

DAVID B. RUDERMAN

# Early Modern Jewry

*A New Cultural History*



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*David B. Ruderman*

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*For my sister Nomi Raz*

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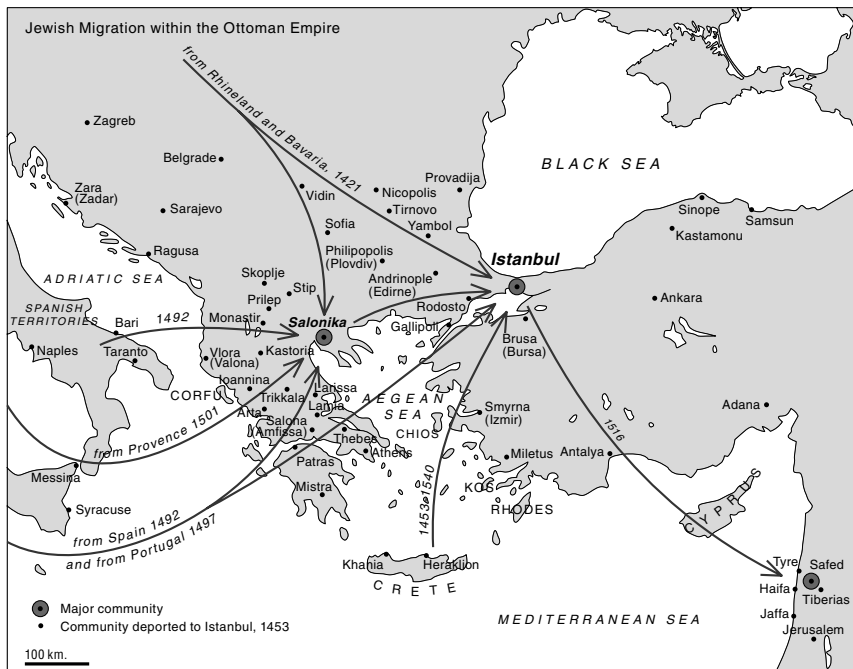
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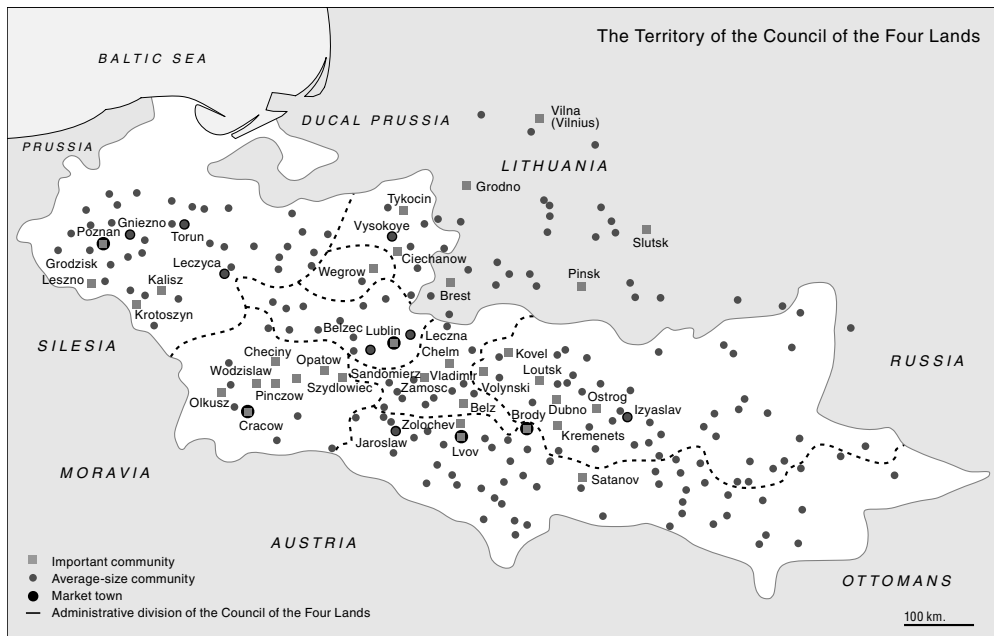
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# Early Modern Jewry



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## Introduction

Since my first college course in European history some forty-five years ago, the historical period usually called “early modern” (roughly comprising the late fifteenth to late eighteenth centuries) has held a special fascination for me. It displays so conspicuously the trends and processes historians delight in studying: radical change, social and cultural crises, and the complex and often unexpected mingling of the old and new. One is hard-pressed to understand how such developments as the new geographic and scientific discoveries, the invention of print, the emergence of new national political structures and policies, protracted and devastating famines and wars, economic contractions and expansions, and religious individualism countered by religious discipline and control can all be subsumed easily under one overarching interpretative framework. Such labels as “a period of transition,” of “paradox,” or of “seeming contradictions and inconsistencies,” often evoked to characterize early modernity, transparently betray how challenging it is for the historian to make some sense of the epoch as a whole in relation to its diverging and contrasting parts.

Such is the case for those who study early modern Jewish history as well. Take, for example, the story I enjoy relating to my students about three prominent rabbis and writers who lived and worked in Venice in the first half of the seventeenth century, although one of them spent much of his life traveling to other parts of the European continent and to the Middle East. It would be safe to say that each of them was aware of and

appreciated the others and that each highly respected the others for their intelligence and erudition.

The first, Leon Modena (1571–1648), served as rabbi, cantor, and preacher in the ghetto while composing many works (both published and unpublished) including an autobiography, a collection of rabbinical responsa, sermons, a critique of the kabbalah, a work composed in Italian explaining Judaism and its practices to non-Jews, and several books defending the integrity of the rabbinic tradition and the Talmud. Modena also composed an unfinished work called *Sha'agat Aryeh* (The Roar of the Lion) responding unfavorably to another composition called *Kol Sakhal* (The Voice of a Fool), a radical and devastating critique of the very foundations of rabbinic Judaism. Given the apparently lame response Modena offered to counter this work, it has often been assumed that he also penned the *Kol Sakhal*. (This assumption informs the most thorough and compelling treatment of this work by Talya Fishman.) The colorful rabbi and educator was not only a writer of many genres and a holder of the many professions that he lists at the end of his autobiography but also appears to have been a dissimulator, simultaneously defending the Talmud and the rabbis while criticizing and holding them accountable for the miseries they had allegedly inflicted on the Jewish community. Modena was also going against the grain in challenging the predominance of kabbalistic sapience in a Jewish culture saturated with esoteric books and their teachers. Modena's life and thought is one of the most documented of any rabbinic figure in early modern Europe, but ironically it may be the least understood.<sup>1</sup>

Modena's rabbinic colleague, Simone Luzzatto (1583–1663), was a similarly enigmatic figure, functioning as a

rabbi and educator for more than fifty years in Venice, but appearing to have little sustained interest in rabbinics or in traditional Jewish subjects given the paucity of his Hebrew writing in these areas. Indeed, Luzzatto is primarily known for two works he published in Italian, apparently written for non-Jewish readers. The first, the *Discorso circa il stato de gl' hebrei et in particolar dimoranti nell'inclita città di Venetia* (A Discourse on the State of the Jews, Particularly Those Dwelling in the Illustrious City of Venice) represented a vigorous defense of the Jewish presence in Venetian society, arguing that their economic utility to the state, their political allegiance, and their high cultural profile entitled them to live peacefully and creatively among their Catholic neighbors. Luzzatto later published a work titled *Socrate ovvero dell'humano sapere* (Socrates, or Concerning Human Knowledge), his own highly original reconstruction of the Socratic trial, containing rich discourses on many of the philosophical and scientific issues of his day. The work purports to argue that without the aid of divine revelation human beings are incapable of understanding the truth and knowing the world. At least this seems to be the theme of this work from a perusal of its long title page. But alas, the reader who persists in reading the book from beginning to end will discover only a skeptical bent with no discussion whatsoever of the virtue of revelation—Jewish or otherwise. In fact, there are few references to the Jewish provenance of this work other than the name of the illustrious Venetian rabbi! What could have motivated this allegedly prominent spokesman of Judaism to compose a text in which his faith appears to be totally absent? Despite the considerable learning and eloquence of both works, one written to

influence public opinion and the other without any obvious pedagogic or religious objective, Rabbi Luzzatto remains a mystery to those who would wish to understand his true intentions and his ultimate beliefs.<sup>2</sup>

Their colleague Joseph Delmedigo (1591–1655), known by the name Yashar of Candia (Crete), was as complex a thinker as either of his two colleagues. Born in Crete, he gained his medical degree at the University of Padua as well as an extensive background in the sciences, even studying with Galileo, and spent time in Venice as well before returning to Crete to practice medicine. From there he set out on an extensive journey through the Middle East, eastern and central Europe, and even Amsterdam, engaging in conversations with Jews and especially Karaites wherever he went. His scientific work *Sefer Elim* (The Book of Elim) was published in Amsterdam by Menasseh ben Israel. It demonstrated his intricate understanding of contemporary cosmology and astronomy and ensured his place as the leading Jewish scientific writer of his day. Soon after, one of his disciples published a large collection of his writings called *Ta'alumot Hokhmah* (The Secrets of Wisdom). The work includes both a treatise defending the study of the kabbalah along with an extensive collection of recent kabbalistic works. He also composed in a separate letter a critique of Jewish esoteric wisdom and advocated the study of philosophy and the sciences for contemporary Jews. Delmedigo's recent biographer, Isaac Barzilay, wrestled with the obvious discrepancies among these various works, the seemingly contradictory stance of promoting the kabbalah and its writings while at the same time deprecating its teachings in favor of a "scientific" view of the universe. In the end, Barzilay dismissed

Delmedigo's kabbalistic leanings as a deception and saw him as a proto-*maskil* (a man of enlightenment), an early advocate of rational enlightenment. But Barzilay had hardly reconciled the inner contradictions seemingly underlying the composite nature of Delmedigo's search for truth: Was he a secret kabbalist or not? Had his positions shifted over time? And how was it possible to reconcile these inconsistent strands of his thinking, revealed in works he wrote to disparate colleagues and students from Cairo to Vilna to Amsterdam? Who was the real Joseph Delmedigo?<sup>3</sup>

Here, then, is a wonderful example of the richly textured complexity of Jewish cultural life in early modern Europe. How might one characterize these three rabbis, friends and associates, and their intellectual commitments and the nature of their religious beliefs? Was Modena a defender or detractor of Jewish norms and rabbinic authority? Was Luzzatto a skeptic, or a believer? And was Delmedigo hostile to kabbalistic musings, or were they for him the pinnacle of Jewish spirituality and creativity? Were these three all dissimulators practicing a form of double talk that Leo Strauss characterized in his well-known book *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, speaking publicly in one voice while masking their true private opinions?<sup>4</sup> Perhaps their seemingly contradictory positions are symptomatic of something deeper in their culture and society that the historian needs to decipher: a crisis of confidence in what constitutes true knowledge, epistemological doubts about the porous boundaries between occult and rational thinking, a compulsion to challenge religious and political authority in the name of an inner voice of conscience, or, perhaps, an autonomous personality questioning all conventions and norms.

I have not yet made up my mind on how to explain precisely each of these three intriguing individuals and their parallel quests to understand the world around them. Whether typical or not of other early modern cultural figures among European Jewry, this cadre of rabbinic scholars illustrates profoundly and dramatically the challenges of understanding, defining, or classifying the milieu in which they lived and the culture they helped to shape. Was their age traditional or modern? How should the historian weigh such factors as the language in which they expressed themselves, the books they printed and those that remained in manuscript, their mobile or sedentary lifestyles, their interactions with Jews and non-Jews, or the reciprocal impact each had on the other? Whatever factors one considers in reconstructing their world, the individual portraits these rabbis cut in all their complexity and impenetrability are exciting and compelling. Their stories illuminate the vast treasures that await the student of Jewish history in the baffling age called early modernity. Theirs and other stories are what sparked my long-held interest in understanding this captivating era.

In this quest, however, I have hardly been alone. Many others have entered this field in recent years and have scrutinized its multiple dimensions intensely and resourcefully, not only focusing on Italy but throughout the continent and beyond. When I began my graduate studies in early modern Jewish history at the Hebrew University in the late 1960s, I was expected to master a finite canon of recent historical works on this era written especially by such giants as Jacob Katz, Yizhak Baer, and Gershom Scholem. This list was conspicuously weighted in favor of Israeli scholarship; almost all of it was written in Hebrew, but some in English.<sup>5</sup>

By the late 1970s, the study of this period was significantly enlarged by the work of a younger group of scholars, most of them residing in Israel but some of them in other countries. Several researchers expanded the study of the cultural and intellectual history of the conversos beyond the previous focus on Benedict de Spinoza and heresy. Scholem's regnant reconstructions of the history of the kabbalah were now challenged by several of his most prominent students. A younger group of scholars, several of them trained in America with strong interests in social and economic history, begin to revive the study of Jewish history in Poland and Lithuania. New reconstructions of the social history of Anglo-Jewry, the cultural and intellectual history of Italian Jewry, and the social and cultural history of Ottoman Jewry appeared in these same years. Richard Popkin's prestige and ability to surround himself with a talented group of researchers enhanced the study of Jewish-Christian relations, Spinozism, converso skepticism, and millenarianism in numerous ways.<sup>6</sup>

In subsequent decades, the maturation of this younger group of historians has now produced major and fuller treatments of larger units of study. Several scholars, initially attracted to the social and economic history of the 1960s, have shifted their interest to cultural history as well. They have been joined by others still primarily Israeli, but increasingly represented by North American and European scholars.<sup>7</sup>

Several areas previously ignored by an earlier generation have become prominent—undoubtedly the result of trends in general historical research. Several scholars have pioneered the study of print and book censorship in the formation of early modern Jewish culture.



Others have generated a renewed interest in the study of Christian Hebraism, especially Christian kabbalah, as well as the study of antiquarianism and scholarship among Jews. Still others have opened up the study of women and gender in this period, while much new work on the conversos from a variety of researchers on three continents continues to appear. New archival work from central and eastern Europe, the Ottoman Empire, and elsewhere has offered new vistas from which to reassess Jewish cultural and social history. The ultimate result of all of this new research is an extraordinary number of books and articles in many languages. My students now confront a body of scholarly literature they can never fully master and absorb. The finite reading list of my own student days is now a thing of the past!<sup>8</sup>

Quite surprisingly, despite the plethora of new studies related to Jewish history in early modern Europe and despite the great interest among students of Jewish history this literature has generated, there has been little attempt to understand the whole and to connect the smaller units of investigation in any coherent or meaningful way. Only one historian, Jonathan Israel, has attempted to offer a serious comprehensive portrait of the entire period, arguing for the first time that early modern Jewish history needs to be understood as a distinct epoch, distinguishable from both the medieval or modern periods.<sup>9</sup> Others have remained indifferent to demarcating this period, or have simply designated it an extension of the Middle Ages, or have labeled it vaguely as a mere transitional stage between medievalism and modernity without properly describing its distinguishing characteristics.

This reluctance to offer a comprehensive, transregional portrait of Jewish culture and society in early

modern Europe, is attributable, I would argue, to at least three major challenges that have inhibited others from attempting to do what Israel tried to do. The first is the challenge offered by Jonathan Israel himself and, by now, the well-established and honorable place his book (*European Jewry in the Age of Mercantilism 1550–1750*) has assumed in scholarly literature. While Israel has made an important case for a distinct early modern period for Jewish history and ably described its economic and political foundations, his understanding of Jewish culture was deficient in many respects when he first published the book in 1985. Subsequently, the new explosion of scholarship in the last twenty-five years has made his reconstruction even more outdated and incomplete. Israel's characterization of Jewish social and cultural history as primarily reflective and derivative of general trends located in non-Jewish society also requires revision and reevaluation. The history of Jewish society and culture in early modern Europe is more than a mirror of the Christian world and needs to be described more accurately and more comprehensively than Israel has done. It also needs to be viewed simultaneously from both external and internal perspectives.

The second challenge is that offered by my colleagues who prefer to speak about the early modern period exclusively from the vantage point of a particular region or locality they study. The overall assumption of their work is that Jewish history in this period can only be reconstructed on a microlevel. Its variegated histories are radically singular, diverse, and heterogeneous, lacking common features that might link them together. The general thrust of the recent narratives of early modern Jewish history is to deny the possibility that a distinct

early modern Jewish cultural experience can ever be meaningfully described. I wish to assert that such a description is possible and desirable.

The third challenge is the one posed by both European and world historians who have grappled with the slippery term *early modernity*. There is first their discomfort in dealing with the ambiguity of the label, which is commonly evoked but never clearly defined. There is also the more formidable challenge in overcoming the teleological progression from premodern to modern that the term *early modern* surely implies. And when the label is employed by world historians confronting the radical diversity of the societies they study, their comparative search for elements common to all societies often appears superficial and reductive, and even a distortion when viewing the entire globe, either explicitly or implicitly, from a Europeanist perspective. I wish to find a way to overcome the so-called early modern muddle in writing about the Jewish experience.

Beyond these three challenges one might even question on a more basic level the need for the historian to offer elaborate schemes of periodization in the first place. Any attempt at periodization invites the detailed criticisms of specialists eager to discredit any facile generalizations about the past. We undoubtedly live in an age where periodization schemes have gone out of fashion since they suggest an effort to essentialize, and it is much easier and more certain to focus on the particular than the sweeping explanations of larger historical units.

In light of the above, proposing the need for a bold construction of Jewish cultural history in the early modern period might appear to be highly unrewarding. In presenting this agenda, nevertheless, I wish to claim that

historians, in search of useful knowledge, are required at times to step back from their narrow studies, to explore the wider and deeper meaning of an elusive historical past, and to uncover not merely a Jewish history specific to a Polish context or an Italian or Ottoman one but a history of the Jews and their cultural legacy as a whole. There is clearly a potential danger in such an endeavor in distorting or misconstruing the past by imposing upon it the preoccupations of the present. Yet the project of describing a transnational culture in early modern Europe still remains useful in attempting to link in some sense disparate communities and, more significantly, disparate historiographical traditions rarely in contact or in conversation with each other.

So what, specifically, am I proposing to study? I wish to describe as best I can the larger patterns of cultural formation affecting early modern Jewry as a whole.<sup>10</sup> Cultural formation for me implies more than “pure” intellectual developments, a history of Jewish ideas, literary texts, and authors. Rather, my focus is on the study of the interconnections among intellectual creativity and the political, social, and technological conditions shaping Jewish life in this era. Thus my narrative is neither a series of readings of individual authors nor even an examination of the general trends of literary production with which Jewish intellectuals were engaged but a broader exploration of ideas and intellectual achievement in their social and political contexts.

In searching for larger patterns, I do not expect to efface the specificities and singularities of the subcultures of Jewish life other historians have carefully described. Nor do I intend to offer a new master narrative superseding their own individual interpretations. Instead I

propose only another interpretative layer, a perspective on their work that emphasizes connections, contacts, and conversations over time and across specific localities. In this I am especially indebted to the work of Jerry Bentley and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, among others, and their employment of the related concepts of cultural exchange and “connected” histories in addressing the meaning of early modernity for world history at large. These concepts, discussed more fully in the appendix of this book, might indeed provide a useful vocabulary in speaking about the variegated Jewish experiences of the early modern period. Connected histories recognize and appreciate disparate local traditions and cultural developments rather than obscuring or obliterating their uniqueness. By defining this era on the basis of intense communication and exposure to other groups and communities, the historian might be better able to speak about a common cultural experience while recognizing the perpetuation of distinct regional and local identities. Accordingly, like Subrahmanyam, I wish to highlight the dialectical relationship between local conditions and continental or even global patterns, to acknowledge the possible tension between them but also to insist that looking at the local and specific from the perspective of connected histories is useful and productive in reconstructing this multifaceted period. In the end, a merely derivative account of Jewish cultural and social history or one fragmented by disparate localized narratives are neither intellectually satisfying nor do they adequately describe the larger picture that might emerge if the sources and their modern-day reconstructions are allowed to connect, to speak with each other.

I consider five elements in this book that might allow me to describe the era as a whole. Each element needs to be examined over the entire period and across regional boundaries to assess its significance as a marker of a newly emerging Jewish cultural experience. These categories overlap, but to my mind they offer us a most promising beginning in speaking about a connected early modern Jewish culture. They also offer an outline for charting an agenda for future study of the field. I am hard-pressed to point to any overarching epistemological or methodological reasons why I have privileged these factors over others. They represent, at best, my own intuitive sense of what was distinctive and unprecedented about this era, based on my years of studying and teaching its manifold dimensions.

I would be the first to acknowledge that these markers are tentative at best, that they may even describe inadequately and incompletely the larger landscape I wish to define, and that some of the factors affected some people more than others. Nevertheless, I have yet to discover a better way of characterizing the formation of a common Jewish culture whose constituent parts were connected to each other in the early modern period. For the time being, they represent for me the most meaningful rubrics in speaking about the shared historical experience of early modern Jewry. Perhaps these five factors should be regarded by the readers of this book as primarily tentative proposals, certainly open-ended and preliminary to further discussion, research, and interpretation that my own reconstruction might hopefully generate. I have no objection if these five elements are corrected, revised, and expanded in the future based on new insights from

other fields or new research on specific localities still inadequately studied by scholars up to now.

I propose accordingly the following five primary components of the early modern experience for Jews:

1. An accelerated mobility leading to enhanced contacts between Jews and other Jews of differing backgrounds, traditions, and even languages, and between Jews and non-Jews; the strains and stresses these contacts engendered leading both to rapid cultural change and reactionary conservatism. I have in mind both the mobility of large numbers of émigrés expelled from their places of origin and forced to seek refuge in new and alien environments, a condition especially noticeable in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries but less so in the eighteenth century. But I also refer to the mobility of individuals—especially secondary elites, peripatetic scholars, book dealers, peddlers, restless intellectuals—a relatively constant movement noticeable throughout the entire period and in almost every Jewish community of early modern Europe.

2. A heightened sense of communal cohesiveness throughout all Jewish settlements, reaching an apex in the remarkable Council of the Four Lands, the overarching self-government of eastern European Jewry as a whole. Such communal structures often reveal a striking tendency: the growing decline of rabbinic authority and the rising power of lay oligarchies, although local variations need to be carefully noticed. They also raise the intriguing question as to what extent their existence was a direct function of the conscious policy of the political states that supported them.

3. A knowledge explosion precipitated by the technology of the printing press, but also by other factors such as a growing interest in Jewish books on the part of Christian readers, an expanded curriculum of Jewish learning, and the conspicuous entrance of Jewish elites into the universities. This general transformation, more than all the others, seems to be constant and repercussive throughout the entire period and needs to be seen in relation to the factors of mobility and social mixing already mentioned above.

4. A subsequent crisis of rabbinic authority engendered by many factors, including the previous three, and often expressed through active messianism, mystical prophecy, radical enthusiasm, and heresy. While manifest throughout the entire period, it is most acute in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and leaves its mark in some way on all Jewish communities. It also precipitates a counterreaction on the part of the rabbinic establishment that we might refer to as the emergence of a united front of "orthodoxy."

5. The blurring of religious identities, a factor intimately connected to the previous one, and most prominent in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. I refer specifically to the emergence of the conversos and their attempts to reenter the Jewish community; the boundary crossings of Sabbateans among Judaism, Islam, and Christianity; the paths of individual Jewish converts to Christianity; and the complex uses of Judaism among Christian Hebraists in their own searches for Christian authenticity and identity. This factor is clearly more visible in the West than the East, but given the vast international networks of converso merchants and messianic



enthusiasts, the expansive presence of both individual converts and Christian students of Judaism from Amsterdam to Krakow to Prague, and given its ultimate significance in redefining Judaism and Christianity and their relationship to each other, this factor is surely as significant as the others.

In singling out these five factors, among many others, I am fully aware that I leave myself open to criticism. Some might point to other factors more significant than these, such as the rise of the kabbalah and eventually Hasidism and their revolutionary impact on Jewish culture and society; transformations in the status of the family and women; or the rising importance of popular culture, for example. I would argue that the dissemination of the kabbalah and the rise of Hasidism at the end of this period are primarily effects of factors I have already mentioned such as mobility, the printing press, and the rise of radical enthusiasm. Within these contexts, the significant impact of the kabbalah needs to be understood. With respect to women's life and popular culture, we are not yet in a position to weigh either factor as primary in defining the early modern experience for Jews. This is partly a function of the state of scholarship in these fields which is still in its infancy. It also stems from the fact that the changing statuses of women and of nonelite culture appear to be highly more significant in the centuries that follow our period.<sup>11</sup>

Some might object to the apparent arbitrary nature of selecting these five factors. Are they equally present throughout all the regions of Jewish settlement, and at the same time? Surely migrations, as I have already indicated, are decisive at the beginning of this era, but by

the eighteenth century mobility was less a characteristic of Jewish life than before. Radical messianism affected the Jewish communities of the Mediterranean more than those of eastern Europe. Communal developments, despite some general similarities, also varied from region to region. Mingled identities obviously were relevant to only certain special populations within the larger Jewish community but did not affect the latter as a whole. There is no doubt that these objections are valid to a certain extent. There are clear geographical and chronological variations that do not allow us to claim equal cogency and force for each of these factors over time and place. But, as I have already indicated, I am not claiming a homogeneity of early modern Jewish culture where local differences can be swept away. I am seeking only general tendencies that vary distinctly from place to place, but nevertheless reveal some commonality, some connections between the various parts and the whole.

With respect to the alleged randomness of my factors, I would argue that almost all of them are related in one respect: they reveal in their entirety the pressures this period exemplifies on the notion of religious and social boundaries between Jews and other Jews and between Jews and members of other faiths and ethnic groups. Mobility, social mixing, the loosening of rabbinic control, knowledge explosion, and mingled identities all clearly contest and complicate the borders imposed by Jewish law and Christian society on its Jewish minority. All five factors suggest a blurring of what constitutes Jewish identity with a variety of new options for Jewish self-definition and for representing Jewish civilization in the non-Jewish world. All five factors also describe in varying degrees a profound sense of crisis, especially a

loss of control and authority on the part of communal leaders that accompanied the intense creativity and productivity of Jewish life in this era.

Others might argue that my five factors are merely identical with those found in European society at large. Mobility, print, the widening of cultural horizons, radical enthusiasm, syncretism, and cosmopolitanism feature prominently in all descriptions of early modernity, so how is my description a compellingly Jewish narrative? What is unique about looking at these factors within a Jewish context? My answer would be that Jews were also Italians, Dutch, or Poles and one should not be surprised that they exhibited cultural tendencies similar to those of other human beings with which they came in contact. But what might be unique and interesting to study is not so much the similarity of these factors among different groups experiencing a common cultural environment and common cultural challenges but how each group responded to these challenges with its own specificity and out of its own special cultural and social conditioning and resources. The story of print is a universal story, but its specific Jewish dimensions are clearly not identical to those of Protestants, Catholics, or Muslims. Other people in early modern Europe were surely mobile, yet mobility had a particular impact on the Jews in forcing them to confront and become acquainted with non-Jews, but especially with other Jews they had hardly known so intimately in previous ages.

I have tried to look at these five factors across most of the Jewish world between the late fifteenth and late eighteenth centuries. I concentrate especially on the Jewish communities of Italy, the Netherlands, central Europe, eastern Europe, and the Ottoman Empire. I have not

adequately treated Anglo-Jewry, French Jewry, or North African Jewry in this book. This is primarily due to the state of scholarship regarding these communities. In the case of England, its cultural profile emerges distinctly only in the eighteenth century, and only at that century's end.<sup>12</sup> I know less about North African Jewry primarily because scholarship on this region for the most part has not addressed these issues. Jewish culture in early modern France, outside the converso communities, has only recently been examined in modern scholarship.<sup>13</sup> Thus my focus on the communities I have chosen to study is not so much a judgment on their importance over other communities but a practical reflection of present research and my own limitations as a synthesizer. My project is primarily about Jews who lived in Europe and the Ottoman Empire. In not taking into account the Jewish experiences in North Africa and the rest of the Middle East beyond the land of Israel, I recognize the possibility that their histories might not be fully accounted for within my Eurocentric perspective. I hope that others can better integrate other perspectives into mine. Indeed, the strategy of connected histories that I have employed and the open-ended nature of this project surely encourage this refinement, as well as others, to take place.

I offer one final comment about the organization of the chapters that follow. Some readers might question the order that I have chosen. If one begins with mobility, why not follow with the mobility of books? Or, shouldn't a chapter on communal cohesiveness immediately precede one on communal crisis? There also appear to be points in my narrative where I return to subjects treated in earlier chapters, such as the converso diaspora, Christian Hebraism, or Sabbateanism. I am aware

of these apparent redundancies but have, nevertheless, allowed them to remain. I begin with mobility, followed by communal cohesiveness, since I consider them the two foundations upon which early modern Jewish culture was formed and thus wish to introduce them from the start. The last two elements seem quite interrelated, and also emerge late in the period, and thus seem better positioned at the end. I have tried to minimize redundancies but I also wish to treat some of the same subjects from different angles as my larger story unfolds. My hope is that the reader will appreciate my effort in filling in the picture gradually, layer upon layer. Each chapter provides new insights into moments of challenge and upheaval that are connected to others mentioned in earlier chapters. As my evidence accumulates, my general argument about crisis and boundary crossings hopefully becomes more compelling, as well as convincing.

The rest of the book thus represents an attempt to elaborate on the five elements mentioned herein in order to demonstrate that the early modern period is a meaningful chronological unit of Jewish cultural history. Despite obvious differences, it is my hope that these five elements still might allow us to consider how Jewish communities in early modern Europe from Krakow to Venice to Amsterdam and Smyrna were linked in fascinating ways, and how Jews living in this era were communicating with each other and were more aware of their connections with each other—economically, socially, and religiously—than ever before. Through a thorough examination of these markers across time and space, it might be possible to grasp more fully the unique nature of the Jewish cultural experience in early modern Europe—an experience both peculiar to the Jewish

communities across the continent and simultaneously one shared with other European peoples as well. Finally, through the project of describing an early modern Jewish culture, we are in a better position to understand the modern era for Jews, and its continuities and discontinuities with the period immediately predating it. At the very least, historians of the modern Jewish experience can no longer study their period in isolation from this distinct epoch. Mapping early modern Jewish culture provides an invaluable context and perspective in which to appreciate what modernity actually entailed.

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## JEWES ON THE MOVE

The forced movements of entire populations by governments both within and beyond national boundaries as well as the voluntary migrations of individuals motivated to improve their economic and social standing are surely significant features of the early modern period in Europe and throughout the world.<sup>1</sup> From the perspective of Jewish history, the expulsions from Spain and Portugal of 1492 and 1497 have long been viewed as watersheds in the physical dislocation and cultural transformation they engendered. Certainly for the large numbers of Jews who exited the Iberian Peninsula at the end of the fifteenth century and throughout the sixteenth, the process of migration, of establishing new roots, of mixing with other resident Jewish populations especially in Italy and the Ottoman Empire, and the creative tension the new environments engendered are all matters of great consequence for historians of this era.<sup>2</sup> While specialists have long noted Jewish wide-scale migrations elsewhere in Europe, both among Sephardic and Ashkenazic Jews in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, they have received less attention than the Iberian exodus. But when considered as a whole, the factor of migration and mobility takes on an even greater and constant significance over several centuries of Jewish



life in this era. Furthermore, the possible correlation between motion and cultural production and creativity—the theme of intellectual mobility—emerges as well as a subject worthy of scrutiny in this same period.<sup>3</sup> The mass migration of entire communities compelled to flee for reasons of persecution and economic hardship needs to be considered alongside the migration of individuals—especially carriers of culture and literacy, who migrated for personal and idiosyncratic reasons not necessarily associated with communal upheaval and disruption. When all these elements of Jewish migration are linked together, the cumulative impact of the data is overwhelming: migration was an essential condition of the shaping of Jewish culture in early modern Europe.

### The Mobility of Europeans and Other Peoples in the Early Modern Period

Jews were surely not unique in being on the move throughout the early modern period. Human movement was connected to every level of life from the intimacy of individual family economics to the place of colonial and mercantile policies of governments across the globe. In an era permeated by intense warfare, political oppression, and religious persecutions, migrations of individuals and entire communities were constant. The displacement of peoples in the aftermath of the Thirty Years' War, for example, or the painful migrations of religious minorities such as the Huguenots and Mennonites, Puritans and Quakers, Socinians and Comenians are well known.<sup>4</sup>

New advances in maritime technology profoundly affected the European discovery and subsequent colonization of Africa, Asia, and the New World. Through

enhanced overseas trade and economic exchange spanning the oceans, aristocrats, merchants, clergy, sailors, soldiers, servants, slaves, immigrants and transmigrants, students and scholars, vagrants and beggars were motivated and sometimes compelled to travel long distances to improve their economic and social conditions.<sup>5</sup>

While less dramatic and colorful than the voyages of discovery and conquest, migration within the European continent was a significant factor of economic and social life. Besides religious refugees, economic migrants were well noticed in every European city, small or large. Especially for the young, single, and childless, migration was a common means of enhancing their economic situation, either permanently or temporarily. Whether migrating to the rural countryside in search of work in seasonal agriculture or being drawn into urban environments where skilled or unskilled laborers were in greater demand, young people had reason to leave home. They were motivated, no doubt, by parents and families who tolerated and encouraged their movement; by social networks that facilitated their mobility such as people who spoke their native language and shared their same cultural habits in the new environments to which they were drawn; and by state and local governments that offered economic incentives that outweighed the pangs of separation and upheaval that such migrations surely generated. And despite the risks and discomforts of travel, their movement became a common activity even spurring governments and employers to improve roads, carriage services, guest services, and information media to make their migrations even more practical and desirable.<sup>6</sup>

The early modern city ultimately became a node of movement while migration became the most effective

means of populating neighborhoods with high death rates. Port cities especially served as magnets in attracting the very poor, sailors, servants, and other temporary laborers, as well as petty merchants and more affluent economic agents. Foreigners became a vital and conspicuous presence within the natural landscape of every urban community. Cities offered refuge from political and religious oppression as well as enclaves for the perpetuation of the cultural practices of immigrant groups dislocated from their homelands. They also served as centers for the circulation of news and ideas through oral and printed exchanges. Students and professors moved regularly from city to city in search of better educational and professional opportunities. Cities with major universities housed large numbers of foreign students for temporary and seasonal intervals. The notion of the *peregrinatio academica*, an odyssey made in quest of learning, justified and even romanticized the movement of these young intellectuals through almost all European cities. Artists, musicians, architects, courtiers, and clerical officials rounded out the “desirable” foreigners inhabiting every large metropolitan area.<sup>7</sup> For Jewish migrants, whether forced or voluntary, whether traveling long or short distances, whether crossing political boundaries or moving to an adjacent neighborhood, their adaptation to the cultural practices of an increasingly peripatetic and cosmopolitan Europe was rapid, successful, and ultimately highly transformative.

### Jewish Migration to Italy and the Ottoman Empire

Jewish migrations long preceded the end of the fifteenth century in both western and eastern Europe. From as early as 1348, large numbers of Jews moved eastward

to Poland and Lithuania and southward to Italy. They arrived in Italy and primarily settled in the regions of Piedmont and the Veneto. They were followed by Jewish immigrants from southern France at the end of the fourteenth century, by Italian Jews moving into central and northern Italian cities from the South, and eventually by the exiles from Spain and Portugal, from the papal territories in 1569 and from the duchy of Milan in 1597. Given the instability of Jewish economic life in northern and central Italy, internal migrations of usurers and other Jews were commonplace, thus creating a relatively mobile Jewish population long before the establishment of the ghetto system throughout the Italian Peninsula in the second half of the sixteenth century.<sup>8</sup>

Jewish settlement in the Ottoman Empire came in surges. The first Jewish immigrants came from Romaniot and Karaite communities who settled in pre-Ottoman communities in Anatolia and the Balkans. They were followed by Ashkenazic Jews traveling from central Europe. With the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, Sultan Mehmet II turned his new capital Istanbul into a newly rebuilt and repopulated city, transferring entire populations to the city, among them Jews from Greece, Macedonia, Albania, and Bulgaria, as well as other regions in Turkey. Sephardic Jews and later conversos came to Istanbul, Salonika, Aleppo, Safed, and Jerusalem beginning in the mid-fifteenth century, but larger waves of immigrants followed after the expulsions of 1492 and 1497. Some came through North Africa, others through Italy and Sicily. Later flows arrived from Portugal after 1506 and again after 1536.<sup>9</sup>

In the course of one generation or two, the Sephardic immigrants overwhelmed the local Jewish populations

and dominated communal, religious, and cultural life. While in Istanbul, Romaniot Jews and Sephardim persisted in maintaining communal boundaries and cultural identities between each other, in Salonika, Aleppo, and Safed, the Sephardim soon predominated. They were especially adept at adjusting to a new land and socioeconomic order by blending into the imperial system the Ottoman government was creating. Despite the fact that the Ottomans did little to accommodate the needs of these Jewish immigrants, the latter quickly became part of and flourished within the Ottoman economy—more so than other groups. The process of Jewish adaptation to the economic and political needs of the state was quite rapid and successful. Jews quickly became prominent in the textile industry; in medicine; in winemaking, in banking and international commerce; in tax farming; and in purveying large quantities of foodstuffs, clothing, and arms, thus bringing profit to themselves and their Ottoman overlords alike. In the textile industry, for example, Jews displaced Italians because of Ottoman distrust for Christian merchants and because of Jewish commercial links with other Jewish communities in the West. Jews also pioneered a homegrown Jewish textile industry based on technologies imported from Spain and Italy. The ingenuity of Jews crossing cultural and political boundaries to compete in all spheres of economic endeavor went hand in hand with a dynamic intellectual and cultural rebirth in each of the economic centers in which Jews settled. Safed especially became a cultural center of the Jewish diaspora, attracting creative rabbinic and kabbalistic scholars who in turn stimulated the course of Jewish intellectual and spiritual creativity for centuries. As one scholar has put it, “These communities

rode the wave of Ottoman expansion, flourished during the celebrated Ottoman heyday, and more devotedly than other socio-religious groups, accompanied the Ottoman Empire into old age and ill health.”<sup>10</sup>

The one Ottoman Jewish community whose trajectory of development was different from the rest was Izmir. Jews migrated to the city in the early seventeenth century not as a refuge from persecution and expulsion but because of its economic vitality stemming from a global realignment in commerce from pepper, cinnamon, silks and porcelains to bulkier goods such as woolens, cottons, and fruit. Izmir’s location on the western Anatolian coast attracted merchants seeking these products. Despite Ottoman governmental opposition to this development and because of the government’s inability to control this surge of trade, the city witnessed the creeping penetration of Dutch, English, French, and Venetian merchants, including the influx of Portuguese conversos. Jews initially controlled the collection of customs to their great advantage but eventually lost their monopoly in this area and declined economically as a new global commerce emerged that was dominated by Italians, Armenians, and Greeks. With their diminished economic fortunes, a concomitant institutional decline set in—a loss of cultural élan and a growing insularity in contrast to the dynamic multicultural environment of previous decades.<sup>11</sup>

### Jewish Migration to Eastern Europe

In some fascinating ways, the history of Jewish migration to Poland and Lithuania displays remarkable similarities to its Ottoman counterpart. As in the case of Jewish migration to the Ottoman Empire, the high

point of immigration emerged only at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Waves of Ashkenazim had reached eastern Europe as early as the second half of the thirteenth century, and in previous centuries some Jews had migrated to this region from eastern Byzantine and Muslim regions, especially from the former Khazar territories. But as in the case of domination by the Sephardic element that swallowed up all other local traditions of Ottoman Jewry, the German element quickly left the most salient cultural and social imprint on the character of the eastern European Jewish community. With the worsening situation of Jewish life in the German cities, the subsequent instability of Jewish life in Bohemia and Moravia, and the decline of Hungary, Jewish migrants were prepared to start afresh in eastern Europe given the receptive attitude of Polish kings and landowning magnates to their settlement and economic integration. Thus, on the eastern and southern boundaries of Europe, the largest concentration of world Jewry emerged in the sixteenth century whose ethnic composition and cultural character were largely determined by immigrants who had come from the West. And both communities flourished under governments that became the most tolerant sites for cross-confessional exchange in Europe. Only the United Netherlands in the seventeenth century—also a primary site for Jewish immigration, as we shall soon see—offered similar conditions for its minorities, including the Jews, to practice their own religion and to create their own semiautonomous political structures without the interference of the ruling class.<sup>12</sup>

Israel Halpern long ago noted the commonalities between German and Polish Jewry: a common Yiddish language diverging over time from its German origins;

a common core of religious practice and liturgy called *Minhag Ashkenaz*; and a similar communal structure and rabbinic style of leadership.<sup>13</sup> The situation was not radically different in the Ottoman Empire. The Sephardim brought their own Castilian dialect of the Spanish language with them, later to flourish through the Ladino press. They also carried their own ritual and customs, their own forms of self-government and rabbinical authority that they adapted to the conditions of their new surroundings. What was profoundly different in both new lands from their places of origin but nevertheless strikingly similar in comparison with each other was the economic activity of the Jewish immigrants. In Poland they shifted from money lending to lease management, tax farming, and customs supervision, roles that surely paralleled to a great extent the economic roles of the Sephardim in the Ottoman Empire. In both settings, Jews assumed a colonizing function, taking part in governmental projects of large-scale settlement, military funding, and serving the interests of monarchy and nobility alike. And simultaneously, both immigrant communities assumed a high degree of religious and cultural self-sufficiency, managing their own internal affairs, shaping their own cultural practices, and speaking and writing in a language that set them apart from their host cultures.

The Ashkenazic mass migration of the sixteenth century was primarily from the West to the East and the Southeast. At the beginning of the century, Jews expelled from Germany, Bohemia, and Austria settled primarily in the western parts of Poland such as Krakow and Poznan, and in Lwów. But as the century progressed, Jews moved constantly eastward, spurred by persecutions or



economic opportunities offered in the less developed mainly agricultural regions in Lithuania. They assumed the vital roles of tax and revenue farmers, innkeepers, agents, and middlemen, serving as agents for the Polish colonizers. Jews moved steadily eastward to the Ukraine region after its annexation by Poland in 1569.<sup>14</sup> At the same time, some Sephardic and Italian Jews and former conversos invaded the space of the relatively insulated eastern European community.<sup>15</sup> Other Ashkenazim moved eastward, fleeing the impact of the Thirty Years' War (1618–48) in west central Europe.<sup>16</sup> Despite the political upheaval and atrocities of the Chmielnicki revolt of 1648, the movement of Jews to the East continued throughout the seventeenth century. And by the middle of the eighteenth century, more than two-thirds of the Jewish population of Poland and Lithuania was living in the eastern districts of the Ukraine, Lithuania, and what was then known as White Russia.<sup>17</sup>

By the second half of the seventeenth century, however, migratory patterns of Ashkenazic Jews had also shifted from an eastward direction to a westward one. After 1648, and especially in the course of the next decade, Amsterdam became a primary center for the absorption of eastern European Jews, despite the ambivalence on the part of previously settled Sephardim in the city who now faced a major financial burden in supporting the new arrivals. For many of the Ashkenazic vagrants and mendicants, Amsterdam represented only a way station as they moved through European cities, even returning to Germany, Bohemia, and Poland. By the 1650s, hundreds of Jewish refugees from Lithuania arrived in Amsterdam; but many moved on to Hamburg and Frankfurt am Main, to various parts of Italy,

to London, and to the land of Israel, while some were sent on to Danzig in the hope they would eventually return to Poland and Lithuania. Similar surges of eastern European migration to the West continued into the eighteenth century; most of the new immigrants were absorbed in Germany—most notably, Polish rabbis. Other Ashkenazim migrated to Hungary, Romania, and the northern Balkans, to the Ottoman Empire and especially to the land of Israel throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Some rabbis from Poland and Lithuania even settled in southern France, in the region of Comtat Venaissin, serving as book dealers, and performing ritual and other religious tasks, while either on their way to the land of Israel or returning from the Holy Land.<sup>18</sup>

These westward and southward migrations have been viewed from mixed perspectives by previous historians either positively, as a sign of the wide dissemination of Yiddish culture, or conversely, as a sign of cultural decline for German Jewry. These early migrations surely anticipated by several centuries the mass migrations of eastern European Jews in the late nineteenth century. They suggest clearly the interpenetration of Ashkenazic Jewish culture into predominantly Sephardic zones of culture, and, to a great extent, the reverse process of Sephardic penetration into Ashkenazic zones. These boundary crossings were accelerated through print, as we shall later explore, and were especially manifest in the mystical movements of Sabbateanism and Frankism that attracted both Sephardim and Ashkenazim. The two cultures become especially entangled by the contiguous presence of immigrants from both communities in the land of Israel.<sup>19</sup>

## Converso Migration

Mobility, of course, was an essential condition of converso refugees in the seventeenth century who exited the Iberian Peninsula in search of refuge from persecution and, in many cases, new Jewish identities. They came to southern France; to Amsterdam, Hamburg, and London; and to Italy and the Ottoman Empire. They crossed the Atlantic Ocean to the West Indies, Brazil, Mexico, and even North America. In their wanderings they fulfilled a highly distinctive function in the commercial and colonial expansion of Europe well into the eighteenth century. They created Jewish commercial networks following maritime rather than overland routes, importing non-European products over long distances, becoming a vital link between east and west, between northern and southern Europe, and stretching from Amsterdam and Hamburg to Recife and Curaçao, to Izmir and Aleppo, and even to the Far East.<sup>20</sup>

The conversos constitute an important dimension in the formation of early modern Jewish culture and will be the focus of later chapters of this book. What needs to be addressed here is the significance of their wide-ranging migratory patterns and the remarkable networks of communication that such movement engendered. In contrast to the overwhelming majority of Ashkenazic migrants mentioned above, there was an additional dimension to their mobility. As agents in an international system of trade, they had reason to travel from place to place, covering long distances, repeatedly crossing regional zones of commerce and culture. Moreover, their commuting between confessions and cultures—Jewish, Catholic, Protestant, Muslim, and others—offered them

an enormous challenge in defining themselves as well as a modicum of safety from religious scrutiny on the part of orthodox religious and state authorities. Constantly in motion, they could escape the demands to define their social and religious identity strictly and conclusively.<sup>21</sup>

We might begin by examining the so-called converso renegades who, after fleeing the Iberian Peninsula to the relatively free regions of the Netherlands and southern France, opted to return to the “lands of idolatry”—that is, to their places of origin—despite the physical and emotional risks such journeys might entail. These were travelers who viewed religious identity pragmatically. Exit and return to Spain and Portugal often meant switching identities from Christianity to Judaism and back again. The social and economic benefits of travel—the need to buy and sell goods, to collect debts, to visit relatives, to satisfy a craving to return to a familiar birthplace—far outweighed fixed religious loyalty to Judaism or Christianity and, in some cases, to Islam as well. We shall have occasion later to explore the implications of these mingled identities in the formation of Jewish culture in early modern Europe. It is sufficient to emphasize here how the mobility of the conversos enhanced and encouraged religious liminality and how it was a critical factor in their collective ethnic and religious experiences.<sup>22</sup>

Besides the odysseys of those conversos who shuttled from faith to faith, those who opted to conform to one form or another of Jewish identity were also highly conditioned by the mobile nature of both their individual and collective lives. The circulation and exchange of individuals, ideas, goods, and institutions defined the very core of the Sephardic diaspora. Nowhere was this more

evident than in the circulation of rabbinic leaders in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The first rabbis who arrived in Amsterdam came from Venice and North Africa. The rabbis who served Hamburg and London in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries came primarily from Amsterdam. This was also the case for Bayonne, Curaçao, and Surinam. The communities of Jamaica, Barbados, and New York, however, recruited their rabbis primarily from London. Leghorn hired its rabbis from the Balkans and North Africa but by the late seventeenth century was turning to Amsterdam. In other instances, rabbinic emissaries from Israel functioned as rabbis in Leghorn, Amsterdam, and London, as well as the eastern Mediterranean and the New World. In many respects, the nomadic Sephardic rabbinate mirrored that of the Ashkenazim as well. Congregations throughout Europe, such as those in Prague, Metz, or London, recruited rabbis from Germany and Poland. The only difference was the lack of one primary source of rabbinical recruitment as that of Sephardic Amsterdam. In this respect, Amsterdam created the first major rabbinical seminary of the modern age, exporting its rabbinical graduates across the globe while assuming the role of the “mother church” of the Sephardic diaspora.<sup>23</sup>

Besides the rabbinical vectors of transmission and communication, the broad economic and family networks of the Sephardim in general fostered other forms of information gathering and communication. Their international merchant networks allowed them to gain great advantage in seeking political and economic concessions from local authorities, especially in ports of entry. Sephardic merchants from Leghorn, for example, gained extensive trading privileges throughout the Mediterranean.

Similar privileges were extended to Sephardic merchants in Spanish America. Their communities regularly mobilized money to address emergencies taking place in other Jewish communities, whether Ashkenazic or Sephardic. London and Amsterdam responded favorably to crises in Provence, Poland, and Venice. Both Sephardic and Ashkenazic communities, for example, offered intense political support to avert the expulsion of Jews from Bohemia in 1745. The Amsterdam community dealt with the overwhelming problem of poverty by attempting to transport undesirable paupers to faraway places such as Surinam and Georgia. In one instance, they shipped their indigent poor to the land of Israel, hoping to alleviate their social problems at the expense of the already impoverished communities of the Holy Land. This was especially ironic in light of the presence of a virtual army of *sheluhim* (emissaries) fanning out throughout the more affluent Sephardic and Ashkenazic diaspora in search of economic support for their struggling communities.<sup>24</sup>

### The Social Consequences of Jewish Mobility

The movements described here—from Spain and Portugal to Italy and the Ottoman Empire; from central to eastern Europe and back; from the Iberian Peninsula to the North via Amsterdam, Hamburg, and London, to the New World—inevitably engendered a variety of repercussions and transformations, never fully visible to the historian nor fully documented in the sources at his or her disposal. The pain and hardship of uprooting familiar landscapes for alien cultures, and the overwhelming difficulties of travel and resettlement, are well known, especially in the case of the first exiles

from Spain and Portugal.<sup>25</sup> Equally apparent are the necessary social and economic encounters the new immigrants were forced to endure with Italian Catholics and Muslim Turks, with the varieties of ethnic groups in eastern Europe, or with Protestant Christians in German cities, in Amsterdam, or in London. Intense social mixing between Jews of different backgrounds could be particularly perplexing for Jews of Provençal and Ashkenazic origins, indigenous Italian Jews, and Sephardic Jews within the close quarters of Italian cities. While Sephardim ultimately overwhelmed other local Jewish communities in the Ottoman Empire and the Ashkenazim similarly dominated their new Polish and Lithuanian communities, Jews of differing backgrounds lived side-by-side not only in Venice, Rome, and Mantua but also in Amsterdam, Hamburg, Frankfurt am Main, London, Prague, Krakow, and Jerusalem. When the conversos migrated to Leghorn and Pisa, and to northern port cities, they introduced a new element into the mix of composite Jewish settlements. While their leadership attempted to conform to traditional rabbinic norms, the religious and social lives of individual conversos varied dramatically among themselves and in comparison with other Jews. In Amsterdam and in Hamburg, their strong ethnic identities discouraged intimate contact with other Jews not truly members of their so-called nation.<sup>26</sup>

If one can demarcate roughly the dominant regional identities of medieval Jewish communities and their specialized cultural production such as philosophy and kabbalah in Spain, Talmudic exegesis in northern France, or pietism in Germany, for example, such identifications become significantly more blurred and confused during the early modern period. The intense mobility described

earlier made the Jewish communities in Italy complex sites of cultural mixing, of the intermingling among Jews of Sephardic, Ashkenazic, and Italian ancestry. The same process can be located elsewhere in the Ottoman Empire, in Poland and Lithuania, and in the Western Sephardic diaspora, albeit with less intensity and with considerable variation from place to place. The ultimate result was the uneasy and sometimes reluctant acknowledgment by Jews living throughout Europe, that despite their commonly shared heritage and common political and economic status, unmistakable peculiarities were prevalent among subcommunities, reflected in their disparate liturgies and customs, in their leadership styles, and in their collective memories and cultural origins. Thus David ibn Zimra wrote, in sixteenth century Egypt, that “the men of each city and each language form communities of their own and do not mix with the men of other cities and other languages . . . for hearts are divided according to the divisions of places and languages.”<sup>27</sup>

Such diversity was especially noticeable, as has been mentioned, in the Italian Peninsula where distinctive synagogues, prayers, cantillation, and ritual practices were the norm. It was also visible in the two disparate approaches to rabbinic leadership adopted by Ashkenazic and Sephardic subcommunities on Italian soil. I refer to the tensions that emerged between the so-called model of the *marbiz Torah* (disseminator of Jewish knowledge) brought to Italy by the Spanish exiles in contrast to that of the *rosh yeshivah* (head of the academy) of the French and German Jews. Such contrasting postures could often lead to intercommunal rivalry and conflict. One of the most notorious struggles between rabbis of the Ashkenazic and Italian communities was over the contested



divorce between the Tamari and Venturozzo families in the 1560s. This was hardly the only case of internal disputes erupting along ethnic lines. Even the actual physical appearance of the Jewish ghettos of Venice or Rome, for example, with their separately constructed synagogues and discrete institutional structures standing side-by-side in a restricted urban neighborhood, offer visual testimony of the complex dialectic between the conspicuous individuality of each ethnic subcommunity and its simultaneous connectedness to the larger public space within the ghetto walls.<sup>28</sup>

Mobility also produced less enduring, more sporadic and chance encounters among Jews of various ethnic and religious backgrounds and between Jews and non-Jews. Jews and Christians regularly engaged each other in commerce and other casual exchanges in Italian cities when the ghetto gates were open during the day. Despite their enforced segregations, Jews absorbed and appreciated the sights, sounds, and smells of urban living in a manner similar to that of their Christian neighbors. The Ashkenazic and Sephardic students who studied at the medical school of Padua were exposed to novel social experiences and cultural practices far beyond their formal coursework.<sup>29</sup> In Germany, Glikl von Hameln reported on visits to non-Jewish courts and to the merchant fairs of Brunswick, Frankfurt am Main, and Leipzig where affluent Jewish merchants often stumbled upon the Jewish underclass and criminals.<sup>30</sup> Sephardic Jews and Muslims met frequently and even intimately in public and private spheres in the Ottoman Empire while Jewish *stadlanim* (intercessors) and merchants interfaced regularly with Polish nobility and burgers.<sup>31</sup> Jewish scribes and book dealers were constantly on

the move in search of new markets for their books and regularly did business with Christian publishers and dealers. Itinerant preachers sought out new audiences to hear their orations and to sell their printed tracts and magical potions.<sup>32</sup>

### Did Jewish Mobility Engender Cultural Productivity?

It would seem apparent by now that mobility, especially the large and conspicuous movements of persecuted or economically deprived Jews, constituted a vital dimension of early modern Jewish culture. But there is a further claim this chapter purports to make: that Jewish intellectual life and cultural production were shaped to a great extent by Jewish intellectuals who moved from place to place because in some cases they were forced to move but in other cases they moved simply because of personal choice. This is not an easy claim to demonstrate. Migration is a movement from one place to another, but ideas and people don't necessarily travel together. As Jennifer Platt points out, intellectuals may migrate physically without migrating intellectually, and conversely one need not migrate to feel in exile. Nor is it inevitable that itinerant bearers of ideas always effectuate cultural transformation. They might simply create an enclave, or join an existing one made up of other intellectuals like themselves, or simply become specialists in their own foreign identity, creating in turn a rather inward-looking émigré community. Intellectual migration is also complicated by the relations between migrants and natives that might possibly motivate either group to create new ideas and to be stimulated mutually

by each other—or, conversely, to staunchly defend old orthodoxies due to the perceived threat of the other.<sup>33</sup>

Nevertheless, despite the virtual impossibility of demonstrating a precise connection between the migration of intellectuals and cultural transformation, there still appears to be a strong circumstantial case for making such a connection with respect to early modern Jewish culture. Let us begin by first examining the conclusions of Moshe Idel in several provocative essays on the theme of mobility in the shaping of kabbalistic writing and praxis in the sixteenth century. In these essays, Idel attempts to understand the impact of the Spanish expulsion of 1492 not only in terms of trauma and crisis but also as a trigger for cultural movement and realignment.<sup>34</sup> Idel readily points to the large number of mobile figures who became central figures in the intellectual movements of the sixteenth century in Poland, Italy, and the Ottoman Empire. While the Spanish expulsion affected a relatively small number of émigrés directly, their literary production exceeded those produced earlier and their creativity was more than a mere continuation of what they had achieved before their departure. The new political, social, and economic conditions emerging in Italy and the Ottoman Empire elicited a new stream of writing, preserving earlier material and systematizing disparate traditions within a wider and radically different literary context. Mobile, fluid situations often evoke intense self-reflection and the need to clarify one's own identity against the background of a remembered past and a newly evolving present. Idel also describes the dialectic between mobile and sedentary intellectuals and, especially in Safed, the inevitable clash between firmly set traditions and those evolving to accommodate new and changing circumstances.

