during the 1930s and 1940s, show that shifts in colonial thinking were often not as neatly delineated, also because colonial realities transformed in often unclear and non-monodirectional ways. This unpredictability and lack of clarity challenged the ability of the Freelanders to reach a full awareness of colonial change in order to be able to strike the right tone and to navigate between the required registers when addressing both colonizers and colonized. The failure of the many efforts of the Territorialists does not diminish the value of their history in shedding new light on the fraught reality of twentieth century Jewish politics, geopolitics, and the connection between the two.

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Encountering the Other: Constructing Jewish Identity Outside of Israel in Contemporary Israeli TV Series

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Israeli Identities in Contemporary Israeli TV Series: An Overview

Visual narratives about historical relations between differing individuals, groups, and other societies are reflected in Israeli popular culture. This holds especially true for fictional[1] Israeli TV series, a medium which has increasingly gained importance for communicating changes in contemporary cultural narratives and popular culture.[2] Through changing narratives about the past, the identity of the Other with respect to the group in question is constantly (re-)negotiated in popular culture, especially in those instances where the individual is spatially removed from his or her regular environment.

Further, current scholarship holds that Israeli TV series and fictional film especially serve as a vehicle through which identity, and therefore also alterity, are expressed.[3] The current competing narratives about Israeli identity lead to a re-interpretation of seemingly fixed inclusions and exclusions.[4] Especially since Netflix and Amazon Prime—as well as the viewing patterns associated with them—became available to the wider Israeli public in 2016, there has been an increase in production of high-quality Israeli TV series.[5] Their non-linear structure made longer viewing sessions, consisting of several episodes without break or recaps, possible for consumers. Further, the removal of forced interruption of the immersion of the viewing session made more complex story arcs possible, paving the way for the introduction of a structure that

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1   For a review of documentary series, see Y. Kozlovsky Golan, *Site of Amnesia: The Lost Historical Consciousness of Mizrahi Jewry* (Leiden: Brill, 2019).

2   Cf. M. Talmon and Y. Levy, *Israeli Television: Global Contexts, Local Visions* (New York, N.Y.: Routledge, 2021), 8.

3   Cf. F. Stern, *Filmische Visionen. Deutsch-österreichisch-jüdische Metamorphosen im israelischen Kino* (Graz: CLIO, 2017), 26–7.

4   Cf. A. Kohn, "'We' and 'Everyone': The Representation of Israel's Multi-Cultural Society in the Media," *Kesher* 30 (2001): 42.

5   For a discussion of their features, see: J. Feuer, "HBO and the Concept of Quality TV," in *Quality TV: Contemporary American Television and Beyond*, ed. K. Akass and J. McCabe (New York, N.Y.: I.B. Tauris, 2007) 145–57.

resembles high quality movies more than the previous iterations of TV series, broadcasted weekly.

At the same time, changes took place with regard to the series' content. They came to reflect trends found within the larger societal discourse about Israeli identity, moving away from the melting pot narrative[6] and putting more focus on hitherto underrepresented groups such as *mizrahim*[7], and *haredim*[8]. Here, the question of presentation arises: depending on the series in question, the series managed to portray them authentically or not, instead resorting to using stereotypes. These changes are depicted not on the national, but rather on the familial and personal level, celebrating the differences instead of repeating a monolithic, static, single Israeli identity apart from which no other can exist—a trend found both in Israeli TV and in cinematic movements.[9] While some scholars approach this from a post-colonial perspective[10], this chapter focusses on the ways Israeli TV series retain the multi-cultural approach found in Israeli movies produced much earlier than the 1990s, bearing little correlation to the melting-pot-narrative of other film industries.[11]

Over the course of Israeli film history, the question of Israeli identity was approached from a number of different angles: At first, it constructed the new immigrants' image—mostly of European descent—as belonging to the land of Israel, vis-à-vis a seemingly empty landscape in which Arabs played a minor role, at most.[12] Parallel to the arriving waves of *aliyah* from North African and Middle Eastern countries, the cultural question was reframed to consider values pertaining to Judaism and Jewish religious and secular traditions and their relationship to the young nation, which at first was envisioned to be secular in

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6   For more in-depth discussions, see especially: S. Weiss, "Frum with Benefits: Israeli Television, Globalization, and Srugim's American Appeal," *Jewish Film & New Media* 4, no. 1 (2016): 68–89; I. Harlap, *Television Drama in Israel: Identities in Post-TV Culture* (New York, N.Y.: Bloomsbury, 2017); Kohn, Kohn, "'We' and 'Everyone.'"

7   Broadly, this term denotes Jews of Middle Eastern and North African descent. While ahistorical, it may be applied to other non-Yiddish speaking communities around the globe or used interchangeably with "Sephardic." The latter, however, is also a historically distinct community.

8   This is the term used by "ultra-orthodox Jews" to describe themselves, implying trembling before the word of God. It covers a large variety of communities, most of them originating in Eastern Europe and following increasingly stringent interpretations of Halacha (Jewish religious laws). Especially in Israel, there are also *mizrahi haredi* communities.

9   Cf. S. Weiss, "Frum with Benefits."

10   See esp. E. Shohat, *Israeli Cinema: East/West and the Politics of Representation* (Austin, Tex.: University of Texas Press, 1989).

11   Cf. Harlap, *Television Drama in Israel*, 11.

12   Cf. A. Preminger, "The Arab Other in Israeli Cinema and Discourse," *Journalism and Mass Communication* 2, no. 2 (2012): 414–20.

nature.[13] Against the background of visual Zionism since 1900, the 1964 film *Sallah Shabati* can be understood as the blueprint of ensuing depictions of the quintessential *mizrahi* Other in subsequent films.[14]

Thus, a tension arose between the earlier depictions of the *sabra*[15]—those born before or after 1948 in the Land of Israel—and the contradictions of that image found in the multi-faceted society in which it was perpetuated. With the emergence of filmmakers of varied backgrounds and their engagement with their roots, Israeli Film Studies evolved as a critical field within Visual Studies.

Of course, the influence of funding is important. Rather than being neutral in terms of their motivation, organizations such as the Gesher Multicultural Film Fund as well as the Avi Chai Foundation have been pushing for more representation of marginalized parts of the Israeli public. In both cases, this leads to an increasingly strong, positively coloured presence of religious individuals in TV series funded by these organisations, especially when several of them cooperate.[16] Additionally The Gesher Multicultural Film Fund aims at supporting various other groups which previously received little screen time. Thus, the diverse sources of funding—which often do not restrict themselves to a solely financial role, wanting bigger say in how the programs depict the groups in question[17]—give rise to a similarly diverse collection of narratives about what it means to be Israeli, presented in various television programs. International funding also often accounts for sequences set outside Israel, which are the focus of this chapter. An analysis of these sequences is particularly qualified to exploring methods and images of "Othering" and "passing," of belonging and alterity. This is achieved by suspending norms and providing the viewer only with partial information about the characters involved.