Idel's emphasis on mobility needs to be expanded to include all forms of Jewish cultural production in the three centuries that are addressed in this book. Fully aware of the danger of overstating the case that mobility profoundly transformed Jewish intellectual life, this book ventures to present, nevertheless, a wide ranging inventory of colorful examples of Jewish intellectuals on the move to point to the possible linkage between movement and creativity in the Jewish communities of early modern Europe. I realize that these preliminary sketches do not adequately demonstrate a decisive connection. But the sheer number of these examples and the prominence of the intellectuals mentioned herein might at least suggest the possibility of some causal relationship between mobility and cultural production.

Beginning in the sixteenth century, a list of peripatetic Jewish intellectuals who clearly left their enduring mark on Jewish culture would certainly begin with such renowned figures of the Sephardic exilic community as Isaac Abravanel and his son Judah, Joseph Karo, Isaac Luria, and Israel Sarug. One should also include in this list the itinerant multilayered lives of converso intellectuals such as the prominent physician Amatus Lusitanus.

Isaac Abravanel (1437–1508), biblical exegete, philosopher, and diplomat, while born in Lisbon, eventually left under threatening circumstances for Castile, where he spent time both in Alcalá de Henares and in Guadalajara. In 1492 he left for Naples, but when the French sacked the city and destroyed his library in 1494, he moved on to Messina, then Corfu, and finally reached Monopoli in Apulia. He ultimately settled in Venice at the urging of his son Joseph and was buried in Padua. He refers more than once in his writing to his

wanderings, to the upheavals in his life and their impact on his writing, and to his quest for freedom and security, as the introduction to his commentary on the Passover Haggadah clearly illustrates. His son, Judah Abravanel (c. 1460–c. 1523), more commonly known as Leone Ebreo, was born in Lisbon and left Portugal in the company of his father for Spain. After 1492 he practiced medicine in Naples, then left the city during the French invasion for Genoa, but subsequently returned. There are reports that he visited Salonika and Florence, in the latter case meeting members of the philosophical circle of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, but these are not confirmed. His composition, the *Dialoghi d'amore* (The Dialogues of Love), surely testifies to an intellectual journey from his scholarly Iberian roots to the humanist ambiance of Tuscan Italy.<sup>35</sup>

Joseph Karo (c. 1488–1575) illustrates the high degree of mobility in the pursuit of rabbinic and kabbalistic study on the part of perhaps the greatest luminary of his age. Born in Toledo or Portugal, he traveled with his family as a child to Istanbul about 1497. He received a rabbinic appointment in Edirne, later moving to Nikopol, where he met his close colleague Solomon Alkabez (c. 1505–84). He later moved to Salonika, where he studied with Joseph Taitazak (c. 1487–c. 1545). After a brief stay in Egypt, he moved to Safed to study with Jacob Berav (c. 1474–1546).<sup>36</sup>

Isaac Luria (1534–72) was the son of an Ashkenazic Jew from either Germany or Poland who emigrated to Jerusalem and married a member of the Sephardic Frances family. On the death of his father, his mother brought him to Egypt, where he was apparently raised

in the home of her wealthy brother Mordecai Frances, studied in the yeshivah of David ibn Zimra, and even engaged in business activities. He seems also to have spent some time in seclusion on an island owned by his uncle on the Nile River. After a possible brief pilgrimage in Meron, he settled in Safed, where he gathered around him a fellowship of disciples until his death in 1572.<sup>37</sup>

Israel Sarug (active c. 1590–1610) was born in Egypt, where he might have met Luria in the first place. His whereabouts between 1570 and 1593 are unknown though it is probable he spent time in Safed in the 1580s. Between 1594 and 1600, he was responsible for disseminating Lurianic doctrines throughout Italy among some of the leading kabbalist scholars in that region. After leaving Italy, he appeared in Ragusa and Salonika, and may even have visited Poland.<sup>38</sup>

Amatus Lusitanus (1511–68), the eminent converso physician, was born in Castelo Branco, Portugal, studied medicine at the University of Salamanca, returned to Portugal, but then left for Antwerp when the situation of the conversos deteriorated there. As his fame rose, he appears to have been in close contact with the wealthy and powerful Nasi family, Donna Gracia and Joseph. By 1540 he was appointed professor of medicine at the University of Ferrara. Seven years later he left for Ferrara to Ancona, awaiting an official appointment as town physician of Ragusa. He was detained in Ancona, where he continued to practice medicine. In 1555, his home there was looted and he escaped first to Pesaro and then Ragusa. By 1558 he arrived in Salonika, openly acknowledged his Jewish identity, and treated mainly Jewish patients. He died ten years later.<sup>39</sup>

Among the prominent Jewish intellectuals who settled in Italy in the first half of the sixteenth century were the immigrants Yoḥanan Alemanno, Elijah Delmedigo, Abraham Farissol, Judah Ḥayyat, and David Messer Leon.

Yoḥanan Alemanno (c. 1435–c. 1504), the Italian Jewish exegete, philosopher, and kabbalist, was born in Città di Castello, near Perugia, to a French Ashkenazic family. He was living in Florence by 1465 at the home of the wealthy banker Yeḥiel da Pisa. He appears to have studied in the yeshivah of Judah Messer Leon and received a medical degree in Padua under the direction of this esteemed Jewish scholar and physician. In 1488 he returned to Florence and met the famous Neoplatonic philosopher Giovanni Pico della Mirandola. He left Florence either in 1494 or 1497 when the Jews were expelled from the city and wandered through northern Italy until settling finally in Mantua, where he died.<sup>40</sup>

Elijah Delmedigo (c. 1460–97), Jewish philosopher and Aristotelian commentator and translator, was born in Crete, traveled to Italy in 1480, and lived for the next ten years in Padua, Venice, Bassano, and Florence. After his Italian wanderings he returned to Crete in 1490, where he composed his most important Hebrew treatise, *Behinat ha-Dat* (The Examination of Religion). His contemporary Abraham Farissol (1452–c. 1528), a cantor, scribe, and polemical and geographical writer, was born in Avignon and migrated to Mantua around 1470. He arrived in Ferrara a year later, where he assumed the duties of communal cantor and scribe. Due to his scribal career and the general political turbulence in the city, he traveled constantly in the 1480s, reaching Mantua, Sermide, Rome, Bologna, and Florence before returning to Ferrara, where he eventually died.<sup>41</sup>

Judah Hayyat (c. 1450–c. 1510), prominent Spanish kabbalist, was an exile from Spain who suffered physical hardship and financial loss in his wanderings through North Africa before arriving in Italy in the area of Mantua. Hayyat, a typical representative of the dominant school of Spanish kabbalah, revealed an antagonism and cultural dissonance toward the manner in which kabbalah was understood and studied by Italian Jewish scholars. David Messer Leon (c. 1470–c. 1526), rabbi and philosopher, was born in Mantua and studied at the yeshivah of his learned father Judah Messer Leon in Naples. He continued his rabbinical studies in Padua, later traveled to Florence, and then moved to Salonika in 1505. Around 1512 he was appointed rabbi of Valona, Albania. His career suffered from several public communal disputes in which he was personally engaged. His writings testify to the mix of cultural influences he experienced in his migration from Italy to the Ottoman Empire.<sup>42</sup>

The dramatic movements across the Mediterranean and beyond on the part of the messianic figures Shlomo Molcho and David Reuveni are well known. David Reuveni (d. 1538?), exotic messianic adventurer, first appeared in Venice in 1523, claiming descent from the tribe of Judah and from King David himself. He arrived in Rome in 1524, where he met with Pope Clement II, and then traveled throughout Italy and arrived in Portugal. There he met Diego Pires (aka Solomon Molcho, c. 1500–1532), kabbalist, magician, and messianic figure in his own right, and both were soon expelled from the country. Reuveni was later shipwrecked off the coast of Provence, imprisoned for two years by the Lord of Claremont, and then released. In 1530 he was back in



Venice, visited Mantua, and was eventually imprisoned and sent off to Spain, where he later died. Molcho is alleged to have traveled to many cities but certainly reached Salonika where he studied at the yeshivah of Joseph Taitazak and probably met Joseph Karo. He returned to Italy in 1529, preached in Ancona, and then moved on to Pesaro and Rome. In 1530, he was reunited with Reuveni in Venice, fled again to Rome, but rejoined Reuveni in 1532 on their last mission to the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V in Regensburg. While Reuveni was spared the death decree, Molcho was burned at the stake after refusing to revert to his original Christian faith.<sup>43</sup>

The wanderings of several of the primary writers of historical narratives in the wake of the Spanish expulsion might appear relevant in considering their interest in the histories of Jews and other nations. Joseph Ha-Cohen (1496–1578), whose family originated in Spain, migrated from Avignon to Genoa, where he received an extensive education. A victim of several local expulsions of Jews, he exited Naples for Novi, but returned only to be expelled a second time in 1550 and relocated in Voltaggio. He was also expelled from this town in 1567 with the rest of the Jewish community.

The details of the life of Solomon ibn Verga (d. c. 1520) are murkier. He was expelled from Spain in 1492, arrived in Lisbon, was forcibly converted in 1497, but seems to have escaped to Italy, where he may have resided for some time in Rome. He eventually died in Flanders, perhaps on his way to the Ottoman Empire. The incessant wanderings of Eliezer Ashkenazi (1513–85), rabbi and biblical exegete, from Salonika to Egypt to Cyprus, Venice, Prague, Cremona, Poznan, Gniezno, and Krakow demonstrate

his cultural links with diverse Jewish communities across Europe. His itinerary also reflects transparently an instable, restless and sometimes contentious individual.<sup>44</sup>

In the seventeenth century, intellectual migration is best illustrated by the itinerary of the aforementioned Joseph Delmedigo (1591–1655), astronomer, physician, and expositor of the kabbalah, whose quest for intellectual truth and potential publishers of his scientific writings and theosophical reflections led him from Crete to Padua, to Cairo, Istanbul, Romania, Poland, Vilna, Hamburg, Amsterdam, Frankfurt am Main, and finally Prague. His peregrinations are matched by a wide array of Jewish and converso intellectuals such as the brothers Abraham (1626–1706) and Isaac Cardoso (1605–81), Joseph Hamiz (d. c. 1676), Abraham Herrera (c. 1570?–1635 or 1639), and many more. Isaac Cardoso, a doctor and philosopher, was born in Tancoso, Portugal, studied at Salamanca, and served as a physician in Valladolid and Madrid. He fled the Inquisition for Venice and ultimately settled in Verona. Abraham Cardoso, one of the key architects of the Sabbatean movement, was born in Rio Seco, Spain, studied medicine in Salamanca, lived in Madrid, and then arrived in Venice with his brother. Besides Venice, he also lived in Leghorn, where he declared himself a Jew. After 1659, he wandered widely through Egypt, Tripoli, Tunis, Leghorn again, Izmir, Bursa, Istanbul, Rodosto, Gallipoli, Adriano, Chios, Crete, Jaffa, and Alexandria. Engaged in stormy controversies for over thirty years, his conspicuous role as Sabbatean leader was the reason for the high frequency of his travels and for his inability to settle long in any one community.<sup>45</sup>

Joseph Hamiz, physician and kabbalist, was born in Venice, trained as a doctor in Padua, became infatuated

with the kabbalah and even Sabbateanism, and decided to settle in Jerusalem. On his way, in 1666, he lingered at Zante, where he composed some of his Hebrew writings and served as a physician in the town. Abraham Herrera, converso and kabalistic philosopher, was probably born in Portugal, moved to Florence and then to Morocco. While staying in Cadiz, he was captured by the English and taken to London. By the 1590s, he was living openly as a Jew in Ragusa, studying—under Israel Sarug—the teachings of Isaac Luria. In Amsterdam he formally converted to Judaism, and he remained there, though little is known about his subsequent life.<sup>46</sup>

Even more colorful than these is the career of Jacob Sasportas (1610–98), an opponent and documenter of the early years of the Sabbatean movement. Born in Oran, he became the rabbi of Tlemcen, where he was subsequently dismissed by the government and then proceeded to wander. After a first visit to Amsterdam at the behest of the king of Morocco, he later returned as a financial ambassador for the king of Spain. In 1656 he joined Menasseh ben Israel's delegation to Oliver Cromwell in London, and in 1664 he was offered the Sephardic rabbinical post in London but eventually returned to Amsterdam in 1665. He lived subsequently in Hamburg, moving to Leghorn in 1678 to assume a rabbinical post there, and eventually returned to Amsterdam to become the Sephardic rabbi there in his old age.<sup>47</sup>

Ashkenazic intellectuals on the move appear to be less numerous than their Sephardic counterparts but they surely can be easily located during the same period. One of the most fascinating is Nathan Nata Hannover (d. 1683), the author of the famous chronicle of the Cosack massacres of 1648, who traveled to Prague from

southeastern Poland, then on to Germany and Amsterdam. Subsequently, he traveled to Venice and to Leghorn, where he reported on studying the new kabbalistic texts of Isaac Luria that had arrived from Safed with Sephardic kabbalists. From Italy he moved on to Moldavia. In 1660 he published his book *Safah Berurah* (Clear Language) in Prague, a lexicon in Hebrew, German, Latin and Italian that was a virtual handbook for the Jewish traveler. In 1666 he was appointed head of the yeshivah in Jassy, Walachia, then under Ottoman rule, and was also in Pascani. From there he relocated to Ungarisch Brod, Moravia, on the Hungarian border, where he was eventually killed by Turkish soldiers.<sup>48</sup>

Hanover's self-consciousness as a Jewish traveler is reminiscent of that of his younger contemporary, Shabbetai Bass (1641–1718). Bass's own parents were killed by the Cossacks in 1655 in Kalisz, Poland, but he and his brother were rescued and made it to Prague. A cantor, rabbinic scholar, and Hebraic bibliographer and publisher, he set out on a journey between 1674 and 1679 to visit libraries in Poland, Germany, and Holland. After mastering the art of printing in Amsterdam, in 1680 he published his famous Hebrew bibliographical guide, *Siftei Yeshenim* (The Languages of the Old), as well as his own Yiddish guidebook for travelers called *Massekhet Derekh Erez* (The Tractate on the Way of the Land). From Amsterdam he traveled to Auras, where he opened a printing house that was then transferred to Dyhernfurth, where he died.<sup>49</sup>

In the eighteenth century, Tobias Cohen (1652–1729), an Ashkenazic Jew who traveled from Poland to Germany to Padua to the Ottoman Empire, illustrates well the trials and tribulations of a student trying to matriculate

from a medical school, his eventual admission and graduation, his highly successful career as Jewish physician in the Ottoman Empire as well as his authorship of a well-known medical textbook. David Nieto (1654–1728), a rabbi and another graduate of Padua’s medical school, exemplifies the movement of many other Jewish intellectuals who migrated from Italy to England—in his case from Leghorn to London, where he became the *hakham* (rabbi) of the Spanish and Portuguese congregation Bevis Marks. The journeys of Ḥayyim Joseph David Azulai (1724–1806) throughout Europe are well known. Born in Jerusalem, he spent many of his adult years traveling abroad as an emissary for the Jewish communities in Palestine. He visited Italy, Germany, Holland, France, and England on behalf of the Hebron yeshivah between 1753 and 1758. He left Israel again in 1764, ending up in Cairo, where he remained until 1769. He was again the *shali’ah* (emissary) representing Hebron when he traveled to Italy in 1772. He ultimately settled in Leghorn, where he spent the rest of his life. As a diarist, Hebrew bibliographer, and rabbinic scholar, he visited libraries throughout Europe, and added to the work of Shabbetai Bass in cataloging Hebrew manuscripts and books.<sup>50</sup>

In the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Sabbatean emissaries crisscrossed the continent disseminating the news and message of their captive messiah. Nehemiah Ḥiyya Ḥayon (c. 1655–c. 1730) was perhaps the most notorious of these propagandists who traveled widely and evoked a major storm of protest over his printed revelations on the nature of the divinity. His alter ego was Moses Ḥagiz (1672–1751?), a powerful representative of a virtual army of rabbinical *sheliḥim* (emissaries), who traveled from one Jewish community

to the next in search of funds for Jewish communities in Palestine, and in the case of Ḥagiz preached the faith and defended it vigorously against those heretics who had challenged its very foundations, especially the sanctity of the rabbinic office itself.<sup>51</sup> Azulai, Ḥayon, and Ḥagiz, as well as Sasportas, were more than idiosyncratic wanderers appearing and reappearing in city after city. They were part of organized networks of ideologues, book dealers, preachers, and fund-raisers, often each embodying all of these roles at the same time. They traveled to make a sale—either a material or an ideological/spiritual one—and the Jewish communities that they visited felt obliged to receive them and even to fulfill their sundry requests.

Other later itinerant rabbis include Phinehas Elijah Hurwitz (1765–1821), the author of a massive Hebrew encyclopedia whose vast knowledge was surely accumulated in the course of his travels. Hurwitz was born in Lwów or Vilna and wandered throughout Poland, Hungary, Germany, and England, and he worked with several research assistants who aided him in translating scientific texts in European languages into Hebrew. Mordechai Gumpel Schnaber Levinson (1741–97), physician and Hebrew writer, traveled from Berlin to London to study in the medical program of the famous physicians John and William Hunter. He received a medical degree from the University of Aberdeen in Scotland, since Jews were not yet allowed to matriculate in England itself. His intellectual and spiritualist interests in alchemy and Swedenborgianism led him to Sweden; he eventually returned to London and then to Germany. He related how he composed a commentary on Ecclesiastes when on a boat back to Germany. Solomon Bennett (1761–1838)

traveled from Polotsk, Belarus, to Copenhagen, then to Berlin, finally settling in London at the end of the eighteenth century. A highly talented engraver by profession, he used his extensive Hebrew background in London to initiate a new English translation of the Hebrew Bible while openly challenging the authority of the chief Ashkenazic rabbi of London.<sup>52</sup> One could easily extend this list to include a much larger number of well-known itinerate *maskilim* (men of enlightenment) who traveled from eastern Europe to the West in pursuit of their enlightened interests, such as Israel Zamosc (c. 1700–1772), Isaac Satanov (1732–1804), or Solomon Maimon (c. 1753–1800), to name only a few. Mobility remained a critical dimension of Jewish intellectual life throughout the modern period as well.<sup>53</sup>

In the final analysis, however, all of these examples do not establish beyond any reasonable doubt that there was a direct link between traveling people and traveling ideas. What this chapter has demonstrated is that mobility was a crucial factor in early modern Jewish life, especially for many of its most prominent intellectual figures. The precise impact it played on cultural formation has not yet been studied sufficiently and systematically. Such a project requires more detailed biographical data gleaned from the writings of these individuals and their interlocutors as well a careful study of the variegated cultural contexts in which they lived and their adaptations to their changing surroundings. Such a task is important but clearly beyond the scope of this chapter. All I can point to at present are possible connections. These might include the accelerated pace of writing in many languages; the emergence of new forms of literary creativity in law, kabbalah, belles lettres, medicine, history

and biography, homiletics and more; or the concentration of Jews in itinerant professions such as medicine, performing arts, the rabbinate, and trade. Jewish mobility in this era might even explain, at least partially, such phenomena as the production of custom books meant to acknowledge and to enshrine in memory cultural differences liable to be forgotten, or the composition and printing of a universal code of Jewish law, the *Shulḥan Arukh* and *Mappah* of Joseph Karo and Moses Isserles, meant to address the change and disruption caused by migratory upheaval.<sup>54</sup> Mobility, as we have seen, also determines new linguistic enclaves. Ashkenazic Jews spoke and wrote Yiddish in Venice and Amsterdam, as well as Poland and Lithuania, despite its strangeness among the majority of people living in these places. Sephardim spoke Ladino and published extensively in that language in a Turkic linguistic field while conversos in Amsterdam assembled regularly in their newly adopted city for readings in Spanish and Portuguese and used these languages, rather than Dutch, for communal business and literary composition. Finally, as has been mentioned, and as we shall soon examine in greater detail in chapter 3, the mobility of persons went hand in hand with the mobility of books. The printer, the typesetter, and the book dealer were highly mobile people whose business relied on their shuttling from place to place. In a society in constant movement, the publishing of books also constituted a means of arresting motion, of preserving and storing the memory of the past and its traditions as an attempt—albeit elusive—of fixing and stabilizing the present.



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## Two

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### COMMUNAL COHESION

For more than a century, scholars have well noted the prominent growth of relatively powerful Jewish communal organizations during the early modern period. In the Netherlands, in Italy, in Germany, in the Ottoman Empire, and especially in eastern Europe, these more elaborate and complex institutions functioned most effectively in representing their Jewish constituencies before local governments and in providing religious, educational, and social services to their individual members. The pinnacle of this remarkable development was realized in eastern Europe, where a vast federation of local and regional Jewish communities banded together to create the so-called Council of the Four Lands. This mega-institution represented one of the most imposing structures of Jewish autonomy ever constituted in the diaspora.<sup>1</sup>

These early modern communities, their internal structures, the relations between rabbinic and lay leadership, and the external relations with their host governments have been of great interest to contemporary historians as well. Yet, disappointingly, the focus of their more recent work has remained strictly regional, hardly considering the broader landscape of these developments across the Jewish world. No one, to my knowledge, has freshly

attempted a systematic comparison of Jewish communal developments in early modern Europe.<sup>2</sup>

This chapter offers such a comparison of Jewish communal structures, albeit a tentative and preliminary one, concentrating on the Western Sephardic communities—primarily in Amsterdam, on those in German lands, and those in Poland and Lithuania, Italy, and the Ottoman Empire.<sup>3</sup> While Jewish communities in their early modern contexts exhibited striking continuities with those of medieval Muslim and Christian societies, there were obvious discontinuities as well.<sup>4</sup> And even more dramatic was the diminution and decline of these organizations in modern Jewish societies. Communal cohesion in the particular forms that developed in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries is surely a significant marker of the singularity of early modern Jewry as a whole and, along with the factor of mobility, deserves more serious attention on a transregional basis than it has received so far.

The description that follows focuses on three primary issues. First, the communal structures of early modern Jews were more elaborate and more complex than their medieval counterparts and suggest a development unique to this era. In presenting an overview of these structures, can one discern a trend common to each of the primary regions in which Jews lived, or do significant variations from region to region not allow us to make meaningful comparisons? Second, the new communities privileged and elevated lay authority—primarily that of affluent merchants—over that of the rabbis. The rabbinic authority in this era appears to become more professionalized, more institutionalized, and subsequently more subordinated to the communal leadership of elite patrician groups regulating communal affairs. The rabbis, of

course, did not lose all of their power, and as we shall see, their situation varied to some degree from place to place. Nevertheless, several of them noticed their relative loss of independence and authority, objected to their new status, and struggled to adjust to the new realities they clearly perceived. The loss of rabbinic power appeared to be most acute in western Europe, less so in eastern Europe and Italy, and even less so in the Ottoman Empire. Despite these differences, does a broader picture of a rabbinate in decline emerge from our individual explorations? Third, the growing complexity of Jewish communal organizations was surely the result of the policies of mercantilist governments who saw these communal structures as promoting their own political and economic agendas. The interesting question, which shall be considered in this chapter, is to what degree the early modern Jewish community was a creation of these host governments, the result of a self-conscious and coherent policy on their parts, serving their interests and even shaped in their images. Were the policies of the early modern states actually different from those of medieval ones with respect to Jewry policy? Can we generalize at all about the relationship between the early modern state and its Jewish community or do regional variations obviate such a possibility?

### Italian Communal Developments

In the community ledger (*pinkas*) of the Jewish community of Padua, Italy, a unique case is recorded for the year 1585. It involves a woman who gave birth to a child out of wedlock and insisted that the community support the child. If it refused, she would take the child

to the synagogue or even to the home of the father to embarrass the latter and the entire congregation. The community leaders, the *parnassim*, were understandably apprehensive about such negative publicity and decided to take the matter into their own hands rather than allow their renowned rabbi, Samuel Archivolti (1515–1611), to decide the matter. Archivolti was furious with their usurpation of his authority and ultimately resigned in protest. But the general council of the community stood by their *parnassim*, insisting on their right to decide “without the permission of any rabbi.” Samuel decided on his own to issue a *herem* (ban) against the man he thought to be the father. The *parnassim* declared the following in response: “From now on no rabbi or teacher who lives in Padua can decree or issue a *herem* without the consent and approval of at least two *parnassim* of our community.” Archivolti appealed to Judah Katzenellenbogen, the rabbi of Venice, who tried to find a compromise among the parties, asking the Paduan leadership to rescind their declaration without officially overturning it. The line remained in the community ledger until 1601, at which time the position of the rabbi was considerably strengthened, unfavorable references to him were erased, and his right to issue the *herem* on matters of religious law was acknowledged.<sup>5</sup>

This was the only case in Italy, where community leaders assumed what had traditionally been a rabbinic prerogative, and in the end Archivolti successfully reclaimed what had been temporarily taken from him. This case, then, is the exception that proves the rule but opens for us a window onto one of the primary issues of early modern Jewish communal life in the Italian city states and beyond: the balancing of lay authority with

rabbinic authority and the general limits of each. This incident profoundly illustrates a most telling point: that Jews never had full authority over their own communities in Italy but they nevertheless attained a considerable measure of autonomy in running their own lives.<sup>6</sup>

Signs of Jewish communal organization first appeared in the city states of northern and central Italy by the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries and become more visible by the second half of the sixteenth with the appearance of Jewish synagogues, cemeteries, and charitable associations. The influence of city organizations upon Jewish communal structures is obvious: general assemblies of Jewish citizens, smaller assemblies, and *parnassim* appear to mimic the structures of municipal assemblies and *procuratori*. The oldest Jewish communal ledger can be traced to Verona in 1539. Initially, wealthy bankers dominated the leadership of these communities later to be replaced by equally wealthy merchants challenging their control. The primary function of these elites was to collect taxes from their constituencies for the municipality and to offer social and educational services for their members. Rabbis were appointed by the community primarily for their pedagogic roles but also issued legal decisions carried out by means of arbitration that both parties agreed to accept voluntarily from the outset. These rabbis assumed a relative degree of economic independence; their positions were usually protected from the possible challenge of other rabbis; and they could enforce their decisions by the use of the *herem* with the backing and agreement of the lay leadership—the ultimate resolution of the controversy surrounding Samuel Archivolti mentioned earlier.<sup>7</sup>

By the second half of the sixteenth century, Jews were segregated in neighborhoods, called ghettos, in which all Jews were required to live and where no Christians were allowed to live. From the perspective of the papacy, the new spatial arrangements were designed to shield Catholic society from Jewish “contamination.” Since Jews could be more easily controlled within a restricted quarter, they ultimately could be more easily converted. Yet despite the missionary intentions of the ghetto founders, only a small percentage of the Jewish population converted. In fact, despite the misery and impoverishment these newly sequestered neighborhoods often engendered, there was also a positive side to these new conditions: the ghetto provided Jews with a clearly defined place, geographically and politically, within Christian society. Moreover, Christian authorities continued to tolerate the internal jurisprudence system of the Jews. Despite the explicit aim of the architects of the ghetto to insulate Christian culture from the alleged pollution of its Jewish minority, the closure paradoxically opened up new opportunities for cultural dialogue and interaction with the Christian majority as Jews saw themselves a more organic and natural part of their environment than ever before.

At the same time, the concentration and even congestion of these new urban environments posed new challenges to Jewish communal living. In a highly fragmented society of individual Sephardic, Ashkenazic, and Italian communities and synagogues, the fragmentation of rabbinic authority followed the general trend. Rabbinic power was limited by the presence of these multiple subcommunities and by competing rabbinic authorities who often disagreed with each other. And

despite the intellectual prominence of some individual rabbis, all were ultimately beholden to the communities they served and to the wealthy families who controlled communal life including those who dominated the many confraternities enriching the social and spiritual life of the ghettos.<sup>8</sup>

Until recently, the emergence of the ghetto has been viewed by scholars as a decisive stage in Jewish communal development but not necessarily its beginning or the primary factor in its emergence. In a recent study of the ghetto in Florence, one scholar has claimed that “the act of forcing the Jews to take up residence in their newly bounded Jewish neighborhood created the Jewish institutions that scholarship assumes existed all along.” There may have been a population of Jews living in the environs of Florence but not necessarily a community prior to the establishment of the ghetto. The self-conscious policy of the Medici rulers to organize Jews in a separate quarter suited their need to contain, regulate, control, and “spatialize” particular groups under their regime. And in so doing they fashioned for the first time a Jewish community, Jewish institutions, and even “the reconstruction of Jewishness.”<sup>9</sup>

Such an account of the rise of this relatively insignificant Jewish community in Florence and its ghettoization, based primarily on archival sources of the Medici government, provocatively raises the important question about the deliberate use of Jewish segregation to advance goals of state building and the degree to which a minority community could be fashioned simply by political manipulation alone. In the case of Florence, there is indeed little evidence to suggest institutional life prior to the ghetto, but even after communal structures were



in place the paucity of internal Hebrew sources written by the Jewish inhabitants themselves suggests that the Jewish experience the Medici had allegedly created was not especially rich or important in comparison to that of other Italian Jewish communities. The grand experiment in “creating Jewishness” hardly left a significant impression on Jewish cultural production.

Was the case of the Tuscan Jews unique or “rather possibly normative for Jews elsewhere”?<sup>10</sup> The situation in Florence does indeed seem exceptional when compared to the well-known larger ghettos such as those in Venice and Rome or others such as Padua, Ferrara, or Mantua. Each of these five more significant Jewish communities possessed elaborate communal organizations long before their ghettoization. In the two other Tuscan cities of Pisa and Leghorn, Jewish communities emerged without any ghetto structure at all. This would seem to suggest that a consistent and intentional Tuscan policy for dealing with Jewish institutional life probably never existed in the first place.<sup>11</sup>

In the end, the thesis that early modern states on their own initiative could and did create Jewish communities is stimulating but not persuasive. Jewish communities certainly emerged prior to the bold measures instituted by the Tuscan authorities in Florence, both throughout Italy and in the rest of Europe. The assumption that Jewish communities were only invented through the intervention of early modern states also ignores a vast body of evidence of complex Jewish communal structures in the Islamic and Christian worlds for centuries. It is also misleading to view its inception and development solely as a product of state power without taking into account the religious imperatives of Jews

to congregate together and the powerful aspirations of rabbis to lead their communities. Medieval and early modern governments could act aggressively to interfere in the internal lives of their Jewish minorities. But they could easily choose to ignore the latter as much as possible, as some did, or to deal with their Jewish subjects inconsistently or unintentionally on an ad-hoc basis. The varieties of approaches taken by early modern states toward their Jewish subjects cannot be reduced to a singular model, as the evidence of the rest of this chapter will suggest.

### Converso Communal Organizations: Leghorn and Amsterdam

The models of Jewish organization in communities founded by conversos such as Leghorn and Amsterdam reveal trends similar to what we have already seen in the rest of Italy, but also interesting variations, with respect to external relations with local governments and the internal management of Jewish affairs. The case of Leghorn, a bustling port city with a large population of conversos who were not obliged to live in a ghetto, underscores the preeminence of wealthy merchants in shaping communal affairs.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, the rabbis of this community usually acted as paid employees in a system that revolved around economic privilege and political concessions to the merchants who dominated the organizational life of the community. This fact is blatantly illustrated by the ordinances of the Jewish community and by a public critique of the latter by a prominent visitor to the city, Rabbi Jacob Sasportas (1610–98), in the late seventeenth century.

In 1670, the *parnassim* of Leghorn unambiguously confirmed their power in the following declaration:

The yeshivah shall not respond in writing, qua yeshivah, to any query whether presented from outside or from within the city, in any financial matter, save with the consent of the Senhores, the *parnassim*. . . . Each and every transaction declared hereby to pertain to the jurisdiction of the Senhores, the *parnassim*, or their agents . . . shall adhere to commercial custom or the regulations of the marketplace, to which we assent and approve as if they were expressly decided in *din Torah* [Jewish religious law] without need for any further grounds. . . . [In all matters] that pertain to divine or spiritual law . . . the *parnassim* shall be required . . . to decide and rule according to Jewish laws and customs. They are therefore permitted to refer these cases to Senhores *hakhamim* [rabbis] as they choose, so that they shall render their opinion and the ruling shall then be promulgated by the Senhores del Mahamad, judges or arbiters.<sup>13</sup>

In other words, in all commercial matters, the lay leadership had complete authority to follow “commercial custom or the regulations of the market place.” On matters pertaining to religious law—marriage and divorce, dietary laws, and other ritual matters—this same leadership might consult the rabbis for their expert opinions but ultimately they had the sole prerogative (“as they choose”) to decide these matters as well. Jacob Sasportas, a staunch defender of rabbinic leadership, was incensed by what he considered to be an illegitimate encroachment on rabbinic authority. Writing from Marseilles, he asked, “Is divine law to be considered inferior

to lay law, and the reasoning of the Torah scholars incapable of distinguishing between what [should be] determined by human reason and judged according to the custom of the merchants and what is [properly] determined by divine law?"<sup>14</sup>

His denunciation of the merchant leadership was more pointed and less diplomatic in a letter and a public circular written from Amsterdam. In the first instance, he proclaimed, "The complete truth is that their aspiration and desire is to cast away . . . and dismiss anything that bespeaks the honor of the *hakhamim*, to deprive them of all authority and lower them to the dust to be trampled upon by the laity. In this way, they [seek to] cast off the kingdom of heaven. . . ." In the second instance, he questioned the validity of the entire power structure of the Jewish community based solely on profit: "They [the Leghorn leaders] . . . seized power for themselves through their wealth and might, finding favor by transferring silver. When a seat becomes vacant, they obtain from the lord of the land writs of appointment to a place among the Twelve [parnassim], whether [they are] worthy or unworthy. Money reigns supreme and the deficient [man] gains an appointment."<sup>15</sup>

Sasportas's trenchant criticisms notwithstanding, the ordinances of Leghorn seem to have reflected the status quo throughout the early modern period in the city. This was also the case for Amsterdam, along with its satellite communities in London, Hamburg, and in the New World. The Dutch authorities referred to its Jewish community of former converso émigrés from the Iberian Peninsula as a *Jodenkerck*, similar to all other churches in the city functioning as a voluntary association without rights of law enforcement. But the *kahal*

(Jewish community) and its governing council, called the *Mahamad*, saw itself as much more: a foreign colony dedicated to maintaining its right to live in Holland and to function as a charitable society. Recalling the language of the Leghorn ordinances, the leaders of the Jewish community were actually a mixture of a religious community and a mercantile factory of merchants. Their organizational structure was less imbued with traditional Jewish communal practices and more driven by commercial customs practiced by foreign merchants throughout Europe. In this respect, Sasportas's negative perceptions of the Livornese Mahamad applied equally well to its Amsterdam counterpart.<sup>16</sup>

The Sephardic community of Amsterdam grew out of the merger of three smaller congregations in 1639. Among its primary concerns were the growing needs of poor relief in a community with wide divergences between an affluent merchant class and an indigent underclass, many of whom were recent immigrants. While feelings of ethnic kinship among the Sephardim were quite strong and excluded Jews of Ashkenazic descent who were obliged to form their own community in Amsterdam, belonging to a community that could make demands of its individual members was not a fully developed need on the part of this mobile and individualistic population. The community that was ultimately shaped by the merger agreement revealed immediately its oligarchic character. Its governing Mahamad consisted of seven "worthy, devoted, and God-fearing persons," six *parnassim* and one *gabai* (a kind of administrator), who were responsible for assessing and raising taxes for both the government and for the internal services of the community. Membership in this circle was based on wealth

and social status. In the relatively liberal environment of Holland, the Mahamad acted in an authoritarian manner as its first charter explicitly states: "The *Mahamad* will have authority and superiority over everything. No person may go against the resolutions taken and made public by the said *Mahamad* nor sign papers to oppose it. Those who do will be punished with *herem*. . . . It can condemn disobedient persons to penalties it deems fit and make them ask forgiveness publicly from the *teva* [the elevated platform of the synagogue]." <sup>17</sup>

Mention of the *herem* recalls immediately the tension we have seen already between the will of the lay leaders to exercise their authority and the self-image of the rabbis who saw as their sacred right to leadership to adjudicate according to Jewish law. The merger agreement is equally explicit about the hierarchical relationship between the two:

All the *dinin* [cases coming before the religious court] that will present themselves and that will have to be decided upon will be seen and examined by the salaried *bakhamim*, according to a majority vote. In case there is a tie, the arguments will be heard by the *Mahamad*, before whom it will be decided. The *Mahamad*, gathering information as it sees fit, will side with those with whom it agrees. Thus the issue will be settled. If one of the *bakhamim* asserts or writes anything against what was decided and two witnesses condemn him, he will lose his salary and will be removed from his post in the congregation and will never be admitted to that office again. <sup>18</sup>

The image of the rabbi as a mere salaried official appears to be quite similar to that which Sasportas found

so objectionable in Leghorn and also correlates well with the long history of the use of the *herem* in Amsterdam and other Western Sephardic communities. Although no official document exists, it seems quite certain that the Mahamad received explicit permission from the city authorities to excommunicate those of its members who broke its rules. It also insisted on being the ultimate authority in carrying out what had always been considered by some a sacral function of the rabbis. In fact, the Mahamad's power paralleled that of the Calvinist ministers in relation to the Dutch government. Only on rare occasions was this power contested, as in the case of Menasseh ben Israel, who challenged the Mahamad's authority in 1640 and suffered the indignity of being put under *herem* for a brief period. The Christian theologian Philip van Limborch had no objection to the use of the *herem* in general but found its implementation obnoxious when it was used as a means of imposing the community's beliefs on an individual as in the notorious case of Uriel da Costa. Throughout most of the seventeenth century, the rabbis employed by the community raised almost no objection to the Mahamad's exclusive control and "accepted their subordination with utter resignation."<sup>19</sup> In fact, a recently discovered pamphlet penned by none other than the longest serving rabbi of Amsterdam's Sephardic community, Isaac Aboab da Fonseca, not only endorses this subordination but defends the primacy of the Mahamad's coercive powers on the basis of arguments drawn from biblical and other classical sources.<sup>20</sup>

Only in 1677 did Joseph Abarbanel Barboza challenge the authority of the Mahamad who had issued a *herem* against him by appealing to the municipal authorities. The *parnassim* quickly rescinded their sacred ban, but

banished him anyway. In the end Barboza recanted, but in the wake of all this commotion the city magistrates disallowed the community to issue the herem for a brief time in 1683. The upshot of the entire affair was a warning to the community to moderate its use of the herem so as to project a proper image and demeanor in the public arena.<sup>21</sup>

By the eighteenth century, however, the community reclaimed its right to issue the herem as it saw fit with little intervention from governmental authorities. In fact, not only did the Mahamad regain in theory its ability to expel who it thought was deserving of such a punishment but the local rabbinical authorities in Amsterdam appeared to acquire a more elevated status in deciding matters of Jewish law, as a robust *responsa* literature testifies. But in reality this apparent victory for both rabbis and lay leaders counted for much less than it seemed. By this time the majority of the wealthy merchants of the community ignored the institutions of communal leadership altogether. They were happy to be unaffiliated with little incentive to abide by the decisions of a seemingly confrontational and increasingly irrelevant leadership circle. Those who still wished to affiliate with the community openly welcomed the stringencies of Jewish law zealously prescribed by the rabbis and *parnassim*, but those who willed to be outside the jurisdiction of the community considerably outnumbered those who chose to remain within it. In the final analysis, it was the individual *yehidim* (members) of the Jewish community who determined their own fate in choosing to accept the authority of the Mahamad or not.<sup>22</sup>

In contrast to the active intervention of the state authorities in Florence, those in Amsterdam allowed their



Jewish community to decide its own destiny and intervened only when necessary to preserve the public peace and welfare. The early modern Dutch state treated Jews like its other religious minorities, with a *laissez-faire* attitude even when the Mahamad acted aggressively and overzealously in attempting to punish its deviants. The government preferred to remain on the sidelines as long as it received its financial rewards from the Jews; as long as the Jews handled their own affairs and social services; and as long as the actions of the communal leaders did not embarrass the government or disrupt the social order. The history of Jewish communal life in the Dutch republic is accordingly a history of a community created by members of the community themselves, drawing from traditional Jewish models that they adapted to fit their own economic and social reality, and following a path strewn with both modest achievements and mishaps, accompanied throughout by the minimalist involvement of local authorities.

Ironically, the most powerful assault on the Mahamad came at a time when it had already lost much of its authority and stature. As we shall see more clearly in chapter 4, the rabbinate, too, was in the throws of its own crisis precipitated by the Sabbatean movement and its organs of propaganda directed against Jewish law and its rabbinic guardians. Angered by the initial positive reception accorded the heresiarch Nehemiah Ḥiyya Ḥayon by the Amsterdam Mahamad, Rabbi Moses Ḥagiz (1672–1751?) of Jerusalem constructed his own defense of the primacy of the rabbis over lay leaders in terms most reminiscent of those of his ideological colleague Jacob Sasportas. When pressed by Ḥagiz to accept his rabbinic authority regarding Ḥayon, the

Mahamad responded, "Surely you are aware that our city has a noble and ancient . . . kehillah [congregation] which is subservient to none, nor obligated to follow the opinions of any other." And elsewhere, it reiterated its position in even stronger terms: "We must preserve our unity and maintain our independence. No man dare interfere with our sovereignty . . . so we must act with the authority vested in us by the community and the municipal officials." To this Ḥagiz defiantly replied, "Is the community of Amsterdam and its parnassim superior to the ancient kings of Judea and the inhabitants of Jerusalem who accepted reproof from the prophets who did not defer to them?" Knowing full well that his struggle with the Mahamad was about economic and political power as well as moral authority, he added parenthetically that he would certainly gain the backing of "Hakham Rabbi Joseph Ergas . . . who is wealthy and independent and Rabbi Eliezer Ha-Cohen who is rich and powerful."<sup>23</sup>

In the end, Ḥagiz could claim no advantage over his lay adversaries. It was left to Abraham Segre, one of the Italian organizers of Ḥagiz's campaign against the Mahamad to declare the final swan song in defense of the beleaguered rabbinate: "If we must accord honor to the lay appointed court, how much more so to the heavenly court! They issue long screeds proclaiming their inviolability. How have they erred! For in matters pertaining to Jewish law we [the rabbinate] are all members of one city."<sup>24</sup>

That the rabbis were trying to present a united front claiming an unimpeachable authority over the vested interests of any individual community is important and will be considered again in chapter 4. It is sufficient at

this point to see this emotional exchange as a direct continuation of the contest between rabbinic and lay interests in Leghorn some thirty years earlier. By the second decade of the eighteenth century both the Mahamad and the rabbinate were weakened and tired institutions whose authorities were recognized by increasingly diminished numbers of their loyal following. Since their rhetoric could do little to change the existing political and social realities of Jewish life in Amsterdam, both parties engaged recklessly instead in a hopeless but vicious war of words. They could do little more.

### Jewish Communal Organization in Germanic Lands

On the surface, the rabbi's subordinate position to lay leaders in the Jewish communities in Germanic lands of the early modern era appears quite similar to what we have already seen elsewhere. Take, for example, the first rabbinic contract known to us, the *ketav rabbanut* of rabbi Man Todros (Theodoros) in the community of Friedburg, in Hessen, drawn up in 1575. The rabbi's appointment as *rav av beit din* (head of the rabbinic court) contains the following stipulations not unfamiliar from those of other communities:

First and foremost, the said rabbi is contracted to the community not to leave his residence for four years and the community will likewise be contracted to him not to seek another officeholder during this period. Second, the latter will not issue a warning and certainly will not issue a *herem* against any Jew without the permission of the community [either an inhabitant or someone from a

neighboring area]. But the community will have power and permission to issue a warning without the permission of the *av beit din*. The rabbi will issue a warning to any member of the community if requested by members of the community council.<sup>25</sup>

It would appear from this document that the rabbi of Friedburg was quite limited in his ability to act on his own initiative. He could not issue warnings and certainly not the ban without the explicit permission of the lay leaders; they could issue warnings without consulting him at all; and he was compelled to issue warnings on their behalf whenever they asked him to do so. The situation was no less grim in Prague in roughly the same period. This time no less an eminent rabbi than the Maharal (Judah Loew ben Bezalel) complained bitterly about the state of the rabbinate of his day:

How terrible it is that the dayanim—that is, the rabbis—in these territories are all dependent on the roshim [the lay leaders] and on the elite of the community, who every two or three years review us . . . and possibly will not renew us to be rabbis and it is worth saying that a dayan like this is not allowed to judge . . . and all this happens in this generation . . . that the landowners do not believe in the rabbi since they fear he may fall out of line. Moreover, one should also take into account that the rabbi [too] will fear these landowners if he doesn't fulfill their wishes.<sup>26</sup>

These two testimonies on the decline of rabbinic authority should be considered with one more source also written roughly in the same time period, in Frankfurt

am Main in 1603. The document and the subsequent reaction to its drafting poignantly underscore not only the weakness of the rabbinate in German territories but the conspicuous loss of power on the part of community leaders as well. It is interesting as a courageous attempt to bolster a relatively insecure and disunited community with strong guiding principles of organization and enforcement that ultimately fail miserably, revealing conspicuously the fault lines in German Jewish communal life by the beginning of the seventeenth century and a somewhat different situation from other regions we have examined so far. Written by the leaders of several communities who elected to band together as a united synod to regularize and systemize intercommunal cooperation and coordination and enforce standards of Jewish law, it appears innocuous enough and certainly respectful and supportive of governmental authorities. What is obvious from the tone of its narrative is the sense of powerlessness and frustration the leadership felt in trying to ensure some communal solidarity. Note its repeated emphasis on those who challenge and undermine the Jewish community:

The heads of the communities have gathered here at Frankfort at the order of our masters, the sages of Germany, to sit in council and look into the needs of the community and to make such ordinances and decrees as appear to be needed by the time and the place, so that the holy people may not be a sheep without a shepherd. . . . It is a common offence among the people of our generation to refuse to obey Jewish law and even to compel opposing litigants to present themselves before secular courts. . . . It is well known that many persons have

by the power of wealth sought to break down the organization of Jewish life in Germany, and have all but destroyed it completely. It is hoped that at some future time they will be brought to justice. . . . Since we know that we have in our communities wicked men of much influence who cannot be dealt with by local courts, we have established five central courts. . . . It is well known that much trouble has arisen in Jewish communities and settlements because of the wicked Jews who engage in trade in counterfeit coins.<sup>27</sup>

The rest of the document deals with regulations concerning communal taxes, the qualifications of ritual slaughterers, prohibitions on buying wine from non-Jews, setting the standards of rabbinical ordination, limitations on the printing of Jewish books and on external rabbis interfering with the authority of local rabbis, and more. What could have appeared threatening to government officials is not at all clear. Nevertheless, it seems to have generated an excessively adverse reaction from local authorities who learned of the document by way of an informer. The main plaintiff was the electorate bishop of Cologne, who ordered three German translations of the document in order to mount proceedings against the Jewish leaders. He claimed that their regulations were a provocation challenging the legal authority of the territorial princes and other authorities. These actions ultimately did little harm to the community, but they did engender much anxiety and despair from those who hoped that their efforts to build a supracommunal organization on the scale of earlier medieval synods might bear fruit. No further rabbinical synod ever took place, and the community leadership felt challenged from the

encroachments of both the government leaders and the wealthy individuals who defied their authority.

These three testimonies encapsulate quite well the conditions of Jewish communal life in Germany between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries: a mixture of autonomous communities and larger territorial entities controlled by princes; a community weakened from without by a variety of oft-competing government officials; and its autonomy weakened from within by affluent Jews powerful enough to ignore the needs of the community or to manipulate them for their own purposes if they were so inclined. In other words, what marks the German Jewish community in this era as somewhat different from Jewish communities elsewhere in Europe are two primary phenomena: the emergence of court Jews and *Landjudenschaften*, those regional Jewish organizations focusing on the needs of local Jews organized and supervised by territorial princes. Especially after the Thirty Years' War and the Peace of Westphalia of 1648, Jews living in German lands found themselves supervised by local authorities rather than the Holy Roman Emperor directly. After 1648, the old empire was divided among some 250 princely territories. Seeking economic growth and revival in a relatively underdeveloped society and attempting to weaken previous concentrations of power of various estates and churches, the princes hired individual court factors—many of them Jews—to bolster their economic standing; to acquire instant revenue; to serve as purveyors of supplies for standing militia; to function as intermediaries in transactions with foreign states; to act as leasing agents for state monopolies; to trade in diamonds and precious metals; and even to perform the

most insidious job of all, the reminting of coins with a lower silver content in order to devalue the local currency and allow the prince to spend even more.<sup>28</sup>

Such *Hofjuden*, as they were called, often used their entrepreneurial role to work in support of Jewish communal interests, intervening on behalf of their communities with local governments and financing Jewish communal projects. At the same time, many of them did not feel bound by Jewish law and rabbinic authority; they undermined communal authority by filling leadership roles with their own relatives and associates; and their own precarious positions and precipitous falls from power as unpopular agents of the absolutist governments they served could often have catastrophic results for the communities to which they belonged. The system of patronage and privilege practiced by these exceptional Jews who stood above the norms of the Jewish community would ultimately jeopardize and debilitate the smooth functioning of Jewish communal life.

The Landjudenschaften, on the other hand, became in the seventeenth century the standard form of organization for the majority of Jews living throughout the German regions. They represented all Jews living in a specific sovereign territory who were legally entitled to live there. These organizations well served the interests of the local ruler who could efficiently supervise the behavior of his Jewish subjects and exploit them economically through heavy taxation. These organizations especially served Jews in less populated regions, including large numbers living in isolated rural areas. Moreover, unlike the supragovernmental structures that emerged among the Jews in Poland and Lithuania roughly in the same period, they were composed



of individuals rather than communities and did not function as umbrella organizations with considerable political clout. On the contrary, the Landjudenschaften were limited in power by state officials and by local lay leaders including court Jews.<sup>29</sup>

Nevertheless, it would probably be an exaggeration to see the Landjudenschaften as merely the instruments of German princely policy. They did organize and control a Jewish internal life run by territorial rabbis who were themselves often hired by local sovereigns to whom they were subservient. As we have seen, the rabbis also answered to lay boards that did not allow them to overstep their authority. In some cases, however, the same person may have accumulated the maximum power by simultaneously serving as community *parnas*, rabbi, and court Jew. As in the case of the rabbis of eastern Europe, the most powerful were those who had become part of the elite classes of their community.