13   Cf. M. Aharoni, "Mizrahi Community Cinema in Israel," *Pe'amim: Studies in Oriental Jewry* 120 (2009): 132.

14   Cf. Y. Peleg, "From Black to White: Changing Images of Mizrahim in Israeli Cinema," *Israel Studies* 13, no. 2, (2008): 123.

15   "Sabra" is the name of a cactus native to the land of Israel. It evokes a plant with a prickly outside and a very soft inside, to which Jews born in the land of Israel are likened. It came to be used both in slang and in academic circles, seeing as it is a useful description.

16   G. Dardashti, "Televised Agendas: How Global Funders Make Israeli TV More 'Jewish'," *Jewish Film & New Media* 3, no. 1 (2015): 87.

17   Ibid., 91.

Mizrahim: Bridges between Nearness and Distance

Broadly, the term "mizrahim" denotes Jews of Middle Eastern and North African descent. While ahistorical, it may be applied to other non-Yiddish speaking communities around the globe or used interchangeably with "sephardic." The latter, however, is also a historically distinct community. The evolution of the portrayal of *mizrahim* is certainly among the most pressing changes taking place in Israeli productions released in the past twenty years. While in *Srugim* (2008–2012), there is a main character of Tunisian descent, this fact only plays a minor role in the plot. Apart from two episodes over the course of three seasons, his background does not mark him as any different than the rest of the group.

Gradually, however, people of *mizrahi* descent take up more screen time: Be it in *Beauty and the Baker* (2013–2017),[18] in which *ashkenazim*[19] and *mizrahim* are contrasted starkly against each other, to comic effect; in *Fauda* (2015),[20] where the characters' *mizrahi* background is essential to the series' premise; in *When Heroes Fly* (2018),[21] where the *ashkenazi* part of the group is the one who is singled out as "Other"; or in *Valley of Tears* (2020),[22] where North African characters struggle to reconcile their new identity with their parents' home countries carries the internal conflict presented on-screen. Especially in very recent productions, there exists a tendency to explore *mizrahim* and their portrayals in an almost utopian way. Their knowledge of Arabic, their history and their cultural practice are shown as a possible bridge to Arab neighbours; for older generations, their memories of living together peacefully pointing to a possibility of doing so in the future. This is the case in *Fauda*—especially in its second season – where the character of Amos Kabillio interacts naturally, without any inhibitions, both with Bedouins living in his vicinity and with Shirin, the Palestinian woman in a relationship with his son. Further, in *Valley*

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18   להיות איתה ("Lehiyot Ita", *Beauty and the Baker*), written by Assi Azar, directed by Oded Ruskin, Keshet Broadcasting, 2013.

19   Jews of European, or even more broadly Western, descent. When used in conjunction with the term *mizrahim*, it helps to analyze pressing differences in cultural questions specific to Jewish life in Israel itself, which may differ from the challenges met by *ashkenazi* or *mizrahi* Jews outside of Israel.

20   פאודה ("Fauda", *Fauda*), written by Avi issacharoff and Lior Raz, directed by Rotem Shamir and Assaf Bernstein, yes Studios, 2015.

21   בשבילה גיבורים עפים ("Bishvila Giborim Afim", *When Heroes Fly*), written by Omri Givon and Samuel Stewart Hunter, directed by Omri Givon, Keshet International, 2018.

22   שעת נעילה ("Shaat Neila", *Valley of Tears*), written by Daniel Amsel, Amit Cohen, Ron Leshem, Gal Zaid, and Yaron Zilberman, directed by Yaron Zilberman and Kate Jopson, HBO Max, 2020.

of Tears, two sequences shine a light on possibly ending the enmity on an inter-personal level between Israel and Syria in the 1973 war—in both instances, it is the Jewish character's knowledge of Arabic that functions as a bridge.

Meanwhile, *The Attaché* (2019) explores the relationship between *mizrahi* Jews and Arabs living in the Diaspora, seemingly removing them from the Israeli context and highlighting their similarities. It is on this storyline this part of the chapter focusses on, seeing as it includes a lot of elements found in other series which highlight the similarities between *mizrahim* and Arab Muslims or Christians, albeit to a lesser extent, for example in *Fauda* and *Matir Agunot*. This poses a departure from earlier productions, which characterized *mizrahim* primarily vis-à-vis their Ashkenazi counterparts, for example in *Beauty and the Baker*, or in the case of *Fauda*'s later seasons focused on enmity between Arabs and *mizrahi* Jews.

In those productions portraying *mizrahi* characters in a prominent way, it is important to note that the respective character's home country or roots are mentioned explicitly, not via the catch-all term "mizrahi." Instead, they are described as Moroccan, Yemenite or Tunisian, calling to attention that for immigrants hailing from these countries, the "memory of exile" was not nec-essarily a negative one, to be forgotten as soon as possible.[23] This was also a characteristic of those German and Austrian Jews who were not Zionists but had to seek refuge in Mandate Palestine due to a lack of another safe haven. In the series—as in the film *Transit* about a German Jew not coming to terms in postwar Tel Aviv—the individual is shown to grapple with his background, his memories, his specific experience.[24] Thus, the focus shifts from presenting the *mizrahi* character as different, as othered, to putting these characters in the centre of discussion, highlighting their integral role in the make-up of Israeli society.

The 2019 series *The Attaché*, a coproduction between France and Israel, is very much exemplary with regard to its presentation of the *mizrahi* charac-ter arc. Over the course of ten short episodes, the *mizrahi* male lead morphs from bearing strong similarities to Sigmund Freud's *doppelgänger motif*[25] to a symbol of reconciliation; from having several uncanny experiences of being

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23   For a detailed discussion of this, see: E. Trevisan Semi, *"From Shelilat ha-Galut to Shelilat ha-Geulah in narratives of Moroccan and Ethiopian origin,"* in *Israel: A Diaspora of Memories*, ed. M. Baussant, D. Miccoli and E. Schely-Newman, special issue of *Quest: Issues in Contemporary Jewish History: Journal of Fondazione CDEC* 16 (2019): 1–18.

24   *Synonyms*, Nadav Lapid's most recent production, poses very similar questions and has been critically discussed.

25   S. Freud, *Das Unheimliche* [*1919*], ed. O. Jahraus (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2020), 257.

perceived as Arab to accepting the multiple layers of his own identity, which includes accepting similarities to his Moroccan Muslim counterpart.

The story arc itself is emblematic for the evolution of *mizrahim*'s presentation in contemporary Israeli TV series, leading away from an initial presentation along a spectrum of othered on the one end and assimilated on the other vis-à-vis the *ashkenazi*. As discussed, in more recent years, a certain departure from this very spectrum can be observed in Israeli TV series: The multi-faceted Israeli society is presented as such, with various cultural backgrounds of which it is proud, and which situates Israel within the larger context of the Middle East.[26] This development can be understood as an answer to discourses that seek to describe Israel as foreign to the region. By including *mizrahim* in the series, highlighting their cultural practices and their common roots with their Arab, often Muslim, counterparts, the above claims are refuted. Commonalities are shown to be not appropriated by Israelis, but rather a bridge to a common understanding; their shared heritage not as a source for distance, but rather for peaceful co-existence. Rather than being ascribed to the European context, the very same rhetoric can be observed in *Fauda*'s first season, serving as an argument that this is a broader development present in contemporary Israeli TV series.

The following analysis of sequences from *The Attaché* will highlight this: Set within the context of Israel, the male lead in *The Attaché* is presented as Jewish as it gets—very much a *sabra*, his religion and his roots easily blending in with his surroundings, nothing being read as foreign. This radically changes as soon as he touches down in Charles de Gaulle airport, where his appearance is immediately interpreted as "Arab" by fellow people of North African descent. Already before being engaged in dialogue, an increased amount of "brown" and/or clearly Muslim people are shown in the background.

Similarly, in the opening sequence of episode three, the male lead is shown to enter a Moroccan café. It is here that the *doppelgänger motif* is omnipresent: Upon entering the café, there is little difference between the lead and the café's patrons. It is recognizably North African in décor, albeit with minimal changes reflecting its Parisian location. Were it not for the lead's palpable uneasiness, one could not argue for him being "out of place" in said café. His uneasiness stems not from feeling foreign, but rather from familiarity; accentuated by his frequent glances at the TV, where the search for a terrorist of Moroccan descent has commenced. He also demonstrates a typically Israeli fear of not detecting terrorists. Frequent intercuts between the TV screen, the male lead and his

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26   See, for instance, the questions posed in מונה (*Mouna*), written by Mira Awad and Maya Hefner, directed by Ori Sivan, KAN, 2019.

surroundings highlight their similarities in appearance and in background. It is the uncanny experience par excellence, following Freud—everything that ought to feel familiar feels very much not, everything that seems foreign turns out to be quite well-known. Perceiving a hooded person as a threat, the male lead's mounting uneasiness is yet another indicator for an uncanny episode, while the frequent cuts between the screen and the pair of them point to the *doppelgänger* experience.

This is again taken to yet another level as he is addressed, quite naturally, in Arabic by the shop owner. Figuring that his appearance is the cause, the male lead tries to deflect and hide his language skills. Even when his *doppelgängertum* is lifted, so to speak, when the shop owner assures him that it is not a case of mistaken identity, Avshalom does not cease to be on high alert at every mention of him being Israeli, scrutinizing his surroundings at minute intervals. Rather than relying on the commonalities, he is shown to be quite on edge, fearing antisemitic actions. In this regard, he can be observed manipulating his appearance to others, minimizing various layers of his identity and outright negating others.

Finally, in episode nine, the *doppelgänger* arc comes to its natural conclusion, as described by Freud where he speaks of

> Persons who, because of their identical appearance, are presumed to be identical [...] so that one possesses the knowledge, feeling and experience of the other, the identification with another person, so that one becomes crazy due to one's "Ego" or so that one substitutes one's own "Ego" with the strange one, meaning Ego-duplication, Ego-divison, Ego-exchange [...]²⁷

In *The Attaché*, this is masterfully shown as Avshalom takes the place of the Moroccan café owner during an attack carried out by right-wing youths. It is an intricate sequence, beginning with Avshalom being invited to take a seat at the family dinner table, his inclusion being portrayed as very natural. Again, the television screen is the focal point of the discussions, again, it draws Avshalom's attention—this time, however, rather than being alienating for him, it is a cause for empathy. Within the sequence itself he moves, too, from being an observer of family disputes and fears, to behaving like a brother would, taking the shop owner's place in guarding it while the latter goes to protect his wife. In

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27 Freud, *Das Unheimliche*, 257: "Personen, die wegen ihrer gleichen Erscheinung für identisch gehalten werden müssen [...] so daß der eine das Wissen, Fühlen und Erleben des anderen mitbesitzt, die Identifizierung mit einer anderen Person, so daß man an seinem Ich irre wird oder das fremde Ich an die Stelle des eigenen versetzt, also Ich-Verdoppelung, Ich-Teilung, Ich-Vertauschung [...]." Translation to English is mine.

other words, he accepts his place and his similarities to the shop owner, including their common rejection of racist right-wing thugs, thereby abandoning the uneasiness stemming from his previous identity questions.

The wife herself, Rana, is to be read in the context of other strong female leads in Israeli TV series: one only has to think of *Mouna*[28] or of Amal in *Arab Labour*[29] to find parallels in how they anchored their respective families in surroundings that are not always welcoming. Here, Rana's strength is underscored by visual cues: First, her eloquent gaze, emphasized by close framings and captured in lingering frames, for example in *The Attaché*'s episode nine of season one. As the sequence unfolds, her actions are put into even larger focus, as her choice to veil in front of her husband carries the scene's weight. It communicates visually what is implied by the dialogue, underscoring the discrepancy between her and her husband. As the camera moves to capture her in the kitchen with her son, the distance adds to their presentation as a Muslim family, removed from Avshalom's day-to-day-life. And yet, it is mere seconds afterwards that he advises the shop owner to follow his wife, taking his place and thus fulfilling the *doppelgänger* motif in which individuals melt together, are confused with and substituted for each other.[30] The sequence ends with Avshalom's own wife calling his name. This can be understood as her drawing him back to his original identity, divorcing him from his newfound reality in the shop owner's place.

The sequence's lyrical composition of camera movement, action and background music almost makes the viewer forget that he is witnessing a violent scene, essentially, in which the café's interior is destroyed and Avshalom is beaten, having been mistaken for the Moroccan owner. One could argue that the thugs would not have cared, had they known of his Jewish and Israeli identity—but the very action of taking his place, of passing for the owner, symbolizes that the encounter with the Other has now become complete. Rather than being a source for further disquietude, however, it resolves the character's identity questions, the uneasiness stopped by proximity and ensuing dialogue.

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28   מונה (*"Mouna", Mouna*), written by Mira Awad and Maya Hefner, directed by Ori Sivan, KAN, 2019.