By the eighteenth century, a growing bureaucratization and stagnancy characterized the structures of these Jewish organizations dependent on the whim of petty princes and the inconsistent support offered by imperial diets and the emperor himself. While Jewish autonomy, at least on the local level, remained intact throughout this period, the heavy hand of local governmental intervention and Hofjuden working as lackeys of the territorial princes had taken its toll. Perhaps a possible analogue to the aforementioned model of the early modern government of Florence shaping Jewish affairs might be the German principalities and their control over the Landjudenschaften. Jewish communities in German lands seem to display less independence and less self-determination than those in other regions such as the

Dutch republic, Poland and Lithuania, and the Ottoman Empire.<sup>30</sup> This impression might also explain in part the relative lack of cultural production and creativity of the Jewish elites of this region in comparison with other Jewish communities elsewhere. With the sole exceptions of Frankfurt am Main and Prague, large academies of Jewish learning ceased to exist in Germanic lands. German Jews either sent their children to study in Poland or hired local tutors from the East. Local institutions rarely produced Jewish intellectual leaders.<sup>31</sup>

### The Jewish Community under Ottoman Rule

The standard view of Jewish communal life under Ottoman rule is that Jews were granted almost complete autonomy to a degree unparalleled in the rest of Europe. Earlier historians of Ottoman Jewry described the communities of Istanbul, Salonika, and Izmir as self-contained and self-administered units with relatively independent courts unhampered by state authorities. This view has been reinforced by contemporary eyewitness accounts of both Jews and Christians who described the Ottoman Jewish communities they saw in glowing terms. It is also sustained by the large number of collections of rabbinical responsa printed in the Ottoman Empire from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, testifying apparently to the intense activity of Jewish law courts and rabbinic judges.

More recent scholarship has refined this picture considerably for the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by clarifying that the Ottoman Empire never legally recognized the Jewish community or its law courts in the first place. As a consequence of this situation, the status of

Jewish judicial activity always remained unstable. The rabbis limited their decisions to religious matters, but even in these cases, since Jewish courts had no official status, any hope of enforcement over the objection of one of the parties depended upon Muslim officials. The internal Jewish courts functioned primarily because of governmental indifference or a certain reticence to supervise the Jewish legal system and to interfere with its usually normal operations. The state officials might have assumed that the Jewish judges were only functioning as arbitrators rather than actual court officials. Jewish courts thus often went unnoticed, and flourished as a consequence of the benign neglect of Ottoman officials. The system failed to work when dissatisfied litigants appealed to the Muslim law courts to overturn Jewish internal decisions. In these cases, often involving more serious financial consequences, and when Jews needed confirmation of legal documents, Jews made use of the Muslim system at their own initiative. When individual Jews bypassed the rabbinic judges, the system was undermined.

In other words, the Jewish courts were only legitimate if both parties willingly accepted the validity of their decisions and agreed to bypass the Muslim authorities, who would usually not intervene unless provoked by defiant Jewish litigants. Those outsiders—such as Samuel Aboab, the rabbi of Venice, who painted an idyllic picture of pious Ottoman rabbis deciding on matters of Jewish law in contrast to the subordinate role of their Italian counterparts—were incapable of interpreting what they were actually seeing. For all appearances, Jewish legal autonomy was solid and impressive; in actuality, it proved to be less stable and more like Jewish legal structures throughout Europe.<sup>32</sup>

Another myth punctured by recent scholarship is that Ottoman Jewry had its own chief rabbi, its *hakham basi*, who ruled over a Jewish *millet* system, a legal entity recognized by the Ottoman government. This official was responsible for collecting taxes and running the Jewish court system. The millet system was, in reality, a system applying to Muslims, not Jews, and no official rabbi was appointed by the Ottomans prior to the nineteenth century. There was a chief rabbi in Istanbul in the sixteenth century, and two rabbis held this position jointly in Izmir in the seventeenth century.<sup>33</sup>

The real heart of the system of Jewish governance, however, was located not on the national but the local level. When Istanbul was made the Ottoman capital after 1453, entire communities of immigrants, including Jews from the West, were settled in the city according to their places or origin. Thus emerged a system of *kahalim*—that is, small ethnic enclaves consisting more or less of a synagogue of congregants from the same region with common customs and ritual practices. It is not totally clear whether these miniature communities emerged because the government or the immigrants themselves preferred them or perhaps because they suited the needs of both parties. From Istanbul the kahal system spread elsewhere, to Salonika and smaller towns as well, and became a fixture of Ottoman Jewish life well into the seventeenth century.

Each kahal functioned as an entity onto itself, encouraging the full participation of its members in managing the wide range of administrative, social, and judicial services required of Jewish communal life. According to Joseph Hacker, there were two kinds of kahal systems: the Salonika model, which allowed full autonomy to

the individual kahalim and was adopted by most Jewish communities in the western regions of the Ottoman Empire; and the Istanbul model, which allowed the majority together to impose its will on individual kahalim and was followed primarily by Jewish communities in the eastern Ottoman regions.

Within the framework of these local communal structures, the internal Jewish leadership generally remained oligarchic, controlled by a restricted group of families with considerable financial and political status. These families ensured a social hierarchy of *parnassim* chosen from their ranks. They in turn chose a *marbiṣ Torah*, the rabbi who presided over the rabbinic court of the kahal. In a few cases, kahalim evolved out of private synagogues donated by individual families who dominated their leadership structure.<sup>34</sup>

Despite the dependent status of the rabbinate in relation to the lay *parnassim*, the local rabbis seem to have enjoyed more freedom in comparison with that of many of their colleagues in other Jewish communities. They maintained their right to issue the *ḥerem*, and the *parnassim* generally respected this right or more frequently requested that such decisions be made together. Occasional outbursts of rabbinic impatience directed against the lay leadership can be found in the sources. Rabbi Isaac Adarbi of Salonika could not countenance lay interference in what he considered to be an exclusive rabbinic prerogative: "There is no greater contempt of the Torah than that the ban of a sage should not be valid without the consent of some frivolous or irresponsible person." Rabbi Yom Tov Zahalon of Safed called the *parnassim* of Lepanto, Greece, "compromise judges, cowards, and shepherds." But such dissonance was

relatively infrequent, for lay and rabbinic leaders generally worked well together supporting each other's interests. In the main, the rabbi's image as sacral leader of the Jewish community was less tarnished than elsewhere.<sup>35</sup>

By the second half of the seventeenth century, the authority of the *marbiṣ* Torah was even more pronounced. The power of some aristocratic families declined as that of new urban elites and rabbinic leaders ascended. Rabbis presided over Jewish law courts that were increasingly recognized by the constituencies they served. While the ultimate decisions of the community still rested on those patrician families who paid the most taxes, an even more favorable balance of power emerged between the salaried rabbis and affluent lay leaders. As the large urban centers of seventeenth-century Ottoman Jewry became more centralized, the collective power of rabbinical leaders was noticeably enhanced through the growing prominence of several local chief rabbis who commanded more power than the ordinary rabbinic judge, especially in the cities of Istanbul and Izmir.<sup>36</sup>

Nevertheless, this development appears to have lasted only until the end of the century when the general economic conditions of Jewish life throughout the Ottoman Empire declined significantly leading to a diminution of both lay and rabbinic power. In the particular case of the once dynamic Jewish community in Izmir, the infiltration of new merchant colonies of Italians, Armenians, and Greeks eroded the once dominating economic role of the Jews. The centralized Jewish leadership of the city was also challenged by the emergence of subcommunities of converso merchants as well as the commotion and intrigue in the wake of the crisis over the messianic claims of Shabbetai Zevi.

## Jewish Self-Government in Eastern Europe

In considering, finally, the complex organization of Jewish communal life in Poland and Lithuania, we turn to the most celebrated and most studied Jewish self-government in early modern Europe, one considered by the Russian historian Simon Dubnow as the quintessential model of Jewish autonomy in all of Jewish history. The overall structure of eastern European Jewish life from the local community to the vast federation of communities known as the Council of the Four Lands could be described as a religious ethnic corporation recognized by law and protected by the monarchy and nobility. Its autonomy rested on the mutuality of interests between the Polish nobility and the Jewish elites who ran their communities. In return for the decisive roles played by Jews in the economic life of towns and estates controlled by the nobility and the king, they were rewarded with a broad autonomy fitted to the Polish legal system.

As communities flourished on a local level, the need for representation of their broader interests on the regional level led to the creation of a larger territorial organization. The Council of the Four Lands was a kind of federative parliament functioning like an assembly of nobility, run by a small number of Jewish notables who served the governments of Poland and Lithuania as a tax collection agency for its Jewish citizens. The council ultimately became the overall governing body of the larger Jewish community dealing with internal matters of ritual law, education, and social services while representing Jewish interests before governmental authorities through its official intercessors, called *shtadlanim*. Given the density of the large Jewish population it represented,

the council virtually maintained and directed a vast internal Jewish world.<sup>37</sup>

The emergence of the Council of the Four Lands and the aggrandizement of its political power did little to enhance the independence of the rabbis. On the contrary, the Polish communal rabbinate, as early as the beginning of the sixteenth century, experienced a steady decline in its authority, subordinated to the interests of the king and the lay community leadership. In the first decades of the century, rabbis were appointed directly by the king to collect Jewish taxes. In a series of disputes between the community's lay leadership and the rabbis, the communities attempted to limit rabbinic power by appealing directly to the king who initially rebuffed their demands. The king viewed his appointed rabbis as Jewish legal officials and was willing to grant them power to impose Jewish law on his Jewish subjects. In 1541 two rabbis, Moses Fishel and Shalom Schachna, were granted royal jurisdiction over a vast area of southern Poland with even the power to issue bans. Circumventing the will of the lay leadership, they rose to power by winning the trust of royal officials.

This situation gradually changed in the 1540s as community *parnassim* accumulated more authority as the king's power declined and that of the nobility rose. By the middle of the sixteenth century rabbis were increasingly subordinated to Jewish lay leaders who exercised their rights to appoint and fire rabbinic judges. The new reality was not easily accepted by even the most prominent Polish rabbis of the era. Moses Isserles maintained that it was the king's right, not the community's, to appoint rabbis as royal officials; and Solomon Luria, who received a royal privilege to open a yeshivah in Lublin in



1567, also preferred the model of a stable Polish rabbinate buttressed by royal authority.<sup>38</sup>

The balance of power between rabbis and lay leaders can also be detected in the relations between the rabbis and the Council of the Four Lands over several centuries. It appears that until 1670, the Polish rabbinate had no official function within the council that may have indicated that their very prestige as codifiers of the *halakha* (Jewish law) and authors of voluminous responsa was not affected by this lay body at all. They continued to issue their decisions as their great rabbinical court met during annual fairs. After 1670 until about 1720, a permanent rabbinical body worked alongside the lay leadership of the council although the latter surely acted as the dominant force. After 1720, until the council's closure in 1764, the rabbinical court's activity was significantly reduced while some individual rabbis attempted to gain previously lay positions as financial secretaries or trustees in the council's administration. This process would seem to show as well a steady decline of rabbinic power and prestige from the sixteenth century until the eighteenth. The growing need of the rabbis to assert their power in this lay body may have been a clear indicator that this authority was waning, especially during the last stage when their grab for lay positions seemingly undermined their status as rabbis.<sup>39</sup>

This picture of the frequently tense relations between lay and rabbinic authorities in the council system is also confirmed by the language of the charter of the council of Lithuania of 1639: "The leaders of the community will adjudicate disputes and quarrels . . . fines and punishments, and the dayanim of the community will deal with monetary laws . . . and the dayanim should not

stick their heads into matters not relevant to them.”<sup>40</sup> The language of the constitution of the Jewish community of Krakow-Kazimierz of 1595 is more neutral and less inflammatory, but the ultimate authority of the community’s lay oligarchy is clear: “Neither the *roshim* nor the *tovim*, nor the rabbi nor the *kahal* . . . nor any other official will be chosen anywhere except on the street of the Jews. They will be chosen with the agreement of the [incumbent] *roshim*, *tovim*, and *kahal*, and according to the prescriptions of our Torah, [and] as in the statutes we have from kings and other princes and rulers.”<sup>41</sup> Conspicuously absent in the process of choosing the community’s leaders are the rabbis themselves.

In 1622, Rabbi Joel Sirkes (1561–c. 1640), the *av beit din* of Krakow, criticized the leadership of the Council of the Four Lands for exercising a ban against Jewish money changers in Lublin. The issue for Sirkes was not the punishment per se but the process itself: “By what authority do you take it upon yourself to issue such an edict of excommunication? . . . Why do you neglect to consult the scholars before leveling such a ban?” For Sirkes, the council acted unwisely by so harsh a punishment, a mistake that could have been avoided had they not ignored the sage counsel of rabbinic authorities. Rather than misuse their authority by issuing a sacred ban, they should have restricted themselves to nonsacral punitive measures more appropriate for *parnassim* to execute.

Sirkes, of course, had accommodated himself to a governing lay authority to which he was dependent—as were other members of his profession. He was obliged to protest, however, the ultimate indignity of a lay council assuming that they could issue the ban traditionally associated with rabbinic sanctity without consulting any

rabbi whatsoever. There is no evidence that the leaders of the council took Sirkes' criticism to heart and rescinded their *herem*. By this time, the subservient status of the communal rabbi was well entrenched. He was fully subordinate to communal leaders whose own power rested on their personal wealth and on their connections with sources of power outside the Jewish community. Those rabbis who continued to wield a modicum of power were usually those who were born into affluent Jewish families in the first place, or married into them, thus becoming part of the oligarchic power structure themselves.<sup>42</sup>

Only a few years before Sirkes' protest against the council, in a time of social turmoil and insecurity on the part of the communal leadership stemming from hostility on the part of the Catholic Church against Jews, the leaders of the Council of the Three Lands (as they were then called) issued a set of communal ordinances in 1607. In the introduction, the heads of the community underscored the dangers of their times and the need to take immediate and conclusive actions. What is interesting is how the rabbis were enlisted in support of the lay leadership, in a manner transparently revealing their utter dependence on the latter. In order to address these new adversities facing the community, the document announces that the *roshim* would choose "rabbis from the large congregations to examine and determine the laws" regarding usury, Sabbath observance, and kosher slaughtering, and that they would "compel each [rabbi] in his own region to fulfill everything that needs to be corrected." It continues,

Even though it has been difficult for us to stick our heads in such serious and awesome matters, particularly

at the fair, and particularly to lift our heads in the presence of the great ones [the rabbis], the cedars of Lebanon, the sages of [holy] secrets. . . . It would have been more proper that they rather than us set the restrictions, each in his place and in his own area of jurisdiction, as is necessary, and according to the Torah and his magnanimity. Nevertheless, we feared the breach driven by our many sins, such that many small people do not listen to great ones, its rod directs it [see Hosea 4:12]; so it has been written here in a decree emanating from the officers, the heads of the lands, whose words will be heeded more readily, forcing those willing until each says: "I accept."

Written in a tense moment of crisis, when the leadership of the community felt compelled to act decisively to rectify what it perceived as an intolerable situation, the message the document conveys inadvertently is more interesting than its explicit concern. At a time when the leaders felt the need for a kind of religious renewal, a communal purging of sins of a social and religious nature, rabbis were summoned to lend their support to this communal effort. But the rabbis were considered no more than servants of the community officers, "compelled" by them to carry out what the leaders required. The heads of the communities issued their directives somewhat awkwardly, knowing full well that they were trespassing in areas traditionally reserved for rabbinical leaders. But they justified their presumptuous actions by acknowledging that the rabbis could not be expected to be taken seriously enough without their solid backing. The document provides a revealing portrait of both the self-assurance of communal leaders and the low image

of the rabbis in their eyes and apparently in the eyes of those to whom the leaders were directing their message.<sup>43</sup>

By the eighteenth century, with Jewish communal structures more dependent than ever on governmental authorities who sought to weaken internal Jewish authority, rabbinic appointments and activity fell under their control.<sup>44</sup> The Council of the Four Lands continued to meet regularly, but it was supervised by officials of the crown treasury who severely limited its independence in enforcing its own laws. In this changed climate, some rabbis saw an opening to advance their own authority at the expense of the lay leaders, as has already been mentioned. In the minutes of a meeting held in Jaroslaw in 1739, the following was recorded:

Great harm is caused to the council by second-tier rabbis, that is, rabbis of communities, interfering in the economic concerns of the councils and the lands. They themselves have been elected to protect the customs of our religion and pay no taxes. Nevertheless, they try by various means to encroach on honors that properly belong to us householders, who must bear the full burden of taxes. They attempt to be chosen for appointment as delegate, assessor, trustee, or recorder. . . . Therefore, to eliminate such competition, which reflects no honor on the rabbis, we have resolved that no rabbi now or in the future will dare to seek any such office on pain of losing his rabbinic office.<sup>45</sup>

In contrast to the many testimonies of the conflict between lay and rabbinic authorities already discussed in this chapter, there is nothing edifying about the recorded behavior of these rabbis and the motivation that drove

them to usurp secular authority. The terms of the conflict in a period when the Council of the Four Lands was feeling a serious diminution of its autonomy and control were solely about power and wealth. For some the office of the rabbi had reached a low point, increasingly subjected to external influences and purchased for a price. Thus, David ben Yizhak Ha-Karo bitterly acknowledged, "The office of instruction [the rabbinate] has been so corrupted in some places that the rabbinate has become an agency for tax collection. In many places [control of] the rabbinate has been taken away from Jews and they have no say over it."<sup>46</sup>

This later decline in the authority and image of rabbis went hand in hand with other power struggles among the community's elite classes. The successful intervention of governmental authorities to gain more control over their Jewish population was driven primarily by fiscal—not cultural or religious—concerns. Despite these new challenges to communal autonomy, the lay leadership and its salaried rabbis continued to function throughout the eighteenth century and beyond. In the final analysis, when considering the entire period and not only its declining moments, it seems appropriate to conclude with the sentiment of Gershon Hundert, following that of his professional ancestor, Simon Dubnow, that the communal organization of eastern European Jews was "more ramified, extensive, and complex than any other in European Jewish history."<sup>47</sup>

### Some Comparative Observations

In attempting to summarize this chapter, we might begin by stating the obvious: that Jewish communal

autonomy, with all its limitations and inadequacies, was an essential condition of Jewish life throughout the early modern period. The Jewish community was not born in this era nor was it a product of early modern statecraft alone. Jewish communal structures outside the land of Israel have long pedigrees that can be traced back to late antiquity and the Middle Ages. Moreover, the political and economic conditions under which Jewish self-government emerged, the recognition by local authorities of Jewish autonomy, the admission and exclusion of members, the range of educational and social services the Jewish community offered, and the division of powers between secular and rabbinic authorities are matters that confronted Jewish communities from their earliest beginnings.

The Jewish communities of early modern Europe were not unique in relation to their ancient and medieval counterparts but they were different in some major respects from those of previous eras. Jacob Katz long ago underscored the size of early modern structures in his famous sociological overview of the *kehillah* system of governance. His point of reference was the elaborate organization of the Council of the Four Lands, which clearly had no precedent in medieval Ashkenazic society.<sup>48</sup> Surely size was also a factor in considering Jewish life under Ottoman rule or the Landjudenschaften in German lands or even the emergence of particular forms of self-governance within Western Sephardic communities. Not only size but the longevity of these early modern organizations distinguished them from the occasional medieval synods that momentarily brought smaller Jewish communities under one roof but quickly dissolved after their collective deliberations had ended.

Early modern Jewish communities were also different because of the new political and economic policies of early modern states, of absolutism and mercantilism, that helped shape their evolution and limited success. As we have seen, no simple correlation between early modern statecraft and the formation of Jewish communal life might adequately explain the variety of structures that emerged from Amsterdam to Istanbul. Nevertheless, the new political landscape of early modern Europe, its religious wars, the movement of populations, the rise of new governments hospitable to the influx of new immigrants, and the struggle for power between kings and noblemen are all relevant in understanding why early modern governments not only tolerated self-administered Jewish communities but in certain instances even encouraged them to flourish. And because of these new circumstances, the great historians of Jewish communities—Simon Dubnow, Salo W. Baron, and Jacob Katz—were right to privilege this era as the one of most full-scale and intense Jewish communal development.

In this quick survey of early modern Jewish communities, I have noted throughout a common picture with distinct regional variations. The unique setting of the ghetto system often helped to rejuvenate if not create Jewish communal life in Italy, with the sole exceptions of the Tuscan cities of Pisa and Leghorn, where spatial restrictions were absent. The converso leadership in Amsterdam, Leghorn, Hamburg, and London established communities governed by both Jewish traditional values and mercantile commercial custom. Jewish communities in German lands were uniquely formed because of the existence of court Jews and territorial organizations initiated by local princes. The Ottoman Jewish community,



though lacking official recognition, took full advantage of benign neglect to shape communal cohesiveness on both national and local levels. And the Jews of Poland and Lithuania were allowed the opportunity to form a gigantic federation of smaller communities, a government within a government unparalleled within the Jewish diaspora.

While each Jewish community forged constructive relationships with its host governments, no single formula can define these communities precisely, as they ranged from the more interventionist case of the German principalities to the more noninvasive Ottoman government. Conditions also varied over time, as we have seen in the case of Poland, where the monarchy initially elected to appoint rabbis as royal officials but later lost its power to that of the magnates who then more directly shaped Jewish life. This was also the case in the Ottoman Empire with the rise of rabbinic power in the seventeenth century in contrast to the weaker status of rabbis in the sixteenth century. What we can then say, noting these obvious differences over time and place, is that the early modern period represented a culmination of Jewish communal development everywhere across the diaspora emerging both because of the initiatives of strong Jewish leaders as well as the relatively tolerant policies of governments that recognized a certain political and economic utility in their continued existence.

One final aspect of this story needs to be emphasized—that is, a condition plaguing each of the communities we have examined in one way or another: the contentious relationships between lay and rabbinic leadership and their concerted efforts to dominate each other. Here, too, there are important variations in the five regions

we have studied. But the general picture seems clear. Despite their best efforts, the rabbis do not end up on top. One might argue that the self-image of rabbinic power and the reality of what the rabbis actually achieved have a long history before this period. Nevertheless, in early modern times, as we have seen through numerous examples, the rabbinic office was more clearly defined, more professionalized, and more circumscribed by the lay leadership than ever before.

This last point is critical not only regarding the subject of this chapter but of several others to follow. Based on the findings of this chapter, it might be fair to argue that the seeds of the crisis over rabbinic authority usually associated with the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries can already be located earlier in the sixteenth, at the very inception of powerful communal structures and at the very height of Jewish self-government and internal political life. When one considers this predicament in the context of other sweeping changes, such as those affecting the traditional curriculum and the modes of education engendered by the printing press (to be addressed in chapter 3), it would be legitimate to argue that in some respects the resurgence of Jewish political power in the sixteenth century represented a double-edged sword, strengthening certain lay elites at the expense of more traditional rabbinic ones. The rabbinate was certainly not a spent institution in this earlier period, drained of all its considerable legal and moral resources to direct the religious lives of the constituencies it served. But its power had been eclipsed, and rabbis reluctantly were obliged to function within this new reality. They understood fully that both their legal and educational roles would never be the same as those

of some of their ancestors. With the emergence of the Sabbatean crisis of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, this new challenge to rabbinic authority, precipitating an even further erosion of traditional mores and controls, actually fed on the fault lines of laicized and localized Jewish communal structures established centuries earlier and subject to the will of Jewish economic elites who had personally benefited from the new structures of power and authority handed them by the mercantilist governments they served.

# Three

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## KNOWLEDGE EXPLOSION

### The Printed Book and the Creation of a Connected Jewish Culture

The impact of the printed book is a critical dimension in understanding the emergence of an early modern Jewish culture.<sup>1</sup> I open this chapter with a profound illustration of this point: the story of one of the most important Hebrew books ever published, the *Shulhan Arukh* (Ordered Table), that monumental code of Jewish law composed by the Sephardic rabbi Joseph Karo (c. 1488–1575), accompanied by the glosses of the Ashkenazic Moses Isserles (1525 or 1530–1572) called the *Mappah* (Table Cloth).<sup>2</sup> The code was first published in Venice in 1565 and then republished in Krakow in 1578–80, appearing together with Moses Isserles' additions. Isserles boldly introduced the printed text into his yeshivah in Krakow, thus reducing the totality of Ashkenazic legal practice to the material referred to in this composite work and, more important, producing a new legal compendium whose traditional boundaries separating Ashkenazim and Sephardim by long-established custom were blurred.

To understand the enormous significance of this publication one needs to recall that medieval Ashkenazic culture was based on a limited library of rabbinic

works, learned orally and transmitted through *hagahot* (glosses) written by a later exegete that eventually merged with the original text itself as they were studied, transmitted, and recopied. In contrast to the medieval Christian book, an authoritative text for Ashkenazic Jews was thus not the original text but its latest version consisting of the most recent accretions to the text. The authority of the text thus depended on the authority of its most recent rabbinic interpreter and transmitter. This all changed when Isserles decided to print his glosses to accompany Karo's legal digest. By committing his oral comments to writing and linking them to the fixed code of Karo, Isserles hoped to preserve at least a part of the earlier oral and scribal tradition in this new printed book so that a kind of printed manuscript emerged.<sup>3</sup> When his contemporary Ḥayyim ben Bezalel strenuously objected to Isserles' innovation, this critic fully grasped the consequences that would result. A binding code, with its privileged commentary in the pages of a printed book, would arrest the elasticity of the tradition, diminish the importance of local customs, and degrade the authority of individual rabbinic commentators. All would be subsumed under the centralizing authority of a supracommunal canon whose ultimate voice was Isserles himself.

This description of the genesis of the famous code of Jewish law offers a lasting icon that a unified culture fusing Sephardic law with Ashkenazic custom was emerging among early modern Jews and that it was made possible through the new invention of the printed book and its circulation. Although Jews "on the move" explain in part the possibility of a shared cultural experience between disparate Jewish communities at great physical and psychological distances from each other, books

on the move explain even more. Before print, no one could have imagined the seemingly improbable merger of two legal traditions on the pages of a book or the obliteration of localized oral traditions of authority and transmission. Similarly, no one could have conceived of the extraordinary layout of multiple commentaries from different eras and regions surrounding the core text of the Talmud and simultaneously appearing on the same page in the first printed edition in Venice in the first decades of the sixteenth century. Equally unprecedented was the publication of the *Magna Biblica Rabbinica*, also published in Venice in four different editions in the sixteenth century. Initially produced by Daniel Bomberg, the Christian printer, with the assistance of Jewish proofreaders, these newly formatted Jewish sacred texts were clearly imitative of Christian publishing practices of their own canon law.

The truly revolutionary implications of these publication events have only recently been appreciated by contemporary scholarship. It is now possible to understand how the regular migration of Hebrew books from Venice into eastern Europe created a crisis for the rabbinic elites of Poland and Lithuania, one more enduring and more repercussive than even that engendered by the publication of the *Shulḥan Arukh* itself. Accustomed to the fluid scribal culture of texts with exegetical notes, rabbinic teachers had long felt comfortable in modifying the law according to local custom and current usage. The appearance of printed texts arrested considerably this creative and open process, establishing canonical texts not easily “invaded” by scribal glosses and novel formulations. The text—not the teacher—became the ultimate word, and thus diminished the teacher’s authoritative capacity for

interpreting the law. The text, now available in multiple copies and purchased by larger numbers of students, could no longer be easily supervised and controlled by an overseeing rabbinic elite. Through the elevation of the status of the text through print, the rabbinic master was less in a position to contest its supremacy.

One additional transformation was engendered by the new Hebrew printing houses of early modern Europe. With the publication of multiple commentaries and authors flowing first from Venice, then Constantinople, and then Amsterdam as well as other eastern European communities, Ashkenazic readers were ultimately exposed to the classics of the Sephardic library. The Ashkenazic yeshivot were soon overtaken by Sephardic biblical commentaries produced in Spain and later in the Ottoman Empire; the medieval philosophical tradition was revitalized in eastern Europe with the appearance of the Maimonidean corpus in print; Sephardic and Italian sermons were regularly disseminated in eastern Europe, along with a massive library of kabbalistic books; and even astronomical textbooks and a medical encyclopedia written by a graduate of Padua's medical school could be read in Prague and Krakow. Eventually the process was reversed as the library of Ashkenazic culture and traditions meandered southward to Italy, eastward to the Ottoman Empire, and westward to Amsterdam and London.<sup>4</sup>

The significant role of the presses of Venice, Istanbul, Amsterdam, and elsewhere in the formation of a connected early modern Jewish culture is thus compelling. Printing shattered the isolating hold of potent localized traditions and attitudes as one community became increasingly aware of a conversation taking place long distances away. Writing from faraway Prague, Judah

Loew ben Bezalel's (the Maharal's) bitter denunciation of Azariah de' Rossi's scholarly work, the *Me'or Einayim* (The Light of the Eyes), published in Mantua in 1575, composed soon after the book had appeared, is a case in point. So too, this time moving in reverse direction, was the Venetian rabbi Leon Modena's comparison of the structure of his sermons with those published by Ashkenazic and Levantine (i.e., Ottoman) rabbis. Print made Jews more aware of other Jews than ever before.<sup>5</sup>

### Further Consequences of the Printing of Jewish Books

Scholars have also delineated another result of the printing revolution, one paralleling closely the reading patterns of Christian readers in the age of the Reformation. The emergence of cheap books initiated another form of a cultural transformation. The itinerant preachers, teachers, scribes, cantors, and other secondary elites discovered a forum for disseminating their own views. Print helped to shatter the exclusivity and hegemony of rabbis, who, as we have already observed, were simultaneously recognizing their own diminished status vis à vis wealthy lay communal leaders. They proved incapable of controlling the outpouring of small books and pamphlets quickly and inexpensively produced for a lay public and that thus opened up new readers and audiences—men, women, and children—and exposed them to aspects of a tradition that had once been the exclusive prerogative of highly educated legal scholars.<sup>6</sup>

One subject whose secrets had been guarded zealously by the rabbis before print was the kabbalah. According to the well-known thesis of Gershom Scholem, with



the expulsion of Spain in 1492 the kabbalah became a more potent and significant force, responding directly to the existential challenges of Jewish life not only among Sephardic refugees but throughout the Jewish diaspora. Scholem's explanation has been refined and challenged by later scholars, but the general picture of the elevation and dissemination of the kabbalah in early modern Europe remains legitimate, and surely the printing press was a major catalyst in generating this development.<sup>7</sup> As we shall soon see, Christian printers were actually the first to publish kabbalistic books in the sixteenth century. Contemporary Jews had mixed reactions to the dissemination of what was for them an esoteric lore. By midcentury, a major conflict emerged within the Jewish community over the printing of the classic thirteenth-century work the *Zohar* and other compositions related to it. The final outcome was the printing of two separate editions, in Mantua in 1558 and in Cremona in 1560, but not without certain fear and foreboding about the consequences of divulging divine secrets in print. These inhibitions very much paralleled those expressed when the Talmud and *Shulḥan Arukh* were published. In both instances, rabbinic control and supervision of knowledge were at stake. But in the case of the kabbalah, the situation was even more complicated and painful to the guardians of Jewish culture because the Christians had jumped the gun, so to speak, by publishing at their will what the rabbis would never have allowed their own coreligionists to do so openly. And these same Christian Hebraists were taking liberties with previously protected Jewish secrets in a manner the rabbis deemed irresponsible and theologically dangerous. Jews were ultimately obliged to publish kabbalistic works in order to present

what they considered to be authentic versions of their own cultural legacy.<sup>8</sup>

In the sixteenth century, the number of kabbalistic books was relatively modest compared to the publication of other Hebrew books. This radically changed by the late seventeenth century with the wide distribution of both learned and popular kabbalistic texts emanating originally from Safed, crossing the boundaries of north, south, east, and west in the wake of the Sabbatean movement. Indeed, the universal appeal of Shabbetai Zevi and his prophets well into the eighteenth century was as much a product of the networks of communication engendered by the publications of his followers and detractors as anything else. Lurianic kabbalah, through the Sabbatean printing press, captured the attention of elites and nonelites alike in both the Sephardic and Ashkenazic worlds and ultimately left its impact on Jewish worship and ritual life as well.<sup>9</sup>

Accompanying the publication of Hebrew books on the kabbalah and other Judaic subjects were those written in Yiddish and Ladino. In fact, Yiddish and Ladino were languages that were virtually created by the unique conditions of Jewish life in early modern Europe. Through the flourishing book industry in Italy, in eastern Europe, in the Netherlands, and in the Ottoman Empire, works in these Jewish languages were widely disseminated, including translations of works in other European languages, challenging the privileged place of Hebrew books and offering modes of popular communication and literary outlets that would transform Jewish culture for centuries to come.

In the case of Yiddish, a wide reading public emerged across the continent truly creating a common Jewish

culture that spanned Europe, transcending localized communities and linking especially the West and the East. While Yiddish books had initially been published in Italy and in Poland, by the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries Amsterdam became the center of Yiddish printing in the Jewish world. Between 1650 and 1800, over five hundred different works were printed. The presses catered both to internal use, appealing to the growing numbers of Ashkenazim who had settled in the city, and to Jewish authors and publishers who came from long distances especially to print their volumes. Attracted by the relative lack of censorship and by the liberal printing business that published books in many languages, it was not unusual for eastern European book dealers to travel to Amsterdam in order to publish their manuscripts and return home to sell their new library of printed books. This image of a Jew from Krakow traveling across the continent, with a variety of other Jewish merchants, to publish a Yiddish book in what had been the center of the Western Sephardic diaspora is as good a snapshot as any of the actual existence of a transregional Jewish culture by the seventeenth century.<sup>10</sup>

Ladino works in the Ottoman Empire began to appear considerably later than Yiddish ones but they, too, were widely distributed because of print and helped to shape an entirely new Jewish reading public. Centuries after the first Hebrew books had been published in Istanbul in the late fifteenth century by the first generations of Sephardic immigrants to the city, Ladino printing came into its own with the publication in 1730 of Jacob Culi's *Me'am Lo'ez* (From a People of Strange Language [from Psalm 114:1]), an encyclopedic biblical commentary and distillation of Sephardic Jewish culture. It was followed

over the next century and a half by a flow of popular Jewish books attempting to educate and popularize Jewish knowledge. The heyday of the Ladino book also coincided with the publication of the first Turkic book of 1729. Lacking any prior manuscript tradition upon which they could develop, Ladino works represented a bold acknowledgment by rabbinic leaders of the need to communicate in the vernacular and to Jews lacking sophisticated Jewish knowledge. What is most interesting about this blossoming of Ladino literature in print is that it emerged at a time conventionally acknowledged as a period of decline for both Ottoman culture and Jewish culture. Long after the Sabbatean crisis of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Ottoman Jewish life could hardly be described as in a state of stagnation and degeneration.<sup>11</sup>

Alongside the publication of Jewish books in Ladino and Yiddish was the steady accretion of books written in Western languages by Jews—demonstrating, among other things, the need for Jewish authors to speak to Christian readers beyond the immediate community of their own coreligionists or to conversos whose primary language was Spanish or Portuguese. This phenomenon was generally restricted to the West, particularly to Jewish intellectuals living in relatively open environments such as Italy and the Netherlands. Already in the sixteenth century, several Jewish authors such as Elijah Delmedigo, Jacob Mantino, Samuel Usque, and the most famous example of all, Judah Abravanel (aka Leone Ebreo) chose the unusual path of publishing books in Latin or Italian.<sup>12</sup> In contrast, while Jewish preachers had often addressed their congregations in the vernacular, they often remained reticent to publish the written

versions of their oral remarks in any language other than Hebrew.<sup>13</sup>

By the seventeenth century this development of publishing in the vernacular took on added momentum with the emergence of apologetic works written either to convince conversos to return to the Jewish fold or to counter a negative image of Jewish religion and culture emerging in print among certain Christian authors. Such Jewish intellectuals in Italy as Leon Modena and Simone Luzzatto and their counterparts in Amsterdam, such as Menasseh ben Israel, Isaac Orobio de Castro, and many others, felt compelled to raise their voices in a language accessible to assimilated Jews and Christians alike and within a cultural matrix understandable to both.<sup>14</sup>

A wonderful example of how apologetic writing in the vernacular could redefine the very essence of Judaism when presenting it to others is the sixteenth chapter of the aforementioned Venetian rabbi Simone Luzzatto's *Discorso circa il stato de gl'hebrei et in particolar dimoranti nell'inclita città di Venetia* (A Discourse on the State of the Jews, Particularly Those Dwelling in the Illustrious City of Venice), published in 1638. In this chapter, Luzzatto offers an intellectual profile of the Jewish community as consisting of three distinct groups: Talmudists, philosophers, and kabbalists. The division appears strange from an internal Jewish perspective through which Talmudists were also philosophers and kabbalists and the distinction between those who upheld the law and interpreted it and those who were preoccupied with "meta-halakhic" (legal) concerns was artificial. Luzzatto probably borrowed these categories from a similar division written by the Catalan Jewish thinker Profiat Duran at the beginning of the fifteenth century. But Luzzatto's

division of Jewish intellectuals is also reminiscent of those of Johann Reuchlin, the famous Christian Hebraist (to be discussed later in this chapter). Reuchlin clearly appreciated good Jewish kabbalists but separated them from those Talmudists he deemed disreputable because they blindly followed the letter of the law. Luzzatto hardly disparaged the Talmudists; on the contrary, he provided an accurate and complementary portrait of the legal development of Judaism. Nevertheless, by isolating the Talmud and its transmitters from the rest of Jewish culture he gave greater attention to those areas of Jewish culture more accessible to Christian readers and more easily translatable into their frames of reference. Thus he demonstrated the glorious traditions of Jewish philosophical reflection and its interrelatedness with common developments in Islam and Christianity. And the kabbalah, in its close association with Neoplatonism and Pythagoreanism, again reminiscent of Reuchlin's articulation, was to be understood and appreciated as part of the exotic and legitimate occult traditions of Western civilization.<sup>15</sup>

The genre of apologetic works presenting Judaism in the simplest and most attractive manner addressed simultaneously wavering Jews and indifferent or antagonistic Christians. The publication of vernacular works was surely an acknowledgment on the part of Jewish religious leaders of the need to reach out to those who no longer bothered or were incapable of reading Hebrew books. (And it should be noted that books eventually opened the possibility of presenting Judaism not only in words but also in icons.) The emergence of illustrated *minhag* collections as early as the sixteenth century in Italy, and the publication of Leon Modena's manual of

Jewish life, accompanied by the famous illustrations of Jewish events and observances of Bernard Picart, are two notable examples of how books could be used to visualize Jews and Judaism in novel ways.<sup>16</sup>

One final dimension of the impact of the print revolution on Jewish culture revolves around the censorship of Hebrew books in early modern Italy. As one recent scholar has argued, there is a constructive side to the initiative of the Counterreformation Church to examine Hebrew books in order to ascertain that they did not offend Christian sensibilities. Hebrew censorship should be treated as part of the Catholic campaign to censor all books as well as in the context of an emerging Christian readership of Hebrew books. Censors did not necessarily prevent readings; rather, they strove to preserve the text in a way noninjurious to a potential Christian reading public. Furthermore, Hebrew books emerged in a new setting unique to early modern Europe: the print shop usually owned by Christians where converts and Jews worked side-by-side. In this unique setting editors, typesetters, and censors worked together, often making it difficult to determine where editing had concluded and censorship had begun. The ultimate effect of this shared endeavor was to reach a kind of consensus whereby Judaism could be fully expressed without deprecating the Christian other, and Jewish self-definition could be articulated in a neutral and nonpolemical manner. The print shop offered an intimate space of nonbelligerent encounter between Jews and Christians. The censor extended to the Jewish community an official legitimization of its literature while participating in a new articulation of Jewish identity.<sup>17</sup> Thus the social context of printing Hebrew books offers yet another novel direction in

which Jewish-Christian relations were emerging in early modern Europe.<sup>18</sup>

### Christian Hebraists and Their Judaic Publications

One of the most interesting literary constructions by an early modern Jewish author is found in Solomon Ibn Verga's *Shevet Yehudah* (The Rod of Judah). In this book—part history, part polemic, and part self-reflection on the meaning of the Jewish experience, written in the wake of the Spanish expulsion, and appearing in a variety of editions in subsequent centuries—the author constructs an imaginary dialogue between a Spanish king and his secular Christian counselor Thomas on the reasons Jews are hated in Christian society. Beyond the substance of this highly interesting exchange is the dramatic appearance of two Christians reflecting on Jewish identity. Thomas represents a Christian learned in the ways of Judaism, who, analogous to the censor, articulates a definition of Judaism and a strategy of Jewish survival in the role of a neutral observer, never challenging its legitimacy. Thomas epitomizes in the mind of a Jewish author the image of a new kind of reader of Jewish books and a new element in the relationships between Jews and Christians: the Christian Hebraist.<sup>19</sup>

Christian Hebraism has a long history before the early modern period and individual Christian scholars pursued Hebraic subjects throughout the Middle Ages, especially as related to biblical exegesis and medieval theology. Some Christians came to Jewish literature as a natural extension of their intense involvement with the biblical text itself and because of their own quest to fathom the ancient origins of Christian teaching. Others



dismissed as worthless the entire body of rabbinic literature, even considered its existence diabolical and heretical. Still others viewed Jewish books as an opportunity for Christians to proselytize Jews, to argue that certain rabbinic teachings allude to Christian truths. Of course, from their perspective, such “truths” were often encrusted in the dung of useless and blasphemous Jewish utterances and were to be used with extreme caution.<sup>20</sup>

By the end of the fifteenth century, two significant changes in the cultural landscape of European Christendom affected profoundly Christian involvement with the Jewish book. The first was the influence of the Renaissance and the Reformation on Christian Hebraic scholarship; the second was the critical impact of the printing press on the production and dissemination of Hebraica.

The most prominent Renaissance figure to approach Hebrew books in a way radically different from that of earlier Christian scholars was Pico della Mirandola (1463–94). With the assistance of Jewish tutors as well as others who converted to Christianity, Pico studied Hebrew texts while assembling a most impressive collection of Jewish exegetical, homiletical, and philosophical writing translated from the Hebrew into Latin. But his first passion was the kabbalah, to which he devoted his primary energies as a student of Jewish literature.

Pico was certainly motivated by missionary activity among Jews in his pursuit of Jewish knowledge, but there were other reasons as well for his personal quest. Along with other Florentine Neoplatonists, especially Marsilio Ficino, Pico upheld the notion of *prisca theologia*, or ancient theology: that a single truth pervades all historical periods and that a direct line of thinking can

be traced back to Plato through a succession of pagan writers. Underlying the external difference between the latter and the sacred writings of Christianity was to be found a unity and harmony of religious insight, a basic core of universal truth. This genealogy of knowledge from Plato back through pagan sources eventually led to the Hebrew Bible. By universalizing all religious knowledge, Ficino and Pico fashioned a more tolerant version of Christianity, appreciating not only other cultures and religions but also the centrality of Hebrew culture in Western civilization.

While ancient theology led Pico's circle back to the Hebrew Bible, his concept of poetic theology facilitated a special interest in the kabbalah. Pico believed that the ancient pagan religions had concealed their sacred truths through a kind of "hieroglyphic" imagery of myths and fables designed to attract the attention of their following while safeguarding their esoteric character by not divulging their divine secrets. Moses had thus addressed the Hebrews in a veiled language, and only the kabbalists were capable of deciphering it. For Pico and his associates, the kabbalah was the key to laying bare the secrets of Judaism, to reconcile them with the mysteries of other religions and cultures, and thus to universalize them. Through the kabbalah, the essential differences between Judaism and Christianity could be eradicated.

Two other factors motivated this heightened interest in Jewish esotericism. In the study of the kabbalah Pico and his circle, who were also humanists, discovered a cultivated sense of the meaning of language as a vehicle for penetrating deeply the underlying significance of human experience. By correctly deciphering the words and letters of the holy language they hoped to directly

approach the divine itself. Furthermore, kabbalah also represented power, a higher form of licit magic linking heaven and earth and empowering humans who had mastery of the secrets for transforming themselves into divine beings.<sup>21</sup>

Thus under the spell of the syncretistic thought and religious passion of certain Renaissance thinkers, Jewish learning in general and the kabbalah in particular became an essential part of Renaissance culture. But in the hands of Pico and similarly minded Christian scholars, the Jewish traditions were soon estranged from their original cultural and spiritual source in Judaism and now confronted a new mixture of radically different associations and meanings blended together from pagan and Christian modes of thinking. The Jewish kabbalah was literally recast into a Christian one.

Pico subsequently became the pioneer figure in the dramatic reevaluation of Jewish literature and the gradual penetration of contemporary Jewish thought into European culture. His Christianization of kabbalistic techniques and his amalgamation of Renaissance magic and Jewish mysticism, while officially condemned by the church, were enthusiastically received by a notable number of Christian thinkers in Italy, France, Germany, and England well into the eighteenth century. The Christian kabbalah of Pico left its mark on Renaissance culture through its integration with Neoplatonism. It also influenced both the Catholic and Protestant Reformation through its impact on such thinkers as Egidio of Viterbo, Francesco Giorgio, Cornelius Agrippa, and especially the aforementioned Johann Reuchlin.

After Pico, Johann Reuchlin (1455–1522) was the most prominent Christian scholar to master Hebrew

sources and to utilize them in revitalizing Christian theology. In *De Arte Cabalistica*, first published in 1517, Reuchlin followed Pico in considering kabbalah a higher and theologically licit form of magic, a source of divine revelation to be correlated with the highest truths of Neoplatonic and Pythagorean philosophy. Reuchlin's commitment to Jewish texts aroused the antagonism of some of his contemporaries in Reformation-era Germany—especially the Dominicans of Cologne, who initiated a bitter campaign to ban the reading of Hebrew books. Reuchlin's well-reasoned responses to the extreme accusations of a Jewish apostate named Johann Pfefferkorn drew him unwittingly into an acrimonious debate over the value of Jewish learning for Christians and the place of Judaism in Christian society.<sup>22</sup>

Yet Reuchlin was hardly alone in his appropriation of Hebrew learning in the cause of Christian reform. Other Protestant thinkers in the first half of the sixteenth century focused on the more conventional sources of Jewish knowledge beyond the kabbalah. In their return to the Hebrew Bible, they were especially attracted to the literal sense of the text. They mastered biblical Hebrew and its grammatical foundations and they also probed rabbinic exegesis in attempting to grasp the original meaning of Scripture. Scholars such as Paul Fagius and Sebastian Münster published Hebrew grammars, examined Jewish rites and customs, and explored the Pharisaic context of the utterances of Jesus. Others, like Michael Servetus, even used Hebrew sources to offer a radical critique of Trinitarian Christianity.<sup>23</sup>

By the seventeenth century, Hebraic studies reached new heights among a gifted circle of Christian scholars who included Johann Buxtorf I, his son Johann

Buxtorf II, Edward Pococke, Johann Christof Wagenseil, John Lightfoot, John Selden, and Christian Knorr von Rosenroth. The Buxtorfs produced translations of some of the classic philosophical texts of Judaism; Wagenseil published Jewish anti-Christian works in Hebrew and Latin; and Rosenroth compiled a vast compendium of kabbalistic texts that he called the *Kabbala Denudata*, making available to Christian readers the most extensive anthology of its kind. By the seventeenth century, scholars such as Lightfoot and Selden mastered the large rabbinic corpus of Jewish law and studied it for the insights it provided in understanding early Christianity and ancient legal systems. Their work was continued by Wilhelm Surenhusius, who published the entire Mishnah with commentaries in an elegant Hebrew and Latin edition by the end of the century. Well into the eighteenth century, erudite Christian scholars studied Hebraica along with Arabic and other Semitic languages, paving the way for the study of these fields within secular universities as well as Christian seminaries.<sup>24</sup>

Besides their learned tomes of erudition on Jewish literature, Christian authors, including the older Buxtorf himself, composed the first ethnographic accounts of Jewish customs for Christian readers. This interest in contemporary Jewish practice was fundamentally ambivalent. It still reflected the older medieval polemical stance toward Judaism, but on the other hand, its ethnographic depictions preserved a relative posture of objectivity and neutrality toward their subject. Jewish practices were normalized and demystified by these descriptions and presented as simply those of another ethnic group alongside Muslims, Hindus, and the other peoples of the world that European society was encountering by the seventeenth century.<sup>25</sup>

These intellectual and religious transformations in the study of Judaism by Christians were certainly enhanced and magnified by print. The first Hebrew books were printed in the last quarter of the fifteenth century first in Italy, and then in the Ottoman Empire. We have already mentioned the impact of the Bomberg press in Venice on the transformation of Jewish culture in eastern Europe. Bomberg's books also sold well to Christians who were particularly interested in acquiring the rabbinic Bible and other classics of rabbinic scholarship.<sup>26</sup>

The centers of Christian printing of Hebrew books were generally concentrated, however, north of the Alps in the German principalities, France, and the Netherlands. While the Italian and Ottoman Hebrew presses catered primarily to Jews, these presses in the North focused on the needs of Christians publishing, for the most part, works dealing with biblical scholarship. In the case of Amsterdam, however—with its significant resources for Jewish publications, often exported to the East—the distinction between Christian and Jewish presses becomes more confusing. The press of Menasseh ben Israel, Amsterdam's most well known Jewish public intellectual, was surely a case in point, producing books read by both Christians and Jews. In other centers of Christian printing in the North there existed a close correlation between the printing of Hebrew books and the presence of Hebrew professors at Protestant universities.<sup>27</sup>

While the Renaissance and Reformation appear to have limited impact on improving the social status of Jews in Christian society, both movements contributed mightily to the growing appreciation of Judaism as a cultural factor in Christian civilization. Pico's and Reuchlin's Christian kabbalah opened up new vistas of

Christian self-understanding and spirituality through the agency of Jewish mystical writing; the rediscovery of Jewish medieval commentators by Protestant and Catholic scholars offered them a new and useful perspective in appreciating the Old Testament; and the rediscovering of Jewish thinkers like Maimonides and Abravanel provided fresh resources for Christian political thinking in the seventeenth century.<sup>28</sup> Christian Hebraism thus constituted an intellectual explosion fed by print and university learning; a Christian spiritual quest rooted in the essential notions of rebirth and reform propelling the intellectual and religious developments of the sixteenth century and beyond; and also an appropriation and aggrandizement of the Judaic element of Western civilization to be utilized and appreciated for Christians alone. As has been often remarked, the new Christian scholars were often infatuated with Jewish books with little regard for actual living and breathing Jews.

This last point was sorely appreciated by contemporary Jews who noted with mixed feelings the emergence of the new Christian Hebraism. On the one hand they initially were flattered by the attention Christian scholars were giving their own religious heritage, even seeking out Jewish teachers with whom to study.<sup>29</sup> For some Jews living in Renaissance Italy, this attention appeared to reflect well on their own self-image; Jewish culture, especially its esoteric dimension, was in vogue. Jews and their postrabbinic libraries were “in” among the most elite of Christian intellectual circles. But as time went on, some Jews began to realize the unsettling fact that Christians, to an unprecedented degree, could master Judaic traditions without recourse to Jews. The Jewish intellectual could ignore his Christian rival, could choose

to collaborate with him, or could even embrace his assumptions, at least partially, in studying Judaism. As in the case of Pico and his Jewish interlocutors, Jewish responses could vary from outright condemnations from Elijah Delmedigo and Leon Modena, to open embrace from Flavius Mithridates, to a more complex and nuanced approach from Yoḥanan Alemanno.<sup>30</sup>

For the Jewish scholar of early modern Europe, Christian Hebraism thus became a new factor in his intellectual and psychological development. And from Pico and Reuchlin in the fifteenth century to Benjamin Kennicott, Robert Lowth, and Johann David Michaelis at the end of the eighteenth century,<sup>31</sup> Jews faced a formidable challenge that would continue to plague them for centuries to come. They were no longer the sole arbiters of the sacred texts of the Jewish tradition, and certainly not of the Hebrew Bible. In the new cultural space populated by Christian Hebraists and converts, Henry More, to cite only one ludicrous example, could presume to speak authoritatively about the Cabbala (with a C) without having examined any original kabbalistic text or certainly never having encountered a Jewish kabbalist.<sup>32</sup> The more Christians mastered the Hebrew and Aramaic languages and the more they could consult medieval Jewish authors, the more they could also claim to understand the Jewish tradition, especially the Hebrew Bible, better than the Jews themselves. To some extent, the mastery of Jewish books by Christian scholars was an expression of power relations, of aspirations to dominate Jews by acquiring intimate knowledge of their intellectual legacy. And in the new cultural space populated by Christian Hebraists and an increasing number of converts to Christianity, Jewish scholars were surely



losing their hegemony over the interpretation of their own texts and their own traditions.<sup>33</sup>

### The Expansion of Cultural Horizons

Print could not only refashion traditional modes of Jewish study and facilitate a new Christian readership of Jewish books; it could also help modify the very notion of what constituted appropriate Jewish knowledge. I am not suggesting that cultural choices and tastes were determined by a new technology alone. On the contrary, they were profoundly shaped by larger cultural forces in the environments in which Jews lived in early modern Europe. But the technology of print was certainly an important factor in the cultural explosion affecting Jewish intellectual elites by making the writings of their non-Jewish contemporaries more accessible to them and by disseminating their own published writings to a wider Jewish readership. The print revolution made Jewish intellectuals, especially in dynamic intellectual centers like Mantua, Venice, Amsterdam, Istanbul, and Prague, more aware of the multiple sources of human knowledge and experience. Bombarded by new books in print they, like other readers, were encouraged to expand their cultural horizons, to integrate and correlate the vast range of sources and ideas now available to them with those of their own intellectual legacy.