29   עבודה ערבית (*"Avoda Aravit", Arab Labour*), written by Sayed Kashua and Dror Nobleman, directed by Shay Capon, Jacob Goldwasser, and Ron Ninio, Keshet Broadcasting, 2007.

30   Freud, *Das Unheimliche*, 257–58.

Face-to-Face with the Christian Other in *Matir Agunot*

Non-Jewish people have featured prominently in Israeli series. *Arab Labour* can be certainly described as a revolution of sorts, the first series to feature an Arab Israeli family and be broadcast at prime time in Israeli TV. Ever since, a number of series were released in which the diverse make-up of Israel and its surroundings are highlighted: Be it in *Mouna*'s main cast, in *Fauda* and *Our Boys* as the central protagonists or antagonists, or in *When Heroes Fly* as a love interest in the diaspora.

In most of these, the characters are presented alongside their Jewish Israeli counterparts: In this manner, the Alian family is contrasted with their daughter's Jewish school friend in Arab Labour; in *Fauda*, the army team with the terrorists which they are assigned to; in *When Heroes Fly*, as half of a couple that seemingly effortlessly combines Christian and Jewish symbols in the life they built together. Often, interactions occur that give rise to a reconciliation of personal conflict in an Israeli, Jewish character. While in most of these instances, this is achieved via an encounter with another fleshed-out character, in *Matir Agunot*, this resolution arises primarily through the Jewish character's interactions with a Christian space, namely, a church.

Matir Agunot is a series released in 2019 on channel Kan 11, concerning itself with gender relations, as well as differences between observant Jews of *ashkenazi* vs. *mizrahi* or *sephardi* descent. While the premise is based on the main lead's job as a Rabbi concerned with getting uncooperative husbands to grant their "chained" wives ("Agunot") a Gett, a Jewish divorce document, the more important relation portrayed is the one between the main lead and his own wife. Differing in their personal conviction of the necessity of religious observance, both of them are faced with the Christian Other while spending time abroad. While for the husband, the encounter is inconsequential, the wife is shown to be able to relate to her spirituality in a manner that surpasses similar attempts in her native Israel.

In contrast to her husband, Hana's curiosity is piqued when confronted with the Christian Other abroad, instead of being repulsed by it. Entering the church alone—something that is perceived to be untoward for most *haredim*[31], if not outright forbidden—her otherness seems nonetheless to be continuously highlighted by the framing of the shots. Owing to the church's interior design, the viewer constantly sees Hana side-by-side with some Christian symbolism from the moment she enters the church, be it crosses, icons or the candles lit in front of them.

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31   Outside of Israel, these groups may be described as ultra-orthodox.

Image 10.1   Hana enters the church. An icon is presented in the background left to Hana
              (blurred). מתיר עגונות (*Unchained*), season 1, episode 11. Kan 11, Jan 15, 2020,
              screenshot.
              Courtesy of KAN Israeli Public Broadcasting Corp and United Studios of Israel.

Image 10.2   Hana inside the church, a cross is shown on the left. מתיר עגונות (*Unchained*),
              season 1, episode 11. Kan 11, Jan 15, 2020, screenshot.
              Courtesy of KAN Israeli Public Broadcasting Corp and United Studios of Israel.

Her unsure demeanour, combined with her attire, only add to that, since in
the context of the series, her clothing reads unambiguously Jewish, while in
the background, whispered prayers can be heard. It is only when she arrives in
front of the iconostasis that this certainty is replaced with ambiguity: There,
she encounters a woman praying devoutly, prostrating and crossing herself

before standing up to reveal attire that is quite similar to what Hana herself is wearing, down to the way her headdress is knotted—and with these parallels, the out-of-place-ness Hana may have felt before that is reduced.
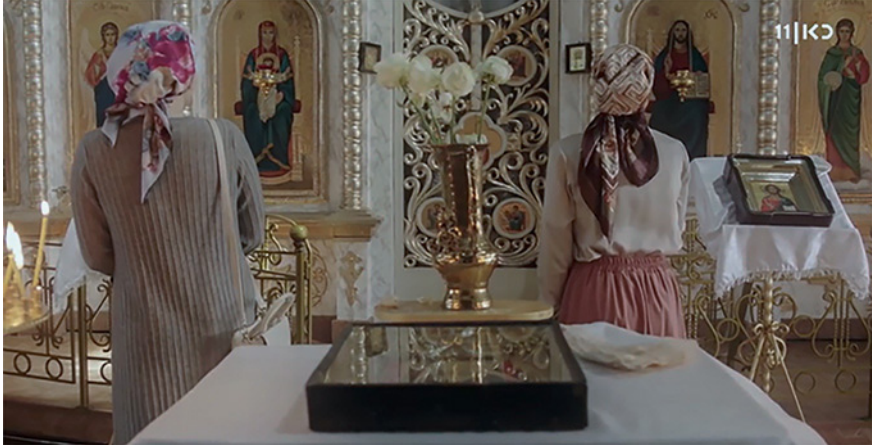

Image 10.3   Hana inside the church, in front of the iconostasis. מתיר עגונות (*Unchained*), season 1, episode 11. Kan 11, Jan 15, 2020, screenshot. Courtesy of KAN Israeli Public Broadcasting Corp and United Studios of Israel.

Image 10.4   Hana's headdress is similar to the Christian orthodox woman. מתיר עגונות (*Unchained*), season 1, episode 11. Kan 11, Jan 15, 2020, screenshot. Courtesy of KAN Israeli Public Broadcasting Corp and United Studios of Israel.

The parallels in symbolism, reinforced by a close-up in which the two women share an extended look, can be understood as a comment on the perceived distance between two different, but nonetheless historically connected religious

groups. In fact, it is an interfaith gaze, new to Israeli series with a huge utopian potential.

Indeed, this connection has an empowering effect on Hana, rooting her in a place that is decidedly not hers, enabling her to use it and the rituals it provides to reconnect to her own spirituality: Offered by a clergyman to hear her confession, it is only after a glance backwards, towards the place where the other woman prayed, that she accepts and enters the confessional, determinedly.

Inside the confessional, she repurposes it for her own cause: Rather than taking part in a Christian ritual such as confessing, her prayer is markedly Jewish, spoken in Hebrew, with accompanying subtle movements of the head and addressing God as "אלהים" (*elohim*, Lord) and "השם" (*hashem*, lit. the name), only a single glance towards the end spared for her silent audience. It is a reclamation of spiritual space that has been lost to her, a finding of new ways to access a part of her identity that up until now in the series was silent. Simmel reiterates that Otherness, strangeness, is determined by carrying characteristics into a place where they previously had not been found.[32] As such, the religious attire both Rav Yosef and Hana wear sets them apart at first and highlights their strangeness in the foreign land, their belonging made impossible, presumably, by what divides them from their surroundings. Following Simmel, however, Yosef's strangeness remains, while Hana's strangeness is lifted as soon as she relates her own being to the other people in the church, recognizing similarities and parallels between them that go beyond merely recognizing the other as a fellow human being.[33]

Of course, it also serves to analyse these scenes in terms of Buber's dialogical principle. Differentiating between *Ich-Es* and *Ich-Du* (I-It, I-You) relationships, he argues that the latter can only take place when the person you encounter is not reduced to a thing, to an experience, but rather when the encounter itself fills you.[34] Jospe stresses that the Other is not necessarily another human being: It is everything besides man's own self, not limited to animate beings—it stretches to ideas and even God himself[35]. The difference between speaking a "Du" (You) and speaking an "Es" (It) lies in the "Ich"'s (I's) approach: In reducing the Other to an "Etwas" (something), one enters the realm of the "Ich-Es"-relation, in which the "Etwas" is an object to be used,

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32   Cf. G. Simmel, *Exkurs über den Fremden*, in *Soziologie: Untersuchungen über die Formen der Vergesellschaftung* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot 1908), 506.

33   Idem.

34   M. Buber, *Ich und Du [1923]* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1995), 8–9.

35   R. Jospe and D. Schwartz, *Encounters in Modern Jewish Thought* (Boston, Mass.: Academic Studies Press, 2013), 13.

an experience to be had without having the world partake in it.[36] Following Buber, every encounter with another person that follows the Ich-Du pattern is also an encounter of the spiritual sphere: "In every 'You,' we address the eternal, in each sphere according to its own way."[37]

Thus, when Rav Yosef only considers the old woman's halachic status in terms of what it implies for him keeping the Shabbat, when he counters the missionary's arguments only to prove that he follows the right religion, when he completely disregards the woman's kindness in keeping their bags and worries about the icons placed around them, he is firmly in the realm of Ich-Es, seeing and judging the other in terms of his characteristics, not relating to them on any human level.[38] Their encounters therefore stay devoid of any possible higher meaning, in contrast to the transformation that occurs with Hana in the church: Even though no words are spoken, the prolonged eye contact, acknowledging the Other in all her similarities, is shown to move Hana in some way, making her able to relate to her spiritual side in a way that up until then was not really possible for her. Thus, one can argue that in encountering the praying woman, she enters the realm of Ich-Du, therefore making encountering the divine easier and thus introducing her to another sphere of life experience, hitherto little explored by her despite her being raised religious.[39]

An Anchor in Foreign Lands: Maria in *When Heroes Fly*

In *When Heroes Fly*, a group of four men experience trauma during the Second Lebanon War, shown in an introductory sequence. After this, there is a cut to Bogotá, showing the new life of one of the four soldiers, Benda, far away from Israel. As we are introduced to Benda's life in Bogotá, a key figure appears quite quickly: His Colombian girlfriend, Maria. The viewer is introduced to her twice—first, as part of the life Benda built for himself far away from home, second, through the eyes of his friends arriving from Israel, as can be seen in the screenshots below:

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36   Buber, *Ich und Du*, 8–9.
37   Ibid., 7: "[…] in jedem Du reden wir das ewige [sic!] an, in jeder Sphäre nach ihrer Weise." Translation into English is mine.
38   Ibid., 17–18.
39   Ibid., 71.

Image 10.5   Trauma during the Second Lebanon War. בשבילה גיבורים עפים
              (*When Heroes Fly*), season 1, episode 1, Keshet 12, 13 May, 2018, screenshot.
              Courtesy of Keshet International and Spiro Films.

Image 10.6   The streets of Bogotá. בשבילה גיבורים עפים (*When Heroes Fly*), season 1,
              episode 1, Keshet 12, 13 May, 2018, screenshot.
              Courtesy of Keshet International and Spiro Films.

Image 10.7   Benda serving tourists from Israel. בשבילה גיבורים עפים (*When Heroes Fly*),
              season 1, episode 1, Keshet 12, 13 May, 2018, screenshot.
              Courtesy of Keshet International and Spiro Films.

Image 10.8   Benda talking to Maria in Spanish (hence the Hebrew subtitles). בשבילה גיבורים
              עפים (*When Heroes Fly*), season 1, episode 1, Keshet 12, 13 May, 2018, screenshot.
              Courtesy of Keshet International and Spiro Films.

The first introductory sequence moves from the big picture to the small,
showing at first an overview of the city, flying Colombian flags, Latin music
playing in the background, then cutting quickly to a short exchange between
Benda and some Israeli tourists and then, contrasting Benda with them in his

at-home-ness. Finally, it moves to showing the distance between him and the Israeli tourists by virtue of having him speak Spanish fluently to his anchor in Colombia—the Christian, non-Israeli girlfriend aptly named Maria mentioned before.

The "zooming in" of the sequence is preceded by a lengthy sequence in Lebanon, highlighting the trauma of the four men, culminating in a close-up of a very disturbed-looking Aviv. Thus, the relative tranquillity of Benda's life in the picturesque city is starkly contrasted with his previous life in Israel, Maria being the centrepiece and focal point of the new beginning. The details in the sequence seem to imply a certain compromise, a synergy between both cultures—they run a Hummus place together, there is a *chanukkyah* in the background, their dialogue, albeit in Spanish, is littered with Hebrew slang words such as "*כפרה*" (kapparah; a term of endearment based in religious practices), "*טוב*" (tov, good), "*יאללה*" (yallah, let's go) etc. This unity is reinforced through the framing, in which even the colour schemes construct a wholesome environment around and with the couple.

The unity is however both reiterated and simultaneously called into question when his friends arrive in Bogotá, immediately commenting on her Christian name. Both the framing and her accessory choices reflect this, too, with her accessorizing with a rather large cross for the first meeting between her and her boyfriend's Jewish friends, a detail missing in previous scenes in which she wore a regular, non-religious pendant.

As the sequence unfolds, we first see Maria standing alone in the kitchen, then joining her boyfriend and his friends at the entrance of their Hummus eatery. From this moment on, the framing groups Maria and Benda together, creating a split between them and the arriving three Israelis. Both Aviv and Himmler comment on Maria approvingly, with only Dubi refraining from voicing his opinion until later on in the series.