I have in mind the striking image of the *ḥakham kolel* (the universal sage) as articulated so boldly by the Mantuan Jewish scholar Judah Messer Leon in his pathbreaking manual of rhetoric, the *Nofet Zufim* (The Honeycomb's Flow), published dramatically during the lifetime of the author among the earliest Hebrew printed

books around 1480. Writing to his students engaged in the study of medicine, philosophy, and Judaism, Messer Leon argued in the spirit of the humanist schools of his age that learning alone without rhetorical skill could not make the wise man an effective leader in Jewish society. The role of the ideal Jewish scholar, as he understood it, was to retrieve all of world literature as a means of restoring and recuperating what was once Israel's alone. In my estimation, this recognition of the supreme value of non-Jewish learning redefined as Jewish learning and its potential sacred value is more than a rhetorical strategy or an exercise in "orthodox" apologetics, as one scholar has described it; Messer Leon was offering an ideal articulated by a conspicuous number of Jewish scholars throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>34</sup> Sharing the mind-set of Messer Leon, they displayed no inhibition in their quest for knowledge and claimed that no external sources, no matter what their provenance, were prohibited from Jewish eyes. Thus, Messer Leon's son David promoted similar cultural ideas even after his exit from Italy and his resettlement in the Ottoman Empire. Messer Leon's student, Yoḥanan Alemanno, mastered the art of magic and promoted it as the most sublime subject in his proposed curriculum of Jewish studies. His student Abraham Yagel read and copied Cornelius Agrippa's controversial work on magic. The Ottoman Jewish scholar Joseph Taitazak regularly cited the Christian scholastics while Tobias Cohen (see chapter 1), an Ashkenazic Jew who studied in Padua before finding employment as a physician in the Ottoman Empire, discovered the library of the chemical philosophers.<sup>35</sup> The great Italian Jewish polymaths from Abraham Portaleone to Judah Moscato to Azariah de' Rossi

made erudition in multiple sources an aesthetic value in itself, even when integration of so vast an array of sources and ideas seemed forced and artificial.<sup>36</sup> And even the performing arts of theater, music, and dance now found their place in Jewish curricula in Italy and were professionally pursued by such talented artists as Judah Sommo and Salamone de' Rossi.<sup>37</sup>

Especially in Italy, the new intellectual style of the Jewish savant was reflected in the composition of encyclopedic anthologies, presenting multiple truths and multiple sources of knowledge without prioritizing one over the other. This genre of writing was preferred by Yoḥanan Alemanno and Abraham Yagel in the sixteenth century and by Joseph Delmedigo, Abraham Portaleone, and David de Pomis in the seventeenth.<sup>38</sup> Tobias Cohen's medical textbook was encyclopedic in nature; so was Isaac Lampronti's multivolume Talmudic anthology, the *Pahad Yizḥak* (The Fear of Isaac).<sup>39</sup> This same tendency to gather disparate sources under one intellectual roof also defined kabbalistic studies in Italy. Italian kabbalists never studied their sacred texts in isolation; rather, they correlated them with other sources of knowledge. Even the mythic Lurianic corpus was transformed into an occult philosophy as it passed through the "interpretive grid" of Italian Jewish students of the kabbalah who subsequently transmitted it to Christian scholars in the form they understood it.<sup>40</sup>

No doubt the radical shifts in intellectual style prevalent among Jewish elites in early modern Italy did not necessarily affect their counterparts in northern and eastern Europe and in the Ottoman Empire in precisely the same way. In the Ottoman Empire, the Sephardic refugees brought with them a strong aristocratic

self-perception, a philosophical legacy of their transplanted Maimonidean tradition, and the wherewithal to establish Hebrew printing houses several centuries before Arabic or Turkic books were printed in Ottoman lands. But their adaptation to their new environment ultimately shaped a blending of the old and new. They selectively adopted medieval and Renaissance philosophical notions; they opted for the genres of biblical commentary and homiletics over systematic philosophy; they displayed great interest in practical ethics; and they integrated creatively philosophy and the kabbalah when the latter began to be studied intensively by the end of the sixteenth century. Despite the greater emphasis on commentary and midrash among Ottoman Jews, the book trade across Venice, Amsterdam, and Istanbul ensured the constant circulation of titles from outside the boundaries of their local community. Ottoman Jewry's interaction with Muslim culture was more limited and is comparable to the relative isolation of eastern European Jews from their immediate cultural surroundings. Yet ties to the West persisted not only through the flow of books but through the later influx of converso merchants in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries—especially in Izmir—in search of lucrative seaports for their businesses and in search of religious freedom.<sup>41</sup>

In Amsterdam, the degree of interaction with the Christian cultural and religious world resembled that of Italy. In fact, Venice especially provided the initial political and cultural models from which the first Sephardic Jews created their own communal institutions and religious practices and from which they recruited their first rabbinic leaders. Like Venice, Amsterdam became a major center for publishing books, especially

with the eventual decline of the Venetian presses in the seventeenth century. Dutch Jews like Orobio de Castro and Menasseh ben Israel devoted much of their writing to polemics and apologetics, preoccupied with the need to present a positive image of Judaism before wavering conversos and Christians alike. Orobio de Castro appears to be the only contemporary Jew to publish a systematic response to Benedict de Spinoza. Dutch Jews also published plays and poetry in Spanish and Portuguese. Their bi- or trilingualism made them avid readers in several languages. Despite their wide exposure to Latin and Christian culture before their return to Judaism, they displayed less the daring and broader cultural interests of their Italian coreligionists and revealed more a conservative and even defensive temperament when engaging radical political, scientific, or religious ideas.<sup>42</sup>

Central and eastern European Jews for the most part were relatively oblivious to the cultural movements and ideas known to their Italian and Dutch counterparts. But they were never hermetically sealed off from the West, as we have seen. Prague and its Rudolphine Renaissance in the late sixteenth century seems to have had a limited impact in both scientific, historical, and occult studies on some of the students of the Maharal of Prague—especially David Gans.<sup>43</sup> By the seventeenth century, kabbalistic and rabbinic studies dominated the intellectual life of Polish and Lithuanian Jews but, as has been suggested herein, they had also undergone a transformation as a result of these Jews' cultural encounters with Sephardic and Italian Jewish ideas and customs engendered through the medium of print. Eastern European Jewish intellectuals were hardly as involved in contemporary literary, philosophical, and scientific currents

as those to the south and the west of them. Nevertheless, the boundaries between their local communities and others were always porous because of the migration of books and a constant stream of travelers across eastern Europe, Italy, and western Europe. Since so many Yiddish books for eastern European consumption were produced in Amsterdam, there was surely a constant flow of dealers, book manuscripts, and business transactions related to publications between the East and the West.<sup>44</sup>

### Jewish Medical Students at the University

One final factor unifying to a great extent the divergent cultural centers of early modern Jewry was an interest and enthusiasm for the natural world and for medicine.

Larger numbers of Jews were drawn to medicine and science in the early modern period for a number of reasons. In the first place, science and technology, catapulted by their revolutionary and dramatic successes, became more prominent in the political culture of Europe in general. Second, all Europeans, including Jews, were profoundly affected by the formidable impact of the printing press in publicizing and disseminating the new scientific discoveries. Third, in contrast to their medieval ancestors, large numbers of Jews were allowed entrance into the university medical schools, first in Italy and eventually in the rest of Europe. Accompanying this change was the integration of a highly educated and scientifically sophisticated converso population, that of émigrés from Spain and Portugal, who settled in Jewish communities in western—and, to a lesser extent in eastern—Europe. Finally, a general ideological transformation affected Jewish religious sensibilities regarding

scientific study, one not unlike that affecting the Christian community. As early as the fifteenth century, Jewish thinkers increasingly displayed a crisis of confidence regarding the still dominant place of philosophy in Jewish intellectual life. They criticized philosophy without disparaging natural study, divorcing philosophical metaphysics from science and consequently liberating and elevating scientific activity within the Jewish community. When science was no longer linked to an ideology that made claims to truths challenging those of the Jewish faith but was viewed as a hypothetical and contingent way of describing the physical world, a new coexistence between the secular and the sacred, between scientific pursuits and Jewish religious thought, even Jewish mystical thought, could successfully emerge.

As early as the second half of the sixteenth century, certain circles of Jewish scholars in central and eastern Europe pursued scientific learning, especially astronomy, as a desirable supplement to their primary curriculum of rabbinics. Jewish cultural centers such as Prague and Krakow appear to have been especially hospitable to such learning. Two rabbinic luminaries, Moses Isserles (1525–72) and Judah Loew ben Bezalel (the Maharal, c. 1525–1609) openly encouraged the acquisition of scientific knowledge. Isserles integrated it into his rabbinic exegesis and even introduced a Hebrew textbook of astronomy for use by his students. The Maharal explicitly demarcated the study of theology from physics, arguing for the legitimacy and the autonomy of the latter within the culture of traditional Judaism. David Gans (1541–1613), a student of both Isserles and the Maharal, accepted their religious mandate in composing his own Hebrew compendium of geographical and astronomical

information, far surpassing that of Isserles and even offering his readers a glimpse of the more current discoveries of Johann Kepler and Tycho Brahe based on his own personal contact with them in Prague.<sup>45</sup>

In the West the impact of the new scientific learning on Jewish culture was more profound and more sustained through the regularized attendance of hundreds of Jews at the medical schools of Italy—especially the University of Padua—from the late sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries. For the first time, a relatively large number of Jews graduated from a major medical school and went on to practice medicine throughout Europe. During their studies, they were afforded the opportunity for intense socialization among other Jews of remarkably diverse backgrounds—former conversos from Spain and Portugal, together with those coming from Italy, Germany, Poland, and the Ottoman Empire. University graduates often maintained social and intellectual ties with each other and constituted a significant cultural force within their widely scattered communities. Moreover, the new university setting invariably allowed Jewish students constant social and intellectual contact, both casual and formal, with non-Jewish students and faculty. Above all, the university offered talented Jewish students a prolonged exposure to the study of the liberal arts, to Latin studies, and to classical scientific texts, as well as to the more recent scientific advances in botany, anatomy, chemistry, clinical medicine, physics, and astronomy.<sup>46</sup>

The writing of several illustrious graduates of Padua illustrates quite dramatically the impact the new medical education could have on Jewish religious and cultural sensibilities. Already mentioned in the introduction to



this volume was Joseph Delmedigo (1591–1655), who produced a highly technical and sophisticated compendium of current physics, mathematics, and astronomy while at the same time delineating the latest cosmological theories of the kabbalah and even attempting to integrate them with those of contemporary science. Tobias Cohen (1652–1729; see chapter 1), produced an up-to-date and comprehensive textbook of medicine, revealing both an impressive familiarity with classical medical texts and the more recent theories of the new chemical philosophers of the seventeenth century. Isaac Lampronti (1679–1756) devoted a lifetime to the composition of the first Talmudic encyclopedia that displayed throughout his medical expertise as well as his new intellectual orientation toward reorganizing rabbinic knowledge in conformity with the norms of current scientific practice. It is unknown whether Simone Luzzatto (1583–1663), the rabbi of Venice first mentioned in the introduction to the present volume, studied at Padua, although he obtained a vast knowledge of mathematics and the sciences worthy of a university graduate. As has been noted, his Italian book on the trial of Socrates was totally unrelated to Jewish religious concerns and was directed to readers not exclusively Jewish. In fact, it espoused a skeptical view of knowledge seemingly inappropriate to one entrusted with the safeguarding of traditional Jewish belief and praxis. And David Nieto (1654–1728) utilized his impressive knowledge of current scientific theories and discoveries to defend rabbinic Judaism before a highly assimilated and secularized community of Jewish merchants recently settled in London.<sup>47</sup>

The graduates of Padua and other Italian universities were not the only group within the Jewish communities

of early modern Europe conversant in medicine and natural philosophy. They were joined by hundreds of university-trained converso physicians who fled Spain and Portugal in the seventeenth century and settled in Holland, Italy, Germany, England, and eastern Europe, serving as physicians and purveyors of scientific learning within the Jewish community while often yielding considerable political and economic power. Allegiance to traditional Jewish beliefs and practices varied from enthusiastic orthodoxy to conspicuous indifference or even antipathy among these recent converts to Judaism. Nevertheless, it would be fair to say that these physicians of Spanish and Portuguese origin shared a common professional and cultural agenda with the other Jewish medical graduates from Italy and elsewhere in Europe and, like them, projected themselves as a kind of intellectual elite within their own communities. Having been exposed to the shame and racial stigma attached to the medical profession in their countries of origin, they increasingly associated their professional status with their newly evolving cultural and social identities. In other words, their professional identity, belonging to a highly successful albeit maligned group of clinical physicians, was directly linked with their own personal quest to define and understand their newfound place within the Jewish communities in which they now settled. The personal biographies of such illustrious converso physicians as Amatus Lusitanus (1511–68), Zacutus Lusitanus (1575–1642), and Rodrigo de Castro (1550–1627) and his son Benedict (1597–1684) reveal quite clearly such linkages and, to a great extent, exemplify the shared convictions of many others stemming from the same professional and ethnic background.<sup>48</sup>

The study of attitudes toward medicine, astronomy, and the other sciences among Jews living in early modern Europe, especially among these three subcommunities—rabbinic scholars in Prague and Krakow, graduates of Padua and other Italian medical schools, and converso physicians—suggests a tolerance and enthusiastic endorsement for the study of the natural world within Jewish culture, one even greater than in previous eras of Jewish history. Jewish religious thinkers in this period were increasingly willing to disentangle physics from metaphysics, the secular from the sacred, and science from theology and thus, in a manner similar to many of their Christian counterparts, to view scientific advances as positive resources to be enlisted in the cause of perpetuating their ancestral faith. Opposition or sheer indifference to the study of nature could still be located among certain Jewish intellectuals, especially those living in eastern Europe in the era after Isserles, the Maharal, and Gans. Yet there was never an ideological struggle over the study of the sciences similar in magnitude to the struggle over the philosophical writings of Maimonides within the thirteenth century Jewish community. Aristotelian metaphysical assumptions about God and the universe appeared to threaten the very foundations of Jewish faith but sincere inquiry into the physical universe was deemed to be generally benign and neutral, even religiously praiseworthy. And in some instances, kabbalistic thinkers such as the aforementioned Delmedigo or Solomon Aviad Sar Shalom Basilea (c. 1680–1749) could even appropriate empirical knowledge of the natural world to bolster their mystical and occult philosophies.<sup>49</sup> With the increasing dissonance between traditional faith and modern secularity by the end of the eighteenth century,

however, the seeming alliance between science and Jewish faith would become more tenuous and difficult to maintain.

Reflections on scientific activity among early modern Jewish thinkers, to be sure, are not the same as actual scientific performance itself. For the most part, the achievements of Jewish practitioners of science in both the medieval and early modern periods were unimpressive in comparison with those of more recent times. The lack of such achievements, however, should not be attributed to any religious or theological inhibitions on the part of Jewish religious thinkers. More critical is the fact that Jews conspicuously lacked the institutional support of churches, courts, and especially scientific academies, and thus had little opportunity to “do” science other than medicine. The only avenue available to them in order to keep abreast of the latest discoveries in all the sciences was through the medical education offered by some universities and through their own reading. They subsequently remained outside the scientific laboratory primarily because of social, not religious, constraints.

In summarizing this entire chapter, one might reasonably conclude that the obvious linkages existing across Jewish cultural boundaries and localized subcultures were due in large part to the printing press. Print revolutionized the manner in which Jewish tradition was transmitted to both Jews and Christians, expanded the intellectual horizons of many Jews with relative degrees of intensity, and made them more aware of their cultural connections with their own coreligionists scattered in far-off regions. It also elevated the study of the classical texts of Judaism and contemporary customs and rituals within the space of Christian high culture. In addition

to books, the conspicuous presence of Jewish medical elites, converso businessmen and intellectuals scattered throughout the European continent, and Christian Hebraists, as well as the constant movement and social and intellectual interchanges among other Jewish merchants, book dealers, rabbis and communal leaders with other Jews and non-Jews alike, were also constituent factors in the formation of a connected early modern Jewish culture. When one compares the vast and diverse literary output of Jews, conversos, and Christian Hebraists from the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries with that of previous eras, the contrast is unmistakable and dramatically striking.

## Four

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### CRISIS OF RABBINIC AUTHORITY

Scholars have often relied too heavily on the notion of crisis to explain a wide array of historical events affecting Jewish history, making them susceptible to imprecision and overstatement, and even to the danger of identifying too readily with what Salo W. Baron long ago labeled as “the lachrymose conception of Jewish history.” When “crisis” is summoned on more than one occasion to explain such events in the seventeenth century as the Chmielnicki massacres, the messianic debacle of Shabbetai Zevi, or the Spinozist assault on religious tradition, or in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Hasidic schism, the *Haskalah*, or the pogroms of eastern Europe, one might be left wondering when the Jews were not in a state of crisis. By organizing this chapter around the theme of crisis and highlighting its significance as a primary dimension of a transregional Jewish culture in early modern Europe, I clearly risk falling into the same explanatory trap of relying simplistically on a dramatic convention too easily educed to explain historical change in Jewish life.<sup>1</sup>

This situation is further complicated by the standard ways in which crisis appears in general historical narratives. For historians of early modern Europe, the notion of crisis as an explanatory mechanism has a long

pedigree, especially in describing “the general crisis of the seventeenth century.” Beginning with a series of well-known essays published in the late 1950s and early 1960s, several prominent social historians described a general crisis of the European economy in the seventeenth century as well as a clustering of social revolts across Europe. These heated discussions about the existence of a pan-European crisis reached their high point in the 1960s and ’70s. By 1975, the debate had seemingly run its course with the appearance of a synthetic book by Theodore Rabb, who attempted to relate aspects of the political and economic crisis to intellectual and aesthetic dimensions of Baroque culture, describing a process of political stabilization throughout Europe that followed in the aftermath of economic depression and political and social upheavals. No doubt the nature of the linkage of politics, economy, society, and culture across diverse European political and cultural units still remained as uncertain as ever, although the big questions asked by these earlier historians were most laudatory and enriching in their effort to paint European history across the widest canvass possible.<sup>2</sup>

Long before the designation of a seventeenth-century crisis by the social historians of the 1950s, Paul Hazard had called his famous book *La Crise de la conscience européenne, 1680–1715* (The Crisis of the European Mind, 1680–1715; published in 1935). In it he focused on a half century of innovation and radical change fed by two “rivers”—one of rationalism and one of sentiment—that challenged and shattered cultural traditions of the past. The mood engendered by Benedict de Spinoza, Pierre Bayle, John Locke, Isaac Newton, Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet, and François Fenelon at the close of the

seventeenth century prefigured for Hazard the age of the French Revolution in its true novelty of ideas and in its new critical thinking about the universe and social order.<sup>3</sup>

Jonathan Israel's *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650–1750* (2001) was surely a reiteration and expansion of Hazard's *Crise de la conscience européenne*, while singling out Benedict de Spinoza, his radical critique of conventional religion, his separation of the powers of church and state, and the broader currents of Spinozism as the most dramatic engines leading to the secularization and transformation of European society in the seventeenth century. For Israel, the era beginning in 1650—a bit earlier than the date initially posited by Hazard—was a more radical crisis than the Renaissance and the Reformation and challenged all political and ecclesiastical hierarchies and authority, promoting democratic and egalitarian principles of societal organization. Like Hazard before him, Israel insisted that the so-called High Enlightenment of the late eighteenth century was merely a series of footnotes based on the earlier upheaval, merely “consolidating, popularizing, and annotating revolutionary concepts introduced earlier.” Because of the crisis of the post-1650 era, the common European culture of confessional theology and scholastic Aristotelianism “weakened and then disintegrated.” The crisis of the radical enlightenment thus preceded the onset of the Enlightenment proper, initiating a cultural revolution emerging in dynamic cities with exceptionally high levels of immigration. New and provocative ideas flowed from a new kind of public sphere fed by erudite journals, literary clubs, and Masonic lodges where traditional social barriers were blurred.<sup>4</sup>



The primary questions of this chapter should now be obvious: Did Jews living in early modern Europe also experience a crisis of faith, a destabilization of their political and social orders, and a radical rethinking of their religious and cultural heritage? And if so, what crisis affected them directly—the crisis of the social and economic historians, or that of the cultural and intellectual historians, or both? Or was the crisis they experienced not directly related to either of these crises but instead propelled by processes emerging from the particular conditions of Jewish life, such as those described in previous chapters—mobility, the laicization of communal leadership, or the knowledge explosion engendered by print?

### Locating the Beginnings of a Jewish Crisis in the Seventeenth Century

Most historians who have considered the Jews in crisis in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries have either ignored any connection whatsoever with alleged crises affecting other European peoples or have remained judiciously vague about any actual connection between the Jewish experience and those of European society in general.<sup>5</sup> No doubt, we should acknowledge from the outset the genuine difficulty in finding coherence among these variegated aspects of Jewish and Christian society. Nevertheless, the important question of what crisis the Jews experienced and how to situate it within a larger historical context deserves a fresh and more precise explanation.

The rest of this chapter (as well as chapter 5) will be devoted to addressing this question. This chapter

attempts to claim that Jews did experience a crisis and to define more clearly the nature and consequences of that crisis. The primary crisis affecting European Jewish society in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries was undoubtedly that associated with the appearance of Shabbetai Zevi. In 1665–66, this bizarre individual declared himself the messiah, engendered an enormous reaction among followers and detractors alike, and ultimately was incarcerated and converted to Islam, but nevertheless remained the focus of messianic aspirations within the Jewish communities of both the Ottoman Empire and the rest of Europe well into the eighteenth century. The phenomenon of the strange messiah became the basis of a new antinomian and nihilistic ideology—constructed especially by Shabbetai’s two major followers, Nathan of Gaza and Abraham Cardoso—that challenged the very foundations of normative Judaism and rabbinic authority already in decline centuries earlier, as we have seen.

The single most important historian of Shabbetai Zevi and Sabbateanism, the movement of his followers both during and after his lifetime, was Gershom Scholem, whose masterful and elaborate reconstruction left a significant impact on every researcher in the field. Scholem knew well the larger context of both Christian and Muslim messianism of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and was also fully aware of the image the Jewish messiah cut especially among Christian contemporaries. But in explaining the origin of this movement and its remarkable longevity for well over a hundred years, he turned to internal and intellectual causes—namely, the wide dissemination of kabbalistic ideas associated with the sixteenth-century mystical figure Isaac Luria—that

infiltrated, Scholem claimed, both Sephardic and Ashkenazic cultures and provided the theological premises upon which the Sabbatean prophets could explain the paradox of a Jewish messiah converting to Islam. Furthermore, these notions were then distorted even more to explain the mass apostasy of Shabbetai's followers, the Dönme, to Islam and the later bizarre conversion of Jacob Frank and his followers to Christianity in the eighteenth century. Anyone searching for larger connections between the European world and this Jewish crisis could not find them in Scholem's reconstruction, which perceived the latter as exclusively an internal affair ignited by the inevitable combustion of kabbalah and anarchic Jewish messianism.<sup>6</sup>

In recent years Scholem's own students have challenged their teacher's grand narrative in arguing that Lurianic kabbalah was not particularly messianic in the first place, that is was not widely diffused by the late seventeenth century, and that mystical ideas, notwithstanding their usefulness to Nathan of Gaza and Abraham Cardoso in justifying the messianic apostasy, could not adequately explain the mass hysteria of a popular movement.<sup>7</sup> Especially significant was a recent suggestion of one scholar to give more weight to the noticeable presence of a large community of converso merchants in Smyrna, the birthplace of Shabbetai Zevi, in explaining the diffusion of his messianic movement. While Scholem had previously noticed that many conversos—and especially Cardoso himself—were attracted to the Sabbatean ideology he went further in arguing for social, economic, and intellectual links of the converso communities of Amsterdam, Hamburg, and Leghorn with Smyrna, revealing that the Smyrna community was truly

an international one, and that these converso networks surely contributed to the dissemination of Sabbatean currents throughout the European continent.<sup>8</sup>

Still others have continued to challenge Scholem's insistence on isolating Sabbateanism from the larger European context to which it belongs. Some have underscored the significance of the Jewish messiah in the eschatological and millenarian schemes of Christian contemporaries. While some Christian observers initially viewed Shabbetai's Zevi's messiahship somewhat favorably or neutrally, they eventually came to see him as a false prophet and heretic to be denounced and ridiculed along with those emanating from their own religious traditions. The apostasy of Shabbetai Zevi was also a pretext, so other Christians argued, for Jews to abandon their false faith and to approach the baptismal font.<sup>9</sup> Even more recently, another scholar has attempted to reattach the tenuous but nevertheless apparent linkage of this Jewish crisis with that emerging in the Christian world and, less distinctly, with the Muslim. By juxtaposing the apocalyptic anticipations of seventeenth-century Christians with analogous stirrings among Ottoman Muslims and with Sabbateans, he hopes to offer a plausible account of the probable connections among all three phenomena. While he has less to say about the Muslim context of Shabbetai Zevi, he is on stronger ground regarding the messianic dialogues between Christians and Jews. The connecting link is, of course, converso messianism—specifically, the attempt of Cardoso and others to portray Shabbetai Zevi as a converso himself who was living with two separate identities and constructing a syncretistic messianic ideology based on elements of both religions. By labeling the followers of

Shabbetai Zevi as “enthusiasts” and their opponents as “anti-enthusiasts,”<sup>10</sup> he meaningfully relates Sabbateans to comparable groups within the Christian world such as the Quakers, Camisards, and female Spanish visionaries, or even Mahdists and heretical dervishes in the Muslim context. Similarly, the opposition to these visionaries on the part of doctors, lawyers, and governmental officials can be correlated with the reaction of such rabbinic crusaders as Jacob Sasportas, Moses Hāgiz, and Jacob Emden, who opposed the Sabbateans.<sup>11</sup>

### The Sabbatean Turmoil of the Eighteenth Century

Scholem and most other scholars have focused primarily on Sabbateanism from its inception until the last decades of the seventeenth century. Its subsequent unfolding in the eighteenth century has been charted less exhaustively, although for the purposes of this chapter it assumes an even greater importance. Certainly by the mid-eighteenth century, with the fading memory of Shabbetai Zevi himself, the rise of the menace surrounding the anarchist Jacob Frank, and especially the outbreak of a series of convulsive debates and public recriminations, Sabbateanism took on a new form and a new direction. It seems appropriate to refer to this period, especially in this later phase of the movement, as one of crisis, of internal polemics, deep-seated enmity, and anxiety, articulated especially in print by those leaders identified as Sabbatean emissaries and their vocal rabbinic opponents. Moreover, the subsequent witch hunt to root out these Sabbatean iconoclasts throughout the European world can best be explained by recourse to the notions of enthusiasm and antienthusiasm.<sup>12</sup>

Beginning in the first decades of the eighteenth century, the Sabbatean prophet Nehemiah Ḥiyya Ḥayon evoked unprecedented alarm among numerous rabbis writing from all over Europe. The charges surrounding Ḥayon had less to do with his personal relationship with Shabbetai Zevi and more to do with his pretension to understand the divine essence as expressed in a Trinitarian form and to publish his self-discovery in a printed book for Jews and Christians to read.<sup>13</sup> Ḥayon's messianic activism is nowhere evident in his writings; nor does he even bother to refer to Shabbetai Zevi. His *Oz le-Elohim Beit Kodesh ha-Kodashim* (Strength to God: The House of the Holy of Holies), published in Berlin in 1713, instead reveals its author as an enthusiast whose personal quest for religious truth was of the utmost importance, that "he who will investigate every approach diligently . . . will be rewarded by recognition of the true essence of God, with no dilutions."<sup>14</sup> For Ḥayon it was not only legitimate for the individual to investigate the most esoteric secrets of his religious faith, unencumbered by the norms of traditional authority; it was incumbent on him to initiate this quest. Moreover, the audacious act of revealing the secrets of the Godhead in a printed book to any potential reader removed all impediments to limit knowledge to elites alone. Instead God prefers those who, like Job, come to know him from independent inquiry in the solitude of their own home, being instructed by a book rather than through careful supervision and control of rabbinic mentors in the study hall.<sup>15</sup>

It was inevitable that Ḥayon's Trinitarian construction of the divinity as "the Ancient of Days," the *Malka Kadisha*, the male element, and the *Shekhinah*, the female element, and his instructions on how one unites them in his

prayer along with separation of this triune God from the transcendent *Ein Sof* (The Infinite), were to evoke bitter acrimony from Jewish religious leaders while arousing the curiosity and delight of Christian Hebraists eager to have Ḥayon join their ranks.<sup>16</sup> The controversy was exacerbated even further, as we have seen, by the clashing interests of the lay authorities of the Jewish community of Amsterdam and those of the rabbinic emissary Moses Ḥagiz. In challenging the decision of Solomon Ayalon, the local rabbi considered by Ḥagiz as a rabbinical lackey of the lay leaders of Amsterdam, Ḥagiz claimed the right to interfere in the affairs of the local community when so fundamental a matter as the publication of esoteric secrets by a brazen heresiarch was at stake. And the lay leaders in turn defended their independence and local autonomy from the encroachments of a foreign rabbi who, they argued, could claim no jurisdiction over them.<sup>17</sup> In the final analysis, the intrusive nature of a rabbinic emissary from the Holy Land seeking to intervene in the affairs of a distant community run by wealthy Sephardic merchants, the claims of an enthusiast pitting his own personal autonomy against the hallowed instructions of religious authorities, and the capacity of a printed book to shatter religious norms and controls all combined to produce the lethal explosion known as the Ḥayon affair. Its importance in precipitating a crisis long in the making by bringing together the various elements of communal transformation and rabbinic decline we have examined in earlier chapters should not be underestimated. Accelerated mobility, the laicization of Jewish communal life, and the effect of the printing press simultaneously propelled this dramatic and corrosive affair.

Similarly, the other great internal schisms associated with Sabbateanism in the eighteenth century—the accusations leveled against the Italian kabbalist Moses Ḥayyim Luzzatto and the Ashkenazic rabbi Jonathan Eybeschütz—were primarily concerned with their challenge to the authoritative structure of the rabbinate and the anxiety they engendered over this real slippage in its actual power.<sup>18</sup> Luzzatto's profile as a self-proclaimed prophet and the bearer of divine illumination could not have failed to evoke the consternation of the same rabbis who had objected to Ḥayon. No rabbi could countenance the temerity of this mystic who would claim, "I have been permitted to inquire and to know any matter pertaining to our Holy Torah barring none."<sup>19</sup> Nor could any of them ignore his brazen attacks against the rabbis for their shallowness and greediness and the absence of spirituality in their intellectual pedantry and vain dialectics. Luzzatto's belief in the supremacy of his own endowments in relation to those of other rabbis was especially evident when he proclaimed, "There may be power among all the sages of Germany and Poland . . . but I have the power of the Holy One, Blessed be He, and the *Shekhinah*, and all the members of the Academy on High who illuminate my eyes with a divine light. Please do not disregard my words."<sup>20</sup> In this regard, Ḥagiz's comparison of Luzzatto's self-assertions with those of Jesus and Shabbetai Zevi were most perceptive. Ḥagiz well understood the consequences of legitimizing Luzzatto's heavenly source of revelation that could undermine that of the Torah and its interpretative guardians, the rabbis. How might one distinguish in the end the declarations of Luzzatto from those of Jesus,



for both based their claims to truth on the individual reception of divine illumination? In the end, Luzzatto had blatantly adopted a position of antinomianism and apostasy; no greater crisis could have been imagined by his rabbinic opponents!<sup>21</sup>

The other great controversy of the first half of the eighteenth century surrounded the rabbinic figure Jonathan Eybeschütz—especially those stemming from the accusations of his Sabbatean leanings voiced by his archrival, the rabbi Jacob Emden. This complex altercation has been discussed many times and involves many elements including a clash of strong personalities, professional jealousy, the zealotry and obsessive behavior of Emden, and even elements of syncretism with Christianity apparently present in Eybeschütz's own theological proclivities and those of some of his followers.<sup>22</sup> As in the cases of Hayon and Luzzatto, the connections between Eybeschütz and the messiahship of Shabbetai Zevi were tenuous at best. Rather, as all three cases exemplify, Sabbateanism in its eighteenth-century dimensions was simply a code word, a convenient label for enthusiasm, heresy, and the undermining of rabbinic authority.

The last and most radical of Sabbatean prophets, Jacob Frank, connected his own pedigree more directly to Shabbetai Zevi and articulated his own nihilistic messianic aspirations. But here, too, the inherent danger of the Frankists that well persisted into the next century was primarily their subversion of rabbinic norms and rabbinic authority. The Frankist sect negated the very essence of religious authority claimed by rabbis and church officials alike. Frankism simply confirmed in a most vivid and dramatic manner the initial suspicions articulated by the earliest rabbinic adversaries of

Sabbateanism—Jacob Sasportas, Moses Hagiz, Jacob Emden, and their colleagues—decades earlier: that the menace of Sabbatean enthusiasm imperiled their very standing and legitimacy as religious leaders as well as the very foundations of their religious community.<sup>23</sup>

The Sabbatean controversies “which occurred with rhythmic regularity through the first half of the eighteenth century,”<sup>24</sup> are significant, then, in pointing to a moment when the entire Jewish community from the Ottoman Empire to Amsterdam and London seemed engaged in bitter struggles between competing elites: enthusiasts and prophetic luminaries on the one hand, and rabbinic leaders on the other. Each of their altercations, however, defies easy classification. They often involved clashes among rabbis themselves, among lay leaders, among those defending local interests and those who migrated from community to community. What needs to be stressed above all is the cross-cultural nature of these embroilments and the general mood of crisis that permeated multiple European Jewish communities in this era. The Sabbatean movement is indeed the quintessential example of an early modern transregional Jewish cultural phenomenon. While emerging in Smyrna, Cairo, Gaza, and Jerusalem, it dramatically spread like wildfire, intruding into western Europe and to a lesser extent into eastern Europe as well. The network of Sabbatean emissaries, often intersecting with converso commercial and cultural networks, moved dynamically across the continent, energizing Jewish acolytes in numerous communities, and effectively exploiting the printing press to convey its message. That Shabbetai Zevi and his disciples were also noticed by Christians and Muslims across the continent suggest how successful the organization was

in gaining prominence and notoriety as a global Jewish movement among followers and detractors alike.

### Sabbateanism and the Birth of “Orthodoxy” in the Eighteenth Century

The Sabbatean network, as we have seen, also galvanized a counternetwork of vociferous opponents—primarily rabbis—who saw their own authority and standing deleteriously affected by such unruly characters as Ḥayon or Luzzatto and their magnetic appeal among large Jewish followings. To the extent that the rabbinic opposition to Sabbateanism organized itself in a unified way across the continent to defend its exclusive authority to determine Jewish norms and beliefs, it also offers significant testimony to the connecting links between divergent Jewish communities of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and the consciousness of an early modern Jewish rabbinate transcending specific geographic areas and cultural zones. Indeed, it might be fair to conclude that the united rabbinic front that coalesced around their vigorous opposition to the Sabbateans, attempting to undermine their legitimacy and to separate and sequester the ‘infidels’ from the community of the faithful through denunciation and even excommunication, might be labeled as the first “orthodox” rabbis.

The notion that orthodoxy emerged first in the nineteenth century as a response to the large numbers of Jews who had abandoned the normative tradition and considered their nonobservance as a legitimate form of Jewish behavior has been most cogently articulated by Jacob Katz and followed by his students and colleagues in their subsequent writings.<sup>25</sup> When Elisheva Carlebach

suggested in her study of Ḥagiz that the beginnings of orthodoxy as a defensive reaction to the challenges posed by deviant Jews might have begun as early as the eighteenth century rather than the nineteenth, she was subsequently refuted by Katz himself in a review of her book. Katz consistently maintained that the conditions of Jewish observance in Ḥagiz's time was still quite different from those of the nineteenth century as exemplified by the staunch defender of orthodoxy Moses Ḥatam Sopher. Sabbatean deviances from tradition did not constitute a self-conscious ideology such as that of Reform Judaism that argued that ritual observance was no longer obligatory for the Jewish faithful.<sup>26</sup>

Even more recently, another scholar of modern orthodoxy has claimed that groups such as the medieval Karaites and the Sabbateans never posed a real challenge to the hegemony of Jewish law as the authentic form of behavior for those who considered themselves normative Jews. Only in the nineteenth century, when nonobservance became a legitimate form of Jewish behavior for a significant number of Jews, did orthodoxy emerge. Before this era rabbis simply dealt with deviants by excommunicating or isolating them. But in the nineteenth century they chose to voluntarily separate themselves from other Jews by enclosing themselves as a united front and thus preventing the incursion of modern values and practices.<sup>27</sup>

The only challenge to the Katz thesis has been presented in a recent doctoral dissertation that locates the origins of orthodoxy not in the nineteenth century surrounding the ideology of Moses Sopher but in the sixteenth century in the ideology of the Maharal of Prague. According to this view, orthodoxy was more than a

reaction to the Enlightenment and the reform movement and more than an attempt to fortify the borders of traditional Judaism from the encroachments of heterodoxy. By pitting the progressive forces of enlightened reform against those of reactionary orthodoxy, the genesis of orthodoxy is not adequately understood and described. Instead, one needs to understand the Prague rabbi's distinction between the supernatural path of the Jewish people and the natural path of the other nations of the world as the pathbreaking formulation of Jewish orthodoxy and to locate it within the context of Reformation notions of law and society, the Jewish-Christian debate, and nationalist ideologies emanating from Prague. This notion of the separateness of the Jewish people from the rest of humanity became the cornerstone of later reiterations of orthodox spokesmen in subsequent centuries.<sup>28</sup>

This is not the place to offer a comprehensive discussion and refutation of the views of Katz, his followers, or his detractors. Whatever the virtues or flaws in these new interpretations, the impact of this new scholarship has been critically important in locating the construction of orthodox theory and praxis at the center of discussions of modernity and modernization in Jewish history. On the semantic level alone, the distinction between a definition of orthodoxy as a theological and cultural alienation from the rest of humanity and the more restricted notion of a voluntary act of separation from other Jews is substantially different. No doubt there is a conceptual similarity between the Maharal's elevation and separation of the Jewish people from other nations and Hatam Sopher's insistence on the purity of the faithful in their isolation and insulation from nonobservant Jews. But this similarity alone clearly does not denote an

identity of the two postures or even a causal relationship from one to the other. The first articulation calls ultimately for a renewal and reunification of Judaism and Jews; the second rigorously and aggressively calls for secession and self-differentiation from other Jews.

To my way of thinking, orthodoxy in the context of early modern and modern Jewish history is indeed a response to a crisis. It emerges out of a critical need to legitimate rabbinic authority among a growing number of Jews who either question it because of a competing ideology or ignore it out of indifference. Orthodoxy emerged in the eighteenth century under the conditions of a beleaguered rabbinate, one insecure and anxious about itself, no longer capable of leading effectively, and acutely aware that its constituency—or at least a conspicuous part of it—was seduced by an alternative ideology and leadership. To cope with this new unpleasant reality, it responded by erecting barriers between itself and the “impure,” by differentiating itself from other Jews now deemed heretical, denouncing and delegitimizing them categorically, and declaring itself the only authentic version of Judaism.

The difference between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries regarding the emergence of Jewish orthodoxy is a matter of degree, not of substance, as Katz has argued. Such rabbinic critics of the Sabbatean prophets as Sasportas, Ḥagiz, and Emden were obsessed with their mission to defend a traditional faith and legal system that seemed in danger of disintegrating before their eyes. Whatever the actual number of Sabbatean deviants, the rabbis encountered an ideology that challenged the very rationale of their legal system and their exclusive right to be the sole arbiters of its rulings. Sabbateanism,

especially in the formulations of Ḥayon, Luzzatto, and Frank, offered an ideology of Judaism based on the authority of personal revelation and was antinomian at its core. Judaism's leaders were now self-anointed charismatic mystics whose authority came from divine illumination and not from the mastery of Jewish legal texts. The threat of this new ideology was magnified even more by the systemic opposition and interference of lay leaders in the communities the rabbis served from Amsterdam to eastern Europe, as we have seen. The rabbis were also wounded by their inability to control the flow of printed books in Hebrew and other languages, allowing any author a platform to articulate his own idiosyncratic understanding of Jewish faith and practice. Ḥayon's scornful declaration that he knew the secret of God's essence and could disclose it in a book for all to see was only the tip of an iceberg. Jewish religious leaders helplessly observed the incessant flow of new books and bemoaned their utter futility in controlling and censoring that flow. The toxic combination of a new ideology delegitimizing their very existence with the new cultural and social limitations in which they were obliged to function were an overwhelming burden for them to bear.

Symptomatic of this mood of crisis among Jewish religious leaders was the outpouring of works written by them throughout this period with the repeated title *Emunat Ḥakhamim*—that is, a desperate plea for “faith in the rabbinic sages.”<sup>29</sup> Moses Ḥagiz, in his own work titled *Mishnat Ḥakhamim*, underscores the unmistakable connection between the goals of the Sabbatean leadership and the attack on the oral law and rabbinic authority, writing, “[Those] who have licentiously rebelled against

the Torah of Moses and Israel and have inclined towards evil beliefs which they have devised and fabricated in their sinful hearts, the well-known imposter Shabbetai Tsevi and his friends, may their bones be pulverized, the accursed Cardoso, and the abominable Nehemiah Hiyya Hayon, may the name of the wicked rot . . . the insane fool Leib Prossnitz and his friend, as evil as he is, Moses Meir of Zholkva and the aforementioned snake [Shabbetai Zevi].” (It should be noted here that Hagiz’s spelling of Zevi’s name references the word *tsefá*, “snake.”)

And he adds, even more explicitly, “He [Shabbetai Zevi] spoke slanderously not only about all the *aggadot* [rabbinic stories] and *midrashim* [homilies] of the sages, interpreters of the twenty-four [books of the Torah], but also about the works of the rabbinic authorities and moralists, recent as well as ancient, until *they have caused us to be abhorred.*”<sup>30</sup>

Earlier Jacob Sasportas had labeled Sabbateanism as “the ultimate *apikorsut*” (Epicureanism, or irreligion) adopted by “the uneducated who perceive a lack of truth in the teachings of the sages, who open their mouths neither in holiness nor purity and say: ‘One cannot rely on the sages . . .’ and from this time on, the teachings of the sages are not [regarded as] prophecy.” Sasportas thus understood the danger of the Sabbateans in devaluating rabbinic authority since, unlike their own teachings, those of the rabbis were not prophetic.<sup>31</sup> And again, he uses the same label to designate the Sabbateans as a new religion, a new sect distancing themselves from rabbinic Judaism, writing, “It seems to me that it is the beginning of *apikorsut* among the Jews and that it constitutes the foundation of a new faith and a different religion, as happened in the days of that man [Jesus]. And it is



incumbent upon all the sages in every city to come together and gird themselves and hound those who follow their irreligion.”<sup>32</sup>

Sasportas, Ḥagiz, and Emden thus felt a critical need to defend the legitimacy of their own religious leadership by publishing books and pamphlets defending the rabbinic tradition they embodied while lashing out at all those who sought to undermine their position. Ḥagiz especially succeeded in enlisting a large number of rabbis from all over Europe to act in unison and to fortify the image of the institution of the rabbinate. Through a series of orchestrated letters, exchanging information on the defamers of the rabbinic class, garnering and maintaining support for the rabbinic cause, and publicizing the evidence of the alleged apostasy of the Sabbatean infidels, the rabbinic class attempted to speak in one voice. Judah Briel of Mantua joined forces with Ḥagiz and the Ḥakham Zevi, the Ashkenazic rabbi of Amsterdam in excoriating Ḥayon and his book. Their efforts were rewarded with the publication of a collection of letters offering retractions of previous support for Ḥayon or repudiations of his positions from such notables as Naph-tali Kohen of Frankfurt am Main, Gabriel Eskeles of Moravia and Nicholsburg, Jacob Aboab of Venice, and David Oppenheim of Prague. Other well-known rabbinic figures were enlisted to the cause against Ḥayon, including Jacob Kohen Poppers of Koblenz, Joel Pincherle of Alexandria, Abraham Segre of Casale Monferrato, Joseph Ergas of Leghorn, and David Nieto of London, as well as other rabbis throughout the Middle East.<sup>33</sup>

Moses Ḥagiz even turned to the Council of the Four Lands, the powerful supracommunal institution of eastern European Jewry, in the hope that it would issue a

ban against the Sabbateans. Despite its character as a powerful lay body with a rabbinical court at its service, both Hagiz and Emden considered the council's support critical in their universal campaign against sectarians such as Hayon and Eybeschütz.<sup>34</sup>

In the case of Emden, his appeal to the council for support was carefully crafted to legitimate officially sanctioned versions of Christianity and Judaism while excoriating the obnoxious mixture of religious ideologies that constituted sectarian Sabbateanism. Displaying an impressive familiarity with the New Testament, Emden argued that Christianity was a legitimate religion appealing to gentiles while Judaism appealed, appropriately, to Jews. Both represented parallel paths to redemption, but they were paths that should never intermingle; the theological boundaries between them and their well-defined dogmas preserved their integrity and guaranteed their self-imposed separation from one another. It was only when the Sabbateans crossed these boundaries, mixing elements from each religion in their syncretistic heresy, that they impaired the purity of each traditional faith. Emden thus posed as "a chief heresiologist" in his appeal to the council, understanding religious orthodoxy in a way parallel to the representatives of the Catholic Church. In fact, the Lutheran scholar Freidrich David Megerlin had specifically designated Emden's position against the Sabbateans as "orthodoxy."<sup>35</sup>

In turning to the most powerful body of eastern European Jewry to combat the Sabbatean scourge, Hagiz and Emden understood well the ultimate danger to which the entire Jewish community was subjected and why Jewish leaders were obliged to separate themselves

from the heretics. Abraham Segre similarly grasped that all fellow rabbis were under siege and needed to act in concert in suppressing their local interests and loyalties on behalf of the greater good: “For in matters pertaining to Jewish law we [the rabbinate] are members of one city.”<sup>36</sup> Segre’s defiant declaration offers the clearest expression of an awareness of a pan-European Jewish community and an idealized unified rabbinate of Ashkenazic, Sephardic, and Italian rabbis. And Emden’s forceful separation of an authentic Christianity from an authentic Judaism, delegitimizing the hybrid religion of the sectarians, illustrates well the orthodox posture of the rabbinical opponents of Sabbateanism.

The consciousness of rabbinic unity was also reinforced by the publication of extensive documentation about the “sins” of the infidels so as to record for posterity the war of words the Sabbatean crisis had engendered and the hoped-for victory of the rabbis, the “repairers of the breaches.” Jacob Sasportas’s *Zizit Novel Zevi* (The Fading Flower of Zevi) was surely the model of a massive collection of historical documents on the travesties of the Sabbateans. Jacob Emden’s *Torat ha-Kena’ot* (The Teaching of Jealousy [Numbers 5:29]) performed a similar function, substantiating his charges against those he deemed the enemies of faith. Other rabbis consciously collected published and unpublished materials; as Samson Morpurgo of Ancona wrote to his colleagues concerning the Hayon controversy, “Send me all the books that have been published hitherto, and those that will be published in the future pertaining to this controversy . . . the full and complete editions. I will store them in my library as a keepsake for generations.” These rabbis saw themselves as litigants before the court of public opinion

that included other rabbinic colleagues but also lay leaders and even Christians fascinated by the fireworks igniting the Jewish community. Their efforts on behalf of the rabbinic establishment would be crowned with success if they meticulously recorded and documented the crimes of their generation and their courageous efforts to stand together to preserve rabbinic Judaism as they understood it.<sup>37</sup>

### Sabbateanism and the Other Crises of Early Modernity: Some Tentative Conclusions

Until now we have focused exclusively on the Sabbatean menace, especially the well-publicized affairs of Ḥayon, Luzzatto, and Eybeschütz of the first half of the eighteenth century in describing the crisis of Jewish life. From the perspective of the beleaguered religious establishment, as we have seen, these events were indeed crises that called for a total and unified response, bringing together all communities throughout the Jewish world in a show of strength against the heretics. This chapter began by mentioning several other so-called crises of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries besides that of the Sabbateans. Before concluding this discussion, we need to ask whether it is possible to link the internal Jewish crisis in the name of Shabbetai Zevi with the larger intellectual crisis engendered by Benedict de Spinoza and his contemporaries and followers.<sup>38</sup> Can one be more explicit in arguing that both crises took place more or less simultaneously (Shabbetai Zevi appeared in 1666, and Spinoza's *Theological-Political Treatise* was published in 1670) and shared some (unnamed) causes? Spinoza, of course, was born into a converso family who had settled

in the Jewish community of Amsterdam and received a traditional Jewish education. His impressive mastery of Jewish sources is well known. Furthermore, recent scholars of Spinoza have made much of his Jewish/converso connections.<sup>39</sup> Sharing a common attitude toward the obsolescence of rabbinic law were two other contemporaries of Spinoza, Juan de Prado and Uriel da Costa, the latter writing an impressive critique of Jewish law.<sup>40</sup> Beyond these three outspoken critics of the rabbinic position, one scholar has unearthed a small group of Amsterdam Jews accused of so-called Karaite tendencies at the beginning of the eighteenth century who eventually converted. Despite the attractiveness of the image of Karaism to some Christian Hebraists like Richard Simon, the reality of a genuine ideological movement challenging rabbinic Judaism, a kind of Jewish Protestantism, seems most unlikely to him.<sup>41</sup> Another contemporary Hebrew work, the *Kol Sakhal* (Voice of a Fool), most likely written by the Italian rabbi Leon Modena, offers a remarkable in-house critique of the foundations of rabbinic Judaism, but it need not be linked to converso heterodoxy in Amsterdam at all.<sup>42</sup>

It is not only difficult to tie Spinoza with any sizable number of contemporary ideological critics of traditional Judaism in Amsterdam or beyond but difficult to trace the evolution of deistic or Spinozist trends among Sephardic intellectuals after his lifetime.<sup>43</sup> The only well-known reaction to Spinoza among contemporary Jews was the rebuttal of his views by Isaac Orobio de Castro.<sup>44</sup> The London rabbi David Nieto was accused of Spinozist leanings in 1703, but it is clear that he was wrongly accused.<sup>45</sup> Most recently, another scholar has assiduously collected the existing evidence surrounding a colorful

group of Jewish deists across the continent and England to support his contention of a wide-ranging secularizing trend among Jews in the eighteenth century.<sup>46</sup> But these individuals, like the so-called Karaites mentioned in Amsterdam, hardly constitute a significant organized group conspicuously associated with the Spinozist trends so prominent across Europe. The many references to atheists, deists, Epicureans, and other deviants from rabbinic Judaism that have so far been unearthed are not easy to contextualize precisely or to assess their impact on the larger community. Hāgiz and Emden were also prone to conflating Sabbateans with other heretics, blurring the differences between Sabbatean enthusiasts and those offering a philosophical challenge to religious orthodoxy.

It may be plausible to assume that Jews inevitably would be dragged into the intellectual arena of Spinozism that pervaded European society and significantly provoked the radical enlightenment, but the evidence for this activity on a massive or public scale has not yet been unearthed. Modern Jewish thought from Moses Mendelssohn on is certainly a direct or indirect response to Spinoza's devastating assault on traditional Judaism, but the Jewish responses to Spinoza in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries remain generally unknown. Perhaps a conspiracy of silence was the most effective response Jews could offer to counter the acute heretical tendencies ever present in the environments they inhabited, but this is no more than conjecture. The Jewish upheaval remains virtually unconnected to the Spinozist crisis of the same time period.

What remain to be stressed are the common conditions under which Shabbetai Zevi and Benedict de Spinoza emerged in the second half of the seventeenth

century and the common results they achieved. Both were patently linked to the converso experience; Sabbateanism and Spinozism in general were nurtured in Amsterdam itself; and both represented two kinds of enthusiasm, generating ideologies that challenged the legitimacy of rabbinic norms and rabbinic authority. In the end, both converge in remarkably interesting ways, although it is impossible to weigh them equally as factors in the collapse and deterioration of rabbinic authority at least before 1750.

It is equally risky to posit any meaningful connections between the other well-known economic and political crises of the seventeenth century discussed by social and economic historians nearly a half century ago.<sup>47</sup> Precisely during the years in which this crisis was taking place (1650 or earlier), Jews seem to have been experiencing the height of their political and economic integration into western Europe.<sup>48</sup> On the other hand, the Jews of eastern Europe had experienced a significant trauma in 1648 with the onset of the Chmielnicki massacres although they eventually recovered their losses and regained much of their autonomy and economic power years later. While the connections between the Jewish crises of 1648 and 1666 and those larger institutional and societal crises seem most opaque, their coincidence is surely worth noting. In the absence of specific evidence binding the Jewish phenomenon to a general cultural or political crisis, it is sufficient to note the genuinely shared human condition experienced by Jews and Christians alike and the remarkably common perception particularly felt by their religious and political leadership of living through an era of crisis that they could neither control nor arrest.

## Five

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### MINGLED IDENTITIES

On many grounds the rabbis of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries had reason to feel anxious. Along with the unmanageable explosion of knowledge triggered by printed books, the curtailment of their authority by lay leaders and governmental officials, and the Sabbatean threat described in chapter 4, they also witnessed with horror another troubling phenomenon: the recurrent and conspicuous boundary crossings between Judaism and Christianity (and sometimes, as in the case of the Dönme, between Judaism and Islam) on the part of a small but conspicuous number of Jews and Christians. When Jewish identity became a matter of personal volition rather than imposed communal will; when apostasy was advocated as an agency of messianic renewal; when certain Christians attempted to recover their spiritual roots through an intense exposure to Judaism while certain Jews found social intimacy with Christians and spiritual nourishment in their faith more attractive than ever the possibilities for Jewish-Christian syncretistic thinking and praxis were significantly enhanced. Decades before the late-eighteenth-century Enlightenment, Jews and Christians were encountering each other in public and private places, in intellectual forums, and in radical and



spiritualist movements. And certain individuals were actually shaping a personal identity drawn simultaneously from each of the faith communities.

My goal in this chapter is to describe succinctly the simultaneous appearance of four interrelated developments that emerge as discrete phenomena but ultimately converge to create a new complexity, an utter confusion of confessional loyalties and religious identities. For the sake of this analysis, I will separate each of these four distinct trends before reconnecting them again.