This can be understood as a reference to biblical motifs, seeing as the foreign woman is a central theme throughout the Tanakh, at once warned against in some cases and celebrated in others. For the former, Potiphar's wife as a seducer of Joseph during his exile in Egypt (Gen 39) and Delilah of the Samson narrative (Jud 14) in which Delilah's seduction of Samson can be read as an allegory to his very faithfulness towards the God of Israel. The motif of a foreign woman is also known from the stories of Hagar in Gen 16–22, who is understood as the quintessential foreigner due to her very name,[40] of Rahab in her role as the only welcoming inhabitant of Jericho (Jos 2) and finally of Ruth

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40   The word "Hagar" can be translated, quite literally, as "the stranger." She is compared with Sarah, Abraham's wife, while her son Ishmael is contrasted with Isaac, the promised son.

Image 10.9   Maria and Benda. בשבילה גיבורים עפים (*When Heroes Fly*), season 1, episode 1,
              Keshet 12, 13 May, 2018, screenshot.
              Courtesy of Keshet International and Spiro Films.

Image 10.10   Benda's Israeli friends. בשבילה גיבורים עפים (*When Heroes Fly*), season 1,
              episode 1, Keshet 12, 13 May, 2018, screenshot.
              Courtesy of Keshet International and Spiro Films.

Image 10.11   Benda's friends talk about Maria. בשבילה גיבורים עפים (*When Heroes Fly*),
season 1, episode 1, Keshet 12, 13 May, 2018, screenshot.
Courtesy of Keshet International and Spiro Films.

(Ruth 1–4) in her function as a foreigner who despite all things merits becoming the great-grandmother of the greatest of kings by virtue of her adhering to Israel's laws.[41] Of these, it is Rahab who is of most interest here, seeing as in the Biblical narrative, she is the one to house the spies in her native home city, shielding them from those who would cause them harm.

Of course, it would be a stretch to seek closer analogies between the complete episode in the Tanakh and the story line in *When Heroes Fly*—at no times Bogotá is in danger of being destroyed by the arriving Israelis, and Maria is not a prostitute. Nonetheless, Rahab remains a distant echo for the way that Maria is characterized as of essential assistance in the Israelis' quest in her home city, welcoming the Israelites, guiding them, and opening ways for them (as in Jos 2:15). In as much as Rahab is portrayed as an outsider[42], however, Maria is

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She is first "given" to Abraham by Sarah herself, who later requests that Hagar be cast out into the wilderness with her son.

41   Even though she is a Moabite, she follows her Israelite mother-in-law back to her home country, uttering the famous phrase about going wherever the latter goes and accepting her God as her own. She later marries another Israelite and is praised by him for her faithfulness to the God of Israel.

42   See also: N. Wazana, "Rahab, the Unlikely Foreign Woman of Jericho (Joshua 2)," in *Foreign Women—Women in Foreign Lands: Studies on Foreignness and Gender in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East in the First Millennium BCE*, ed. A. Berlejung and M. Grohmann (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2019), 42.

the quintessential insider to Bogotá, her appearance and accent opening doors that otherwise would have stayed shut in the face of the foreign Israelis.

In yet another inversion of the biblical episode, contrary to Rahab being drawn to live among the Israelites, presumably in her ancestral lands which have been voided of everything non-Israeli, as in Jos 6: 23–25, it is Maria who offers a home to Benda—turning the spatial home into its metaphorical emotional equivalent, raising the question of belonging.

The conclusion at which this series arrives is quite telling: Rather than having Benda be excluded from feeling at home in Bogotá, it depicts a viable mode for him to exist there as an Israeli that is nonetheless at home by virtue of the life he built there over the past years. In a way, the history of belonging seems to be not as written into the concrete space as it is in those series set in Israel itself. Thus, the question of Maria, the outsider, becoming Benda's home is answered in another way than those by series set in Israel, elevating it to an emotional instead of a spatial question.[43] This is quite an unusual approach for an Israeli TV series, but nonetheless fitting: researchers Talmon and Leibes argue that contrary to other countries, in Israel, the actual space of the country, down to the respective neighbourhoods, is not a source of stability, but rather transiety, of passing through, and thus having to be reconnected to identity through various means.[44] The question of emigrating Israelis, however, is one that remains unanswered, pointing to a multi-layered identity just as easily uprooted as it has been planted, entailing a number of questions and contradictions.[45]

Conclusion

The three sequences analysed are only a small part of material found in contemporary Israeli TV series occupying themselves with portraying Israeli identity. While those three take place abroad, several others are set in Israel itself, carrying no less of an encounter with individuals living in a distinctly different

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43   It is important to consider that the sequence analyzed is found within the very first episode of the series. As it progresses from episode to episode, the seemingly resolved question of identity posed to Benda is opened again at the very end of the series, pointing to the émigré topic referred to above.

44   Cf. M. Talmon et al. "Location and Identity in Two Israeli TV Series: 'Florentine' and 'Bat-Yam—New York,'" *Kesher* 27 (2000): 41.

45   For a discussion of Israelis relocating to Berlin and their sentiments, see Y. Almog, "Illusory Diasporas," *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies* 37, no. 2, (2019): 63–70.

way.[46] The setting, however, provides a heightened sense of the Other, by which especially poignant commentary on the identity in question is made possible.

Together, both the sequences discussed and the wealth of other sequences mentioned in the previous paragraph point to the trend discussed in the introduction—namely, just how central the topic of Israeli identity is in the medium in question. In those sequences taking place abroad, the disconnect from Israel is used to suspend expectations connected to being "read" correctly or as a way of processing trauma. Thus, passing as an Other becomes a path back to one's own identity, demonstrated in several variations in a number of sequences taken from different series. They all have in common that at the height of suspense, an individual is introduced who differs in one or several aspects from the main character. As both of them find themselves face to face, a question of identity is resolved in some form, for which the Other proves essential even in his absence or in her silence. It is vital to highlight, however, that this does not reduce the Other's personhood—in all instances, it is essential to the sequence's resolution that the Other is recognized as a person.

Narratives and visuals play on the question of Israeli identity—only to conclude that Israeli identity is contingent on an immense variety of identities, hence questioning the whole concept of a homogeneous identity. It further raises the question of how it fares upon encountering alterity, underscoring its multiple facets, each paving the way for recognizing the other person and oneself.

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46   The encounter in *Fauda*, season one, episode four, between barkeeper and suicide terrorist comes to mind, albeit the sequence is diametrically opposed to those presented here: It starts with a connection, as the barkeeper intuitively senses that the woman in front of her is upset, not suspecting anything. Soon, however, this connection is radically severed, as the woman fulfils her suicidal mission, not sparing the female barkeeper who in the past few minutes had reached out to her, trying to alleviate the pain she sensed. Other examples can be seen in the very first episode of *Mouna* (season one), as she arrives home and shows up at an estranged friend's front door, or in *Valley of Tears* in the fourth episode (season one), where an Israeli soldier encounters a Syrian one.

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Michael Brenner, the Award, and Jewish Identity

Dina Porat

The 2021 Salo W. and Jeannette M. Baron Biennial Award for Scholarly Excellence in Research of the Jewish Experience, established by the Knapp Family Foundation and the University of Vienna, is designed

> to recognize achievements of the highest excellence of researchers from all fields of study whose work focuses on the relationship of Jews and non-Jews and perceptions and understanding of Judaism in the wider societies in which they live.

These fields include but are not limited to the history, culture, religion and institutions of the Jewish people, as well as their persecution.

This goal was inspired by Prof. Salo Baron's famous description of the Jewish experience: "suffering is part of the destiny" of the Jewish people "but so is repeated joy and ultimate redemption." He aimed at reevaluating what he defined as "the lachrymose conception" of Jewish history as a history imbued with tears and sorrow, while emphasizing the power to hold on and to keep creating.[1] It is in this spirit that the award committee members decided to bestow the first award on Prof. Michael Brenner, for the following reasons:

We saw a chain, leading from one generation to another: Prof. Salo Baron taught and tutored Prof. Yosef Haim Yerushalmi, who in his turn taught and tutored Prof. Michael Brenner. Here is a continuation, along the years, of thought and research dedicated to the understanding of the Jewish experience, its deep undercurrents as well as its visible manifestations.

Moreover, we saw that all three scholars harbored a deep appreciation, passed on from one generation to the next, for the enormous treasures that Jewish culture gave birth to as the main contribution of the Jewish people to world culture. Baron's main work, considered his opus magnum that made him known as a giant in the field, is the eighteen volumes of *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*.[2] These volumes capture the Jewish experience as a way of life and creation, not just as a chain of historical events, and offer a multilayered picture and analysis of Jewish culture and activity. As a result, Baron was asked, as a leading authority, to deliver an opening presentation in the historic 1961 Adolf Eichmann trial in Jerusalem, one that would depict the situation of

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1 S.W. Baron, "Ghetto and Emancipation," *Menorah* 14, no. 6, (1928): 526.

2 S.W. Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews* (New York, N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1952–1983).

European Jewry before World War II. Indeed, Baron's overview has ever since remained an exemplary analysis of the Jewish situation in the 1930s, which he defined as radiating an extraordinary power of vitality and creativity of the Jewish world in Europe at that time. His description made his listeners understand the enormity of the loss and destruction brought about by the Holocaust. Moreover, Baron answered Dr. Robert Servatius, Eichmann's defense lawyer's question: why are Jews hated? He offered a widely remembered definition: it is the dislike of the unlike.[3]

This deep appreciation is no less manifested in Yerushalmi's work, be it his meticulous research on the Jewish Golden Age in Spain and on the *Marranos*, members of Spanish Jewry who converted to the Christian faith to avoid persecution, which first won him a name, or in his most well-known works: a comprehensive research on the *Haggadah*, the story of the exodus out of Egypt more than 3,000 years ago, read and retold every Passover night for hundreds of years; *Freud's Moses*, an attempt to verify how Jewish Sigmund Freud was; and the most discussed and translated worldwide study *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory*, which probes into the role, or the absence of the role, of the Jewish historian in transmitting Jewish history and shaping Jewish identity.[4]

Michael Brenner is on his way to becoming a pivotal figure in the field of Jewish identity. He is a professor of Jewish history and culture in distinguished universities in the United States and in Germany and a member of prestigious academic societies and editorial boards. In 2014, the Federal Republic of Germany awarded him the Order of Merit, and the extraordinary scope of his activities is recognized by his colleagues and peers. His research encompasses the history of the Jews from the nineteenth to the twenty-first centuries, focusing on sensitive issues: Jews in Germany before and after the Holocaust, relations between the Zionist movement and the state of Israel and especially Jewish thought and thinkers. Most noteworthy are his books: *A Short History of the Jews*, and *Zionism: A Brief History*, in which he skillfully gives an overview of these complicated histories.[5]

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3   *The Trial of Adolf Eichmann: Record of Proceedings in the District Court of Jerusalem* (Jerusalem: Trust for the Publication of the Proceedings of the Eichmann Trial, 1992), 1: 169–82.

4   Y.H. Yerushalmi*, Haggadah and History* (Philadelphia, Penn.: The Jewish Publication Society of America,1975); ibid., *Freud's Moses: Judaism Terminable and Interminable* (New Haven, Conn., and London: Yale University Press: 1991); Y.H. Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (Seattle, Wash., and London: University of Washington Press, 1982).

5   M. Brenner, *A Short History of the Jews*, transl. J. Riemer (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2012); ibid., *Zionism: A Brief History*, transl. S. Frisch (Princeton, N.J.: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2003).

We would like to draw special attention to Brenner's book *Prophets of the Past*: *Interpreters of Jewish History*.[6] The publisher, Princeton University Press, described it as

> the first book to examine in depth how modern Jewish historians have interpreted Jewish history. Michael Brenner reveals that perhaps no other national or religious group has used their shared history for so many different ideological and political purposes as the Jews. He ... traces the master narratives of Jewish history from the beginnings of the scholarly study of Jews and Judaism in nineteenth-century Germany ... to Zionist and anti-Zionist interpretations of Jewish history ... History proved to be a uniquely powerful weapon for modern Jewish scholars during a period when they had no nation or army to fight for ideological and political objectives, whether the goal was Jewism emancipation, diasporic autonomy, or the creation of a Jewish state... . These historians often found legitimacy for these struggles in the Jewish past.[7]

Let us add to the Princeton very apt analysis, that this book, with its illuminating title, *Prophets of the Past*, actually shows that leading Jewish historians were not only scholars or researchers secluded in an ivory tower or an attic. Many people read and discussed their work, and the historians acquired a public status that spread far beyond the realm of pure research. They each had their opinions and worldviews regarding the Jewish past and political and ideological aspirations for the future. Brenner's book explains why Baron was asked to testify at Eichmann's trial in Jerusalem, and how Yerushalmi's *Zakhor* became an almost canonized text. *Prophets of the Past* raises the following question: Brenner is Yerushalmi's student, yet in *Zakhor*, the latter doubts whether the historian exercises any influence on the Jewish public and thought, and on crystalizing Jewish identity, or whether anyone reads history books. Did Brenner deviate from his admired teacher's position, and present here his own conclusion, one that pinpoints the public importance and status acquired by Jewish historians throughout the decades? If so, Brenner should be commended all the more for the independent line of thought presented in his book.