### The Ambiguity of Converso Lives

I begin with the converso phenomenon, a primary factor in the erosion of social and religious boundaries that traditional Christian and Jewish authorities had erected for centuries. As several historians have previously argued, the religious and cultural ambiguity of Jewish self-definition first became an acute problem in early modern Europe with the reintegration of the conversos into Jewish life in Italy, northern Europe, and the Ottoman Empire.<sup>1</sup> For New Christians who fully returned to Judaism, their rite of passage was neither simple nor complete.<sup>2</sup> They retained consciously or unconsciously deeply ingrained attitudes to and associations with their distant past, both religious notions and ethnic loyalties that in most cases they could not dislodge. For New Christians who exited the Iberian Peninsula but hesitated to publicly acknowledge the Jewish faith, lingering in a transitional state between Judaism and Christianity, religious and ethnic self-perceptions were even more complex. If one adds to this condition the highly secularized lifestyle of many of them, with their ever tenuous

connections to ritual life and the synagogue, then it is easy to understand the genuine fears and anxieties of their religious leaders.

The new Jewish identity of the conversos, whether leaning toward Jewish or back toward Christian orthodoxy or wavering between the two poles, was unique because it was based on choice, on personal autonomy. Neither the Catholic Church nor the Inquisition nor the rabbinic authorities could impose it from above. A converso strove and often succeeded, either publicly or clandestinely, in creating his or her own self-definition. The returning New Christians also created their own communal structures and secured unique political arrangements with local authorities in Pisa, Leghorn, Amsterdam, or Hamburg that were often noticeably different than those of organized Jewish communities elsewhere.<sup>3</sup> They were highly mobile, engaged in long-distance trading, and multilingual, with often competing cultural loyalties. But above all, they were the first Jews to determine their own religious identity, the various components of faith and praxis they would choose to accept or reject, and whether or not to believe in any form of monotheistic faith. The conversos had been victimized by a Catholic inquisition that could not tolerate their religious ambiguity. Rabbinic leaders faced with consternation this same ambiguity when these individuals attempted to return to the Jewish community. While most proclaimed themselves Jewish, many could not easily adjust to traditional norms and practices as obnoxious to them as those they had abandoned in Catholicism, or they remained indifferent to any religious ritual or doctrine regardless of its origin. Others clung exclusively to a notion of ethnic or racial identity. Resembling

notions of their own oppressors, they viewed themselves as members of the Nação, distinguishable from their Ashkenazic counterparts and from those Jews who saw their identity as primarily or exclusively confessional.

Recent scholarship has highlighted the trajectory of those conversos who engaged in repeated conversions, shuttling between Judaism and Christianity at several junctures of their lives. For these individuals, religion was a variable to gain certain psychological and sociological advantages; identity formation was malleable and served practical ends. The most well known case was that of Samuel Pallache, who easily adopted the religious identity of his surroundings, viewing it solely pragmatically as a kind of business cost, a way of enhancing his economic and political agendas. Many other examples of paupers who were serial converts, willing to adopt any faith that would ensure them material or social rewards, can also be located in the records of the Inquisition. Consider the case of Abraham Ruben, a Jew of low social standing who traveled all over Europe from Fez to Amsterdam and to Antwerp, switching faiths as he traveled and even assuming the role of a religious missionary when it suited him.<sup>4</sup>

Most fascinating are the complex processes by which conversos reintegrated themselves into organized Jewish lives, bringing with them the cultural baggage of their Christian pasts. For even those who unequivocally reclaimed their Jewish identity, Iberian Christian values and ideas were deeply ingrained in their consciousness and continued to shape their newly formed religious identities. They carried with them such notions as personal honor, genealogical purity, spirituality, and even martyrdom from their former Catholic environments to

their newly created Jewish ones. And given the formidable challenges of their transition from one faith community to the other, the leadership of Amsterdam and other communities of the Western Sephardic diaspora worked assiduously to educate them in the norms of traditional Jewish life and to normalize their existence within the organized Jewish community. But despite their most rigorous efforts, their formal Jewish conversions were often incomplete or even unsuccessful. Many chose to lead independent lives outside the organized community; others continued to follow transient lifestyles, unwilling to establish long-standing roots in any community; others even returned to the Iberian Peninsula, where they felt more comfort and familiarity despite the hostile conditions that had initially precipitated their previous departures.<sup>5</sup>

### Sabbatean Syncretism

Many of these same conversos were infatuated with Jewish messianism—especially the ideology of Sabbateanism—and indeed it became for them and for others another major arena of religious intermingling. As we have seen, Shabbetai Zevi's declaration of his messiahship in 1665–66 engendered an enormous reaction among believers and detractors alike. Despite his incarceration and ultimate conversion to Islam, he nevertheless remained the focus of messianic aspirations, especially within converso communities of both the Ottoman Empire and the rest of Europe, well into the eighteenth century. The appearance of this strange messiah became the basis of a new antinomian and nihilistic ideology, constructed especially by Nathan of Gaza and the former converso

Abraham Cardoso, that challenged the very foundations of normative Judaism and rabbinic authority.

As mentioned in chapter 4, one recent scholar has pointed especially to the presence of a large community of converso merchants in Smyrna, the birthplace of Shabbetai Zevi, and their economic and social links with other converso communities engaged in international commerce. While Gershom Scholem had previously noticed the attraction of many conversos to Sabbateanism, we might now speculate how economic connections could facilitate the spread of Sabbatean currents throughout the European continent.<sup>6</sup> Another recent interpreter, also mentioned in chapter 4, connects Sabbatean messianism to an even broader context of analogous stirrings among apocalyptic Christians and Ottoman Muslims to suggest a plausible account of the apparent connections among all three phenomena. Labeling Sabbateanism and its opponents as forms of “enthusiasm” and “antienthusiasm” has allowed him to view the remarkable structural parallels between Sabbateans and these other groups, as well as their opponents in the religious, legal, and medical establishments.<sup>7</sup>

These new perspectives accordingly point to the central role of Sabbateanism in the blurring of religious identities among the three faiths. Resting on the authority of their alleged Jewish messiah, the Sabbateans converted to Islam (the Dönme) or to Christianity (the Frankists). In a bizarre manner, Jewish messianism was thus restructured to embrace its rival religions. The messiah had come to save the world by not only overturning all rabbinic authority but in reconfiguring Judaism in such a way as to reintegrate it with Christianity and Islam. The world could not be redeemed for Jewish believers without the direct

mediation and involvement of the other two religious faiths. Sabbateanism, in its most radical manifestations, thus constituted a complete redrawing of traditional Jewish norms and beliefs as well as the breaching of conventional religious and cultural boundaries.

The religious identities and ideological agendas of Abraham Cardoso (1626–1606) and Nathan of Gaza (1643/44–1680), as well as Barukhyah Russo (d. 1720) and the Dönmeḥ, as well as Jacob Frank (1726–91) and his followers have been well studied and provide ample evidence of the integration of Christian and Muslim elements into Jewish messianic thought and activity. Besides offering a theological justification for Shabbetai Zevi's apostasy and an open invitation for widespread defection from normative Judaism, antinomianism, and even nihilism, each of these outspoken apostles of Sabbateanism successfully fused his newly constructed Jewish beliefs with others taken from Christianity and, to a lesser extent, Islam, in often bizarre formulations abhorrent not only to Jewish religious leaders but also to their Christian and Muslim counterparts. The complex ways in which they simultaneously repudiated the other religion while drawing from elements of it have been carefully delineated by others who have shown how both Nathan and Cardoso—the latter of converso background—exhibited an intimate knowledge of Christian theology in their Sabbatean justifications of Shabbetai Zevi. The Dönmeḥ's conversion to Islam, while simultaneously retaining a separate Sabbatean faith and praxis, is an obvious example of religious syncretism while Frank's conversion with those of his followers to Catholicism, despite their ultimate excommunication, profoundly illustrate the same tendency.

Gershom Scholem noticed long ago the emphasis on the notion of pure faith in Nathan of Gaza's Sabbatean theology and its striking parallels to that articulated in the Gospels. Similarly Christian in its appearance was his notion that the messiah himself justifies those who believe in him and condemns those who disbelieve. Although Scholem admitted how difficult it was to imagine how Christianity influenced Nathan's thought in the first place, he nevertheless could not dismiss the distinctly Christian flavor of this prominent concept of faith in his thinking.<sup>8</sup>

In the case of Abraham Cardoso, born and educated as an Iberian Catholic, the Christian overtones in his Jewish messianic thinking are not only unmistakable but self-conscious and openly articulated. In response to his brother Isaac, who accused him of demonstrating the messiahship of Shabbetai Zevi on the basis of the same exegesis of Isaiah 53 used by Christians to prove that of Jesus, he exclaims, "And if the Christians say the same, what harm can come to us from the truth? They took it from the sages of Israel. To what extent it is entangled in Augustine's book on the City of God, being a contemporary of the sages of the Gemara, with whom he conversed and from whom he learned." And elsewhere, in commenting on his own messianic interpretation of Psalm 22, he adds, "This is the true Messiah of Israel according to the sages of Israel, of which the Christians avail themselves and say that the Messiah must be humble; and because he must also be triumphant, they affirm that all the prophecies shall not be completely fulfilled . . . until the final coming, when he shall come triumphantly on the clouds of the heavens. And we say that between the abasement and the glory of

the Messiah son of Israel, there must be no death, for the Messiah son of David does not have to die.”<sup>9</sup>

Cardoso’s teaching of the radical suffering of the messiah and that of Christianity are almost identical, the only difference being that the Sabbateans did not believe he had to die. Cardoso certainly could denigrate Christianity as a foolish religion in general, but he also admitted that it still preserved tenets of the true faith of Israel lost to rabbinic Judaism. Even the Christian Trinity was to him nothing more than a corruption of the “secret of the divinity” that the ancient sages had known but had subsequently been forgotten by later generations until rediscovered by the Sabbateans.<sup>10</sup>

Nehemiah Hiyya Hayon, Cardoso’s student, similarly espoused a triune notion of God based on the twin notions of the three aspects of the Godhead (*parzufim*) and the three knots of faith (*kishrei de-Mehemnuta*) found in the *Sefer ha-Zohar* (Book of Splendor). For Hayon, as we have seen, the true faith of Israel was based on this central notion and became the critical teaching of his notorious publication. Christians had distorted its meaning while the rabbis refused to acknowledge its centrality in differentiating Judaism from Christianity, but it captured the essence of the divinity as Jews understood it. By arrogantly publicizing in print a doctrine easily susceptible to misrepresentation and theological error, Hayon evoked the scorn of the rabbis, as has also been mentioned, by presenting an allegedly Jewish belief that easily appeared to some as identical with that of Christianity.<sup>11</sup>

Moses David of Podhayce, a Sabbatean kabbalist and associate of Jonathan Eybeschütz, similarly displayed a theology fusing Christian elements with Judaism. Moses



David allegedly created an amulet made of a cross as well, placing the name of Shabbetai Zevi alongside that of Jesus. One scholar even suggested that his general syncretistic orientation came from the influence of Barukhyah and the Dönmehe despite the fact that the latter had primarily mixed Judaism with Islam and not with Christianity. This type of appropriation of Christian images and ideas appears dissimilar from that of Jacob Frank, who considered Christianity in its externality generally unattractive and instead converted in order to subvert its basic convictions. We shall return to Frank's use of Christianity later in this chapter.<sup>12</sup>

Adding to the fascinating story of Moses David, Yehudah Liebes later claimed that there existed a secret Jewish-Christian sect emerging from Sabbatean circles in Prague in the 1720s that was based on documents of the Moravian Church first published in the late nineteenth century. He assumed, based on his reading of these documents, that this sect was established as early as the late seventeenth century. Contact between a member of the sect and one Pastor Burgmann led to an exchange of letters between him and the Amsterdam branch of the group as well as the involvement of the Moravian Church in London, which sent a mission to Amsterdam to convert this group. The Jews eventually ended this contact. Liebes further argued that this group was the same as the circle surrounding Jonathan Eybeschütz and distinguished them from the Frankists in their open advocacy of a hybrid religion of Judaism and Christianity.<sup>13</sup>

Subsequent scholarship has now shown that the documents used by Liebes are forgeries and that the original letters are no longer extant. One might therefore question

the very existence of such a sect in Amsterdam. On the other hand, the documents do reveal an intimate knowledge of Jewish heretical movements in the eighteenth century, including their major leaders. While seemingly a “figment of the imagination” of a missionary associated with the Moravians, the texts nevertheless point to real discussions about Judaism and Christianity among the Sabbateans if not actual tenets of their faith. Moreover, other evidence exists of contacts among Moravian missionaries, Sabbateans, and Frankists. The missionaries clearly advocated syncretistic practices among Jews leaning toward Christianity that might ultimately lead to their official conversion. It would seem judicious to conclude that while the actual documents described by Liebes are no more than “projections of the expectations of the missionaries,” they do point to real encounters between missionaries and Sabbateans and especially reveal how the former actually knew about the specific doctrines of the latter.<sup>14</sup>

An even more convincing manifestation of a Judeo-Christian ideology surrounds the fascinating figure Johann Kemper. In 1696, Johann Kemper, alias Moses ben Aaron of Krakow, converted to Christianity within the stronghold of the followers of Emanuel Swedenborg, the mystic theologian and occult scientist, in Uppsala, Sweden. Kemper had clear Sabbatean links that probably made him more attractive to his Christian associates, who became his students. Kemper’s highly original commentary on the *Sefer ha-Zohar*, the foundational text of kabbalistic theosophy, presents a more complex picture of his liminal status between Judaism and Christianity. Kemper remained committed to the nomian framework of Judaism, which could be interpreted properly, so he

claimed, through a kabbalistic and Sabbatean hermeneutic. Kemper was unwavering in his allegiance to the oral law of Judaism, which he genuinely considered to be not the Talmud but the messianic truth taught by Jesus. By upholding ceremonial law with the proper intentionality, Kemper believed it was possible to penetrate the true mysteries of Christianity. Fully focused on uncovering the real messianic message of rabbinic and kabbalistic texts, Kemper ingeniously remained faithful to his rabbinic background by interpreting Christianity through the Jewish textual tradition. His unique attitude toward Judaism stands in sharp contrast to that of Jacob Frank, who had also attempted to convert to Christianity but had done so by violently attacking the very foundations of Jewish law and praxis.<sup>15</sup>

It is also possible that other Sabbateans with Christianizing proclivities existed, including such figures as Zadok of Grodno, Ḥayyim ha-Malakh, and Samuel Primo. One might also posit a connection between Nehemiah Ḥiyya Ḥayon's *Oz le-Elohim Beit Kodesh ha-Kodashim* (Strength to God: The House of the Holy of Holies) and Kemper's own theology. Kemper's Christian student in Uppsala, Anders Norrelius, copied Ḥayon's work for Kemper and described to him the uproar over the publication of Ḥayon's book. He most certainly alluded to Ḥayon's own Trinitarian notions of the Godhead, which were also noticed by the Christian rabbinic scholar Wilhelm Surenhusius (discussed later in this chapter) and Kemper himself as a sure sign of Ḥayon's Christianizing inclinations.<sup>16</sup>

We have referred earlier to the particular mingling of Judaism and Islam in the sectarian group called the Dönmeḥ and particularly the subsect founded by Barukhyah

Russo. Scholem has surmised that while these groups essentially preserved their Jewish character, secretly followed forms of Jewish liturgy and practice, and married among themselves, they nevertheless established contacts with Islam—especially the mystical tendencies of the dervishes. Scholem singled out the apparent contacts between the Bektashi and the Dönme and the former's practice of *takiyah* (dissimulation), which precisely suited the needs of the latter.

Barukhyah Russo (d. 1720), also known as Osman Baba, founded a specific sect within the Dönme around 1700 and is especially interesting in the context of this chapter because of his proclamation that he was the divine reincarnation of Shabbetai Zevi. Given the overt Christological character of this designation, it was widely noticed by Polish Sabbateans who established contact with Barukhyah and accepted the doctrine for themselves. Condemned by his opponents for his extreme nihilism as well as his claims to be the incarnation of the divine messiah, Barukhyah nevertheless left his impact on his adherents even as far as central and eastern Europe, shattering the confessional boundaries among the three religions and even fusing their doctrines in novel ways. His opponents labeled his followers as the *Onyolon* (of the ten paths), meaning apparently that they were considered syncretists who wanted to amalgamate the various elements of the world religions into one. Scholem acknowledges, however, how difficult it is to identify particular theological elements stemming from the three religions in the esoteric thought of this sect other than the doctrine of reincarnation itself.<sup>17</sup>

Barukhyah's doctrine directly influenced Jacob Frank and his followers, who refer to Barukhyah in their

writings and speak of Frank as his direct spiritual descendent. Scholem even calls the Frankists a particularly radical shoot of the Dönme, “only with a Catholic facade,” who made contact with the Turkish sect well into the nineteenth century. By the Catholic facade, of course, Scholem meant Frank’s call to all Jews to convert to Christianity by the 1760s and the emergence of a mass movement of followers.<sup>18</sup> Ultimately, the Frankists were excommunicated by the church and marginalized from both official Judaism and Christianity. Nevertheless, Frank clearly imbibed Christian doctrines into his new system of faith—most prominently the notion of the Trinity. He also relied on kabbalistic versions of the triune nature of the Godhead such as those articulated by earlier Sabbateans like Cardoso and Hayon. His conversion to Christianity, his “entering the faith,” meant for him the true faith of Christianity, the mystery of its sacraments—especially the spiritual power of baptism as understood by him and his disciples alone, not through the mediation of the Roman Catholic Church. In Christianity, Frank discovered the original elements of Judaism. They could only be preserved and passed on through the agency of a separate and clandestine sect unpolluted by rabbinic legalism on the one hand or Catholic distortions on the other. Paradoxically, his most bitter opponents among Jewish and Christian clerics alike welcomed his removal and ostracism from both traditional Judaism and Christianity. The hybrid character of the Frankists and that of the Sabbateans who had preceded them was surely disconcerting to clergy who required clear-cut definitions and boundaries between religious confessions. By isolating the Frankists from each of their respective faiths they had fervently acted

to excise the lethal admixture of religious pluralism and antinomianism from their midst.<sup>19</sup>

### The Conflicting Loyalties of Christian Hebraists

Along with the phenomena of the conversos and Sabateanism, a third factor contributing to boundary crossings and religious intermingling was Christian Hebraism. As we have already seen, Christian Hebraism in early modern Europe constituted a new dimension of Jewish-Christian relations. It was first and foremost an intellectual explosion of dramatic proportions fostered in the print shop, in the university classroom, and even in the public press. But it also had a deeper spiritual dimension: a Christianity in search of the roots of its own identity. By gaining a fuller access to the riches of Jewish learning and spirituality, Christians were enriching and enlivening their own intellectual and spiritual worlds.<sup>20</sup>

Was the new Christian Hebraist a syncretist? Did his intense preoccupation with Jewish texts diminish his Christian loyalties while bringing him closer to a Jewish core of his identity? There is no simple and unequivocal answer to such questions. Christian scholars who devoted their lifetimes to the study of sacred scriptures, Jewish languages, ancient Jewish history and literature, and even, in some cases, the ethnographic study of Jewish customs and ceremonies could hardly be motivated by intellectual reasons alone. Some indeed saw their responsibility to reclaim an authentic reading of the Hebrew Bible for Christians; others hoped to locate in their study the original, pure, and unpolluted version of Christianity practiced by Jesus; some were smitten by Jewish forms of esotericism that they hoped to appropriate to

replenish the wells of Christian spirituality; others even believed that early rabbinic Jewish culture and literature were the principal keys in deciphering New Testament prophecies. Whether the new breed of Christian Hebraists actually became more “Jewish” in the process of their prodigious Jewish learning or not they were often perceived as such, as “Judaisers” whose seemingly excessive exposure to Jewish sources had brought them unwittingly closer to Jews and Judaism.

We have already surveyed the phenomenon of Christian Hebraism beginning in the late fifteenth century with the prodigious writings of Pico della Mirandola and Johannes Reuchlin and continuing well into the late eighteenth century through the contributions of scholars such as Benjamin Kennicott, Robert Lowth, and Johann David Michaelis. In this present discussion, I would like to limit myself to several telling examples of Hebraists who were significantly transformed by their encounter with Jewish sacred texts so that their own Christian faiths were enriched, revitalized, reshaped, and even attenuated by this involvement. Few actual conversions took place as a result of intense Judaic study on the part of Christian scholars, but nevertheless, their preoccupation with Judaic knowledge could become more than academic and bookish. They came to familiarize themselves with the Jewish tradition; they often came away with a deeper understanding of themselves and their own beliefs.

Take, for example, the unusual circle of Christian thinkers and their fascination with the kabbalah at the court of Sulzbach, especially Francis Mercurius van Helmont (1614–98), the son of the famous Paracelsian physician, and his close colleague, Christian Knorr von Rosenroth (1636–89), the compiler of the greatest Latin

collection of kabbalist writings ever published, the *Kabbala Denudata*. Previous scholars have held a high regard for Rosenroth's accomplishments,<sup>21</sup> and have acknowledged the influence of Helmont on Henry More, Ann Conway, Gottfried Leibnitz, and some of the Quakers,<sup>22</sup> but had never undertaken a systematic examination of the political and intellectual worlds of these remarkable thinkers. We now have an intellectual biography of Helmont that canvasses the larger intellectual links he established with his illustrious contemporaries Christian August, the count of Sulzbach; Rosenroth; More; Conway; Leibnitz; George Keith, the Quaker theologian; and even John Locke. What this reconstruction clearly points to is the centrality of the kabbalah in the consciousness of Christian thinkers very much engaged in the critical religious and political issues of their age, in many ways analogous to the uses of the kabbalah two centuries earlier in the thinking of such thinkers as the aforementioned Pico della Mirandola and Johannes Reuchlin. Unlike the fifteenth century, however, this Sulzbach circle, through the masterful translations of Rosenroth, assimilated especially some of the principal themes of the kabbalistic system of Isaac Luria, as translated into a Neoplatonic key by such seventeenth-century Jewish thinkers as Israel Sarug, Abraham Herrera, and Joseph Delmedigo.

What appears to have emerged was an enthusiastic appropriation of Lurianic notions on the part of these thinkers, especially their use of Luria's view of transmigration (*gilgul*) and his radical optimism as reflected in the notion of *tikkun* (repair). Although mixed with other forms of gnosticism as found in Hermetic, Neoplatonic, and alchemical sources, their new infusion of



Lurianic ideas was significant for several reasons. In the first place, these thinkers adopted a vitalistic philosophy of perfectionism and universal salvation at the expense of rejecting partially or completely the traditional Christian notions of predestination, original sin, and the eternality of hell while at least minimizing the role of Christ in the redemptive process. Second, by deemphasizing these dogmas, they promoted a more tolerant and open version of Christianity that blurred the boundaries between Catholics and Protestants, and between Christians and Jews. Third, by privileging the Jewish notions of theodicy and progress, they revealed their great indebtedness to Jewish and converso thought at a critical moment in the reshaping of Western culture. Finally, these individuals exemplified the religious roots of the process of secularization and the Enlightenment, and the intimate connections between Jewish and Christian gnosticism and messianism with science, toleration, and progress.<sup>23</sup>

One of Helmont's associates was Johann Peter Späth (1642/5–1701), who ultimately converted to Judaism taking the name Moses Germanus largely as a reaction to Helmont's kabbalistic philosophy. Born in Vienna to a Catholic family, Späth first converted to Lutheranism, regretted his conversion, and returned to his original Catholic faith. He then came to Sulzbach to work on the printing of the *Kabbala Denudata*, where he imbibed the ecumenical Christian proclivities of Helmont and Rosenroth that were infused with kabbalistic notions. In the end he became disenchanted with these men and viewed their interpretation of Jewish sources as a misreading and manipulation of Judaism and its sources; Christian kabbalah, he argued, was more pagan than it

was Jewish. Instead he insisted that the core of Christian teaching came from the oral law and that what was valid in Christianity was directly attributable to Judaism. He ultimately ended up in Amsterdam, where he converted to Judaism.<sup>24</sup>

Späth was not the only Christian Hebraist to personally embrace Judaism, especially in the open environment of Amsterdam, where it was relatively easy for Christians to convert to Judaism and for Jewish converts to Christianity to revert to their original faith. Aaron d'Antan's philosophical skepticism led him ultimately to convert to Judaism as well. In a manner similar to that of Späth, d'Antan converted to the simple faith of Jewish monotheism out of his disillusionment with the conflicting creeds of Christianity.<sup>25</sup>

While most of the other Hebraists declined to follow the radical course of d'Antan or Späth into Judaism, their study of Jewish texts, their familiarity with Jewish mystical notions, Jewish law, and Jewish rituals touched them each personally in some way. They also reconsidered Christianity in the light of their enhanced knowledge of Judaism, seeking ways in which the two religions could reunite under one universal church. Johann Stephan Rittangel, a professor of oriental languages at Königsberg, was similarly attracted to Amsterdam. Whether born a Jew or a Roman Catholic, he was deeply involved in Jewish matters, lived with Jews and with Karaites, and was in close contact with other Christian Hebraists such as Samuel Hartlib, Constanijn L'Empereur, John Dury, and others. In Amsterdam he published an edition of *Sefer Yezirah* (Book of Creation) while grounding his notion of the Trinity in kabbalistic sources. Petrus Serrarius likewise journeyed to Amsterdam, where he engaged in

conversation with Jews such as Menasseh ben Israel and Nathan Shapira as well as Christians associated with Hartlib's circle. In meeting Shapira and in learning of his messianic proclivities, he exclaimed, "My bowels were inwardly stirred within me, and it seemed to me, that I did not hear a Jew, but a Christian, and a Christian of no mean understanding, who did relish the things of the Spirit, and was admitted to the inward mysteries of our Religion." Serrarius was one of the first Christians to report on Shabbetai Zevi and the meaning of his messiahship for Christian millenarianism. Other Christians enchanted by the mysteries and rituals of Judaism include Oliger Paulli, John Dury, Samuel Fisher, Isaac la Peyrere, and Paul Felgenhauer, among many others.<sup>26</sup>

One final example of a religious syncretist was Wilhelm Surenhusius (c. 1664–1729), professor of oriental languages at the Athenaeum, the predecessor of the University of Amsterdam. Surenhusius was more than a typical Hebraist; he mastered Hebrew and rabbinic literature with enormous passion, sought out contemporary rabbis with which to both study rabbinic texts and engage in theological discussion, and amassed a truly impressive library of Hebrew books, including the most recently published tomes on the Bible, philology, the kabbalah, philosophy, history, science, and more. He is best known for producing the first complete Latin translation of the Mishnah, including translations of Moses Maimonides' and Ovadia Bertinora's commentaries and an extensive commentary of his own.

Some years later he composed another Latin work, offering a highly learned introduction to rabbinic hermeneutics as a critical tool in understanding the cultural background, the forms of biblical quotation, and the

exegetical methods employed in the New Testament. As he relates in the introduction to this work, he sought the solution to the exegetical crisis plaguing contemporary Christianity by turning to a rather unusual rabbi he had met in Amsterdam to explain to him how the New Testament was related to the Old. He ultimately learned from this erudite mentor that rabbinical literature offered the most authentic key for understanding the mind-set and the literary practices of the early disciples of Jesus. They provided Christians a critical sword with which to defend themselves against the claims of unreliability of the Gospels leveled by deists and atheists. By mastering the rabbinic modes of reading and writing, the student of the New Testament might come to appreciate more fully and meaningfully the analogous literary practices among the early Christians.

Surenhusius saw the Mishnah, however, as more than a scholarly prop to illuminate New Testament prophecies with relevant historical data and modes of interpretation. He genuinely believed that the Mishnah, that dry and straightforward digest of ancient Jewish law, was divinely written. The Mishnah provided Christians with more than historical truth; it offered them a final revelation. The Jewish code was to stand side-by-side with the New Testament as representing the words of the living God. A Christian was obliged to study rabbinic literature to uncover these common origins, and its study was more rewarding for Christian theologians than Greek literature. Surenhusius even waxed eloquently about the sheer aesthetic delight of reading the Mishnah; he explicitly praised his Jewish teachers and interlocutors, and he praised Amsterdam for its toleration with respect to its Jewish minority.

Mishnah study, for Surenhusius, would not only make Christians better Christians but would also make Jews understand Christianity more fully and thus cause them to opt for conversion. Since, according to Surenhusius, there was only one truth—that shared by ancient Judaism and Christianity alike—it was the role of the Christian Hebraist to uncover this single faith by reconciling the Old Testament with the New, and Judaism with Christianity.<sup>27</sup>

### The Mediating Roles of Jewish Converts to Christianity

There was yet another group of highly complex individuals who were literally boundary crossers, moving from Judaism to Christianity. These were the conspicuous numbers of Jews who chose to be baptized and joined—sometimes quite publicly—a Christian denomination, either Protestant or Catholic. We know especially of a large number of converts in Germany but smaller, albeit significant, numbers can be easily located elsewhere in Europe. The individual convert, unlike the converso who generally left Catholicism for some form of new Jewish identity, was usually engaged in a reverse crossing—from Judaism to Christianity. Whether motivated by economic, social, or religious reasons, or simply the victim of aggressive missionaries, the convert from Judaism had to encounter an uncertain future in which economic benefit, social acceptance, or religious credibility in the newly acquired faith were often in doubt. The surest path for the more intellectually inclined was to become a so-called expert in Jewish affairs, a living testimony of the fallacies of the Jewish—and the truths

of the Christian—faith. In assuming the role of Hebrew teacher and authority in Jewish texts, the convert often found himself in an uncertain and uneasy relationship with the Christian Hebraist who presumed to acquire a similar role by virtue of his consummate learning in Judaism.<sup>28</sup>

The primary evidence of the passage from Judaism to Christianity is the enormous literature of conversionist testimonies allegedly written by the converts themselves to document their separation from Judaism and to testify to the revelatory experience of their conversion. While many of these tracts eschew the personal and idiosyncratic for the conventional and expected narrative journey from spiritual degradation to inspired illumination, a few reveal the personal struggles, the complex ambivalence, and the hesitations and backslides of the confused convert. Theirs was a life betwixt and between Judaism and Christianity. And for some, as soon as they had converted, there were misgivings and regret. For aggressive Protestant missionaries, the task was allegedly easier in that they could offer the potential convert a faith heavily drawn from the Old Testament, a faith based on *sola scriptura*, which superficially resembled their former one. But this was hardly a guarantee that the conversion would hold, or that the convert would come to appreciate how the pain of separation from his family and friends and the uncertainty of economic and social security might make his new Christian self even more debilitating than his former Jewish one.

I present here a few examples of the complex identities of several Jews who voluntarily converted to Catholicism or Protestantism but retained some persisting sense of their former Jewish identities. Undoubtedly

my small sampling could be amplified considerably by a systematic study of Jewish converts to Christianity throughout Europe.

In 1554, Ludovico Carreto, also known as Todros ben Joshua Ha-Cohen, published a testimony of his conversion to Catholicism in Latin and Hebrew for the sake of his former coreligionists. Todros was none other than the brother of Joseph Ha-Cohen, the well-known physician and Hebrew chronicler of Genoa. The work shares much with the many other surviving testimonies of conversion used to justify the act and to inspire others to apostatize. What is unique about this text is its publication in mid-sixteenth-century Paris, a place uninhabited by Jews; the prominence of the author within the Jewish community; and his creative use of prophecy and kabbalistic arguments to proselytize on behalf of Christianity utilizing the language and traditional sources of his former ancestral faith.<sup>29</sup> It would be an exaggeration to speak of Todros's new religious identity as anything other than Christian. Nevertheless, the reader of his fascinating text in Hebrew is struck by how "Jewish" Todros actually appears, articulating his newly found faith in traditional Jewish language for his former coreligionists. This strange mingling of a simple faith in Christianity with the familiar patterns of religious expression for Jews suggests, at the very least, that Todros remained embedded in some way in his Jewish past. No doubt his printed tome was meant to manipulate and seduce Jews by describing Christianity in the intimate language of Jewish spirituality. But in so doing, I would contend, he betrayed, nonetheless, the vestiges of a Jewish faith he had still not fully overcome or erased.

More revealing as an example of the mingled identity of a convert is that of Johann Isaac (1515–71) and the latter's defense of the integrity of the Masoretic text of the Hebrew Bible against the charges of the Catholic theologian Wilhelm Lindanus. Johann and his son Stephan both underwent multiple conversions from Judaism to Lutheranism to Catholicism and back to Lutheranism. The relations between father and son were strained by the machinations of the Jesuits to use them for their own purposes. Johann especially was a prolific author of books on Hebrew and Judaic subjects, in addition to his defense of the biblical text, and was deemed worthy of a professorship in Hebrew studies in Cologne. Nevertheless, both Johann and his son were consistently accused of insincerity and inconstancy in their profession of the Christian faith. They were Jews who had allegedly become false Christians.<sup>30</sup>

Perhaps Johann's critics noticed accurately the lingering markers of a Jewish identity and a loyalty to one's former coreligionists expressed in ethnic or intellectual, rather than religious, terms. Religiously, Johann was a faithful follower of Jesus Christ; yet he still felt a strong solidarity to Jews and their intellectual and literary legacy. In his new status as Christian who was originally Jewish, he felt compelled to defend the integrity of the transmission of sacred scriptures by Jews and the Jewish exegetical tradition from uninformed critics lacking the proper intellectual and linguistic credentials to understand Hebrew texts in the first place. Being a former Jew meant staking out a position where religious affiliation could be separated from cultural attraction and scholarly commitment.<sup>31</sup>



Moses Marcus was the son of a rich Jewish diamond merchant and grandson of the well-known Jewish businesswoman and autobiographical author Glikl von Hameln. He had learned of the career of Johann Isaac and viewed it as a model of his own behavior as a Christian convert with enduring Jewish commitments. In 1724, Marcus published a small book announcing and justifying his conversion to the Anglican Church under the personal supervision of the learned chaplain of the Archbishop of Canterbury, David Wilkins. Among the many interesting aspects of the young man's composition was its open rebuttal of a well-known defense of rabbinic Judaism penned by the famous Sephardic rabbi of London David Nieto some years earlier.

From the time of Moses's well publicized conversion, he seems to have taken a series of confusing steps that left his immediate family, his Jewish friends, and his Christian associates highly uncertain about the sincerity of his conversion and his ultimate feelings about his ancestral faith. Despite a letter to his parents denying his intention of ever converting, he challenged his father with a prolonged suit in English court, demanding material support from him, even while living as a Christian. While conveniently seeking out and gaining employment as a Hebrew and Judaic studies teacher for learned Christians in want of his expertise, he seems to have fancied himself as an author and translator in his own right and even a defender of Jewish interests. In a highly revealing begging letter to the well-known scholar and cultural patron Sir Hans Sloane, Marcus listed all of his many Jewish compositions, including an English translation of the entire Jewish liturgy, a guide to Jewish ceremonies, and a defense of the Masoretic text of the

Hebrew Bible against the highly controversial findings of William Whiston. In addition, he also listed the many illustrious students who befriended him, including some of the most distinguished of the English clergy.

Marcus represents a well-documented example of the tenuous nature of conversion for Jews enticed by Christian missionaries to relinquish the Jewish faith. Ironically Marcus could only survive in a Christian world as a self-proclaimed expert on Judaism. Yet his primary role as an expositor of Judaism inevitably shaped his fiercely loyal and warm feelings for Jews and their beliefs. Despite his formal repudiation of his birthright, he could not extricate himself from his former life as a Jew. As he wrote in his attack on Whiston, "I had a particular ambition to vindicate the Jews, my own brethren and countrymen," and despite their infidelity to Christ, he continues, "still I retain, and ever shall retain that regard for my brethren, whom I have left for the sake of Christ, as to do them all reasonable justice, and to defend their reputation against downright calumny."<sup>32</sup>

Our last mention of a convert with similarly deep-seated loyalty to his former community of Jews is Carl Anton. Anton was known formally as Moses Gerson Cohen and apparently was an associate of the Sabbatean rabbi Jonathan Eybeschütz, who was discussed earlier in this chapter. Anton converted to Christianity in 1748, taught Jewish languages at Helmstadt, and subsequently published many books of Jewish interest, including a series of reports describing the Emden-Eybeschütz controversy. When the learned Christian Johann Andreas Eisenmenger published his bitter denunciation of Judaism titled *Entdecktes Judenthum* (Judaism Revealed) in 1711, Anton eventually felt compelled to refute it. In the

introduction to his work *Einleitung in die rabbinischen Rechte* (Introduction to Rabbinic Law), he passionately proclaims, “I confess that I love the Jews because I was born and raised among them, more because my beloved Savior sprang among them. I love them with Paul and wish daily that they would find the right path.” The same distinction we have seen in Isaac and Marcus between religious identity and ethnic loyalty marks Anton’s self-understanding as well. Baptism had not fully erased his allegiance to and affection for the Jewish people, especially in critical moments when their very lives and good names were threatened by such defamers as the dangerous Eisenmenger.<sup>33</sup>

### Jewish Christians and Christian Jews

While the confessional convert in early modern Europe was a phenomenon distinct from the converso, the ambiguous and ambivalent statuses of both in Christian and Jewish societies overlapped and intersected. And as we have seen, conversos were often simultaneously Sabbateans who found in this special form of Jewish messianism a blending of their Jewish and Christian identities. Sabbateanism in particular, in its Frankist and other radical forms, could easily be conjoined with radical Christian ideologies like those of the Rosicrucians, Swedenburgians, and Freemasons.<sup>34</sup> Add to this mix Christian Hebraists in pursuit of their pristine Jewish origins and one begins to appreciate the fascinating complexity of Jewish-Christian relations in early modern Europe and the appearance of what Richard Popkin and others have labeled Jewish Christians and Christian Jews.<sup>35</sup> Surely these new configurations reflect the weakened and fragile

state of Judaism and Christianity in early modern Europe and the prominent search for spiritual meaning in an unstable political and social climate.

In the final analysis, the historian can readily discover a remarkably fluid, protean, and instable set of relationships among Jewish and Christian theologians and thinkers, messianic enthusiasts, book dealers, merchants, and others, flirting with each other's faith and attempting to construct their own confessional creeds on the basis of highly individualized life choices. Conversos, Sabbateans, Christian Hebraists, and Jewish neophytes to Christianity invariably could no longer be satisfied with the traditional orthodoxies out of which they had been raised. The simultaneous embrace of certain hybrid forms of Jewish and Christian faith and praxis became a more viable option to members of these groups and to others than ever before.

One might question, nevertheless, the importance of the "mingled identities" described in this chapter as significant indicators of the transformation of early modern Jewish culture. Were the converts and Hebraists, Sabbateans and conversos anything more than marginal figures on the fringes of Jewish (and Christian) culture and society with relatively little impact on the Jewish or Christian majorities? Were they geographically diverse, or more concentrated in only a few metropolitan centers in western Europe such as Amsterdam, Hamburg, or London?

Admittedly, it is impossible to offer precise numbers of each of the four groups under discussion. Certainly the conversos and their settlement patterns from the Ottoman Empire to Amsterdam, London, and the New World suggest a sizable and significant network of

people extending throughout early modern Europe and beyond. Converts and their writings can also be located in western Europe, especially in Germany and England, but are also noticeable to some degree to the East as well. Sabbateans, as we have seen, created networks often aligned with those of the conversos and were seen as a threat to Jews across Eurasia, including the Middle East and eastern Europe. And Christian Hebraists eventually appeared in most universities where high culture was transmitted both in the West and in the East, from London and Oxford to Leipzig, Prague, and Krakow.

Beyond the sheer numbers of these groups was the overall impact their remapping of the borders of Judaism and Christianity had on Jewish and Christian cultures in their own era and upon the subsequent history of these religious civilizations and their interactions in the modern period as well. The implications of these new, mingled identities were profound for Jews living in early modern Europe in precipitating a turning point in Jewish self-definition based on human autonomy rather than communal will, and in weakening traditional rabbinic authority. The impact on the Christian community was less profound but still noticeable. Judaism became, more than ever before, an object of intense scrutiny for some Christian scholars, clergy, and others as part of a complex reevaluation of Christianity in relation to other cultures and civilizations, in both the past and the present. The study of Judaism by Christians always reflected a need to denigrate the other in authenticating the self, but in light of the growing awareness—especially in this age—that the Jewish “other” was indeed a vital and intrinsic part of the Christian “self,” repulsion and vilification went hand in hand with attraction and

even embrace, as the individual cases of Belmont, Späth, and Surenhusius demonstrate in their own ways. Judaism also became for others a part of the subversive mix of radical political and religious movements, including the aforementioned millenary movements affecting Jews, Christians, and conversos, as well as, of course, the Spinozist revolution. Jewish mysticism and messianism were both subjects of scorn and enchantment on the part of Christians and they sometimes entered the discourse of clerics, antiquarians, politicians, and other intellectuals. In ways unimagined and unexpected, the boundary crossings of Jews into Christianity and Christians into Judaism (with occasional intermingling with Islam as well) created a new set of dynamic relations between these faith communities, new challenges to their clerical leaders, and new articulations of religious identity in an increasingly cosmopolitan and ecumenical world.

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TOWARD MODERNITY:  
SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

By presenting what I consider to be the five most salient features of Jewish cultural formation during the early modern period, I have tried to offer a meaningful response to the challenges posed at the beginning of this work. The first, the reader will recall, was the challenge offered by the single most influential reconstruction of early modern Jewish history, especially the notion that the history of Jewish culture is primarily derivative of general trends located in non-Jewish society. The second was that offered by Jewish historians who prefer to speak about the early modern period exclusively from the vantage point of a particular region or locality they study, implicitly denying the possibility that a transregional early modern Jewish cultural experience can ever be intelligibly described. The third challenge is the one posed by both European and world historians who have grappled with the slippery term *early modernity* and the difficulties of writing comparative history in the first place. I consider my own portrait of early modern Jewish culture a fuller and more accurate portrait than any previous one. These five features, although they vary in intensity and frequency throughout this long period and



over a vast continental terrain, do capture a sense of the whole in relation to its parts. Mobility, communal cohesion, a knowledge explosion, rabbinical authority in crisis, and a muddling of religious identities clearly transfigure the culture and society of Jews living across Europe in early modern times. Finally, in employing the notions of connected histories and cultural exchange, I hope I have found a useful way to speak about Jews in early modern Europe, recognizable to other early modern historians and comparable with their national and regional historical narratives.

These common conditions also point to a consciousness of a worldwide community transcending local or regional boundaries. Mobility made certain Jews intensely aware of Jews from other lands and other cultural settings. Complex communal organizations administering increasingly expansive areas, such as those in eastern and central Europe, naturally facilitated and encouraged constant contact and engagement with their counterparts across Europe and beyond. The printing presses broke down cultural barriers in an unprecedented way, enlarging the horizons of Jews even in the most remote and isolated of regions. The Sabbateans created complex networks of emissaries and followers over vast areas; their campaign to organize a movement extending from the Middle East to the far corners of western Europe precipitated in turn strong oppositional structures of rabbis and communal officials who were equally intense in a common cause against the “heretics” crossing political and cultural borders. The mixed identities of conversos, Sabbateans, Christian Hebraists, and individual converts, whatever their actual number and wherever they lived, posed a universal threat to those protectors

of the communal norms and upholders of traditional praxis and belief. They were menacing to the very foundations of the entire Jewish community, and its leadership everywhere was forced to deal with a new reality destabilizing the long-established boundaries demarcating one religion from others.

Accordingly, the markers described in the previous chapters signal both a distinctive age and cultural experience for all Jews living in the early modern era as well as the presence of a vast community linked by common values, common circumstances, and common challenges to its very existence. These shared experiences emerge against a reality of cultural, social, and political diversity among the Jewish subcultures we have surveyed. Early modern Jewish life was predicated on profound local and regional differences reflected in distinct languages, customs, political structures, and ritual life. But within this heterogeneity of recognizable local traditions and practices, there emerged a clear sense of connectedness. Jews were members of Polish, German, Ottoman, Sephardic, and Italian communities while simultaneously in contact with and aware of their affiliation with Jews everywhere. In times of crisis and stress, such as that engendered by the Sabbatean heresy, this feeling was especially magnified, as we have seen.

### When Does the Early Modern Period Begin and When Does It End?

If indeed my argument in favor of an early modern era of Jewish history is plausible, what remains to be considered in this final chapter are the following questions: When should we date its beginning and its closure, and

how might we assess its continuity or discontinuity with the period that follows it, usually referred to as the *Haskalah*, or period of Jewish enlightenment, ostensibly ushering in the modern period of Jewish history?<sup>1</sup>

Since the process of major migratory shifts begins not at the end of the sixteenth century but some eighty years earlier in 1492, the year of the expulsion of the Jews from Spain, I would date the beginning of the early modern period from about that time. If mobility, the radical shifts in population, and the subsequent displacement and restructuring of Jewish life they engendered represent primary factors in the shaping of Jewish culture in this era, then 1492 represents a plausible beginning, although one should acknowledge that the first waves of Ashkenazic migration from Germanic lands can be dated even much earlier.

I might add that the not-so-insignificant impact of the Renaissance and Reformation on Jewish culture needs to be rethought in light of the movement of Jews into Italy from Germanic lands, Provence, and Spain in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries and their intense social mixing, as well as the later migration of conversos into Italy and into such centers of Protestant culture as Hamburg and Amsterdam. One can at least state emphatically that the Renaissance left its mark on a small but conspicuous group of Jewish intellectuals—many of them immigrants—in Italy, and to a lesser extent in other European centers, who rethought their cultural legacy in the context of humanist, Aristotelian, and Neoplatonic categories.<sup>2</sup> And the Reformation in northern Europe also had a significant impact on the emergence of the Christian study of Hebrew and Judaism, the publication of works in Hebrew by Christian scholars, and the

reassessment of Judaism as a factor of early modern culture from the early sixteenth century onward.<sup>3</sup> Mobility that was first set in motion on a large scale in 1492, together with the impact of the Renaissance and the Reformation on Jewish culture and on Christian attitudes toward Judaism, all suggest the beginnings of a new and distinctive era of Jewish culture already emerging by the early sixteenth century.

If 1492 roughly marks the opening of our period, when should we designate its closing, and by what criteria?<sup>4</sup> The beginnings of modernity in Jewish history are often associated with the emergence of the Haskalah during the second half of the eighteenth century. Yet viewing the cultural world of this Jewish enlightenment from the perspective of the structural changes highlighted herein raises some interesting questions about this conventional dating as the actual beginning of modern Jewish culture and society: Why indeed, from the perspective of early modern Jewish history, is the ideational world of the Haskalah traditionally perceived as a radical break from the past, iconoclastic in shaping a new secular consciousness, a new intellectual elite, and a new construction of Jewish identity? How novel, how revolutionary was its intellectual production? From the perspective of the dynamic intellectual universe of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the eighteenth century in Jewish thought seems rather unspectacular in the novelty of its formulations and in the intensity of its contacts with the outside world. Its significance lies rather in its radical impact within the political, social, and pedagogic spheres, not necessarily the intellectual/cultural ones, even when one considers such exceptional eighteenth-century thinkers as Moses Mendelssohn or Solomon Maimon. If one

compares how thoroughly up-to-date and how genuinely aware such early modern writers as Azariah de' Rossi, Joseph Delmedigo, or Simone Luzzatto were of their immediate intellectual surroundings with the relatively limited cognizance of their counterparts some 150 years later, the contrast is truly striking.

Note a similar sentiment of Paul Hazard in his famous book regarding the crisis of European culture in general, in which we read, "The daring utterances of the *Aufklärung*, of the age of light, pale in insignificance before the aggressive audacity of the *Tractatus theologico-politicus*, the amazing declarations of the *Ethics*. Neither Voltaire nor Frederick II ever came near the ungovernable anti-clerical, anti-religious frenzy of Toland and his like. Had Locke never been born, d'Alembert would never have penned the 'Discours preliminaire' to the *Encyclopedie*."<sup>5</sup>

Very much in step with Hazard's position was the young Salo W. Baron, writing in the first edition of his *Social and Religious History of the Jews* in 1937. Hidden in a footnote, he wrote "Compared with Leone Ebreo and Spinoza, the sage of Dessau [Mendelssohn] appears to be more of a medieval apologist than a modern secular philosopher. The Mendelssohnian school, by programatically republishing in 1794 Azariah de' Rossi's *Light of the Eyes*, symbolized its indebtedness to the Italian pioneers." And earlier he categorically stated, "But all the fundamental tendencies of the *Haskalah*, such as secular learning, a "purified" Hebrew tongue, historicism and the revolt of the individual against communal power, had become more and more marked in Italy and Holland long before Mendelssohn."<sup>6</sup> Baron apparently had second thoughts about the notion of an Italian or

Dutch Haskalah since he removed any traces of it in the later edition of his multivolume history, and besides the brief comment cited here, he failed to develop his insight any further.

During the last eighty years, most historians have seemingly put Baron's unsubstantiated inclination to rest in their clear-cut distinction between the cultural lives of early modern Jews and those of the *maskilim* (men of enlightenment). For these scholars, the real innovation of the Haskalah was its ideology of change and reform of Jewish culture and society, based on the assumption that ideologically articulated shifts in conscious thought are the landmarks of historical change. Since the earlier patterns of intellectual and cultural changes were not ideologically driven, they had less significance in the process of Jewish modernization.<sup>7</sup>

Despite the fact that recent historical writing has challenged the assumption that cultural change is only or primarily driven by ideology,<sup>8</sup> Baron's proposal of a Dutch Haskalah has not been readily accepted by contemporary historians. Instead, while acknowledging the unique conditions of Dutch Jewish life, one distancing the realms of the sacred from the secular, one characterized by constant cultural and social interactions with non-Jewish society, and one based on "an invented tradition," no one has called this a Haskalah nor considered it analogous to the momentous changes of the later period of the Enlightenment. On the contrary, the intellectual elite of Amsterdam were deemed basically conservative, cautious, and resistant to change both with respect to religious and scientific thought.<sup>9</sup>

Perhaps, after all, it is time to reconsider the refreshing audacity of Baron's youthful reflection in a new light. It

is true that the Sephardic Jews living in Amsterdam were relatively conservative, but conservatism, as we now know well from the study of nineteenth-century orthodoxy, is just as much an ideological response to modernity as that of bold or radical reform and innovation.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, one should not consider the cultural climate of seventeenth-century Amsterdam in isolation from its Italian counterpart. When these two cultural experiences are viewed side-by-side, it is clear that the Italian is less conservative, more innovative, and more daring in its formulation of Jewish thought and in its dialogue with the non-Jewish world. As we have noted, Judah Messer Leon's cultural ideal of an all-inclusive view of the Torah was promoted by several generations of Italian Jewish scholars of a different mind-set than many of the former conversos in Amsterdam. Since—as I have argued throughout—both of these communities were essential pieces of the larger cultural landscape shared by all early modern Jews, the Dutch experience should not be considered in isolation but in relation to what transpired in Italy both prior to and during its “golden age.”

### Early Haskalah, Early Modernity, and Haskalah Reconsidered

The complex relationship between an early modern Jewish culture and the Haskalah is further obscured by the notion of an “early Haskalah” recently proposed by several historians. This view has it that we should divide the history of a Jewish enlightenment into two distinct periods: a period roughly falling between 1720 and 1770 called the early Haskalah, and the Haskalah proper of the 1770s and '80s. The earlier period had

primarily an intellectual and religious coloring, whereas the later period focused more on reforming Jewish society through an emphasis on social and political activity. In other words, the early maskilim, the Jewish proponents of enlightenment, were itinerant intellectuals, physicians, men of traditional Jewish learning primarily from Germany, Poland, and Lithuania who devoted themselves to the construction of a rational view of Judaism, grounded in humanism and an appreciation of the natural world. In their common agenda to expand the intellectual borders of Judaism without undermining traditional Jewish norms they emerged as representatives of an enthusiastic new republic of letters, a secondary elite who, through the publication of their Hebrew works, contributed to the enlargement of Jewish cultural horizons and paved the way, while not necessarily being connected, to the later ideological movement of the 1770s and '80s. Following this way of thinking, even Moses Mendelssohn, the so-called father of the Haskalah, in contradistinction to his disciples, was actually a member of the earlier group and not the later one.<sup>11</sup>

Informed by this definition of an early Haskalah, I wish to offer the following hypothesis: Jewish cultural history during most of the eighteenth century, at least until its last decades, needs to be situated within the early modern period—that is, not as a precursor or early stage of the Haskalah nor interpreted through the lens of later Haskalah developments. The so-called early maskilim have a long pedigree. They emerged centuries earlier in ways quite different from their medieval counterparts, as products of the knowledge explosion generated by the printing press and by the universities of early modern Europe. These early maskilim of the eighteenth



century, predominantly Ashkenazic Jews, are a familiar manifestation of an already fully developed phenomenon of Jewish intellectual life. Jewish scholars without ideological agendas other than to educate themselves and their students more broadly in multiple disciplines and to integrate and reconcile this knowledge within the framework of Jewish tradition were part and parcel of the cultural profile of early modern Jewish elites, both primary and secondary, from at least the sixteenth century on, as we have seen.<sup>12</sup> The early maskilim simply followed the well-trodden steps of such luminaries as Judah Messer Leon, Azariah de' Rossi, Solomon ibn Verga, Judah Moscato, Abraham Portaleone, Tobias Cohen, Simone Luzzatto, Menasseh ben Israel, Orobrio de Castro and many others.<sup>13</sup> While Italy of the late fifteenth century, as we have seen, represents the point of origin of this new portrait of the *hakham kolel* (universal sage), the term used to describe boldly this new Jewish scholar in the first book printed in the lifetime of its author, Judah Messer Leon, the image and the actual writings of these scholars were known throughout Europe both in their own time and during the eighteenth century.<sup>14</sup> The defiant criticism of the eminent rabbi the Maharal (Judah Loew ben Bezalel), emanating from distant Prague, of Azariah de' Rossi's provocative reading of the *Aggadah* in Mantua in the sixteenth century, as we have seen,<sup>15</sup> or Isaac Satanov's republication of Rossi's *Me'or Einayim* (The Light of the Eyes) in 1794 are two dramatic manifestations of the impact of the cultural agenda of the *hakham kolel* across space and time.<sup>16</sup>

While the beginnings of early modernity for Jews can be established with relative ease by the close of the fifteenth century, as has been argued herein, the

boundaries separating early modernity from modernity itself are more difficult to establish conclusively. I would then suggest the following formulation: The primary ingredient of a modern Jewish culture, distinguishing it from an early modern one, is the changing political landscape of western and eastern Europe as it affected the Jews, the impact of enlightened absolutism on Jewry policy, the political debates and limited successes of civil emancipation, and the subsequent use and misuse of Jewish minorities as tools of nineteenth-century nationalism. In dating the beginning of modern Jewish history at about 1782 and anything before it as early modern Jewish history, I know I am certainly following in the footsteps of many historians, from Simon Dubnov on.<sup>17</sup> But through my new reiteration, I hope to underscore the Haskalah proper as primarily a political, pedagogic, and programmatic movement committed to transforming Ashkenazic Jewish culture. Mendelssohn was thus more an early modern Jewish figure than a modern one, although the image created by his followers transformed him into a modern cultural icon.<sup>18</sup> When the Haskalah was institutionalized and politicized,<sup>19</sup> it became a modern phenomenon and no longer an early modern one. Accordingly, the real pioneers of the Haskalah were those offering a political agenda of Jewish modernization—men such as Naphtali Wesseley and Isaac Euchel, but not Mendelssohn. Of course, 1782 was not only the year in which Emperor Joseph II issued his edict of tolerance but also the year of publication of Wesseley's famous ideological manifesto of the Haskalah movement, his *Divrei Shalom ve-Emet* (Words of Peace and Truth). The Haskalah was then, for the most part, a German Jewish development from its beginnings, emerging

primarily out of a condition of cultural deprivation, of inequity, and out of a sense of intellectual inferiority and the deep-seated need to catch up with a world that had passed Jews by.<sup>20</sup> It was an attempt by Ashkenazic Jews, first in Germany and later in eastern Europe, to acquire what other European Jews had enjoyed for centuries. The ideological program of the Haskalah was relevant to Jews who themselves lacked the cultural opportunities available to their coreligionists in other European communities. In such places as Italy, the Netherlands, or England, such ideological advocacy was generally unnecessary and thus relatively absent.