In addition, we also noted that the appreciation our trio harbored and still harbors for Jewish culture and creativity, led them to develop and follow Baron's rejection of the "lachrymose conception" of Jewish history. This "bag of tears" history comprising pogroms, persecutions and expulsions, made way for another more positive view of the Jewish experience. Brenner emphasizes the positive side of this experience: the everyday life interaction between

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6   M. Brenner, *Prophets of the Past*: *Interpreters of Jewish History* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2010).

7   Ibid. (cover).

Jews and the surrounding society, the cultural interchange, the social fabric of which Jews were part during periods of calm relations between the groups. Baron described earlier periods and relations as part of the diasporic experience. He opposed the idea of exile as a totally negative phenomenon. At the same time, he argued that emancipation, achieved by Jewish communities beginning in the second half of the nineteenth century, was indeed a liberating achievement on the one hand, yet it also opened the door to new forms of antisemitism derived from resentment against their integration and success. This is why he entitled his groundbreaking 1928 article "Ghetto and Emancipation." Later, once the Zionist ideology began to crystalize, he continued his line, emphasizing that younger generations rejected earlier nightmarish descriptions of Jewish history, and repudiated the thesis that Zionism drew a major part of its strength from "the negation of the Diaspora" where all the tragic events took place. This did not change his mind regarding the need to draw again a positive Jewish history even in the diaspora, as a basis for self-awareness and cohesive identity of diasporic Jews in the modern world.

Yerushalmi went one step further in advocating the positive Jewish experience. His research on the *Haggadah*, and description of the Jewish cycle of the year in *Zakhor*, highlighted the contribution of rites and rituals to the Jewish experience, no matter where situated on the globe. This year-round experience is made up of daily prayers, weekly traditions ending with Shabbat, of holidays and ceremonies, all repeated every day, week and year for centuries, based on the ancient scriptures to which new interpretations and debates are added. This is all the more so when they are all transmitted from parents to sons and daughters, around the family table or while performing the basic ceremonies that most Jews perform, from the atheists and secular to the religious and Haredi. A vast majority of the Israeli Jewish population respect the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur, for instance. Thus, Jewish time is made up of a cyclic repeated movement, but also of a linear one, that goes hand in hand with the cyclical one, from the past to the future and the horizon, toward messianic redemption that again may have many faces and various different ideological interpretations.

Brenner also detaches Jewish historiography from its past burden of disasters. He found his own path to accomplish this task: He intertwined the diasporic experience with the Zionist one, not necessarily as a contradiction but rather as a continuation and implementation. He delved into Theodor Herzl's writings, in order to trace the beginnings of the modern Zionist idea, and found the connection Herzl indeed made between Judaism and the Zionist idea. In his speech in the first Zionist Congress in 1897, a speech which made his listeners hear the pangs of the coming redemption, he said: "we, one may say, came

back home" and explained: "Zionism is a return to Judaism even before the return to the land of the Jews."[8] He was referring not to Judaism in the religious sense, but rather to the national one, namely the wish of individuals to be affiliated to a public that has so much in common. Antisemitism gave birth to Zionism, and Zionism is first and foremost a return to Judaism—here in a nutshell is Herzl's view on the impact of antisemitism as a moving external force, and on Zionism as revitalizing Jewish contents from within.

Let us draw attention to a beautiful piece, "The Menorah," written a few months after the first Zionist Congress, in which Herzl describes his way from being a modern man of means and of universal values and habits, to a Jew who discovered the beauty of Judaism, which he started loving and following.[9] Then comes a description of the menorah—the candelabra, which the Romans looted when they destroyed the Second Temple and today is Israel's national symbol. On Hanukkah, Herzl lights its eight candles with his children, whom he wants to see educated as Jews, and defines his own vocation: to be the ninth candle, the one that lights the others, one by one, and chases away darkness. And he is happy: "no task can bring more happiness than the task of bringing the light."[10]

And finally, we found a certain modesty, an acknowledgement of the historian's limitations, even among highly acclaimed personalities such as Baron and Yerushalmi as well as in Brenner's words. When Baron was asked by the judges in Jerusalem to give an assessment of the Jewish situation prior to the Second World War, he opened with an apology: I am standing here in front of you, he answered, not as an eyewitness but rather as a historian, and the historian of the present always faces a double question: first, does he already have a historical perspective? Generally speaking, he does not, as such a perspective comes after decades. And second: does he have the relevant documents? And again, it takes decades for these to be released from the archives. Baron added that since the evidence in the wake of the war was already partially available, a historian would try and offer at least a preliminary summary. Baron stood there, acknowledging his limitations out of respect for the court and the attentive audience.

Yerushalmi published just one story in prose that differs from all his other publications. This story, entitled "Gilgul," namely metamorphosis in Hebrew,

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8   T. Herzl, *Zionist Articles and Speeches, 1895–1899*. Jerusalem: The Zionist Library, 1976. [In Hebrew.]

9   T. Herzl, "The Menorah," in *Zionist Writings: Essays and Addresses*, trans. H. Zohn (New York, N.Y.: Herzl Press, 1973), 1: 203–6. Orginally published in *Die Welt*, December 31, 1897.

10   Ibid.

includes many autobiographical elements, and reflects the never ending self-scrutiny of a great historian.[11] It presents a restless Jew, standing on the beach in Jaffa and looking for answers that will calm his stormy soul, that will tell him "What will become of me? What must I do?" The protagonist was Yerushalmi, who despite decades of study, still searched for a way to understand Jewish history, solve its riddle and expose its secret. The sea heard the questions but did not reply. Instead, "it continued to shimmer, to heave and swell, to roll its waves, ancient, majestic, inscrutable, indifferent."[12]

Brenner, when asked what he had learnt from Yerushalmi, answered: he warned me against short cuts in my learning, he recommended studying languages and reading my sources thoroughly. And I do hope, said Brenner, that I passed this test.[13] He certainly did, and in his reply, he was perhaps referring to the well-known words of Abba Kovner, the partisan leader in the Second World War and poet:

> ... for it is not the answers that are important. Only
> By questions is man empowered. And no final summary,
> Just no rounding off,
> In the name of God![14]

And for this modesty, inspired by his teacher and his teacher's teacher, his search for questions and for not offering too clear-cut answers, and for all the reasons mentioned above, we decided unanimously to bestow on Brenner the *Salo W. and Jeannette M. Baron Senior Scholar Award* for 2021.

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11   Cf. Y.H. Yerushalmi, "Gilgul." *The New Yorker*, August 8, 2011. https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2011/08/15/gilgul.

12   Ibid.

13   A telephone conversation with Prof. Brenner held on May 24, 2021.

14   A. Kovner, *Sloan-Kettering: Poems* (New York, N.Y.: Schocken Books, 2002), 62.

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