### Viewing the Modern Era in the Light of the Early Modern

Until now we have looked at the continuities and discontinuities between early modern Jewish culture and the Haskalah in its various phases. But modernity, as we have already indicated, is a larger and more complex phenomenon than the Haskalah movement alone. For many historians, modernization is neither primarily about the flood of new ideas nor about educational and cultural agendas but about political, legal, and socio-economic processes. Roughly at the same time as the appearance of Wesseley's educational pamphlet, the French and American revolutions took place alongside the partitioning of Poland. And generally within the same time frame, European states experienced, to varying degrees, intense urbanization and industrialization, the aggressive consolidation of national economies, and the breakup of an older estate system of privileged and

powerful groups upon which mercantile governments had relied. The emergence of the public sphere—of partial or sometimes full political and legal emancipation, of the development of democratic electorates and modern citizenship, of political parties, nationalist ideologies, and more—suggest a rapidly changing social and political universe where new pressures were being placed on Jewish individuals, their families, and their collective institutions and leaders. This is not the place to describe these processes in detail but only to point to a radically different political and social reality for Jews that sharply contrasted with the processes we have carefully traced in early modern Europe.

Underscoring the difference between the period under examination and its successor, however, should not blind us from observing the obvious continuities between the two. We have already mentioned the intellectual linkages between early modern Jewish intellectuals and the early maskilim. Accelerated mobility, the dissemination of printed books, pamphlets, and newspapers, the diminution of rabbinic authority, and the blurring of religious identities are primary factors for Jewish culture both in the early modern and modern periods. Even the condition of communal cohesion we have noted in describing early modernity was never fully eroded in the modern era. There is no doubt that political emancipation and the civic pressures of the new modern states precipitated the fragmentation of Jewish collective life to a greater degree than in the past. Nevertheless, modernization created new forms of communal cohesion as it destroyed old forms. The rabbis still remained a force to contend with in the nineteenth century and beyond as

they discovered new ways of influencing their constituencies; the organized Jewish community was hardly a spent institution; and even assimilated Jews continued to identify themselves as Jews ethnically and even religiously.<sup>21</sup>

Thus, the process that one historian once designated as “out of the ghetto” was never about a clean break between one era and the next,<sup>22</sup> and no one who attempts to distinguish one period from another should expect any neat and uncomplicated partitions between them. Add to this mix the complex regional variations; the variegated political, economic, and social structures of each locality in which Jews lived; and the cultural, linguistic, and religious differences originating in the specific environments to which they were exposed, the presumption that one can delineate the general contours of any epoch or differentiate it decisively from another might indeed be called into question.

I still remain convinced, however—as I have argued from the start—that the exercise in which I have been engaged serves worthwhile ends. One such result is to undermine once and for all a view long entrenched in modern Jewish historiography of an inevitable one-dimensional and one-directional path from servitude to emancipation, from communal solidarity to disintegration, from ghettoization to citizenship, and from a normative tradition to radical assimilation. This trajectory, labeled by Jonathan Frankel as the bipolar focus of nationalist historiography originating in the writing of Simon Dubnov, has long dominated the way the process of modernization has been described. It is no doubt a specifically Jewish instance of the flawed paradigm of modernization discussed in this volume’s introduction

as well as in the appendix that follows, one that posits the triumphant march of civilization from the inferior condition of a traditional premodern society to a more superior modern one.<sup>23</sup>

The term *early modernity*, if taken literally, preserves the false opposition between tradition and modernity and the implied teleology of a supposed progression from one to the other by simply introducing an intermediate stage between the two. Thus, *early modernity* might be taken to denote a kind of inevitable transition from the allegedly backward condition of medievalism to the more advanced one of modernity. When shorn of its literal meaning in designating an early stage of modernity and utilized solely as a neutral label for demarcating a specific epoch in history, neither medieval nor modern, the construction of an early modern period of Jewish history might still allow us to overcome the polarizing tendencies of the “nationalist” approach. Early modernity contains elements both conventionally labeled medieval and modern; its overlapping characteristics defy location at either one pole or the other. By locating prominent trends usually deemed modern in the early modern period (such as mobility, knowledge explosion, or heresy and orthodoxy) while recognizing the novelty of later developments such as the politics of the modern state, the sharp juxtaposition between traditional/premodern and modern is blunted. A more nuanced and more profound understanding of constancy and change ultimately emerges. Those who would see the modern world as a sweeping transformation or the Haskalah as a radical break from the past, a kind of revolution shattering the old while ushering in the new, might indeed reconsider such extreme dichotomies when examining

the three hundred years preceding the late eighteenth century. In aligning the early modern with the modern, carefully tracing the evolution of one to the other while discerningly noting their convergences and divergences, the myth of a radical modernity itself is called into question.

# Appendix

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## Historiographical Reflections

I offer here an extended discussion of the three “challenges” in writing early modern Jewish history that I briefly presented in the introduction to this book. This section is added especially for those readers who require a more detailed accounting of the scholarship that I am engaging. It includes my own thoughts on the strengths and weaknesses of Jonathan Israel’s pioneering book; a consideration of some of the major treatments of specific regions by historians of the Jewish experience; and an overview of the work of European and world historians who write on early modernity. I include in this latter section remarks on the insights of Jerry Bentley and Sanjay Subrahmanyam on cultural exchange and “connected histories” that I have found especially helpful in framing my interpretation of the Jewish experience of the early modern period.

### Jonathan Israel’s Interpretation of Early Modern Jewish Culture

The publication of Jonathan Israel’s *European Jewry in the Age of Mercantilism 1550–1750* (1985) clearly marked a significant moment in the emergence of this field, which has commonly been called *early modern Jewish studies*. For the first time a well-known historian had skillfully attempted to define what had been denied, ignored, or taken for granted by most previous researchers in the field: that the period from the late sixteenth to the early eighteenth centuries represented a unique



epoch in the history of Jewish society and culture, to be distinguished from the end of the Middle Ages on the one hand, and from the modern period on the other.<sup>1</sup> Taking advantage of some of the current scholarly writing in this field on the part of Israeli, North American, and, more recently, European scholars, Israel constructed a new synthesis weaving the various economic, political, and cultural strands of this period into a coherent whole. Despite the visible differences among Jews living in the West and the East, Israel offered a plausible argument for placing their disparate histories under the rubric of a common early modern Jewish experience.<sup>2</sup>

While not trained in Jewish history per se, Jonathan Israel was no stranger to the Jewish historical experience, having encountered and written about Jews in his prodigious writings on the history of the Netherlands and especially on the social and economic history of the conversos. Well known as an economic historian, in more recent years Israel has utilized his extraordinary talents to examine the intellectual life of European civilization in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. His fascination with Benedict de Spinoza and the significant contribution of certain converso intellectuals to the spiritual ferment of this era was already quite evident in this specific treatment of Jewish history and already represented a primary focus of his narrative.<sup>3</sup>

One is hard-pressed to answer the obvious historiographical question: Why was Israel the first to take up the challenge of producing such a synthesis that clearly laid out the parameters of an early modern period of Jewish history? Surely the issue of periodizing the modern Jewish experience has long been a subject of great interest to late-nineteenth- and twentieth-century Jewish

historians such as Heinrich Graetz, Simon Dubnow, Jacob Katz, Shmuel Ettinger, Ben-Zion Dinur, and others.<sup>4</sup> Several others, especially Salo W. Baron, had clearly noted that certain “modern” developments were already prevalent especially among Italian and Dutch Jewish communities long before the eighteenth-century Enlightenment and political emancipation. Both the converso experience and the messianic movement of Shabbetai Zevi have also been linked to the emergence of Jewish modernity in recent historical literature.<sup>5</sup> But Israel was clearly uninterested in simply locating the origins of modernity in an earlier era or in tracing the process of modernization back to its earliest beginnings. Rather, he hoped to describe an autonomous early modern era whose distinguishing marks were not identical to those of the modern.

Proceeding beyond the partial and casual observations of his predecessors, he presented a comprehensive portrait of social and intellectual developments over a huge geographical space across Europe. And most attractive about Israel’s narrative was its wide-ranging nature, its impressive mastery of details, and especially its ability to situate the Jewish experience within the contours of Western civilization as a whole. As another early modern historian put it, “For the first time, the history of early modern Jewry is presented as a coherent whole and in a form recognizable to non-Jewish scholars.”<sup>6</sup> In other words, at the risk of reading too much into this sweeping pronouncement, Israel had removed the Jewish experience from its relative isolation and obscurity as a subject for mere Jewish historians by integrating it fully into European history in general, thus investing it with a greater significance than it had previously held. One might also

add that the book reappeared in two further editions, including one revised as late as 1998. Moreover, at least two other historians of early modern Europe, neither trained as Jewish historians, have subsequently offered their own synthetic histories of Jews of late medieval and early modern Europe, albeit with less impact than Israel's work on Jewish and non-Jewish historians alike.<sup>7</sup>

Israel's book was thus noticed precisely because he approached his subject with the broad strokes of a general European historian, with a range and mastery of detailed information few of his peers possessed, and with the relative ease to move from economic and political to intellectual history in order to demonstrate a common relationship among all three. While Jewish historians responded to Israel's book in generally favorable reviews and adapted it for their own courses,<sup>8</sup> none to this very date have seriously attempted to follow Israel's lead in offering a broad interpretation of this period. This is especially surprising given the plethora of recent historical writing since 1985 on every subject Israel addressed and more.<sup>9</sup> To my mind this is unfortunate because despite the book's obvious strengths and the essential accuracy of its understanding of the economic, political, and intellectual contribution of Jews to early modern culture and society, the book is flawed in one major respect. It does not adequately examine the cultural and intellectual history of Jews living in this era. Given Israel's inability to consult much of the primary and secondary literature written by and about early modern Jews in Hebrew, this limitation is obvious. But there are other reasons for this inadequacy as well.

Israel posited, both in the original version of his book and in the preface to the latest edition, the assumption

that the principal driving forces in transforming early modern Jewish society were external factors present in European society as a whole—namely, mercantilism and a revolution in European thought.<sup>10</sup> While for Israel the Renaissance and the Reformation had more limited impact in changing the relations between Jews and Christians, the so-called intellectual crisis of the seventeenth century had a lasting effect. Because of the new secular philosophy articulated most forcefully by Spinoza, a general critique of religion, and new biblical scholarship, Christianity as a cultural force was on the decline and the foundations of a new secular culture were clearly emerging. In this new climate, “it was inevitable that Jews—not just exceptionally up-to-date rabbis in Amsterdam and London, who were seen by the Jewish community in general as deviant Jews, or that secularized, ennobled sephardi patrician élite who delighted in discussing rare books and new ideas with Christian writers, diplomats and courtiers—but Jews collectively, should in some measure be dragged into an intellectual arena which was rapidly transforming and secularizing European civilization.”<sup>11</sup> The elements of Jewish culture that interested Israel were primarily those that intersected with trends in Western society in general. During the early modern era, Jews contributed mightily to both the economic and intellectual spheres while aspects of their culture were noticed and appreciated by a relatively large number of Christian scholars, many of whom actually mastered the Hebrew language. Jews living in relatively open cultural spaces such as Venice, Amsterdam, and Prague, were in turn intellectually alive and creative because of their intense interactions with the outside world. With their growing isolation and

intellectual stagnation in the early eighteenth century, as Israel saw it, their dialogue with and contribution to the intellectual life of Europe declined, just as their financial and commercial significance to the mercantilist governments of Europe also diminished.<sup>12</sup>

Stated differently, Israel's depiction of early modern Jewish culture rests on two strongly held premises: that the decline of religion and its authority over Christian and Jewish populations was ultimately a liberating force that represented the primary factor in creating a secularized modern world; and that Jewish intellectual history is essentially derivative. It generally represents a Jewish version of a universal European trend. Furthermore, from the perspective of early modern Europe as a whole, Jewish intellectual history is interesting in the ways it contributes to and informs non-Jewish society. On its own terms and in its engagement with its own tradition and intellectual past, it exhibits little intrinsic significance.<sup>13</sup>

Such a view of Jewish intellectual and cultural history is only partial. It privileges only that part of Jewish culture and society that participates directly in larger societal trends; it focuses exclusively on how Jews contribute to human (non-Jewish) civilization both economically and culturally. Is this what Israel's reviewer meant when he praised Israel's Jewish history as that written in a form "recognizable to non-Jewish scholars"? Furthermore, by highlighting especially Italian and Dutch intellectual developments, has Israel given adequate weight to the cultural ambiance of the majority of early modern Jews living in eastern Europe and in the Ottoman Empire? Is their intellectual history reducible to the articulations of a very small circle of marginal Jews infatuated with Spinozism? Or to put it another

way, is Spinozism as critical a factor for Jewish culture as it is for Christians? Is it “inevitable,” as Israel claims with little evidence, that Jews were dragged into an intellectual arena dominated by Christians?

I am, of course, not claiming that the intellectual and social interactions between Jews and Christians in early modern Europe are insignificant in constructing Jewish self-identity and Jewish and Christian notions of the “other.” On the contrary, I have argued throughout this book that such interactions were critical in reshaping every aspect of Jewish life, including those factors usually considered to be “internal” or “inherently Jewish.” But I am insisting that the reduction of Jewish culture to a mere mirror of larger societal trends is ultimately misleading and distorting. Israel’s depiction of Jewish intellectual life is partial and incomplete because he understands only a part—albeit that part most interesting to early modern historians—but not necessarily the larger patterns of cultural formation affecting early modern Jewry as a whole. It is this larger picture, both its external and internal dimensions constantly intersecting with each other, that I have addressed in this book.

I should add one final point about Israel’s book, recently raised in an essay by Jonathan Karp, who attempts to answer the question of whether economic history can date the inception of modernity. Karp suggests that Israel did indeed answer this question affirmatively in his meticulous reconstruction of Jewish trading networks, those primarily Sephardic but with a supportive role for the Ashkenazim. Like Werner Sombart in his famous book on Jews and modern capitalism, Israel also saw them as pioneers of economic modernity. Their economic significance was limited in time, however, for

with the rise of industrialization and the consolidation of national economies they declined economically and in other respects. Karp perspicuously points out that Israel's Jewish early modern epoch is unconnected to either the medieval Jewish economic life that preceded it or with the modern Jewish economic life that followed. Israel's early modernity is less a true beginning of Jewish modernity and more "a false dawn." For Karp, Israel writes about early modern Jews not within the perspective of Jewish historiography but primarily within the history of European economic thought.<sup>14</sup>

In acknowledging Jonathan Israel's profound and pioneering effort, I have offered also a corrective and a challenge to his notion of how early modern Jewish culture might be described. It should be obvious to any reader of this intellectual exercise in periodization to what degree I have departed from Israel but also to what degree I have remained indebted to him.

### Jewish Historians on the Early Modern Period

Although no historian of Jewish society and culture has yet to undertake a synthetic overview of early modern Jewish history in the manner of Israel's book, several have offered some important guideposts or markers useful in conceptualizing the larger period.<sup>15</sup> But for the most part, their focus has been on specific Jewish subcultures or regional identities, emphasizing the unique conditions and characteristics of the latter and less those that transcended or bridged these local differences on a more global scale.

One of the most important historians of this era is Robert Bonfil, who in several books and critical articles

has focused on the structural transformation of medieval Jewish society especially from the late sixteenth century on—roughly the same period on which Israel has focused. Although Bonfil's comments emanate primarily from the Italian Jewish context that he knows so well, his reflections undoubtedly resonate beyond Italy and apply in varying degree to other communities within the Jewish world. For Bonfil, the sixteenth century ushers in an era of the restructuring of Jewish-Christian relations and new perceptions of the "other" in both societies. This is reflected especially in the creation of the ghetto, first in Venice, and then throughout the Italian Peninsula, a paradoxical creation signifying both a distancing from Christian society on the part of its Jewish minority and, simultaneously, a greater sense of participation and entitlement through the new urban spaces Jews now viewed as their own. It is also reflected even more dramatically by conversos fleeing Spain and Portugal and receiving special political and economic privileges in Italian cities such as Leghorn, Pisa, and Ancona. The conversos are a novum in Jewish history because they received a form of citizenship unprecedented even among Italian Jews. The ambiguity of their Jewish identity, their status as Jews defining themselves as they wished instead of accepting a traditional definition imposed by either Christian or Jewish society, surely implies a radical break from the past. When Bonfil adds to these two phenomena the impact of print and censorship on Jewish culture, as well as the inception of the secular sphere in Jewish life and its separation from the sacred (a theme he especially develops in his reconstruction of ghetto space), he clearly points to the Italian genesis of several major components of early modern Jewish culture in general.



In thus describing the transformation of early modern Jewry from an Italianate perspective, he underscores the central role of Italian Jewry in the shaping of Jewish culture beyond its borders and despite its relatively small numbers.<sup>16</sup>

The insights Bonfil proposes from the perspective of Italy to some extent mirror but also diverge from Yosef Kaplan's masterful reconstruction of seventeenth-century Western Sephardic Jewry—especially in Amsterdam, the heartland of the seventeenth-century intellectual crisis of Paul Hazard and Jonathan Israel. In Kaplan's books and essays, this historian meticulously examines the intellectual life and social makeup of this unique Jewish community poised precariously between tradition and modernity, at the crossroads of the oft-competing demands of religious authority, multilingualism, and ethnic loyalty, and between Christianity and Judaism. He uncovers the complex levels of cultural ambiguity implicit in the definition of Jewish identity among converso intellectuals. Their invented tradition attempts to grapple with the new economic, social, and intellectual realities of western European culture in an age of economic and intellectual revival. In tacitly acknowledging the emerging divide between the secular and religious lives of their constituencies, Amsterdam's Jewish elites revealed their conservative bent and their timid and insecure posture before governmental authorities. Despite the novelty of this singular community and its cultural ambiance, to which Spinoza himself is intimately connected, Kaplan remains unwilling to associate it with the later Haskalah, the Jewish enlightenment, since the intellectual elites of Amsterdam Jewry, in contrast to the later maskilim generally proposed no conscious ideology as an alternative

to that of the tradition. In this respect, the experience of the Western Sephardic Jews of Amsterdam, as well as of Hamburg, London, and the New World, was unlike that of contemporary Ashkenazic Jews in central and eastern Europe and was also dissimilar to that of the ideologues of the Jewish enlightenment in the next century. Amsterdam represents for Kaplan a unique moment within early modern Jewish culture; its singularity offers a significant challenge to any attempt to define early modern Jewish culture overall.<sup>17</sup>

Gershon Hundert presents a similar challenge to the notion of a unified Jewish culture in early modern Europe in his provocative comments about the character of eastern European Jewry in this period. He insists that Jewish modernity needs to be viewed in its proper perspective by considering the largest concentration of Jews living neither in Amsterdam nor Italy but in Poland and Lithuania. In this community, the historian can detect a more positive sense of Jewish identity, an urban population living in a state of multiple nationalities, along with a greater sense of Jewish insularity and apartness from the surrounding cultures. The absence of what Hundert calls a “beckoning bourgeoisie” creates a different cultural dynamic in the East in contrast to the West, one characterized by a stronger sense of Jewish cultural superiority. In highlighting the different psychological attitude that characterized the bulk of Ashkenazic Jewry, Hundert’s observations provide an obvious contrast to the cultural styles of their Dutch and Italian coreligionists. As in the case of Kaplan’s remarks on Amsterdam, they underscore the difficulty of speaking about an early modern Jewish culture given the obvious idiosyncrasies of each of its constituent parts.<sup>18</sup>

Hundert's exclusive focus on the history of the eastern European Jewish community, treated in isolation from other Jewish communities and given primacy of importance because it held the largest Jewish population, leads him to an even more radical formulation. The eastern European Jewish experience should be considered paradigmatic, he claims, of the Jewish pattern of modernization as a whole. Since it hardly exhibits any of the characteristics of other Jewish communities experiencing modernization, the term *modernity*, when applied to the Jewish experience, should be emptied of its usual associations and should simply designate the period of roughly the last two centuries.<sup>19</sup>

Moshe Rosman, in several recent essays on Jewish cultural history in eastern Europe, emphasizes less the incongruity of Ashkenazic culture from both its immediate cultural surroundings and from European society in general. For Rosman, the alleged distinction between authentically traditional attitudes and practices and so-called alien influences represents a false dichotomy. Despite the sense of cultural superiority and aloofness Hundert has underscored, Polish Jews also profoundly identified with Polish culture. Jews represented an integral part of what Rosman calls the "Polish polysystem." Such facets of their culture as their oligarchic communal institutions, their belief in demons, their protectionist policies against competition, and their attitudes toward gender are simultaneously Jewish but also inherently Polish and European. Rosman also refers to the revolution in print that undermined dramatically the insularity of rabbinic culture. Drawing heavily from the recent work of Elhanan Reiner, which is discussed in chapter 3 of the present volume, he singles out the remarkable

production of Joseph Karo's code of Jewish law, a Sephardic creation, molded together with the Ashkenazic commentary of Moses Isserles. In a blatant effort to reduce to writing the Ashkenazic oral tradition in order to save it from oblivion, Rosman concludes, Isserles had surrendered to the inevitability of the power of the printed book.<sup>20</sup>

David Sorkin and Shmuel Feiner, among others, have both written interpretations of the Haskalah period, focusing primarily but not exclusively on developments in central Europe at the end of the eighteenth century. Both contrast the dramatic rise of a so-called Jewish republic of letters with the relatively insulated traditional societies of early modern Europe that preceded it. Sorkin calls the latter period a Jewish baroque while Feiner contrasts it with the Haskalah proper, which he considers to be a real cultural revolution. He apparently understands the maskilim as they viewed themselves, as radical innovators, actually "creating" the notion of a modern age for Jews. Both Sorkin and Feiner subsequently take cognizance of an earlier period during the first half of the eighteenth century, that they designate as an "early Haskalah," but they generally ignore the seventeenth century in seeing the roots of a cultural transformation only in this later period. This view stands in contrast to several earlier Jewish historians, such as Salo W. Baron, Yosef H. Yerushalmi, Samuel Ettinger, and Gershom Scholem, who—each in his own way—had underscored the importance of the seventeenth century as a decisive moment in Jewish cultural development.<sup>21</sup>

One final scholarly perspective is worth noting among recent approaches to early modern Jewish history. As a kind of alternative trajectory of modernization, David

Sorkin, following Lois Dubin in her book on the Jews of Trieste, has also introduced the notion of the “port Jew” into modern historiography.<sup>22</sup> Port Jews were Jewish merchants who lived in dynamic port cities and engaged in international maritime trade. Sorkin primarily focused on Sephardim in western European ports, contrasting them with the Ashkenazic “court Jews” of northern and central Europe whose path toward modernization was thoroughly distinctive due to their international trading networks as well as the acculturation and cosmopolitanism these engendered.

We might conclude that the challenge presented by each of these historians in attempting to reconstruct a transregional early modern Jewish culture is twofold. In the first place, most of those surveyed above, in contrast to Jonathan Israel, do not distinguish clearly between an autonomous period called early modernity and from a process of modernization that they locate anywhere from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. In the second place, several—especially Hundert and Kaplan—appear to deny the possibility of meaningfully describing anything other than a regional Jewish culture such as that of Amsterdam or Poland and Lithuania. Bonfil and Rosman imply that their assumptions, emerging from the regions they study, may be applicable elsewhere but do not fully develop this point.

### Early Modernity in European and World Historiography

For some time now, *early modern* has become the most fashionable and convenient label for designating the period from the end of the Middle Ages to the modern age.

As early as the 1960s, historians have preferred to characterize the age of the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Counterreformation, or the Catholic Reform as simply the early modern period, avoiding the complexities and interpretative biases each of these terms has presented in the past. In perusing a number of recent textbooks on early modern Europe, I came away with no precise definition offered by any historian other than a cluster of economic, political, and cultural developments that more or less fall within the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries such as geographic discoveries, the scientific revolution, the invention of print, confessional conflicts, the emergence of new national political structures, economic fluctuations, and more.<sup>23</sup>

Perhaps Randolph Starn summed up the notion of early modernity best in claiming that it represents a patent but flawed remedy to the problem of periodizing the time between medieval and modern history. Touted as a kind of democratic alternative to the previously utilized terms *Renaissance* and *Reformation*, and the high culture they appeared to suggest, this indeterminacy confers the aura of innovation on an agenda that by now is as conventional as anything previously said about the Renaissance. And he concludes, "Early, partly, sometimes, maybe modern, early modern is a period for our period's discomfort with periodization."<sup>24</sup>

By the 1980s, historians had extended the European experience with early modernity to the entire world, using the term to describe global history at large. In the newly formulated notion of "an early modern world," such robust processes as demographic growth, inflation, social mobility, urbanization, and surging international trade marked the common experiences of peoples living

throughout the Eurasian land mass. Such an application of early modernity to the non-European world raised the issue of orientalism, with its potential danger of imposing a Western cultural pattern on non-Western societies. Nevertheless, a growing consensus seems to have emerged in using the term *early modern* to designate a period of truly global proportions.<sup>25</sup>

John F. Richards's attempt to define a global early modernity through a description of six essential processes provides a good example of the expansion of the concept. For Richards, the early modern era was characterized by the creation of global sea passages that linked all humanity with a transportation network of increasing capacity and efficiency. This development led in turn to a truly global economy in which long-distance commerce connected expanding economies on each continent. A major engine of economic expansion was the rise of powerful trading companies, with their monopolies of trade in various parts of the world. The new economic growth spurred the growth of powerful states with enhanced abilities to mobilize resources and deploy overwhelming force. Throughout this period, the world's population dramatically increased with the intensification of land use and colonization. Finally, these changes were accompanied by the diffusion of new technologies, especially New World crops, gunpowder, and print.<sup>26</sup>

Richards's early modern world is primarily linked by economic and material processes that help shape common patterns of production, distribution, consumption, and social organization across the globe. In defining a universal condition of human experience, economic and social history are certainly privileged over the cultural and intellectual, where commonalities are more difficult

to locate. In addressing the question of how one speaks about early modern culture from a global perspective, two additional promising strategies have emerged: the first focuses on cross-cultural exchange, and the second on the notion of “connected histories.”

Within the perspective of global history, Jerry Bentley views the period from 1500 to 1800 as an age of cross-cultural interaction on a previously unprecedented scale. For Bentley, the early modern period brought almost all the world’s peoples into “frequent, intense, and sustained interaction with one another.” These new and intense networks of exchange embraced the entire world, but in a manner distinct from those of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, when European and Euro-American peoples dominated world affairs through political, economic, military, and technological power. Early modernity thus established increasingly dense networks of interaction and exchange prior to the industrial revolution and to state imperialism. While Bentley focuses primarily on factors of economic exchange—reliable and cheap maritime highways and technologies; biological exchanges of food and animal species; and mass migrations, especially across the Atlantic Ocean—he does not ignore cultural interactions as well. Early modern Europe is only conceivable for him in its participation and dialogue with the early modern world.<sup>27</sup>

The theme of cultural exchange—this time only in Europe, albeit expanded to include Poland and Lithuania, Russia, and the Ottoman Empire—is the focus of the highly ambitious four-volume set titled *Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe*, edited by Robert Muchembled and William Monter. It seeks “to uncover the deep but hidden unities shaping a common European



past” in the early modern period, “identifying the links which endured and were strengthened through ceaseless cultural exchanges, even during this time of endless wars and religious disputes.” Through numerous essays it examines the role of religion as a vehicle for cultural exchange; the reception of foreigners within the cities of early modern Europe; and the roles of information, communication, and cultural exchange in fashioning a European identity. Discovering a European culture and identity rather than a global one in the early modern period by focusing on more restricted areas along the Atlantic Ocean, the Baltic and Mediterranean seas, and central and eastern Europe appears to be a more realizable goal in this collective enterprise. Comparative history on a global scale is better at identifying economic commonalities rather than cultural ones.<sup>28</sup>

Sanjay Subrahmanyam offers an alternative terminology to describe early modernity from a global perspective in his use of the term “connected histories.” Raising a reasonable methodological skepticism regarding the highly mechanistic and materialistic models of comparative early modern history, Subrahmanyam finds these comparative exercises lacking in cultural sophistication and subtlety, too heavily relying on a simplistic acceptance of what appears to be the broadest conventional wisdom. The neat categories of the comparatists are most often contaminated by the specialized knowledge of localized and regional cultures. Their classifications often ignore cultural specificities in their quest to reduce human differences to a flat terrain of benign generalities. In proposing “connected” rather than “comparative” histories in speaking about an early modern world, Subrahmanyam seeks to show how ideas and values flowed

across disparate geographical and political boundaries. In his telling example of how networks of commercial exchange, military elites, courtiers, and clergymen crossed the Bay of Bengal on a regular basis, articulating similar millenary notions of the end of days despite their distinct local religious traditions, Subrahmanyam demonstrates how religious ideas circulated in a fashion not unlike the flow of money and material goods. I appreciate his insight and apply it to the study of Jewish history, as I have indicated in the introduction to the present volume.<sup>29</sup>

One final conceptual obstacle remains in considering the challenge of defining early modernity: Assuming one can meaningfully speak about a distinct epoch neither medieval nor modern for both world and European history, why label it *early modernity*? Randolph Starn's discomfort with this ambiguous designation has already been mentioned.<sup>30</sup> Jack Goldstein goes even further in labeling *early modernity* a meaningless term, developed out of a need by Marxist historians to fill in a space in the timeline between feudalism and industrial capitalism.<sup>31</sup> Garthine Walker underscores the pitfalls of using the term as a kind of innocent shorthand for demarcating the centuries between the medieval and the modern. The concept of early modernity is surely linked to the paradigm of modernization that so long dominated historical writing of the past decades. According to this paradigm, *modern* is capitalistic, industrial, urban, individualistic, bureaucratized, secular, "disenchanted," and scientifically organized, as opposed to *traditional*, which is feudal, preindustrial, agrarian, lineage-based, and religiously and magically organized. Early modernity then is that in-between period that displays some, albeit not

all, nascent characteristics of modernity, such as state formation, secularization, rationalization, individualism, the rise of the middle class, and discoveries of modern science. Such dichotomous periodization between the traditional and modern is of course teleological and hopelessly inadequate. Historical development cannot be reduced to such polarities and to a triumphant march of civilization from one stage of development to an allegedly higher one. Put simply, early modernity betrays its indebtedness to a flawed theory of modernization and thus the term, employed literally, is misleading. Only as a conventional and neutral label referring to a period between medieval and modern, and implying nothing more, might the historian cautiously employ the term.<sup>32</sup>

## Acknowledgments

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This is a book I have thought about for many years. I would imagine that it is a book that many others who teach Jewish history of the early modern period have considered writing as well. In constructing our college syllabi about this amorphous and vaguely defined epoch, we are, first and foremost, obliged to suggest some coherence and structure in presenting it to our students as more than a mere transition, chaotic and untidy, between medieval times and modernity. This indeed was my major motivation in conceptualizing this book. After presenting this material over the course of three decades to undergraduate and graduate students at three institutions of higher learning—the University of Maryland, Yale University, and the University of Pennsylvania—I thought it was time to try to put down on paper some of my ideas forged in dialogue with these students. Especially during the last seven years at the University of Pennsylvania, in presenting a regularly offered reading seminar to a group of exceedingly bright graduate students in Jewish history, I was encouraged to take on a task few others have attempted. My first stab at this challenge was a seventy-page manuscript I presented to my students to evaluate at the end of the semester. Their critical comments were so effective that I quickly went back to the drawing board to consider their probing reflections on my work. The task of reading and absorbing so much of the new scholarship on this period and offering an intelligent and plausible interpretation of the whole also seemed quite daunting. But I have continued to consider what I have read and what I have learned

from my students, and the modest result, with whatever flaws it may contain, is now before the reader. As I argue in the introduction, this volume invites more criticism, more refinement, and more reflection about the periodization of early modernity from both students of Jewish history and others.

There are many people to whom I am indebted upon completing this book, beginning with the aforementioned graduate students at Penn who participated in my seminars in recent years. I am also most grateful to the many colleagues whose works I have read, most of whom are cited in the notes and bibliography that follow. I am especially thankful to colleagues with whom I have engaged in dialogue over the years. In 2007, Shmuel Feiner and I invited about twenty-five of them to Leipzig to probe the borderlines between early modernity and modernity under the aegis of the Simon Dubnov Institute and its able director Dan Diner. The results were subsequently published as the major section of the seventh volume of the *Dubnov Institute Yearbook*. This event, along with others, certainly encouraged me to complete the present project. I also had the opportunity to offer my preliminary thoughts on this book in various forums, especially in a series of four lectures at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales and the Collège de France in Paris in 2005 and, in a more final form, at the Freie Universität in Berlin in 2009. I also presented parts of this manuscript to academic audiences at Oxford University, the University of Düsseldorf, Tel Aviv University, the University of Antwerp, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich, the University of Melbourne, the University of Sidney, the University of Frankfurt, the University of

Potsdam, the University of Toronto, the University of Pennsylvania, and the University of Florida.

I want to thank three careful and wise readers of this book who generously offered their comments and critical suggestions: Francesca Bregoli, Arthur Kiron, and Andrea Schatz. Francesca Bregoli initially critiqued these thoughts as a student in one of my seminars and then, years later, as a young colleague, read the entire manuscript and added many more astute comments. Andrea Schatz offered both criticisms and wonderfully creative strategies on how to construct my arguments more effectively. David Sorkin and Gershon Hundert read this manuscript for the Princeton University Press and assured me that what I had written was worthy of publication. Amnon Raz Krakotskin and Elhanan Reiner discussed aspects of this book with me over the years, and their influence is evident throughout. Adam Teller read a draft of the introduction and offered his wise comments. The mistakes that remain are, of course, my own and not those of any of my readers and interlocutors. I am most grateful to Brian Bendlin, who worked conscientiously and effectively in copyediting this manuscript. Finally, I want to thank Brigitta van Rheinberg, editor in chief of the Princeton University Press, for her enthusiasm for this book and for her thoughtful guidance in shaping the final manuscript.

As in the past, I am grateful to my fellow workers at the Herbert D. Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies at Penn who ran the institution smoothly during my periodic absences while writing this book. I especially want to thank Ety Lassman, Judith Laufer, and Sheila Allen for their constant help in support of my own research.

My wife Phyllis offered her usual and steady encouragement, while providing me the opportunity for the quiet and tranquility necessary to write. As always, I owe her my special gratitude and affection.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
March, 2009

# Notes

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## Introduction

1. On Modena, see Robert Davis and Benjamin Ravid, eds., *The Jews of Early Modern Venice* (Baltimore, 2001); Talya Fishman, *Shaking the Pillars of Exile: "Voice of a Fool," an Early Modern Jewish Critique of Rabbinic Culture* (Stanford, CA, 1997); David Malkiel, ed., *The Lion Shall Roar: Leon Modena and His World* (Jerusalem, 2003); and Leon Modena, *The Autobiography of a Seventeenth-Century Venetian Rabbi: Leon Modena's Life of Judah*, ed. and trans. Mark R. Cohen (Princeton, NJ, 1988).

2. On Luzzatto, see especially Benjamin Ravid, *Economics and Toleration in Seventeenth Century Venice* (New York, 1978), and David Ruderman, *Jewish Thought and Scientific Discovery in Early Modern Europe* (Detroit, 2001), index.

3. On Delmedigo, see especially Isaac Barzilay, *Yoseph Shlomo Delmedigo, Yashar of Candia: His Life, Works and Times* (Leiden, Netherlands, 1974); Ruderman, *Jewish Thought and Scientific Discovery in Early Modern Europe*, index.

4. Leo Strauss, *Persecution and the Art of Writing* (Chicago, 1988). See also Perez Zagorin, *Ways of Lying: Dissimulation, Persecution, and Conformity in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA, 1990).

5. I offer only a sampling of the work of these authors in their first or early editions. For central and eastern Europe, see Israel Halperin, *Yehudim ve-Yahadut be-Mizrah Eropah* (Jerusalem, 1968); Ḥayyim Hillel Ben Sasson, *Hagut ve-Hanhagah: Hashkefoteihem ha Ḥevrativot shel Yehudei Polin be-Shalhei Yemei ha-Beinayim* (Jerusalem, 1959); and Jacob Katz, *Masoret u-Mashber: Ha-Ḥevra ha-Yehudit be-Moẓei Yemei ha-Beinayim* (Jerusalem, 1963). For Spain, see Yizḥak Baer, *A History of the Jews of Christian Spain*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia, 1961–66); and Ḥaim Beinart, *Anusim be-Din ha-Inquisiziah* (Tel Aviv, 1965). For Italy, see Shlomo Simonsohn, *History of the Jews in the Duchy of Mantua* (Jerusalem, 1977); Moses Avigdor Shulvass, *Ḥayyei ha-Yehudim be-Italyah bi-Tekufat ha-Renesans* (New York, 1955); and Cecil Roth, *The History of the Jews of Italy* (Philadelphia, 1946). On Lurianic kabbalah and Sabbateanism, see Gershom Scholem, *Sabbatai Ṣevi: The Mystical Messiah 1626–1676* (Princeton, NJ, 1973); and Isaiah Tishbi, *Netivei Emunah ve-Minut* (Ramat Gan, Israel, 1964).



6. On the conversos, see Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *From Spanish Court to Italian Ghetto: Isaac Cardoso: A Study in Seventeenth-Century Marranism and Jewish Apologetics* (New York, 1971); and Yosef Kaplan, *Mi-Nazrut le-Yahadut: Hayyav u-Fo'olo shel ha-Anus Yizhak Orobio de Castro* (Jerusalem, 1982). On the revision of Scholem's work, see Moshe Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives* (New Haven, 1988); and Yehudah Liebes, *Sod ha-Emunah ha-Shabta'it* (Jerusalem, 1995); On eastern European Jewry, see Murray Rosman, *The Lord's Jews: Magnate-Jewish Relations in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth during the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, MA, 1990); Gershon Hundert, *The Jews in a Polish Private Town: The Case of Opatów in the Eighteenth Century* (Baltimore, 1992); and Israel Bartal, *Me-Umah le-Le'om: Yehudei Mizrah Eropah 1772-1881* (Jerusalem, 2002). On Anglo-Jewry, see Todd Endelman, *The Jews of Georgian England 1714-1830: Tradition and Change in a Liberal Society* (Ann Arbor, 1999). On Italian Jewry, see David B. Ruderman, *The World of a Renaissance Jew: The Life and Thought of Abraham B. Mordecai Farissol* (Cincinnati, 1981); and Reuven [Robert] Bonfil, *Ha-Rabbanut be-Italyah bi-Tekufat ha-Renesans* (Jerusalem, 1979). On Ottoman Jewry, see Joseph Hacker, *Megorashei Sefarad* (Jerusalem, 1966); and Amnon Cohen, *Jewish Life under Islam: Jerusalem in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge, MA, 1984). On the work of Richard Popkin, see, for example, his *The Third Force in Seventeenth-Century Thought* (Leiden, Netherlands, 1992).

7. See, for example, on eastern Europe, Elhanan Reiner, "Transformations in the Polish and Ashkenazic Yeshivot during the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries and the Dispute over Pilpul" (in Hebrew), In *Ke-Minhag Ashkenaz ve-Polin: Sefer Yovel le-Chone Shmeruk*, ed. Israel Bartal, Chava Turniansky, and Ezra Mendelsohn (Jerusalem, 1989): 9-80; and Adam Teller, *Hayyim be-Zavta: Ha-Rova ha-Yehudi shel Poznan ba-Mahazit ha-Rishonah shel ha-Meah ha-17* (Jerusalem, 2003). On Italy, see Elliott Horowitz, "The Eve of the Circumcision: A Chapter in the History of Jewish Nightlife," *Journal of Social History* 23 (1989): 45-69; Azariah de' Rossi, *The Light of the Eyes*, ed. and trans. Joanna Weinberg (New Haven, CT, 2001); and Ariel Toaff, *Love, Work, and Death: Jewish Life in Medieval Umbria* (London, 1996). On Amsterdam, see Yosef Kaplan, *An Alternative Path to Modernity: The Sephardi Diaspora in Western Europe* (Leiden, Netherlands, 2000); Miriam Bodian, *Hebrews of the Portuguese Nation: Conversos and Community in Early Modern Amsterdam* (Bloomington, IN, 1997); and Daniel Swetschinski,

*Reluctant Cosmopolitans: The Portuguese Jews of Seventeenth-Century Amsterdam* (London, 2000). On Lurianic kabbalah and Sabbateanism, see Ronit Meroz, “Geulah Be-Torat ha-Ari,” PhD diss., Hebrew University, 1988; Abraham Elkayam, “Sod ha-Emunah be-Kitvei Natan ha-Azati,” PhD diss., Hebrew University, 1993; Matt Goldish, *The Sabbatean Prophets* (Cambridge, MA, 2004); Jacob Barnai, *Shabta’ut: Hebetim Hevratim* (Jerusalem, 2000); and Ada Rappaport-Albert, “On the Position of Women in Sabbateanism” (in Hebrew), in *Ha-Halom ve-Shivro*, ed. Rachel Elior (Jerusalem, 2001), 1:143–328.

8. On print, see Elhanan Reiner, “The Ashkenazic Elite at the Beginning of the Modern Era: Manuscript versus Printed Text,” *Jews in Early Modern Poland-Polin* 10 (1997): 85–98; Zeev Gries, *Sifrut ha-Hanhagot: Toledoteha u-Mekoma be-Hayyei Hasidov shel ha-Besht* (Jerusalem, 1989); and Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin. *The Censor, the Editor, and the Text: The Catholic Church and the Shaping of the Jewish Canon in the Sixteenth Century* (Philadelphia, 2007). On Christian Hebraism, see Stephen Burnett, *From Christian Hebraism to Jewish Studies: Johannes Buxtorf (1564–1629) and Hebrew Learning in the Seventeenth Century* (Leiden, Netherlands, 1996); Dean Phillip Bell and Stephen Burnett, eds., *Jews, Judaism, and the Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Germany* (Leiden, Netherlands, 2006); Chaim Wirszubski, *Pico della Mirandola’s Encounter with Jewish Mysticism* (Cambridge, MA, 1989); Matt Goldish, *Judaism in the Theology of Sir Isaac Newton* (Dordrecht, Netherlands, 1998); and Allison Coudert and Jeffrey Shoulson, eds., *Hebraica Veritas? Christian Hebraists, Jews, and the Study of Judaism in Early Modern Europe* (Philadelphia, 2004); On antiquarianism and scholarship, see Azariah de’ Rossi, *The Light of the Eyes*. On women and gender, see Moshe Rosman, “To Be a Jewish Woman in Poland-Lithuania at the Beginning of the Modern Era” (in Hebrew), in *Kiyyum ve-Shever: Yehudei Polin Le-Dorotehem*, ed. Israel Bartal and Israel Gutmann (Jerusalem, 2001), 2:415–34; Chava Weissler, *Voices of the Matriarchs* (Boston, 1998); and Renée Levine Melammed, *Heretics or Daughters of Israel? The Crypto-Jewish Women of Castille* (New York, 1998).

9. I have offered an extended treatment of Israel’s book in the appendix to the present volume. Besides addressing the challenge offered by Israel’s work, I also present there a more detailed discussion of the regional studies of other historians of the Jewish experience in early modern Europe as well as that of European and world historians on early modernity in general.

10. While my understanding of cultural history includes a consideration of social and political life, I have generally omitted economic life from this analysis. This is because I consider Jonathan Israel's treatment of the subject generally accurate. While other specialists in economic history have and will continue to refine the picture he has painted, this is not an area in which I can offer new insights. In other words, my own reconstruction builds on the economic foundations of early modern Jewish life that Israel has delineated.

11. In addition to the references on women and gender in note 8 above, see the thoughtful remarks about the history of women in this period by Moshe Rosman, "The History of Jewish Women in Early Modern Poland: An Assessment," in *Jewish Women in Eastern Europe*, ed. Chaeran Freeze, Paula Hyman, and Anthony Polonsky, *Polin* 18 (2005): 25–56. On popular culture in this same period and region, see his remarks in "Innovative Tradition: Jewish Culture in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth," in *Cultures of the Jews*, ed. David Biale (New York, 2002), 519–70. See also the recent synthesis of Robert Liberles, "On the Threshold of Modernity: 1618–1780," in *Jewish Daily Life in Germany, 1618–1945*, ed. Marion Kaplan (Oxford, 2005), 9–92. On the challenge of studying the history of popular culture among early modern Jews, see the related essays of Michael Stanislawski, "The Yiddish 'Shevet Yehudah': A Study in the 'Ashkenization' of a Spanish-Jewish Classic," in *Jewish History and Jewish Memory: Studies in Honor of Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi*, ed. Elisheva Carlebach, John Efron, and David Myers (Hanover, NH, 1998), 134–49; and "Toward the Popular Religion of Ashkenazic Jews: Yiddish-Hebrew Texts on Sex and Circumcision," in *Mediating Modernity: Challenges and Trends in the Jewish Encounter with the Modern World: Essays in Honor of Michael A. Meyer*, ed. Lauren Strauss and Michael Brenner (Detroit, 2008), 93–106.

12. Compare Endelman, *The Jews of Georgian England*, and David Ruderman, *Jewish Enlightenment in an English Key: Anglo-Jewry's Construction of Modern Jewish Thought* (Princeton, NJ, 2000).

13. On Jewish migration and communal life, see J. F. Schaub, *Les juifs du roi d'Espagne, Oran, 1509—1669* (Paris, 1999); H. Z. Hirschberg, *A History of the Jews in North Africa: From the Ottoman Conquests to the Present Time*, vol. 2 (Leiden, Netherlands, 1981); and Shalom Ben Asher, "The Jews in North Africa and Egypt (Hebrew)," in *Toledot ha-Yehudim be-Arẓot ha-Islam*, ed. Samuel Ettlinger (Jerusalem, 1981), 121–96. On French Jewry, see chapter 2, note 3 below and my comments on Jay Berkowitz's important new work.

## Chapter 1. Jews on the Move

1. On mobility in early modern Europe, see Nicholas Canny, ed. *Europeans on the Move: Studies in European Migration 1500–1800* (Oxford, 1994); Harald Kleinschmidt, *People on the Move: Attitudes Toward and Perceptions of Migration in Medieval and Modern Europe* (Westport, CT., 2003); Leslie P. Moch, *Moving Europeans: Migration in Western Europe since 1650* (Bloomington, IN, 1992); Anthony Pagden, *Peoples and Empires: A Short History of European Migration, Exploration, and Conquest from Greece to the Present* (New York, 2001); Thomas Betteridge, ed., *Borders and Travellers in Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot, England, 2007); and Simonetta Cavaciocchi, ed. *Le migrazioni in Europa secoli xiii-xviii*, (Florence, Italy, 1994). On the theme in world history, see, for example, Patrick Manning, *Migration in World History* (New York, 2005).

2. On the general theme of mobility in Jewish history, see Avigdor Shinan, ed., *Hagirah ve-Hityashvut be-Yisrael u-ve-Amim* (Jerusalem, 1982), especially the articles of Robert Bonfil and Haim Beinart on the early modern period. On the Iberian expulsions, see, for example, Yosef H. Yerushalmi, “Exile and Expulsion in Jewish History,” in *Crisis and Creativity in the Sephardic World 1391–1648*, ed. Benjamin Gampel, (New York, 1997), 3–22; and Joseph Hacker, “The Sephardim in the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth Century,” in *Moresbet Sefarad: The Sephardic Legacy*, ed. Haim Beinart (Jerusalem, 1992), 2:109–33.

3. Despite the obvious differences between the two eras, the historian of early modern cultural mobility might profit in consulting the vast literature on the refugee scholars of the twentieth century. On the latter, see, for example, Norman Bentwich, *The Rescue and Achievement of Refugee Scholars* (The Hague, 1953); Lewis Coser, *Refugee Scholars in America: Their Impact and Their Experiences* (New Haven, CT, 1984); Franz Neumann, Henri Peyre, Erwin Panofsky, Wolfgang Köhler, and Paul Tillich eds., *The Cultural Migration: The European Scholar in America* (New York, 1977); and Edward Timmes and Jon Hughes, eds., *Intellectual Migration and Cultural Transformation: Refugees from National Socialism in the English Speaking World* (Vienna, 2003).

4. See the references on the early modern period mentioned in note 1; see especially Moch, *Moving Europeans*, 10, and Kleinschmidt, *Peoples on the Move*, 157.

5. See Kleinschmidt, *People on the Move*, 127–56; Manning, *Migration in World History*, 108–311; and Jan Lucassen, “The

Netherlands, the Dutch and Long Distance Migration in the Late Sixteenth to Early Nineteenth Centuries,” in Canny, *Europeans on the Move*, 153–91.

6. See Moch, *Moving Europeans*, 12–59 and Kleinschmidt, *People on the Move*, 157–163. On the information media related to early modern travel, see Justin Stagl, *A History of Curiosity: The Theory of Travel 1550–1800* (Chur, Switzerland, 1995).

7. See James S. Amerlang, “Cities and Foreigners,” in *Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe*, vol. 2, *Cities and Cultural Exchange in Europe 1400–1700*, ed. Donatella Calabi and Stephen Turk Christensen (Cambridge, 2006), 42–55; and, in the same volume, see Derek Keene, “Cities and Cultural Exchange,” 3–27; Donatella Calabi, Dorothea Noldem, and Roni Weinstein, “The ‘City of Jews’ in Europe: the Conservation and Transmission of Jewish Culture,” 87–113; Edhem Eldem, “Foreigners at the Threshold of Felicity: The Reception of Foreigners in Ottoman Istanbul,” 114–31; and Stefano Zagaglia, “Foreign Students in the City,” 175–93. See also Donatella Calabi and Paola Lanaro, eds., *La città italiana e i luoghi degli stranieri* (Bari, Italy, 1998).

8. Robert Bonfil, “The Settlement of Wandering Jews in Italy at the End of the Middle Ages” (in Hebrew), in Shinan, ed., *Higirah ve-Hityashvut*, 139–53.

9. Besides the references in note 2 above, see Minna Rozen, *A History of the Jewish Community in Istanbul: The Formative Years, 1453–1566* (Leiden, Netherlands, 2002); Bernard Lewis, “The Late Medieval and Early Modern Periods,” in *The Jews of Islam* (Princeton, NJ, 1984), 107–53; Esther Benbassa and Aron Rodrigue, *Sephardi Jewry* (Berkeley, CA, 2000), 1–16; Salo W. Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews* (New York, 1976), 16:3–23; 18:45–74; Avigdor Levy, ed., *Jews, Turks, Ottomans: A Shared History: Fifteenth through Twentieth Century* (Syracuse, NY, 2002); Avigdor Levy, ed., *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton, NJ, 1994), which incorporates his previously published *Sephardim in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton, NJ, 1992); Joseph Hacker, “Spanish Émigrés in the Ottoman Empire in the Fifteenth to Eighteenth Centuries” (in Hebrew), in *Ha-Pezurah Ha-Yehudit Ha-Sefaradit Aharei ha-Gerush*, ed. Michel Abitbul, Joseph Hacker, Robert Bonfil, Yosef Kaplan, and Esther Benbassa, (Jerusalem, 1993), 27–72; Joseph Hacker, “The Sürgün System and its Impact on Jewish Society in the Ottoman Empire during the Fifteenth- to Seventeenth Centuries” (in Hebrew), *Zion* 49 (1988): 27–82 (also published in English as “The

Sürgün System and Its Impact on Jewish Society in the Ottoman Empire,” in *Ottoman and Turkish Jewry: Community and Leadership*, ed. Aron Rodrigue (Bloomington, IN, 1992), 1–65; Mark Epstein, *The Ottoman Jewish Communities and Their Role in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Freiburg, Germany, 1980).

10. Daniel Goffman, “Jews in Early Modern Ottoman Commerce,” in Levy, ed., *Jews, Turks, Ottomans*, 26. On Safed in the sixteenth century, see Joseph Hacker, “The Greeks Were Assembled to Me: Safed in the Sixteenth Century” (in Hebrew), *Shalem* 7 (2001): 133–50; Daniel Goffman, “The Jews of Safed and the Maktu’ System in the Sixteenth Century: A Study of Two Documents from the Ottoman Archives,” *Journal of Ottoman Studies* 3 (1982): 81–90.

11. Jacob Barnai, “The Jews of the Ottoman Empire in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries,” in Beinart, ed., *Moresbet Sefarad*, 2:134–65; Jacob Barnai, “The Origins of the Jewish Community of Izmir in the Ottoman Period (Hebrew)” *Pe’amim* 12 (1982): 47–58; and Jacob Barnai, “The Communities in Izmir in the Seventeenth Century” (in Hebrew), *Pe’amim* 21 (1991): 66–84; Goffman, “Jews in Early Modern Ottoman Commerce,” 26–34, and Daniel Goffman, *Izmir and the Levantine World 1550–1650* (Seattle, WA, 1990).

12. See the insightful remarks in Israel Bartal, *The Jews of Eastern Europe 1772–1881* (Philadelphia, 2005), 14–18. See also Salo W. Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, vol. 16, especially, 4–23; Halperin, *Yehudim ve-Yahadut*, especially 9–33; Bernard Weinryb, *The Jews of Poland: A Social and Economic History of the Jewish Community in Poland from 1100–1800* (Philadelphia, 1972), especially 17–32, 112–18. See also William Monter, “Religion and Cultural Exchange, 1400–1700: Twenty-First Century Implications,” in *Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Robert Muchembled and William Monter (Cambridge, 2006), 1:10–11.

13. See Halperin, *Yehudim ve-Yahadut*, 9–33; Bartal, *The Jews of Eastern Europe*, 16.

14. See Shmuel Ettinger, “The Legal and Social Status of Jews in the Ukraine from the Fifteenth to the Seventeenth Centuries” (in Hebrew), *Zion* 20 (1955): 128–52.

15. See, for example, Jacob Elbaum, “Cultural Connections between Polish and Ashkenazic Jews and Italian Jewry in the Sixteenth Century” (in Hebrew), *Galed* 7–8 (1985): 11–40; Jacob Elbaum, *Petihut ve-Histagrut: Ha-Yezirah Ha-Ruḥanit Ha-Sifrutit be-Folin u-ve-Arẓot Ashkenaz be-Shalhei ha-Me’ah Ha-16* (Jerusalem, 1990), 33–64; Jacob Barnai, “Connections between the Rabbis of Turkey

and Poland in the Seventeenth Century” (in Hebrew), *Galed* 9 (1986): 13–26; Abraham Gutterman, “Sephardic Jews on Polish Soil (Hebrew), *Pe’amim* 18 (1984): 53–79.

16. Israel Halperin, “The Jewish Refugees of the Thirty Years’ War in Eastern Europe” (in Hebrew), *Zion* 27 (1962): 199–215; reprinted in Halperin, *Yehudim ve-Yahadut*, 197–211.

17. Weinryb, *The Jews of Poland*, 117.

18. Yosef Kaplan, “Amsterdam and Ashkenazi Migration in the Seventeenth Century,” in *An Alternative Path to Modernity*, 78–107; Israel Bartal, “Polish Jews in South Western Europe in the Mid-Eighteenth Century” (in Hebrew), in *Temurot be-Historia ha-Yehudit ha-Ḥadasha . . . Shai le-Shmuel Ettinger*, ed. Shlomo Almog et al., (Jerusalem, 1987), 413–38; Israel, *European Jewry in the Age of Mercantilism*, 92–120; Mordechai Breuer, “The Early Modern Period,” in Mordechai Breuer and Michael Graetz, *Tradition and Enlightenment*, vol. 1 of *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*, ed. Michael Meyer (New York, 1996), 79–103; Moses Shulvass, *From East to West: The Westward Migration of Jews from Eastern Europe during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Detroit, 1971); Leah Bornstein, “The Ashkenazim in the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries” (in Hebrew), *Mi-Mizrah u-mi-Ma’arav* 1 (1974): 81–104; Jacob Barnai, “On the History of Ashkenazim in Israel between 1721–1777” (in Hebrew), *Shalem* 2 (1976): 193–230; Meir Benayahu, “The Ashkenazic Community in Jerusalem between 1687–1747” (in Hebrew), *Sefunot* 2 (1958): 128–89; and Elhanan Reiner, “Between Ashkenaz and Jerusalem: Ashkenazic Scholars in the Land of Israel after the Black Plague,” [Hebrew] *Shalem* 4 (1984): 27–62.

Most recently Adam Teller has looked incisively at these migrations triggered by the pogroms of 1648 and their significance as a test case of intercommunal cooperation and coordination. I wish to thank him for allowing me to read his “The Shape of the Jewish World: Economic, Social, and Cultural Aspects of the Ashkenazic Refugee Crisis in the Mid-Seventeenth Century,” seminar paper presented at the Herbert D. Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies, University of Pennsylvania, February 25, 2009.

19. See especially the remarks in Bartal, “Polish Jews in South Western Europe,” 415–17.

20. Jonathan I. Israel, *Diasporas within a Diaspora: Jews, Crypto-Jews and the World Maritime Empires (1540–1740)* (Leiden, Netherlands, 2002); Yosef Kaplan, “The Sephardic Diaspora in North-Western Europe and the New World,” in Beinart, ed., *Moreshet*

*Sefarad*, 2: 240–87; Yosef Kaplan, “The Travels of Portuguese Jews from Amsterdam to the ‘Lands of Idolatry’ (1644–1724),” in *Jews and Conversos*, ed. Yosef Kaplan (Jerusalem, 1985), 197–224; Yosef Kaplan, “The Struggle against Travelers to Spain and Portugal in the Western Sephardi Diaspora” (in Hebrew), *Zion* 64 (1999): 65–100; David Graizbord, *Souls in Dispute: Converso Identities in Iberia and the Jewish Diaspora, 1580–1700* (Philadelphia, 2004); David Graizbord, “A Historical Contextualization of Sephardi Apostates and Self-Styled Missionaries of the Seventeenth Century,” *Jewish History* 19 (2005): 287–313; Miriam Bodian, “Amsterdam, Venice, and the Marrano Diaspora in the Seventeenth Century,” *Dutch Jewish History* 2 (1989): 47–65; Evelyn Oliel-Grausz, “A Study in Intercommunal Relations in the Sephardi Diaspora: London and Amsterdam in the Eighteenth Century,” in *Dutch Jews as Perceived by Themselves and Others*, ed. Chaya Brasz and Yosef Kaplan (Leiden, Netherlands, 2001), 41–58.

21. This point is especially emphasized by Graizbord; see the writings cited in note 20.

22. See the references in note 20, especially the work of Yosef Kaplan and David Graizbord.

23. Evelyn Oliel-Grausz, “La circulation du personnel rabbinique dans les communautés de la diaspora sépharade au xviii<sup>e</sup> siècle,” in *Transmission et Passages en Monde Juif*, ed. Esther Benbassa (Paris, 1997), 313–34; Evelyn Oliel-Grausz, “La diaspora séfarade au xviii<sup>e</sup> siècle: communication, espace, réseaux,” *La Diaspora des Nouveaux-Chrétiens: Arquivos do Centro Cultural Calouste Gulbenkian* 47 (2004): 55–71.

24. See Barukh Mevorakh, “Jewish Diplomatic Activities to Prevent the Expulsion of the Jews from Bohemia and Moravia in 1744–45” (in Hebrew), *Zion* 28 (1963): 125–64; Evelyn Oliel-Grausz, “Les communautés séfarades d’Europe occidentale et l’expulsion des juifs de Prague en 1746,” *Yod* 1–2 (1995–96): 49–58; Oliel-Grausz, “A Study in Intercommunal Relations,” 53; Francesca Trivellato, “Les juifs d’origine portugaise entre Livourne, le Portugal et la Méditerranée (c. 1650–1750),” *La Diaspora des Nouveaux-Chrétiens*, 171–82; Francesca Trivellato, “The Port Jews of Leghorn and Their Global Networks of Trade in the Early Modern Period,” in *Jews and Port Cities 1590–1990: Commerce, Community, and Cosmopolitanism*, ed. David Cesarani and Gemma Romain, special issue of *Jewish Culture and History* 7 (2004): 31–48; Israel Bartal, “The Emigration of the Poor from Amsterdam to Erez Yisrael” (in Hebrew), *Shalem* 3 (1992): 175–92; and Israel Bartal and Yosef Kaplan, “Immigration



and Indigent Jews from Amsterdam to Erez Yisrael at the Beginning of the Seventeenth Century” (in Hebrew), *Shalem* 6 (1992): 177–93.

25. This is well documented, for example, in Joseph Hacker, “Pride and Depression: Polarity of the Spiritual and Social Experience of the Iberian Exiles in the Ottoman Empire” (in Hebrew), in *Tarbut ve-Hevrah be-Toledot Yisrael bimai ha-Beinayim: Kovez Ma’amarim le-zikbro shel Hayyim Hillel Ben Sasson*, ed. Menahem Ben Sasson, Robert Bonfil, and Joseph Hacker (Jerusalem, 1989), 541–86.

26. On the ethnic identities of Sephardim in Amsterdam and Hamburg, see Kaplan, *An Alternative Path to Modernity*; and Bodian, *Hebrews of the Portuguese Nation*. On the social mixing of Jews in Italian cities, see, for example Davis and Ravid, eds., *The Jews of Early Modern Venice*; Kenneth Stow, *Theater of Acculturation: The Roman Ghetto in the Sixteenth Century* (Seattle, WA, 2001); and Shulvass, *Hayyei ha-Yehudim be-Italyah bi-Tekufat ha-Renesans*, 55–61. On social mixing among Jews in the Ottoman Empire see Rivka Cohen, *Kusta-Saloniki-Patros: Hitargenuit kehalit ve-al-kehalit shel Yehudei Yavan taḥat Shilton ha-Ottomani be-Ma’ot ha-15 ve-ha-16* (Tel Aviv, 1984); Yaron Ben-Naeh, “Are We Not Their Brothers? Sephardim and Ashkenazim in Late Seventeenth Century Jerusalem” (in Hebrew), *Katedra* 103 (2002): 33–52; Shlomo Spitzer, “The Ashkenazim in the Ottoman Empire from the Middle of the Fifteenth Century until the Middle of the Sixteenth Century” (in Hebrew), *Mi-Mizrah u-mi-Ma’arav* 1 (1974): 59–79; and Leah Bornstein, “The Ashkenazim in the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries.”

27. *Responsa* 3, no. 472, cited in Joseph Davis, “The Reception of the *Shulhan ’Arukh* and the Formation of Ashkenazic Jewish Identity,” *Association for Jewish Studies Review* 26 (2002): 271.

28. On the Italian subcommunities, see the references in note 26, as well as Shlomo Simonsohn, *History of the Jews in the Duchy of Mantua*, 501–4, on the Tamari-Venturozzo affair; Yaakov Boksenbaum, *Parashiyot* (Tel Aviv, 1986), especially 47–48, for other examples of ethnic tensions among Italian Jews; and Robert Bonfil, *Rabbis and Jewish Communities in Renaissance Italy* (Oxford, 1990), 150–55, on the clash between two types of rabbinic leadership in Italy. On Venice, see David Malkiel, *A Separate Republic: The Mechanics and Dynamics of Venetian Self-Government, 1607–1624* (Jerusalem, 1991), 92–113. On Rome, see Kenneth Stow, “Ethnic Rivalry or Melting Pot? The *Edot* in the Roman Ghetto,” *Judaism* 41 (1992): 286–96.

29. See Ruderman, *Jewish Thought and Scientific Discovery*, especially 100–117.

30. See Stephan Wendehorst, “Imperial Spaces as Jewish Space: The Holy Roman Empire, the Emperor and Jews in the Early Modern Period. Some Preliminary Observations,” *Jahrbuch des Simon-Dubnow-Instituts* 2 (2003): 442–56; and Mordechai Breuer, “The Early Modern Period,” 133–34.

31. See for example, Yaron Ben Naeh, “Moshko the Jew and His Gay Friends: Same-Sex Sexual Relations in Ottoman Jewish Society,” *Journal of Early Modern History* 9 (2005): 79–105; Moshe Rosman, “Innovative Tradition: Jewish Culture in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth,” in Biale, ed., *Cultures of the Jews* 523–30; and Adam Teller, *Kesef, Ko’ah ve-Hashpa’ah: Ha-Yehudim be-Ahuzot Beit Radzwill be-Ma’ah ha-18* (Jerusalem, 2006).

32. See, for example, Ze’ev Gries, “Print as a Means of Communication between Jewish Communities in the Period Close to the Spanish Expulsion” (in Hebrew), *Da’at* 28 (1992): 5–18; Elhanan Reiner, “A Biography of an Agent of Culture: Eleazar Altschul of Prague and His Literary Activity,” in *Schöpferische Momente des europäischen Judentums in der frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Michael Graetz (Heidelberg, Germany, 2000), 229–47; Elhanan Reiner, “Itinerant Ashkenazic Preachers in the Early Modern Period” (in Hebrew), unpublished manuscript, 1990; Joseph Weiss, “Some Notes on the Social Background of Early Hasidism,” in *Studies in Eastern European Jewish Mysticism* (Oxford, 1985), 3–26; and Marc Saperstein, *Jewish Preaching 1200–1800: An Anthology* (New Haven, CT, 1989), 45–50.

33. Jennifer Platt, “Some Issues in Intellectual Method and Approach,” in Timmes and Hughes, eds., *Intellectual Migration and Cultural Transformation*, 7–19.

34. Moshe Idel, “On Mobility, Individuals and Groups: Prolegomenon for a Sociological Approach to Sixteenth-Century Kabbalah,” *Kabbalah* 3 (1998): 145–73; Moshe Idel, “Italy in Safed, Safed in Italy: A Chapter in the Interactive History of Sixteenth-Century Kabbalah,” in *Cultural Intermediaries: Jewish Intellectuals in Early Modern Italy*, ed. David Ruderman and Giuseppe Veltri (Philadelphia, 2004); and Moshe Idel, “Encounters between Spanish and Italian Kabbalists in the Generation after the Expulsion,” in Gampel, ed., *Crisis and Creativity*, 189–222.

35. I only lightly annotate this section with recent works, since I restrict myself primarily to well-known facts about the individuals I describe. On Abravanel, see, for example, Eric Lawee, *Isaac*

*Abarbanel's Stance toward Tradition: Defense, Dissent, and Dialogue* (Albany, NY, 2001). On Leone Ebreo, see, for example, Seymour Feldman, *Philosophy in a Time of Crisis: Don Isaac Abravanel, Defender of the Faith* (London, 2003). See also David Ruderman, "The Italian Renaissance and Jewish Thought," in *Renaissance Humanism: Foundations, Forms, and Legacy*, ed. Albert Rabil Jr. (Philadelphia, 1987), 1:382–433.

36. See R. J. Werblowsky, *Joseph Karo: Lawyer and Mystic* (Oxford, 1962).

37. See Lawrence Fine, *Physician of the Soul, Healer of the Cosmos: Isaac Luria and His Kabbalistic Fellowship* (Stanford, CA, 2003).

38. See, for example, Ronit Meroz, "R. Israel Sarug, a Student of Luria? A Reconsideration of the Question" (in Hebrew), *Da'at* 28 (1992): 41–50.

39. Eleazer Gutwirth, "Amatus Lusitanus and the Locations of Sixteenth-Century Cultures," in Ruderman and Veltri, eds., *Cultural Intermediaries*, 216–38; and Eleazer Gutwirth, "Language and Medicine in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire," in *Religious Confessions and the Sciences in the Sixteenth Century*, ed. Jürgen Helm and Annette Winkelmann (Leiden, Netherlands, 2001), 79–95. Gutwirth succeeds, in my opinion, in demonstrating how Lusitanus's writings were a creative blending of the multiple cultural contexts in which he lived.

40. Fabrizio Lelli, "Un collaboratore ebreo di Giovanni Pico della Mirandola: Yohanan Alemanno," *Vivens Homo* 5 (1994): 401–30.

41. Harvey Hames, "Elijah Delmedigo: An Archetype of the Halakhic Man?" in Ruderman and Veltri, eds., *Cultural Intermediaries*, 39–54; Ruderman, *The World of a Renaissance Jew*.

42. See Idel, "Encounters between Spanish and Italian Kabbalists; and Hava Tirosh-Rothschild, *Between Worlds: The Life and Thought of Rabbi David ben Judah Messer Leon* (Albany, NY, 1991).

43. See Aaron Z. Aescoly, *Sippur David ha-Reuveni* (Jerusalem, 1992), especially the introduction by Moshe Idel; and Moshe Idel, "Shlomo Molcho as Magician" (in Hebrew), *Sefunot* 18 (1995): 193–219.

44. See Martin Jacobs, "Joseph ha-Kohen, Paolo Giovio, and Sixteenth Century Historiography," in Ruderman and Veltri, eds., *Cultural Intermediaries*, 67–85; Solomon ibn Verga, *Sefer Shevet Yehudah*, ed. Azriel Shohet with an introduction by Yizhak Baer (Jerusalem, 1947); Alan Cooper, "An Extraordinary Sixteenth Century Biblical Commentary: Eliezer Ashkenazi on the Song of Moses (Haazinu)," *Frank Tamage Memorial* vol. 1, ed. Barry Walfish (Haifa, Israel, 1993), 129–50.

45. On Delmedigo, see Ruderman, *Jewish Thought and Scientific Discovery*, 118–52, and see the introduction to the present volume. On Isaac Cardoso, see Yerushalmi, *From Spanish Court to Italian Ghetto*. On Abraham, see David Halperin, ed., *Abraham Miguel Cardozo: Selected Writings* (New York, 2001).

46. On Hamiz, see Ruderman, *Jewish Thought and Scientific Discovery*, 100–102. On Herrera, see Nissim Yosha, *Mitus u-Metafora: Ha-Parshanut ha-Pilosofit shel R. Avraham Kohen Herrera le-Kabbalat ha-Ari* (Jerusalem, 1994).

47. Jacob Sasportas, *Zizat Novel Zevi*, ed. Isaiah Tishby (Jerusalem, 1954). See also Oliel-Grausz, “La circulation du personnel rabbinique,” 314.

48. On Hannover’s wanderings, see Bartal, “Polish Jews in South Western Europe,” 414. In a public lecture on June 4, 2007 at Tel Aviv University, Elhanan Reiner discussed the manuscript introduction of Hannover’s *Sha’arei Zion*, where he mentions his learning the doctrines of Luria from kabbalists in Leghorn.

49. Herbert Zafran, “Dyhernfurth and Shabtai Bass: A Typographic Portrait,” in *Studies in Jewish Bibliography, History and Literature in Memory of Edward Kiev*, ed. Charles Berlin (New York, 1971), 543–80. See also Oliel-Grausz, “La circulation du personnel rabbinique,” 320, on Bass’s observations about the Sephardic Talmud Torah in Amsterdam. The travel books of Hanover and Bass are now the subject of an unpublished paper by Konstanze Kunst.

50. On Tobias Cohen and David Nieto, see Ruderman, *Jewish Thought and Scientific Discovery*, 229–55, 310–31. On Azulai, see Meir Benayahu, *Rabbi Hayyim Yosef David Azulai* (Jerusalem, 1959); and Meir Benayahu, ed., *Sefer Ha-Hiddah: Kovez Ma’amarim u-Mehkarim* (Jerusalem, 1959).

51. On both these figures, see Elisheva Carlebach, *The Pursuit of Heresy: Rabbi Moses Hagiz and the Sabbatian Controversies* (New York, 1990).

52. On Hurwitz, see David Ruderman, “Some Jewish Responses to Smallpox Prevention in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries: A New Perspective on the Modernization of European Jewry,” *Aleph, Historical Studies in Science and Judaism* 2 (2002): 111–44. On Levinson, see Ruderman, *Jewish Thought and Scientific Discovery*, 332–68. On Bennett, see Ruderman, *Jewish Enlightenment in an English Key*, 228–30, 251–56.

53. On these last figures, see, for example, Shmuel Feiner, *The Jewish Enlightenment* (Philadelphia, 2004).

54. On custom books in Yiddish, see, for example, Chone Shmeruk, *Sifrut Yidish: perakim le-toldoteha* (Tel Aviv, 1978); Chone Shmeruk, *Sifrut Yidish be-Polin* (Jerusalem, 1981); and Chone Shmeruk, *Ha-Iyurim le-Sifrei Yidish ba-Ma'ot ha-16 ve-ha 17: Ha-Tektstim, ha-Temunot, ve-Nimaneihem* (Jerusalem, 1986). The *Shulhan Arukh* is discussed in chapter 3 of the present volume.

## Chapter 2. Communal Cohesion

1. See, generally, Simon Dubnov, *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland*, trans. Israel Friedlander, 3 vols. (Philadelphia, 1916–20); Simon Dubnov, *Weltgeschichte des jüdischen Volkes von seinen Uranfängen bis zur Gegenwart*, 10 vols. (Berlin, 1925–29); and Salo W. Baron, *The Jewish Community: Its History and Structure to the American Revolution*, 3 vols. (Philadelphia, 1942–48); On Ashkenazic communal developments, see Jacob Katz, *Tradition and Crisis: Jewish Society at the End of the Middle Ages* (New York, 1961; retranslated and expanded by Bernard Cooperman, New York, 1993). On Italy, see Simonsohn, *History of the Jews in the Duchy of Mantua*. On central Europe, see Daniel Cohen, *Die Landjudenschaften in Deutschland als Organe jüdischer Selbstverwaltung von der frühen Neuzeit bis ins neunzehnte Jahrhundert* (Jerusalem, 1996). On eastern Europe, see Israel Halperin, ed., *Pinkas Va'ad Arbah Arzot*, 2nd edition, with revisions and expansions by Israel Bartal (Jerusalem, 1990); Halperin, *Yehudim ve-Yahadut be-Mizrah Eropah*; and Israel, *European Jewry in the Age of Mercantilism, 184–206*. On the Ottoman Empire, see below. For some relevant historiographical reflections, see Israel Bartal, “Pre-Modern Jewish Politics: The Councils of the Four Lands in Eastern Europe” (in Hebrew), in *Ha-Ziyonut ve-ha-Hazarah le-Historiah; Ha'arakbah me-Hadash*, ed. Shmuel Eisenstadt and Moshe Lissik (Jerusalem, 1999), 186–94.

2. The last was Jonathan Israel in 1985, who did not include the Ottoman Jewish community in his survey. See note 1 for references to his work and those of his predecessors—especially Dubnov, Baron, and Katz. Other regional studies are mentioned throughout this chapter.

3. On the Jewish community of North Africa, see Shalom Bar Asher, “The Jews in North Africa and in Egypt” (in Hebrew), in *Toledot ha-Yehudim be-Arzot ha-Islam*, ed. Samuel Ettinger (Jerusalem, 1981), 121–66; Shalom Bar Asher, ed., *Yehudei Sefarad u-Portugal be-Maroko (1492–1753): Sefer ha-Takanot* (Jerusalem, 1990); and Jane Gerber, *Jewish Society in Fez* (London, 1980).

While I have omitted the Jewish community in France from this survey, thanks to Jay Berkovitz, *Rites and Passages: The Beginnings of Modern Jewish Culture in France, 1650–1860* (Philadelphia, 2004), we now have a firm basis by which to understand this interesting community in the early modern period. Berkovitz compares and contrasts the three Jewish subcommunities of France before 1789 in the first part of his book: the Sephardic community of Bordeaux and Bayonne, the rural Ashkenazic community of Alsace, and the more urban Jewish center of Metz. The Sephardim generally followed the patterns we describe herein with respect to Leghorn and Amsterdam. While the Jewish community of Alsace developed a local French-Jewish character, the community in Metz generally retained a “pan-Ashkenazic” one. Notwithstanding regional variations, especially in Alsace, the general picture of rabbinic subordination to lay authority in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is similar to the other communities discussed below.

4. Literature on the history of the medieval Jewish community is vast. Besides the references to Baron and Dubnow mentioned in note 1, see, for example, Yizhak Baer, “The Foundations and the Beginnings of the Organization of the Jewish Community in the Middle Ages” (in Hebrew), *Zion* 15 (1950): 1–41; Mordechai Breuer, *Rabbanut Ashkenaz bi-mai Ha-Beinayim* (Jerusalem, 1976); Simon Schwarzfuchs, *A Concise History of the Rabbinate* (Oxford, 1993); Katz, *Tradition and Crisis*; and Kenneth Stow, *Alienated Minority: The Jews of Medieval Latin Europe* (Cambridge, 1992), 157–95. On the medieval Jewish community under Islam, see especially S. D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, vol. 2, *The Community* (Berkeley, CA, 1971). There is no doubt that important differences existed between Jewish communal structures—their range, complexity, and powers—under medieval Islam and those under medieval Christendom. On these differences, see Mark Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross: The Jews in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ, 1994). No doubt such a vast Jewish self-government as that under the Abassids might be favorably compared with the Council of the Four Lands, but such a comparison is beyond the scope of the present work.

5. See Daniel Carpi, ed., *Pinkas Va’ad Kehilat Kodesh Padova 1577–1603* (Jerusalem, 1973), 43–45.

6. See Bonfil, *Rabbis and Jewish Communities in Renaissance Italy*, 92–94, 124–26, and 129–33.

7. See Bonfil, *Rabbis and Jewish Communities in Renaissance Italy*; Bonfil, *Jewish Life in Renaissance Italy*, and Robert Bonfil, “The Jewish Community in Italy during the Period of the Renaissance”

(in Hebrew), in *Kahal Yisrael, Ha-Shilton ha-Azmi ha-Yehudi le-Dorotav*, ed. Abraham Grossman and Yosef Kaplan (Jerusalem, 2004), 2:197–220.

8. Aside from the references to Bonfil's work in note 7, see also Malkiel, *A Separate Republic*, 16–17, 113–23, and 175–76, on the limits of rabbinic authority in Venice; and Stow, *Theater of Acculturation*, 102–5, for a similar situation in Rome.

On the emergence of the ghetto system, see Kenneth Stow, *Catholic Thought and Papal Jewry Policy* (New York, 1977) and see the various essays on the ghetto era collected in *Essential Papers on Jewish Culture in Renaissance and Baroque Italy*, ed. David Ruderman (New York, 1992).

9. Stefanie B. Siegmund, *The Medici State and the Ghetto of Florence: The Construction of an Early Modern Jewish Community* (Stanford, CA, 2006), especially 407–12.

10. *Ibid.*, 409.

11. Siegmund claims that Robert Bonfil's influential narrative of Italian Jewish history is too limiting since it was written primarily from the perspective of rabbinic elites but she, too, has constructed hers solely from one perspective: that of the ducal government and its own self-representation. Her attempt to distance herself from Bonfil's approach is not fully convincing. Bonfil, too, posits two stages of Jewish life in Italy: an early phase of scattered small communities consisting of a few families with weak institutional structures, and a later phase of urbanization and ghettoization that propelled the intense expansion of Jewish institutions and Jewish cultural creativity. In this respect, the two positions are generally close although Bonfil would hardly characterize Jewish-Christian relations as harmonious in the pre-ghetto era, a throwback to the earlier positions of Cecil Roth and Moses Avigdor Shulvass that Bonfil had vigorously challenged. See especially Bonfil, *Jewish Life in Renaissance Italy*, and Robert Bonfil, "Changes in Cultural Patterns of Jewish Society in Crisis: The Case of Italian Jewry at the Close of the Sixteenth Century," *Jewish History* 3 (1988): 11–30. See also Roth, *The Jews in the Renaissance*; and Moses Avigdor Shulvass, *The Jews in the World of the Renaissance* (Leiden, Netherlands, 1973).

12. On the converso community of Leghorn, see Bonfil, "The History of the Spanish and Portuguese in Italy," 217–39, and the bibliography he cites therein.

13. The translation of the text is taken from Michael Walzer, Menachem Lorberbaum, and Noam Zohar, *The Jewish Political*

*Tradition*, vol. 1, *Authority* (New Haven, CT, 2000), 426–27; italics in the original.

14. The text is translated in Walzer, et al., *The Jewish Political Tradition*, 428. For the original texts here and below and for more detailed interpretation, see Isaiah Tishby, “The Letters of Jacob Sasportas against the Parnassim of Leghorn” (in Hebrew), *Kovez al Yad* 4 (1946): 148–52; and Alfredo Toaff, “The Controversy between R. Sasportas and the Jewish Community of Leghorn (1681)” (in Hebrew), *Sefunot* 9 (1964) 169–91.

15. Walzer, et al., *The Jewish Political Tradition*, 428–29; italics in the original.

16. See Swetschinski, *Reluctant Cosmopolitans: The Portuguese Jews of Seventeenth-Century Amsterdam*, especially 184–87, 221–22.

17. Swetschinski, *Reluctant Cosmopolitans*, 196; italics in the original.

18. *Ibid.*, 225–26; italics in the original.

19. Yosef Kaplan, “The Social Function of the Herem,” in *An Alternative Path to Modernity*, 108–42 (the quotation herein is from 119); and, in the same volume, “Deviance and Excommunication in the Eighteenth Century,” 143–54, and “The Place of the Herem in the Sephardic Community of Hamburg,” 168–95. See also Yosef Kaplan, “Place and State: Jewish Autonomy in the Dutch Republic and Its Limitations” (in Hebrew), in Grossman and Kaplan, eds., *Kahal Yisra’el*, 2:311–27; Yosef Kaplan, “Jewish Amsterdam’s Impact on Modern Jewish History,” in Graetz, ed., *Schöpferische Momente des europäischen Judentums*, especially 52–57.

20. I refer to the discovery of Anne Oravetz Albert of Fonseca’s *Exotyscao, Praque os tementes do Senhor na observance dos preceitos de sua Sancta Ley, naõ cayaõ em peccado por falta da conviniente intelligencia* (Amsterdam, 1680) in the Ez Haim Library in Amsterdam. A study of his work is part of her 2008 University of Pennsylvania dissertation on converso political thought in Amsterdam. I thank her for allowing me to mention this work here.

21. Kaplan, *An Alternative Path to Modernity*, 136–39.

22. See Kaplan, *An Alternative Path to Modernity*, 143–54, and Yosef Kaplan, “Secularizing the Portuguese Jews: Integration and Orthodoxy in Early Modern Judaism,” in *Reconsidering the Borderlines between Early Modern and Modern Jewish History*, ed. Shmuel Feiner and David Ruderman, *Jahrbuch des Simon-Dubnow-Instituts* (Leipzig, Germany, 2007), 99–110.



23. Carlebach, *The Pursuit of Heresy*, 104–32. The citations are from her translations, 104, 110, 111.

24. *Ibid.*, 132.

25. The translation of the text is found in Schwarzfuchs, *A Concise History of the Rabbinate*, 19–21; italics in the original. See also Breuer, *Rabbanut Ashkenaz*, 117.

26. Breuer, *Rabbanut Ashkenaz*, 118–19; my translation.

27. The text is found in Louis Finkelstein, *Jewish Self-Government in the Middle Ages* (New York, 1964), 257–64. See also Eric Yizhak Zimmer, “Government and Leadership in the Communities of Germany in the Sixteenth–Seventeenth Centuries” (in Hebrew), in Grossman and Kaplan, eds., *Kahal Yis’rael*, 2:261–86, especially 265–67; Eric Yizhak Zimmer, *Jewish Synods in Germany during the Late Middle Ages (1286–1603)* (New York, 1978); Eric Yizhak Zimmer, *Gahalatam she Hakhamim: Perakim be-toledot ha-Rabbanut be-Germania be-meah ha shesh esreh ve ha-meah ha-shevah esreh* (Beer Sheva, Israel, 1999); Mordechai Breuer, “The Early Modern Period,” 87–89; and Adam Teller, “Telling the Difference: Some Comparative Perspectives on the Jews’ Legal Status in the Polish Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Holy Roman Empire,” *Polin* 22 (2009), forthcoming. My thanks to Professor Teller for allowing me to read the essay in galley form. Teller suggests that the Jews of the Empire were attempting to copy a successful Polish model of Jewish self-organization; see his note 75.

28. See especially the substantial treatment in Breuer, “The Early Modern Period,” 79–260, upon which I have primarily relied, as well as the other references in note 27. On the court Jews, see also Michael Graetz, “Court Jews in Economics and Politics,” in *From Court Jews to the Rothschilds: Art, Patronage, and Power 1600–1800*, ed. Vivian Mann and Richard Cohen (Munich, 1996), 27–43; and Rotraud Ries and J. Friedrich Battenberg, eds., *Hofjuden: Ökonomie und Interkulturalität: Die jüdische Wirtschaftselite im 18. Jahrhundert* (Hamburg, 2002).

On the vestiges of imperial influence on German Jewish life, see Wendehorst, “Imperial Spaces as Jewish Space: The Holy Roman Empire, the Emperor and Jews in the Early Modern Period,” 437–74; and Stephan Ehrenpries, “Legal Spaces for Jews as Subjects of the Holy Roman Empire,” *Jahrbuch des Simon-Dubnow-Instituts* 2 (2003): 475–87, as well as Teller’s important comparative remarks in “Telling the Difference.” On this period in general, see also Friedrich Battenberg, *Die Juden in Deutschland vom 16. bis zum Ende*

*des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Enzyklopädie deutscher Geschichte 60) (Munich, 2001); Alfred Haverkamp and Alfred Heit, eds., *Zur Geschichte der Juden im Deutschland des späten Mittelalters under der Frühen Neuzeit* (Stuttgart, Germany, 1981); and R. Po-chia Hsia and Hartmut Lehmann, eds., *In and Out of the Ghetto: Jewish-Gentile Relations in Late Medieval and Early Modern Germany* (Washington, DC, 1995). See also the massive volume by Andreas Gotzmann, *Jüdische Autonomie in der Frühen Neuzeit: Recht und Gemeinschaft im deutschen Judentum* (Göttingen, Germany, 2008), especially his discussion of the limits of rabbinical jurisdiction and the herem, 232–73, 322–57; and Andreas Gotzmann and Stephan Wendehorst, eds., *New Approaches to the Legal History of the Jews in the Holy Roman Empire*, special issue of *Jewish Culture and History*, forthcoming.

29. See especially Cohen, *Die Landjudenschaften in Deutschland*. And consider Teller's comparative remarks regarding Germany, Poland, and Lithuania in "Telling the Difference."

30. Compare the conclusions of Teller, "Telling the Difference," which argue that the legal situation of the Jews of the Holy Roman Empire was based on personal privileges and the spread of Roman law, in contrast to that of the Jews of the Polish and Lithuanian commonwealth, whose legal status was based on communal privilege.

31. See Carlebach, "Early Modern Ashkenaz in the Writings of Jacob Katz," in *The Pride of Jacob: Essays on Jacob Katz and His Work*, ed. Jay Harris (Cambridge, MA 2002), 75; and Chone Shmeruk, "Young Ashkenazic Men in the Yeshivot of Poland," (in Hebrew), in *Sefer Yovel le-Yizhak Baer*, ed. Samuel Ettinger, Salo W. Baron, Ben Zion Dinur, and Israel Halperin (Jerusalem, 1961), 304–14–17. This relative lack of cultural production in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries might be attributable, at less partially, to the disruptions of the Thirty Years' War, despite Jonathan Israel's positive conclusion "that the terrible upheavals of the Thirty Years' War mostly worked in favor of German and all Central European Jewry, appreciably enhanced the Jewish role in German life, and prepared the ground for the 'Age of the Court Jew' . . . the high-water mark of Jewish influence on Central European commerce and finance." See Jonathan Israel, "Central European Jewry during the Thirty Years' War," *Central European History* 16 (1983): 30; this essay was later incorporated into his *European Jewry in the Age of Mercantilism* as chapter 5. It is obvious that Israel focused on the economic and not the cultural ramifications of the war and its aftermath. On rabbinic decline in the eighteenth century, see also Azriel Shoḥet, *Im Hillufei*

*ha-Tekufot: Rashit ha-Haskalah be-Yahudut Germania* (Jerusalem, 1960), 92–113.

32. Joseph Hacker, “The Boundaries of Jewish Autonomy: Jewish Self-Jurisdiction in the Ottoman Empire from the Sixteenth through Eighteenth centuries” (in Hebrew), in Almog et al., eds., *Temurot be-Historiah ha-yehudit ha-ḥadasha . . . Sefer Yovel le-Shmuel Ettinger*, 349–88. See also Joseph Hacker, “The Sephardim in the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth Century,” in Beinart, ed., *Moreshet Sephard: The Sephardic Legacy*, 1:109–33; and Joseph Hacker, “Community Organization in the Jewish Communities of the Ottoman Empire 1453–1676,” in Grossman and Kaplan, eds., *Kahal Yis’rael*, 2:287–309; Salo W. Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews* (New York, 1983), 18:3–295.

33. Joseph Hacker, “The Chief Rabbinate in the Ottoman Empire in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries” (in Hebrew), *Zion* 49 (1984): 225–63; see also Hacker, “The Sürgün System and Its Impact on Jewish Society in the Ottoman Empire,” in *Ottoman and Turkish Jewry*, 1–65; Benjamin Braude, “Foundation Myths of the Millet System,” in Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, eds., *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire* (New York, 1982), 1:69–88; and Leah Bornstein, “The Structure of the Rabbinate in the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries” (in Hebrew), *Mi-Mizrah u-mi-Ma’arav* 1 (1974): 223–58.

34. In addition to the references in the previous two notes, see Azriel Shoḥet, “Comments on the Matter of Communal Organization of the Jews in the Ottoman Empire of the Sixteenth Century” (in Hebrew), *Mi-Kedem u-mi-Yam* 1 (1981) 133–41; Uriel Heyd, “The Jewish Communities of Istanbul in the Seventeenth Century,” *Oriens* 6 (1963): 299–314; Yarom ben Naeh, “Between Guild and Kahal” (in Hebrew), *Zion* 63 (1998): 277–318; and Minna Rozen, “Individual and Community in the Jewish Society of the Ottoman Empire: Salonika in the Sixteenth Century, in Levy, ed., *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire*, 215–73.

35. See Leah Bornstein-Makovetsky, “Cooperation and Conflict between Religious and Political Leadership (Relations between Parnasim and Rabbis in the Communities of the Ottoman Empire during the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries),” in *Conflict and Consensus in Jewish Political Life*, ed. Stuart Cohen and Eliezer Don-Yehiya (Jerusalem, 1986), 15–30; the citations herein are from 25–26; Leah Bornstein-Makovetsky, “Jewish Lay Leadership and Ottoman Authorities during the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,” in

*Ottoman and Turkish Jewry*, 87–121; and Bornstein, “The Structure of the Rabbinate in the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,” 223–58. See also Eliezer Bashan, “The Attitude of the Sages of Salonika in the Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries in the Confrontation over Oligarchic Rule” (in Hebrew), *Mi-Mizrah u-mi-Ma’arav* 2 (1980): 27–52.

36. Yaron Ben Naeh, *Yehudim be-Mamlekheth ha-Sultanim: Ha-Ḥevra ha-Yehudit be-Imperia Ha-Ottomanit be-Ma’ah ha-Shevah-Esreh* (Jerusalem, 2006), 127–243; this book has just been published in English as *Jews in the Realm of the Sultans* (Tübingen, Germany, 2008).

37. See Bartal, *The Jews of Eastern Europe*, 14–22.

38. The present account relies on Adam Teller, “The Laicization of Early Modern Jewish Society: The Development of the Polish Communal Rabbinate in the Sixteenth Century,” in Graetz, ed., *Schöpferische Momente des europäischen Judentums in der frühen Neuzeit*, 333–49. See also Edward Fram, *Ideals Face Reality: Jewish Law and Life in Poland 1550–1655* (Cincinnati, 1998), 38–49; Mordecai Breuer, “The Status of the Rabbinate in its Management of Ashkenazic Communities in the Fifteenth Century” (in Hebrew), *Zion* 41 (1976): 47–66; Simḥa Assaf, “On the History of the Rabbinate in Germany, Poland, and Lithuania” (in Hebrew), *Reshumot* 2 (1927): 259–300; Moshe Rosman, “The Jews of Poland until 1648: Political, Economic and Social Trends” (in Hebrew), in Bartal and Gutman, eds., *Kiryum ve-Shever: Yehudei Polin le-Doroteihem*, 1:59–58; Jacob Goldberg, *Ha-Ḥevra ha-Yehudit be-Mamlekheth Polin-Lita* (Jerusalem, 1999); and Israel Halperin, “The Jews of Eastern Europe from Ancient Times until the Partitions of Poland, 1772–1795,” in *The Jews: Their History*, 4th ed., ed. Louis Finkelstein (New York, 1974), 305–42.

39. See Adam Teller, “Rabbis without a Function? The Polish Rabbinate and the Council of Four Lands in the Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries,” in *Jewish Religious Leadership: Image and Reality*, ed. Jack Wertheimer (New York, 2004), 1:371–400.

40. Ben Sasson, *Hagut ve-Hanbagah*, 184; my translation. For more on the councils, see Ḥayyim Hillel Ben Sasson, “The Councils of the Lands in Eastern Europe” (in Hebrew), in *Reẓef u-Temurah* (Tel Aviv, 1984), 239–57; Shmuel Ettinger, “The Council of the Four Lands,” in *The Jews in Old Poland 1000–1795*, ed. Anthony Polonsky, Jakub Basista, and Andrzej Link-Lenczowski (London, 1993), 93–109; Goldberg, *Ha-Ḥevra ha-Yehudit be-Mamlekheth Polin-Lita*;

Halperin and Bartal, *Pinkas Va'ad Arbah Arzot*; and Halperin, *Yehudim ve-Yahadut be-Mizrah Eropah*.

41. See Gershon Hundert, *Jews in Poland-Lithuania in the Eighteenth Century: A Genealogy of Modernity* (Berkeley, CA, 2004), 81–82; italics in the original.

42. Elijah Judah Schochet, *Bach: Rabbi Joel Sirkes: His Life, Works, and Times* (New York, 1971), 143–46; Ben Sasson, *Hagut ve-Hanhagah*, 212–21.

43. Ben Sasson, *Hagut ve-Hanhagah*, 257–60.

44. On the eighteenth century, see Rosman, *The Lords' Jews*, 198–205; Hundert, *The Jews in a Polish Private Town*, 116–55; and Hundert, *Jews in Poland-Lithuania in the Eighteenth Century*.

45. Hundert, *Jews in Poland-Lithuania in the Eighteenth Century*, 96–97.

46. *Ibid.*, 108.

47. *Ibid.*, 237.

48. Katz, *Tradition and Crisis* (New York, 1961), 81.

### Chapter 3. Knowledge Explosion

1. There is a vast literature on print in general that contextualizes the history of the printed book in Jewish culture, beginning, of course, with Elizabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1979). See, for example, Martin Lowry, “Printing and Publishing,” *Encyclopedia of the Renaissance* (New York, 1999), 5:161–66, for a succinct summary; Roger Chartier, ed., *The Culture of Print: Power and the Uses of Print in Early Modern Europe* (Princeton, NJ, 1989); and Roger Chartier and Guglielmo Cavallo, eds., *A History of Reading in the West* (Amherst, MA, 1999), especially the essay by Robert Bonfil on reading in the Jewish tradition. Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin briefly summarizes the impact of print on Jewish culture in “Print and Jewish Cultural Development,” *Encyclopedia of the Renaissance* (New York, 1999) 3:344–46.

2. For what follows, I rely heavily on the essays of Elhanan Reiner, including his “The Ashkenazic Elite at the Beginning of the Modern Era: Manuscript versus Printed Text,” in *Jews in Early Modern Poland-Polin* 10 (1997): 85–98; “Transformations in the Polish and Ashkenazic Yeshivot during the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries and the Dispute over Pilpul,” 9–80; “The Attitude of Ashkenazi Society to the New Science in the Sixteenth Century,” *Science in Context* 10 (1997): 589–603; “A Biography of an Agent of Culture: Eleazar Altschul of Prague and his Literary Activity,” 229–47; and “The Rise

of the Large Community: On the Roots of the Urban Jewish Community in Poland in the Early Modern Period" (in Hebrew), *Gal-Ed* 20 (2006): 13–36, which also appears in English in a shortened version, "The Rise of an Urban Community: Some Insights on the Transition from the Medieval Ashkenazi to the Sixteenth Century Jewish Community in Poland," *Kwartalnik Historii Żydów Jewish Historical Quarterly* 3 (2003): 364–72. Reiner is presently completing a monograph on this topic; I wish to thank him for allowing me to read part of this work before publication. On the *Shulhan Arukh* in general, see Isadore Twersky, "The *Shulhan Arukh*: Enduring Code of Jewish Law," *Judaism* 16 (1967): 141–58; and Davis, "The Reception of the 'Shulhan Arukh' and the Formation of Ashkenazic Jewish Identity," 251–76.

3. See especially Reiner, "Ashkenazic Elite," 97–98.

4. On the controversies over the invasion of the Sephardic library in eastern Europe, including the debate over the study of Maimonides' philosophical works in Isserles' yeshivah, see Reiner's essays in note 2. On the printing and circulation of exegetical, homiletical, philosophical, and kabbalistic works in eastern Europe, see Elbaum, *Petihut ve-Histagrut*, especially 67–248. On scientific works, see Elbaum, *Petihut ve-Histagrut*, 248–79, and Ruderman, *Jewish Thought and Scientific Discovery in Early Modern Europe*, 54–99. On Tobias Cohen's medical encyclopedia, see Ruderman, *Jewish Thought and Scientific Discovery*, 229–55. See also Shifra Baruchson, *Sefarim ve-Korim: Tarbut Ha-Keriyah shel Yehudei Italia be-Shalhei Ha-Renesans* (Jerusalem, 1993); Shifra Baruchson, "Diffusion of Books: Sacred Writing and Classical Literature in the Libraries of Renaissance Jews" (in Hebrew), *Italia* 8 (1989): 87–99; Robert Bonfil, "The Libraries of Jews" (in Hebrew), *Pe'amim* 52 (1992): 4–14–15; Ze'ev Gries, "Printing as a Means of Communication among Jewish Communities," 5–17; Gries, *Sifrut Ha-Hanbagot*; Ze'ev Gries, *Sefer Sofer ve-Sippur be-Reishit Ha-Hasidut* (Jerusalem, 1992); Ze'ev Gries, *The Book in the Jewish World* (Oxford, 2007); Joseph Hacker, "The Hebrew Press in Constantinople in the Sixteenth Century" (in Hebrew), *Areshet* 5 (1972): 457–93; and Meir Benayahu, "The Shift of the Center of Hebrew Printing from Venice to Amsterdam and the Competition with Jewish Printing in Constantinople" (in Hebrew), in *Mehkaram al Toledot Yahadut Holland*, ed. Joseph Michman (Jerusalem, 1975), 1:41–68.

5. See Lester Segal, *Historical Consciousness and Religious Tradition in Azariah de' Rossi's Me'or Einayim* (Philadelphia, 1989), 153–61; and Robert Bonfil, "Some Reflections on the Place of Azariah de

Rossi's *Meor Eynayim* in the Cultural Milieu of Italian Renaissance Jewry," in *Jewish Thought in the Sixteenth Century*, ed. Bernard Cooperman (Cambridge, MA, 1983), 23-48. Modena's reference is in Marc Saperstein, *Jewish Preaching 1200-1800: An Anthology* (New Haven, CT, 1989), 412.

6. See Reiner, "A Biography of an Agent of Culture"; the works of Ze'ev Gries mentioned in note 4; Shmeruk, *Sifrut Yidish be-Polin*; Elbaum, *Petihut ve-Histagrut*; Moshe Rosman, "Culture in the Book" (in Hebrew), *Zion* 56 (1991): 321-44; Moshe Rosman, "On Being a Jewish Woman in Poland-Lithuania at the Beginning of the Modern Era," in Bartal and Gutman, eds., *Kiyyum ve-Shever*, 415-34; and Halperin, *Yehudim ve-Yahadut be-Mizrah Eropah*, 78-107.

7. See Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York, 1960), 244-324; Scholem, *Sabbatai Ševi: The Mystical Messiah 1626-1676*; Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*; and Liebes, *Sod ha-Emunah ha-Shabta'it*.

8. See Isaiah Tishby, "The Controversy about the *Zohar* in the Sixteenth Century in Italy" (in Hebrew), in *Hekrei Kabbalah u-Sheluhoteha* (Jerusalem, 1982), 79-130; Moshe Idel, "From Hiding to Printing an Esoteric Law: Between R. Isaac Sagi Nahor and Rabbi Isaac Luria," unpublished manuscript, 2005.

9. See Gries, *Sifrut Ha-Hanhagot*; Barnai, *Shabta'ut: Hebetim Hevratim*, 69-90; Jacob Barnai, "The Spread of the Sabbatean Movement in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," in *Communication in the Jewish Diaspora: The Pre-Modern World*, ed. Sophia Menache (Leiden, Netherlands, 1996), 313-37.

10. On Yiddish books, see Shlomo Berger, "Yiddish and Jewish Modernization in the Eighteenth Century" (in Hebrew) in *Braun Lectures in the History of the Jews in Prussia*, vol. 12 (Ramat Gan, Israel, 2006); Shlomo Berger, "An Invitation to Buy and Read: Paratexts of Yiddish Books in Amsterdam 1650-1800," *Book History* 7 (2004): 31-61; Chava Turniansky and Erika Timm, *Yiddish in Italia* (Brescia, Italy, 2003); Miriam Gutchow, *Inventory of Printed Books in the Netherlands* (Leiden, Netherlands, 2006); and Jerold Frakes, *Early Yiddish Texts 1100-1750* (Oxford, 2004). See also the interesting essay of Avriel Bar-Levav, "Between Library Awareness and the Jewish Republic of Letters" (in Hebrew), in Yosef Kaplan and Moshe Sluhovsky, eds., *Sifriyot ve-Osfei Sefarim* (Jerusalem, 2006), 201-24.

11. On Ladino, see Yitshak Molcho, "La Littérature judéo-espagnole en Turquie au premier siècle apres les expulsions d'Espagne et du Portugal," *Tesor de los Judios Sefardies* 1 (1959): 15-53; Abraham Yaari, *Reshimat Sifre Ladino ha-Nimza'im Be-Veit ha-Sefarim*

*ha-Te'umi veba-universita'i bi-Yerushalayim*; Jerusalem, 1934); Aron Rodrigue, *Guide to the Ladino Materials in the Harvard College Library* (Cambridge, MA, 1992); Elena Romero, "Literary Creation of the Sephardi Diaspora," in Beinart, ed., *Moreshet Sepharad: The Sephardic Legacy*, 2:438–60; and Matthias B. Lehmann, *Ladino Rabbinic Literature and Ottoman Sephardic Culture* (Bloomington, IN, 2005). On the matter of Ottoman decline in the eighteenth century, see Jonathan Grant, "Rethinking the Ottoman 'Decline': Military Technology Diffusion in the Ottoman Empire, Fifteenth to Eighteenth Centuries," *Journal of World History* 10 (1999): 179–201; and compare Barnai, "The Jews of the Ottoman Empire in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries."

12. On Leone Ebreo's work, see, for example, Arthur Lesley, "The Place of the *Dialoghi d'amore* in Contemporaneous Jewish Thought," in *Essential Papers on Jewish Culture in Renaissance and Baroque Italy*, ed. David Ruderman (New York, 1992), 170–88; Barbara Garvin, "The Language of Leone Ebreo's *Dialoghi d'amore*," *Italia* 13–15(2001): 181–210; On Usque's work, see Martin Cohen, trans., *Samuel Usque's Consolation for the Tribulations of Israel* (Philadelphia, 1965). On Delmedigo's work, see M. David Geffen, "Insights into the Life and Thought of Elijah Delmedigo Based on his Published and Unpublished Works," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 41–42 (1973–74): 69–86. On Mantino, see David Kaufmann, "Jacob Mantino: une page de l'histoire de la Renaissance," *Revue des études juives* 27 (1893): 30–60, 207–38.

13. See Bonfil, *Rabbis and Jewish Communities*, 298–316; David Ruderman, ed., *Preachers of the Italian Ghetto* (Berkeley, CA, 1992); Marc Saperstein, *Jewish Preaching 1200–1800: An Anthology* (New Haven, CT, 1989), 1–63.

14. See Mark Cohen, "Leone da Modena's Riti: A Seventeenth Century Plea for Social Toleration of Jews," in Ruderman, *Essential Papers*, 429–73; Ravid, *Economics and Toleration*; Yosef Kaplan, Henry Méchoulan, and Richard Popkin, eds., *Menasseh ben Israel and His World* (Leiden, Netherlands, 1989); and Yosef Kaplan, *From Christianity to Judaism: The Story of Isaac Orobrio de Castro*, translated by Jonathan Chipman (Oxford, 1989).

15. Simone Luzzatto, *Discorso circa il stato de gl'hebrei et in particular dimoranti nell'inclita città de Venetia* (Venice, 1638), 73–85. See my brief remarks on this thinker in the introduction to the present volume. For a discussion of this work, see Ravid, *Economics and Toleration*. See also Profiat Duran, introduction to *Ma'aseh Efod* (Vienna, 1865). On Reuchlin, see note 22, below. For a different



interpretation of this chapter, see Robert Bonfil, "A Cultural Profile," in Davis and Ravid, eds., *The Jews of Early Modern Venice*, 170–73.

16. On the use of English manuals on Judaism written simultaneously for internal and external usage, see David Ruderman, *Jewish Enlightenment in an English Key: Anglo-Jewry's Construction of Modern Jewish Thought* (Princeton, NJ, 2000), 240–68. On the illustration of *minhag* books, see Diane Wolfthal, "Imagining the Self: Representations of Jewish Ritual in Yiddish Books of Customs," in *Imagining the Self, Imagining the Other: Visual Representation and Jewish-Christian Dynamics in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Period*, ed. Eva Frojmovic (Leiden, Netherlands, 2002), 189–211. On Picart and representations of Jews in the early modern period, see Richard Cohen, *Jewish Icons: Art and Society in Modern Europe* (Berkeley, CA, 1998), 10–67; and Samantha Baskind, "Bernard Picart's Etchings of Amsterdam's Jews," *Jewish Social Studies* 13 (2007): 40–64.

17. See Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, *The Censor, the Editor, and the Text: The Catholic Church and the Shaping of the Jewish Canon in the Sixteenth Century* (Philadelphia, 2007), and Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, "Censorship, Editing, and the Reshaping of Jewish Identity: The Catholic Church and Hebrew Literature in the Sixteenth Century," in *Hebraica Veritas? Christian Hebraists and the Study of Judaism in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Allison Coudert and Jeffrey Shoulson (Philadelphia, 2004), 125–55.

18. In presenting the case for the transformative impact of print on Jewish culture in the preceding sections, I do not wish to overstate my case. The important issues raised in response to the pioneering work of Elizabeth Eisenstein (see note 1, above) by her chief critic Adrian Johns, the author of *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making* (Chicago, 1998), are relevant to my discussion as well. Eisenstein and Johns presented their diverging positions in a heated exchange in a forum published in *American Historical Review* 107 (2002): 84–114–128. Eisenstein insisted on the revolutionary character of print itself in radically increasing the production of texts, disseminating them widely, and standardizing and preserving them. This technical discovery, so she claimed, ultimately affected the transformation of early modern culture, impacting the flow of information during the Renaissance, Reformation, and the so-called scientific revolution. Her critics have challenged her positions, arguing that she exaggerated the revolutionary nature of print while downplaying the continuity and persistence of scribal culture both before and during the age of print. Johns especially accused her

of a kind of technological determinism. He insisted instead that not print culture per se but the social practices of producers, distributors, censors, and readers of books are ultimately decisive in examining the place of print in early modern culture. For Johns, a cultural history of print instead of a history of print culture is the preferred approach for his generation of book historians. It elevates personal agency over the impersonal forces engendered by a new technology; emphasizes localized studies over a shared continental culture centered on a machine; and recognizes the freedom of readers to create a multiplicity of meanings from identical texts.

In considering these same issues regarding the printing of Jewish books, one has to acknowledge that the scribal culture of medieval Jews surely facilitated, albeit to a lesser degree, the movement of texts and ideas across vast cultural and political boundaries long before the invention of print. Prized Hebrew manuscripts remained valuable commodities well into the modern period despite the availability of printed books. Most important, the distribution of printed books should not be mistaken for the distribution of knowledge. The knowledge explosion I describe in this chapter should not be deemed the result of a technological invention alone. It entails much more: the stimulus of new intellectual tastes and fashions, innovations in pedagogy, the accessibility of Jews to new learning opportunities outside the Jewish community such as the university, new reading habits, the high degree of mobility previously described, and the availability of personal contacts between Jews and Christians in a variety of social settings, including the print shop. Print by itself never produced knowledge; but it did enhance the opportunities for new learning and investigation for Jews everywhere. Accordingly, this chapter addresses the impact of print but also addresses other manifestations of the knowledge explosion, as the following sections make clear.

19. See the insightful discussion of Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin on Thomas in his “Censorship, Editing, and the Reshaping of Jewish Identity” and at greater length in *The Censor, the Editor, and the Text*, 175–200. See the critical edition of *Shevet Yehudah* mentioned in chapter 1, note 44, of the present volume.

20. Scholarship on medieval Christian attitudes toward Judaism and Jewish texts is vast. A sampling might include Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1983); Harry Halperin, *Rashi and the Christian Scholars* (Pittsburgh, 1963); Jeremy Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews: The Evolution of Medieval Anti-Judaism* (Ithaca, NY, 1982); idem, *Living Letters of the Law: Ideas of the Jews in Medieval Christianity* (Berkeley, CA, 1999); and

more recently, Deena Copeland Klepper, *The Insight of Unbelievers: Nicholas of Lyra and Christian Reading of Jewish Text in the Later Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, 2007).

21. For a more detailed discussion of Pico and the Christian kabbalah, see David Ruderman, "The Italian Renaissance and Jewish Thought," in Rabil, ed., *Renaissance Humanism*, 1:382–433. See also Umberto Cassuto, *Ha-Yehudim Be-Firenzi bi-Tekufat ha-Renesans*, part 3, chap. 3; Fabrizio Lelli, "Yohanan Alemanno, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola e la cultura ebraica italiana del xv secolo," in Gian Carlo Garfagnini, ed., *Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, convegno internazionale*. . . (Mirandola, Italy, 1994); Bernard McGinn, "Cabalists and Christians: Reflections on Cabala in Medieval and Renaissance Thought," in *Jewish Christians and Christian Jews: From the Renaissance to the Enlightenment*, ed. Richard Popkin and Gordon Weiner (Dordrecht, Netherlands, 1994), 11–34; Frances Yates, *The Occult Philosophy in the Renaissance* (London, 1979); and Wirszubski, *Pico della Mirandola's Encounter with Jewish Mysticism*.

22. See, for example, Jerome Friedman, *The Most Ancient Testimony: Sixteenth Century Christian Hebraica in the Age of Renaissance Nostalgia* (Athens, OH, 1983); Heiko Obermann, *The Roots of Anti-Semitism in the Age of the Renaissance and Reformation* (Philadelphia, 1984); Erica Rummel, *The Case against Johann Reuchlin: Social and Religious Controversy in Sixteenth-Century Germany* (Toronto, 2002).

23. See especially Friedman, *The Most Ancient Testimony*; and more recently, Bell and Burnett, eds., *Jews, Judaism, and the Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Germany*.

24. Frank Manuel, *The Broken Staff: Judaism through Christian Eyes* (Cambridge, MA, 1992); Coudert and Shoulson, eds., *Hebraica Veritas? Christian Hebraists, Jews, and the Study of Judaism in Early Modern Europe*; Allison Coudert, *The Impact of the Kabbalah in the Seventeenth Century: The Life and Thought of Francis Mercury van Helmont (1614–1698)* (Leiden, Netherlands, 1999); Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggeman, ed., *Christliche Kabbala* (Thorbecke, 2003); Steven Burnett, *From Christian Hebraism to Jewish Studies: Johannes Buxtorf (1564–1629) and Hebrew Learning in the Seventeenth Century* (Leiden, Netherlands, 1996); see also the review of Burnett by Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin in *Tarbiz* 68 (1999–2000): 449–55. See, most recently, Jason Rosenblatt, *Renaissance England's Chief Rabbi: John Selden* (Oxford, 2006); and David Ruderman, *Connecting the Covenants: Judaism and the Search for Christian Identity in Eighteenth-Century England* (Philadelphia, 2007).

25. See Yaakov Deutsch, "A View of the Jewish Religion: Conceptions of Jewish Practice and Ritual in Early Modern Europe," *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte*, 3 (2001): 273–95; Steven Burnett, "Distorted Mirrors: Antonius Margaritha, Johann Buxtorf and Christian Ethnographies of the Jews," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 25 (1994): 275–87; Ronnie Po-chia Hsia, "Christian Ethnographies of Jews in Early Modern Germany," in *The Expulsion of the Jews: 1492 and After*, ed. Raymond Waddington and Arthur Williamson (New York, 1994), 223–35. See also Raz-Krakotzkin, *The Censor, the Editor, and the Text*, 181–83.

26. See Sharon Liberman Mintz and Gabriel Goldstein, eds., *Printing the Talmud: From Bomberg to Schottenstein* (New York, 2005).

27. In addition to the references in notes 22–25 above, see especially Stephen G. Burnett, "Christian Hebrew Printing in the Sixteenth Century: Printers, Humanism, and the Impact of the Reformation," *Helmantica* 51 (2000): 13–42.

28. See Bell and Burnett, eds., *Jews, Judaism, and the Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Germany*; Fania Oz-Salzberger, "The Jewish Roots of the Modern Republic," *Azure* 13 (2002): 88–132.

29. See, for example, the testimony of Elijah Halfan, cited in Moshe Idel, "The Magical and Neoplatonic Interpretations of the Kabbalah in the Renaissance," in Ruderman, ed., *Essential Papers*, 107–8.

30. These responses are discussed in Ruderman, "The Italian Renaissance and Jewish Thought," 382–433.

31. On Kennicott and Lowth, see Ruderman, *Jewish Enlightenment in an English Key*, chaps. 1–2. On Michaelis and Christian critiques of the Massoretic text, see Edward Breuer, *The Limits of Enlightenment: Jews, Germans, and the Eighteenth-Century Study of Scripture* (Cambridge, MA, 1995).

32. See David Katz, "Henry More and the Jews," in *Henry More (1614–14–1687): Tercentenary Studies*, ed. Sarah Hutton (Dordrecht, Netherlands, 1990), 173–88.

33. On Jewish converts, see Elisheva Carlebach, *Divided Souls: Converts from Judaism in Germany 1500–1750* (New Haven, CT, 2001); and Ruderman, *Connecting the Covenants: Judaism and the Search for Christian Identity in Eighteenth-Century England*.

34. See Robert Bonfil, introduction to the facsimile edition of *Nofet Zufim* (in Hebrew; Jerusalem, 1981); Abraham Melamed, "Rhetoric and Philosophy in *Nofet Zufim*" (in Hebrew), *Italia* 1 (1978): 7–38; Robert Bonfil, "The Book of the Honeycomb's Flow by

Judah Messer Leon: The Rhetorical Dimension of Jewish Humanism in Fifteenth Century Italy,” *Frank Talmage Memorial Volume, Jewish History* 6 (1992), 21–33. The reference to “orthodox apologetics” is found in this last essay. See also the edition of Isaac Rabinowitz, *The Book of the Honeycomb’s Flow: Sēpher Nōpheth Sūphīm* by Judah Messer Leon (Ithaca, NY, 1983).

35. On David Messer Leon, see Tirosh-Rothschild, *Between Worlds*. On Alemanno, see the entry by Fabrizio Lelli in the *Encyclopedia of the Renaissance* (New York, 1999), 1: 40–42, which includes an up-to-date bibliography. On Yagel, see David Ruderman, *Kabbalah, Magic and Science: The Cultural Universe of a Sixteenth-Century Jewish Physician* (Cambridge, MA, 1988), especially chaps. 7 and 9. On Taitazak, see Joseph Sermoneta, “The Scholastic-Philosophical Literature in the book “Porat Yosef” of Rabbi Joseph Taitazak” (in Hebrew), *Sefunot* 11, *Sefer Yavan* 1 (1971–78): 135–85. On Tobias Ha-Cohen, see Ruderman, *Jewish Thought and Scientific Discovery in Early Modern Europe*, chap. 8. See also Ruderman and Veltri, eds., *Cultural Intermediaries*.

36. See Joanna Weinberg’s English translation of Azariah de’ Rossi, *The Light of the Eyes*; Gianfranco Miletto, *Glauben und Wissen im Zeitalter der Reformation: der Salomonische Tempel bei Abraham ben David Portaleone (1542–1612)* (Berlin, 2004); Moshe Idel, “Judah Moscato: A Late Renaissance Jewish Preacher,” in Ruderman, ed., *Preachers of the Italian Ghetto*, 44–66; Adam Shear, “Judah Moscato’s Scholarly Self-Image and the Question of Jewish Humanism,” in Ruderman and Veltri, eds., *Cultural Intermediaries*, 149–77, as well as the essay by Joanna Weinberg, “The Beautiful Soul: Azariah de’ Rossi’s Search for Truth,” 109–26, in the same volume.

37. See, for example, Don Harrán, “Jewish Dramatists and Musicians in the Renaissance: Separate Activities, Common Aspirations,” in *Musicologia humana: Studies in Honor of Warren and Ursula Kirkendale*, ed. Siegfried Gmeinwieser, David Hiley, and Jörg Riedbauer (Florence, Italy, 1994), 291–304; Don Harrán, “As Framed, So Perceived: Salamone Rossi Ebreo, Late Renaissance Musician,” in Ruderman and Veltri, eds., *Cultural Intermediaries*, 178–215; and Anne-Laure Benharrosh, “Leone de Sommi, homme de théâtre juif dans l’Italie de la Renaissance,” *Les Cahiers du Judaïsme* 14 (2003): 25–43.

38. See, for example, Abraham Melamed, “Hebrew Italian Renaissance and Early Modern Encyclopedias,” *Rivista di storia della filosofia* 1 (1985): 91–112; Shlomo Berger and Resianne Fontaine, “‘Something on Every Subject’: On Pre-Modern Hebrew and

Yiddish Encyclopedias,” *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 5 (2006): 269–84. See also David Ruderman, “At the Intersection of Cultures: The Historical Legacy of Italian Jewry Prior to the Emancipation,” in *Gardens and Ghettos: Art and Jewish Life in Italy*, ed. Vivian Mann (Berkeley, CA, 1989), 1–23.

39. See, Ruderman, *Jewish Thought and Scientific Discovery*, chaps. 8 and 9.

40. See Moshe Idel, “Particularism and Universalism in Kabbalah, 1480–1650,” in Ruderman, *Essential Papers*, 324–44; Moshe Idel, “Major Currents in Italian Kabbalah between 1560 and 1660,” in Ruderman, *Essential Papers*, 345–68; and Moshe Idel, “Italy in Safed, Safed in Italy: A Chapter in the Interactive History of Sixteenth-Century Kabbalah,” in Ruderman and Veltri, eds., *Cultural Intermediaries*, 239–69.

41. Joseph Hacker, “Intellectual Activity among the Jews of the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries” (in Hebrew), *Tarbiz* 53 (1984): 569–603; Joseph Hacker, “A Polemic against Philosophy in Istanbul in the Sixteenth Century: Studies in the book *Derekh Hayyim* of R. Menahem de Lonzano” (in Hebrew), in *Mehkarim be-kabbalah be-filosofia yehudit u-ve-sifrut hamusar ve-ha-hagut . . . Isaiah Tishby Volume* (Jerusalem, 1986), 507–36; Hava Tirosh-Samuelson, “The Ultimate End of Human Life in Post-Expulsion Philosophic Literature,” in Gampel, ed., *Crisis and Creativity*, 223–54. See also Barnai, “The Jews of the Ottoman Empire in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries.”

42. See Kaplan, *An Alternative Path to Modernity*; Kaplan, *From Christianity to Judaism: The Story of Isaac Orobrio de Castro*; Bodian, *Hebrews of the Portuguese Nation*; and Swetschinski, *Reluctant Cosmopolitans: The Portuguese Jews of Seventeenth-Century Amsterdam*. On the Yiddish press in Amsterdam, see Berger, “An Invitation to Buy and Read.” On the Hebrew press as well as a succinct summary of cultural trends in Amsterdam, see Yosef Kaplan, “Jewish Amsterdam’s Impact on Modern Jewish History,” in Graetz, ed. *Schöpferische Momente des europäischen Judentums in der frühen Neuzeit*, 57–62.

43. See, for example, Noah Efron, “Irenism and Natural Philosophy in Rudolfine Prague: The Case of David Gans,” *Science in Context* 10 (1997): 627–50.

44. See especially the works of Reiner and Elbaum mentioned in notes 2 and 4, above; and also Moshe Rosman, “A Prolegomenon to Jewish Cultural History,” 109–127; Moshe Rosman, “Innovative Tradition: Jewish Culture in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth,”

in Biale, ed., *Cultures of the Jews*, 519–70; Berger, “An Invitation to Buy and Read.” See also the introduction to the present volume, notes 2, 32–34, as well as note 10 of this chapter, above.

45. See Ruderman, *Jewish Thought and Scientific Discovery in Early Modern Europe*, 54–99, and the bibliography listed there.

46. See Ruderman, *Jewish Thought*, 100–15. On Jewish university students at other universities see Yosef Kaplan, “Sephardi Students at the University of Leiden,” in *An Alternative Path to Modernity*, 196–210; and Israel Bartal, “Jews in Eastern European Higher Education” (in Hebrew), in *Toledot Ha-Universita Ha-Iurit Bi-Yerushalayim*, ed. Shaul Katz and Michael Heyd (Jerusalem, 1997), 75–89.

47. Each of these thinkers is the subject of a separate chapter of Ruderman, *Jewish Thought*, 118–52, 153–84, 229–55, 256–72, and 310–31.

48. See Ruderman, *Jewish Thought*, 273–309. See also Kaplan, “Sephardi Students at the University of Leiden,” and the two essays of Eliezer Gutwirth mentioned in chap. 1, note 39 of the present volume.

49. On Basilea, see Ruderman, *Jewish Thought*, 213–28.

## Chapter 4. Crisis of Rabbinic Authority

1. Salo Baron, “Ghetto and Emancipation,” *Menorah Journal* 14 (1928): 526; Benjamin Nathans, *Beyond the Pale: The Jewish Encounter with Late Imperial Russia* (Berkeley, CA, 2002), 8–9. Compare also Katz, *Tradition and Crisis: Jewish Society at the End of the Middle Ages*. On the use of “crisis” as a historical category in general, see Randolph Starn, “Historians and ‘Crisis,’” *Past and Present* 52 (1971): 3–22; and, most recently, J. B. Shank, “Crisis: A Useful Category of Post-Social Scientific Historical Analysis?” *American Historical Review* 113 (2008): 1090–99.

2. See Philip Benedict and Myron P. Gutmann, eds., *Early Modern Europe: From Crisis to Stability* (Newark, DE, 2005), especially the introduction by Philip Benedict. See also the essay by J. H. Elliott, “The General Crisis in Retrospect: A Debate without End,” in the same volume, 31–51. The essays that initiated the debate first appeared in the journal *Past and Present* and were written by Eric Hobsbawm and H. R. Trevor-Roper. They were reprinted with other related essays in Trevor Aston, ed., *Crisis in Europe 1560–1660* (London, 1965). See also Theodore Rabb, *The Struggle for Stability in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford, 1975). The latest summary and evaluation of the controversy can be found in Jonathan Dewald,

“Crisis, Chronology, and the Shape of European Social History,” *American Historical Review* 113 (2008): 1031–52. See also Geoffrey Parker, “Crisis and Catastrophe: The Global Crisis of the Seventeenth Century Reconsidered,” *American Historical Review* 113 (2008): 1053–79. In his chart of major revolts and revolutions on 1055, Parker includes the appearance of Shabbetai Zevi.

3. See Paul Hazard, *La Crise de la conscience européenne* (Paris, 1935); Paul Hazard, *The European Mind 1680–1715*, translated from the French by J. Lewis May (Harmondsworth, England, 1964); Margaret Jacob, *The Radical Enlightenment: Pantheists, Freemasons, and Republicans* (London, 1981); and Margaret Jacob, “The Crisis of the European Mind: Hazard Revisited,” in *Politics and Culture in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Phyllis Mack and Margaret Jacob (Cambridge, 1987), 251–71. See also the present volume’s appendix, note 13.

4. See Jonathan Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity* (Oxford, 2001), especially 1–81; the citations herein are on 7 and 17.

5. Jacob Katz, for example, despite the prominence of the notion of “crisis” in his work, ignored completely the general economic and political crises of European historiography and the cultural crisis of Hazard and others. On this, see Yosef Kaplan, “The Early Modern Period in the Historiographical Production of Jacob Katz” (in Hebrew), in *Historiografia ba-Mivhan: Iyyun Mehudash be-Mishnato shel Yaakov Katz*, ed. Israel Bartal and Shmuel Feiner (Jerusalem, 2008), 19–35, especially 26–35. However, in *Out of the Ghetto: The Social Background of Jewish Emancipation 1770–1870* (Cambridge, MA, 1973), p. 228, note 25, Jacob Katz compares his own conclusions about the beginnings of a structural change in traditional Jewish society to those of Hugh Trevor-Roper. (My thanks to Michael Silber for this reference.)

Jonathan Israel, on the other hand, in *European Jewry in the Age of Mercantilism*, 170, offers the following ambiguous formulation: “A mounting turmoil of inner pressures erupted in the 1650s and 1660s in a drama which was to convulse world Jewry. Furthermore, although this Jewish upheaval had some separate and independent roots, unconnected with the current intellectual preoccupations of Christian Europe, it took place during, and shared some causes with, the deepening crisis besetting European culture as a whole. Inevitably, the ferment within the Synagogue interacted on the wider level within European devotion and thought, the one chain of encounters pervading the other in a remarkable process of cultural transformation.”



6. See especially Scholem, *Sabbatai ʿevi: The Mystical Messiah 1626–1676*; Gershom Scholem, *Meḥkarei Shabta’ut*, ed. Yehudah Liebes (Jerusalem, 1991); and Liebes, *Sod ha-Emunah ha-Shabeta’it*.

7. See, for example, Moshe Idel, “One from a Town, Two from a Clan: The Diffusion of Lurianic Kabbala and Sabbateanism: A Re-evaluation,” *Jewish History* 7 (1993): 79–104; Moshe Idel, *Messianic Mystics* (New Haven, CT, 1998), chap. 6; Yehudah Liebes, “Sabbatean Messianism,” in *Studies in Jewish Myth and Jewish Messianism* (Albany, NY, 1993), 93–106; Avraham Elqayam, “The Mystery of Faith in the Writings of Nathan of Gaza” (in Hebrew), Ph.D. dissertation, Hebrew University, 1993; and Elior, ed., *Ha-Halom ve-Shivro*.

8. Jacob Barnai, “Some Social Aspects of the Polemics between Sabbatians and their Opponents,” in *Jewish Messianism in the Early Modern World*, ed. Matt Goldish and Richard Popkin (Dordrecht, Netherlands, 2001), 77–90; Barnai, *Shabta’ut: Hebetim Hevratim*; and Barnai, “The Spread of the Sabbatean Movement in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries,” , 313–37.

9. Richard Popkin, “Christian Interest and Concerns about Sabbatai Zevi,” in Goldish and Popkin, eds., *Jewish Messianism in the Early Modern World*, 91–106; Michael Heyd, “The Jewish Quaker: Christian Perceptions of Sabbatai Zevi as an Enthusiast,” in Coudert and Shoulson, eds., *Hebraica Veritas? Christian Hebraists, Jews, and the Study of Judaism in Early Modern Europe*, 234–65; Elisheva Carlebach, “The Last Deception: Failed Messiahs and Jewish Conversion in Early Modern German Lands,” in Goldish and Popkin, eds., *Jewish Messianism in the Early Modern World*, 125–38.

10. Michael Heyd, “The Reaction to Enthusiasm in the Seventeenth Century: Towards an Integrative Approach,” *Journal of Modern History* 53 (1981): 258–80; Michael Heyd, *Be Sober and Reasonable: Science, Medicine and the Critique of Enthusiasm in the Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries* (Leiden, Netherlands, 1995).

11. Matt Goldish, “Patterns in Converso Messianism,” in Goldish and Popkin, eds., *Jewish Messianism in the Early Modern Period*, 41–64; Goldish, *The Sabbatean Prophets*. Goldish stresses the role of the kabbalah, following Scholem, as the dominant Jewish theology of early modern Jews, and a primary factor in explaining the crisis of authority in the Jewish world. He also connects the general currents of skepticism in this era with the same crisis.

12. The major guide in charting the history of Sabbateanism in the first half of the eighteenth century is Elisheva Carlebach’s masterful study of Moses Ḥagiz and the Sabbatean controversies. Although

the focus of her study is on Hagiz alone, his prominence throughout this long period as a staunch opponent of what he considered the scourge of Sabbatean heresy provides a meaningful perspective to view panoramically the violent eruptions between the Sabbateans and their pursuers. See Carlebach, *The Pursuit of Heresy: Rabbi Moses Hagiz and the Sabbatian Controversies*.

13. *Ibid.*, 75–159; I. S. Emmanuel, “Documents Related to the Nehemiah Hayon Controversy in Amsterdam” (in Hebrew), *Sefunot* 9 (1965): 211–46; Menahem Friedman, “New Documents Relating to the Hayon Controversy” (in Hebrew), *Sefunot* 10 (1966): 483–619; Yehudah Liebes, “The Ideological Basis of the Hayon Controversy” (in Hebrew), *Proceedings of the Eighth World Congress* (Jerusalem, 1982), 129–34.

14. *Oz le-Elohim*, 1, translated by Carlebach in *The Pursuit of Heresy*, 99.

15. Carlebach, *The Pursuit of Heresy*, 99–101.

16. On the Christian fascination with Hayon’s book *Oz le-Elohim* as an expression of Jewish Christianity, see Hans Joachim Schoeps, *Philosemitismus im Barock: Religions- und gesehgeschichtliche Untersuchungen* (Tübingen, Germany, 1952), 108–14.

17. See the discussions of the controversies between Hagiz and the lay leaders of Amsterdam and Sasportas and the lay leaders of Leghorn in chapter 2 of the present volume.

18. See Carlebach, *The Pursuit of Heresy*, 195–255, on the Luzzatto controversy as well as the earlier essays of Isaiah Tishby collected in *Netivei Emunah u-Minut* (Jerusalem, 1964). On the Emden-Eibeschutz controversy, see Jacob Joseph Schacter, “Rabbi Jacob Emden: Life and Major Works,” PhD diss., Harvard University, 1988; Mortimer Cohen, *Jacob Emden: A Man of Controversy* (Philadelphia, 1937) and the critical review by Gershom Scholem of Cohen’s book in *Mehkarei Shabta’ut*, 655–80. See also Sid Z. Leiman, “When a Rabbi Is Accused of Heresy: Rabbi Ezekiel Landau’s Attitude toward Rabbi Jonathan Eibeschutz,” in *From Ancient Israel to Modern Judaism: Essays in Honor of Marvin Fox*, ed. Jacob Neusner, Ernest Frerichs, and Nahum Sarna (Atlanta, 1989), 3:179–94. See, more recently, Sid Z. Leiman and Simon Schwarzfuchs, “New Evidence on the Emden-Eibeschutz Controversy: The Amulets from Metz,” *Revue des études juives* 165 (2006): 229–49, and Pawel Maciejko, “The Jews’ Entry into the Public Sphere: The Emden-Eibeschutz Controversy Reconsidered,” in Feiner and Ruderman, eds., *Early Modern Culture and Haskalah*, 135–54.

19. Simon Ginzburg, *Ha-Ramhal u-Venai Doro: Osef Iggrot u-Te'udot* (Tel Aviv, 1937), 1:116, translated by Carlebach in *The Pursuit of Heresy*, 203.

20. Ginsburg, *Ha-Ramhal u-Venai Doro*, 1:74, 90; 2:85, translated by Carlebach in *The Pursuit of Heresy*, 209; italics in the original.

21. Carlebach, *The Pursuit of Heresy*, 223.

22. In addition to the references in note 18 above, see Chaim Wirszubski, "The Sabbatean Kabbalist R. Moses David of Podhayce" (in Hebrew), *Zion* 7 (1942): 73–93; and Yehudah Liebes, "On a Secret Jewish-Christian Sect Whose Source is in Sabbateanism" (in Hebrew), in *Sod ha-Emunah ha-Shabta'it*, 212–37. On the critique of Liebes's view, see chapter 5 of the present volume.

23. The classic work on Frankism is Majer Balaban, *Le-Toldot ha-Tenu'ah ha-Frankit* (Tel Aviv, 1934). The most important new synthesis is that of Pawel Maciejko in *The Mixed Multitude: The Development of the Frankist Movement 1755–1816* (Oxford, forthcoming).

24. Carlebach, *The Pursuit of Heresy*, 75.

25. See, for example, Jacob Katz, *Ha-Halakha Be-Meizar: Mikhsolim al Derekh ha-Orthodoxiya be-Hithavutah* (Jerusalem, 1992); Jacob Katz, "Orthodoxy in Historical Perspective," in *Studies in Contemporary Jewry* 2 (1986): 3–17; Moshe Samet, "Halakha ve-Reforma," PhD diss., Hebrew University, 1972; Israel Bartal, "True Knowledge and Wisdom': On Orthodox Historiography," *Studies in Contemporary Jewry* 10 (1994): 178–92; David Ellenson, *Rabbi Esriel Hildesheimer and the Creation of Modern Jewish Orthodoxy* (Tuscaloosa, AL, 1990); Mordechai Breuer, *Modernity within Tradition*, trans. Elizabeth Petuchowski (New York, 1992); and Michael Silber, "The Emergence of Ultra-Orthodoxy: The Invention of a Tradition," in *The Uses of Tradition: Jewish Continuity in the Modern Era*, ed. Jack Wertheimer (New York, 1992), 23–84. See also Michael Silber, "Orthodoxy," in *Yivo Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*, ed. Gershon Hundert (New Haven, CT, 2008), 2:1292–97, especially 1293: "Orthodoxy thus emerged in response to ideologies that challenged tradition and presented themselves as legitimate alternatives."

26. Carlebach, *The Pursuit of Heresy*, 277. Katz reviewed Carlebach's book in *Zion* 59 (1994): 521–24.

27. See Adam Ferziger, *Exclusion and Hierarchy: Orthodoxy, Nonobservance, and the Emergence of Modern Jewish Identity* (Philadelphia, 2005), especially 1–17.

28. See David Sorotzkin, "Kehillat ha-al Zeman be-Idan ha-Temurot: Kavim le-Hithavutan shel Tefisot ha-Zeman ve-ha-Kolektiv

ke-Basis le-Hagdarat Hitpathut ha-Orthodoksiyah ha-Yehudit Be-Eropah be-At ha-Hadasha." PhD diss., Hebrew University, 2007.

29. See Shalom Rosenberg, "Emunat Hakhamim," in *Jewish Thought in the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Isadore Twersky and Bernard Septimus (Cambridge, MA, 1987), 285–342; and consider the reservations of Yosef Kaplan regarding the essay in "‘Karaites’ in the Early Eighteenth Century," in *An Alternative Path to Modernity*, 234–79. Compare more recently Kaplan's use of the term *orthodoxy* in describing developments in the Amsterdam Jewish community of the early eighteenth century in his "Secularizing the Portuguese Jews: Integration and Orthodoxy in Early Modern Judaism," in Feiner and Ruderman, eds., *Early Modern Culture and Haskalah*, 99–110. Shmuel Feiner has also located the beginnings of orthodoxy in the eighteenth century, albeit at the century's very end and primarily as a reaction to the corrosive impact of the Enlightenment on traditional Jewish faith. See Shmuel Feiner, "To Uproot Wisdom from the World: Enemies of the Enlightenment and the Roots of Ultra-Orthodoxy" (in Hebrew), in *Kana'ut Datit*, ed. Meir Litvak and Ora Limor (Jerusalem, 2008), 57–83.

30. Moses Ḥagiz, *Mishnat Hakhamim* (1864; reprinted Tel Aviv, 1964), 519:64a–65b; see also 521, translated in Rosenberg, "Emunat Hakhamim," 297; emphasis added.

On the Sabbateans Leible of Prosnitz and Moses Meir of Zolkiew, see Carlebach, *The Pursuit of Heresy*, 174–76.

31. Jacob Sasportas, *Sefer Ziz'at Novel Zevi*, ed. Isaiah Tishby (Jerusalem, 1954), 87, translated in Rosenberg, "Emunat Hakhamim," 296–97.

32. *Sefer Ziz'at Novel Zevi*, 256, translated by Pawel Maciejko in *The Mixed Multitude*; italics in the original. The citation is from chapter 2, titled "The Peril of Heresy, the Birth of a New Faith." I am grateful to Dr. Maciejko for allowing me to read a draft of this chapter prior to publication.

33. See Carlebach, *The Pursuit of Heresy*, 123–59.

34. *Ibid.*, 191–63.

35. See Maciejko, *The Mixed Multitude*, chap. 2.

36. Cited in Carlebach, *The Pursuit of Heresy*, 132.

37. See especially Carlebach, *The Pursuit of Heresy*, 149–55. The citation is found in Isaiah Sonne, "Correspondence between R. Moses Ḥagiz and R. Samson Morpurgo Regarding Nehemiah Ḥayon and his Sect" (in Hebrew), *Kovez al Yad* 12 (1937): 190b, translated by Carlebach in *The Pursuit of Heresy*, 151; her citation on 316, note 29, should read "190b" instead of "19b."

38. One fascinating instance of a contemporary attempt to link the Sabbatean Nehemiah Hayon and Spinoza is found in a French article written by the ḥakham of the Spanish and Portuguese synagogue of the Hague, David Nuñez-Torres, published posthumously several months after his death in 1728. The essay is found in *Bibliothèque raisonnée des ouvrages des savans de l'Europe*, I (1728): 335–352. In this long review of Hayon's controversial book, the author presents its major ideas on the divine essence objectively and dispassionately, pointing out that the rabbis of Amsterdam had not found the work heretical, while completely ignoring the bitter critiques of Hagiz and his rabbinic colleagues. It is not clear why there was such a long time lag between the book's publication in 1713 and this review fifteen years later. Nuñez-Torres casually points out (on 340) that ideas especially found in chapter 8 of Hayon's book well conform to the philosophical system of Spinoza. This scholarly comment from an intellectual who owned a vast private library that included Spinoza's works appears to be a curiosity at best. Neither Hayon's bombastic publication nor Spinoza's philosophical tomes appeared troubling to this ḥakham. On the contrary, he innocently collected Spinoza's books for his library while he deemed Hayon's theology important enough to publicize in the pages of a non-Jewish journal. My sincere thanks to Yosef Kaplan, from whom I first learned about Nuñez-Torres and his remarkable library, and who pointed me to this reference.

39. See, for example, Yirmiyahu Yovel, *Spinoza and Other Heretics: The Marrano of Reason* (Princeton, NJ, 1989); and Steven Nadler, *Spinoza: A Life* (Cambridge, 1999).

40. For more on these other heretics, see Kaplan, *From Christianity to Judaism*, especially 122–78; and Uriel da Costa, *Examination of Pharisaic Traditions*, ed. Herman P. Salomon (Leiden, Netherlands, 1993).

41. See the references to Yosef Kaplan's article and his reservations about the conclusions of Shalom Rosenberg in note 29, above.

42. Talya Fishman, *Shaking the Pillars of Exile: 'Voice of a Fool,' an Early Modern Jewish Critique of Rabbinic Culture* (Stanford, CA, 1997).

43. See Jonathan Israel's rather unsuccessful attempt in "Was There a Pre-1740 Sephardic Jewish Enlightenment?" *La Diaspora des Nouveaux-Chrétiens: Arquivos do Centro Cultural Calouste Gulbenkian* 48 (2004): 3–20.

44. See Kaplan, *From Christianity to Judaism*, 263–70.

45. Israel, *European Jewry in the Age of Mercantilism*, 219–20. On Nieto, see Ruderman, *Jewish Thought and Scientific Discovery in Early Modern Europe*, 310–31.

46. I refer to Shmuel Feiner's forthcoming book, tentatively titled *Olam Hadash, Olam Hafukh: Shorshei ha-Hillun Be-Yahadut Er-opah be-Me'ah ha-18* (Jerusalem) and eventually to be published in an English translation. My thanks to Professor Feiner for allowing me to read an early version of his large manuscript.

47. Chimen Abramsky, "The Crisis of Authority within European Jewry in the Eighteenth Century," in *Studies in Jewish Religious and Intellectual History Presented to Alexander Altmann*, ed. Raphael Loewe and Sigfried Stein (Tuscaloosa, AL, 1976), 13–28, offers no links to larger European crises either.

48. See the essay of Jonathan Israel mentioned in chapter 2, note 31, and my comments there on the difference between economic stability and lack of cultural production.

## Chapter 5. Mingled Identities

1. See especially Kaplan, *An Alternative Path to Modernity: The Sephardi Diaspora in Western Europe*, 1–28; Yosef Kaplan, "The Self-Definition of the Sephardic Jews of Western Europe and Their Relation to the Alien and the Stranger," in Gampel, ed., *Crisis and Creativity in the Sephardic World 1391–1648*, 121–45; and Yosef Kaplan, "Wayward New Christians and Stubborn Jews: The Shaping of a Jewish Identity," *Jewish History* 8 (1994): 27–41; Yerushalmi, *From Spanish Court to Italian Ghetto*, 44; and Robert Bonfil, "Dubious Crimes in Sixteenth Century Italy: Rethinking the Relations between Jews, Christians, and Conversos in Pre-Modern Europe," in *The Jews of Spain and the Expulsion of 1492*, ed. Moshe Lazar and Stephen Haliczer (Lancaster, CA, 1997), 299–310.

2. Besides the works cited in note 1, see also Kaplan, *From Christianity to Judaism: The Story of Isaac Orobio de Castro*, and most recently Graizbord, *Souls in Dispute*, which includes an up-to-date bibliography of older and more recent studies.

3. For Pisa and Leghorn, see Robert Bonfil, "The History of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews in Italy," in Beinart, ed., *Moreshet Sepharad: The Sephardic Legacy*, 2:217–39. For Amsterdam, see the books of Kaplan in notes 1 and 2, above, and Bodian, *Hebrews of the Portuguese Nation: Conversos and Community in Early Modern Amsterdam*. For Hamburg, see M. Studemund Halévy, ed., *Die Sefarden in Hamburg: Zur Geschichte einer Minderheit* (Hamburg, 1994).

4. See Graizbord, *Souls in Dispute*; David Graizbord, "A Historical Contextualization of Sephardi Apostates and Self-Styled Missionaries of the Seventeenth Century," *Jewish History* 19 (2005): 287–313;

Yosef Kaplan, "The Struggle against Travelers to Spain and Portugal in the Western Sephardic Diaspora," *Zion* 64 (1999) 65–100, and Yosef Kaplan, "The Travels of Portuguese Jews from Amsterdam to the 'Lands of Idolatry' (1644–1724)," in *Jews and Conversos: Studies in Society and the Inquisition* (Jerusalem, 1981), 197–224; Richard Kagan and Abigail Dyer, eds., *Inquisitorial Inquiries: Brief Lives of Secret Jews and Other Heretics* (Baltimore, 2004); Mercedes Garcia-Aranal and Gerald Wieggers, *Samuel Pallache: A Moroccan Jew in Catholic and Protestant Europe* (Baltimore, 2003); and Mercedes Garcia-Aranal, "Jewish Converts to Islam in the Muslim West," *Israel Oriental Studies* 17 (1997): 227–48. See also the earlier work of Brian Pullan, *The Jews of Europe and the Inquisition of Venice 1550–1670* (Oxford, 1983).

5. In addition to the references in notes 1–4, especially the books of Kaplan, see Swetschinski, *Reluctant Cosmopolitans: The Portuguese Jews of Seventeenth-Century Amsterdam*; Kaplan, "Secularizing the Portuguese Jews: Integration and Orthodoxy in Early Modern Judaism," in Feiner and Ruderman, eds., *Early Modern Culture and Haskalah*, 99–110.

6. I refer to Jacob Barnai, whose works are listed in this volume's chapter 4, note 9.

7. I refer to Matt Goldish; compare also Michael Heyd and Richard Popkin, who have studied Sabbateanism in the Christian world; see chapter 4, notes 10–12.

8. Scholem, *Sabbatai Ševi*, 211–12, 283–84, 796.

9. Both citations are translated in Yerushalmi, *From Spanish Court to Italian Ghetto*, 336–37.

10. See Yerushalmi, *From Spanish Court to Italian Ghetto*, 338–39; Pawel Maciejko, "Christian Elements in Early Frankist Doctrine," *Gal-Ed* 20 (2006): 22–23.

11. See Yehudah Liebes, "On a Secret Jewish-Christian Sect Whose Source is in Sabbateanism" (in Hebrew), in *Sod ha-Emunah ha-Shabbta'it*, 223–25; Yehudah Liebes, "The Ideological Foundation of the Debate over Hayon," in *Sod ha-Emunah ha-Shabbta'it*, 49–52; and Maciejko, "Christian Elements," 21–22.

12. Chaim Wirszubski, "The Sabbatean Kabbalist R. Moses David of Podhayce" (in Hebrew), *Zion* 7(1942): 73–93.

13. Liebes, "On a Secret Jewish-Christian Sect whose Source is in Sabbateanism," 212–37.

14. Maciejko, "Christian Elements," 24–31.

15. See Elliot Wolfson, "Messianism in the Christian Kabbalah of Johann Kemper," in Goldish and Popkin, eds., *Jewish Messianism*

in the Early Modern World, 138–87; Shifra Asulin, “Another Glance at Sabbatianism, Conversion, and Hebraism in Seventeenth Century Europe: Scrutinizing the Character of Johann Kemper of Uppsala, or Moses, son of Aaron, of Cracow” (in Hebrew), in Elior, ed., *Ha-Halom ve-Shivro*, 2:423–70.

16. Asulin, “Another Glance,” 434–35. See also Schoeps, *Philosemitismus im Barock*, 92–133, especially 109–10.

17. Gershom Scholem, “The Crypto-Jewish Sect of the Dönneh (Sabbatians) in Turkey,” in *The Messianic Idea in Judaism and Other Essays in Jewish Spirituality* (New York, 1971), 142–66; Gershom Scholem, “Barukhyah: The Head of the Sabbateans in Salonika” (in Hebrew), in *Mehkarei Shabta’ut*, 321–89.

18. Scholem, “The Crypto-Jewish Sect,” 160.

19. See Maciejko, “Christian Elements in Early Frankist Doctrine,” 13–41; Maciejko, “Jewish and Christian Perspectives on Frankism,” forthcoming in *The Mixed Multitude*; and Pawel Maciejko, “Baruch Yavan and the Frankist Movement: Intercession in an Age of Upheaval,” *Jabbuch des Simon-Dubnow-Instituts* 4 (2005): 333–54.

Before concluding this section, it may be worth mentioning one earlier form of religious syncretism triggered by intense messianic fervor although unrelated to Sabbateanism directly. Though too old to have been attracted to the messianism of Shabbetai Zevi per se, Jacob Rosales, also known as Imanuel Bocarro Frances (1588–1668), might be mentioned here as a kind of precursor to other conversos who were later enamored of Shabbetai Zevi and molded their own identity from both Christian and Jewish elements. After leaving Portugal, Rosales spent most of his life in Hamburg as a physician, mathematician, and astronomer. He took a keen interest in political astrology, which allowed him to calculate a messianic future for Portugal through the return of Sebastian, its mythic king. This professing Jew cum Sebastian enthusiast was eventually denounced by the Inquisition with his wife Ana, and he died only a few years later. Rosales’s younger contemporary in Hamburg, Benedict de Castro, a well-known doctor and apologist of Jewish medicine, followed in his footsteps in espousing Sabbatean messianism, even to the point of attacking the local rabbi who would not allow him to recite a prayer in honor of the alleged messiah in the synagogue of Hamburg. Rosales thus anticipated in a remarkably unique manner the kind of intermingling of religious doctrines engendered by acute messianic behavior. On Rosales, see Michael Studemund-Halévy and Sandra Neves Silva, “Tortured Memories, Jacob Rosales Alias Imanuel Bocarro Frances: A Life from the Files of the Inquisition,” in *The*



*Roman Inquisition, the Index and the Jews: Contexts, Sources, and Perspectives*, ed. Stephan Wendehorst (Leiden, Netherlands, 2004), 107–51, which lists earlier studies.

20. See chapter 3 of this volume, notes 20–25, for references.

21. See, for example, Gershom Scholem, *Kabbalah* (Jerusalem, 1974), 416–19.

22. See Frank Manuel, *The Broken Staff: Judaism through Christian Eyes*, 143–47.

23. See Coudert, *The Impact of the Kabbalah in the Seventeenth Century*; and Allison Coudert, “The Kabbala Denudata: Converting Jews or Seducing Christians?” in *Jewish Christians and Christian Jews*, ed. Richard H. Popkin and Gordon M. Weiner (Dordrecht, Netherlands, 1994), 73–96.

24. On him, see Coudert, *The Impact of Kabbalah in the Seventeenth Century*, index, and Allison Coudert, “Judaizing in the Seventeenth Century: Francis Mercury van Helmont and Joanne Peter Späth (Moses Germanus),” in *Secret Conversions to Judaism in Early Modern Europe: Studies and Documents*, ed. Martin Mulso and Richard Popkin (Leiden, Netherlands, 2004), 71–121; and Allison Coudert, “Five Seventeenth-Century Christian Hebraists,” in Coudert and Shoulson, eds., *Hebraica Veritas? Christian Hebraists, Jews, and the Study of Judaism in Early Modern Europe*, 286–308.

25. Martin Mulso, “Cartesianism, Skepticism, and Conversion to Judaism: The Case of Aaron d’Antan,” in Mulso and Popkin, eds., *Secret Conversions to Judaism in Early Modern Europe*, 123–81.

26. See Ernestine G. E. van der Wall, “The Amsterdam Mille-narian Petrus Serrarius (1600–1669) and the Anglo-Dutch Circle of Philo-Judaists,” in *Jewish-Christian Relations in the Seventeenth Century: Studies and Documents*, ed. J. van den Berg and Ernestine G. E. van der Wall (Dordrecht, Netherlands, 1988) 73–94 (citation herein is on 84); and, in the same volume, Ernestine G. E. van der Wall, “Johann Stephan Rittangel’s Stay in the Dutch Republic (1641–1642),” 119–34. See also Ernestine G. E. van der Wall, *De mystieke chiliast Petrus Serrarius (1660–1669) en zijn wereld* (Leiden, Netherlands, 1987); Richard Popkin, “Some Aspects of Jewish-Christian Theological Interchanges in Holland and England 1640–1700,” in Van den Berg and Van der Wall, eds., *Jewish-Christian Relations in the Seventeenth Century*, 3–32; Richard Popkin, “Rabbi Nathan Shapira’s Visit to Amsterdam in 1657,” in *Dutch Jewish History*, ed. Joseph Michman and Tirtsah Levie (Jerusalem, 1984); Richard Popkin, *Isaac La Peyrère (1596–1676): His Life, Work, and Influence*

(Leiden, Netherlands, 1987); and Richard Popkin, "Can One Be a True Christian and a Faithful Follower of the Law of Moses? The Answer of John Dury," in Mulsow and Popkin, eds., *Secret Conversions to Judaism in Early Modern Europe*, 33–50. On the centrality of Amsterdam for potential converts to Judaism and for converted Jews returning to their ancestral faith, see Carlebach, "‘Ich will dich nach Holland schicken . . .’: Amsterdam and the Reversion to Judaism of German-Jewish Converts," in Mulsow and Popkin, eds., *Secret Conversions*, 51–70. On Paulli, see Schoeps, *Philosemitismus in Barock*, 53–67.

27. Contemporary scholarship on Surenhusius is limited. See Peter van Rooden, "Wilhem Surenhuis' Opvatting van de Misjna," in *Driehonderd jaar oosterse talen in Amsterdam*, eds. Jan de Roos, Arie Schippers, and Jan Wim Wesselius (Amsterdam, 1986), 43–54; Peter van Rooden, "The Amsterdam Translation of the Mishnah," in *Hebrew Study from Ezra to Ben Yehudah*, ed. William Horbury (Edinburgh, 1999), 257–67. Surenhusius's major works are *Mischna: sive toius Hebraeorum juris, rituum, antiquitatum, ac legum oralium systema cum clarissimorum rabbinorum Maimonidis & Bartenorae commentariis integris*, 6 vols. (Amsterdam, 1698–1703); and *Sefer Ha-Mashveh sive Biblos katallagae in quo secundum veterum theologorum Hebraeorum formulas allegandi, & modos interpretandi conciliantur loca ex V. in N.T. allegata* (Amsterdam, 1713). See also Isaac Stockmans and Salomon Schouten, *Bibliotheca Surenhusiana*, a book sales catalog (Amsterdam, 1730); and Ruderman, *Connecting the Covenants*.

28. See Elisheva Carlebach, *Divided Souls: Converts from Judaism 1500–1750*, especially chap. 10, "Representation and Rivalry: Jewish Converts and Christian Hebraists," 200–21. Some other works on early modern converts from Judaism include Lea Bornstein-Makovetsky, "Conversion to Islam in Ottoman Communities and to Christianity in Italy and Germany in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries" (in Hebrew), *Pe'amim* 57 (1993): 29–47; Todd Endelman, *Radical Assimilation in English Jewish History, 1656–1945* (Bloomington, IN, 1990); Todd Endelman, ed., *Jewish Apostasy in the Modern World* (New York, 1987); Jacob Goldberg, *Ha-Mumarim be-Mamleket Polin-Lita* (Jerusalem, 1985); Mel Scult, *Millennial Expectations and Jewish Liberties: A Study of the Efforts to Convert the Jews in Britain up to the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (Leiden, Netherlands, 1978); Renata Segre, "Neophytes during the Italian Counter-Reformation: Identities and Biographies," *Proceedings of the Sixth World Congress of Jewish Studies* 2 (1973):

131–42; Kenneth Stow, “A Tale of Uncertainties: Converts in the Roman Ghetto,” *Shlomo Simonsohn Jubilee Volume* (Tel Aviv, 1993), 257–66; and Ruderman, *Connecting the Covenants*.

29. Robert Bonfil, “Who was the Apostate Ludovico Carreto?” (in Hebrew), in *Galut Aḥar Golah: Mehkarim . . . Mugashim le-Profesor Haim Beinart . . .*, ed. Yosef Kaplan, Aharon Mirsky, and Abraham Grossman (Jerusalem, 1988), 437–442.

30. On the Isaacs, see Carlebach, *Divided Souls*, 36, 60–62, 123, 128–29, 163–64; Elisheva Carlebach, “Jewish Responses to Christianity in Reformation Germany,” in Bell and Burnett, eds., *Jews, Judaism, and the Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Germany*, 467–69; William Rotscheidt, *Stephan Isaak: Ein Kölner Pfarrer und Hessischer Superintendent im Reformationsjahrhundert* (Leipzig, Germany, 1910); Hava Fraenkel-Goldschmidt, “On the Periphery of Jewish Society: Jewish Converts to Christianity in the Age of the Reformation” (in Hebrew), *Tarbut ve-Hevrah be-Toledot Yisra’el bimai ha-Beinayim . . . Hayyim Hillel Ben Sasson* (Jerusalem, 1989), 623–54; and Joseph Jacobs, “Isaac, Johann Levita,” in *Jewish Encyclopedia* (New York, 1904, 6:623. Johannes’s book is titled *Defensio Veritatis Hebraicae Sacrarum Scripturarum, adversus . . . vilhelmi Lindani S.T. Doctoris, quos de optimo Scripturas interpretandi genere inscripsit* (Cologne, Germany, 1559).

31. Compare the comment of Amnon Raz-Krakotskin in “Censorship, Editing, and the Reshaping of Jewish Identity: The Catholic Church and Hebrew Literature in the Sixteenth Century,” in Coudert and Shoulson, eds., *Hebraica Veritas? Christian Hebraists and the Study of Judaism in Early Modern Europe*, 136: “The converts’ functions in the print shops were based on similar criteria to those employed by Jews and Christian Hebraists, even after their conversion. They saw themselves as bearers of the Hebrew tradition and aspired to preserve it. Converts who were employed as editors emphasized their Jewish origins in the colophons added to the printed books. . . . The work of the converts in the printing process, both as editors and censors, reflects a dialogue between the two sides of their identity.”

32. On Marcus, see David Katz, *The Jews in the History of England 1485–1850* (Oxford, 1994), 207–15; and the scattered references to him in Carlebach, *Divided Souls*, index. His major work is titled *The Principal Motives and Circumstances that Induced Moses Marcus to Leave the Jewish, and Embrace the Christian Faith* (London, 1724), and translated into Dutch with many additions by Jacob Campo Weyerman a year later. Marcus’s letter to his parents was published in Cecil Roth, *Anglo-Jewish Letters* (London, 1938),

97–98. His begging letter to Sloan is dated August 16, 1737, and can be found in the British Library MS Sloane 4055, fols. 162–63. The quotation is from Marcus’s partial translation of Johann Gottlob Carpzov’s *Critica sacra Veteris Testamenti*, specifically the translator’s introduction to his defense of the Hebrew Bible against William Whiston (London, 1729), ix–x. Ruderman, *Connecting the Covenants*, discusses both Marcus and the impact of Surenhusius in England.

33. On Anton, see Carlebach, *Divided Souls*, 191–62, 215–17, and 219–23.

34. See Jacob Katz, *Jews and Freemasons in Europe* (Cambridge, MA, 1970); Liebes, “On a Secret Jewish-Christian Sect whose Source is in Sabbateanism,” 212–37; Marsha Keith Schuchard, “Dr. Samuel Jacob Falk: A Sabbatian Adventurer in the Masonic Underground,” in Goldish and Popkin, eds., *Jewish Messianism in the Early Modern World*, 203–26; Marsha Keith Schuchard, “Yates and the Unknown Superiors: Swedenborg, Falk, and Calgiostro,” in *Secret Tests: The Literature of Secret Societies*, ed. Marie Roberts and Hugh Ormsby-Lennon (New York, 1995), 114–67; Ruderman, *Jewish Enlightenment in an English Key*, chaps. 3–4. See also Maciejko, “Christian Elements in Early Frankist Doctrine,” 13–41; and Maciejko, “Baruch Yavan and the Frankist Movement: Intercession in an Age of Upheaval,” 333–54.

35. See Popkin and Weiner, *Jewish Christians and Christian Jews: From the Renaissance to the Enlightenment*.

## Chapter 6. Toward Modernity: Some Final Thoughts

1. For recent scholarship, however, it is fair to say that the condition of modernity entails more than the Haskalah, although for some scholars, primarily Shmuel Feiner, the Haskalah still represents the primary agent of Jewish modernity. For some current reflections on this subject, see Feiner and Ruderman, eds., *Early Modern Culture and Haskalah*. I will return to this question later in this chapter.

2. See my earlier interpretation of this cultural experience in Ruderman, “The Italian Renaissance and Jewish Thought,” 382–433.

3. This phenomenon is discussed in the present volume in chapter 3, especially in reference to Reuchlin and later Christian Hebraists who follow his path.

4. Note how Jonathan Israel closed his book by the mid-eighteenth century, a period he sees as a period of stagnation, impoverishment, and progressive marginalization for Jews, notwithstanding

the countervailing tendencies of rapid economic and demographic growth elsewhere in Europe. This ending coincides with the decline of the economic importance of the Jews in state economies; and economic decline ultimately led to cultural isolation and marginalization with respect to European and world culture. See Israel, *European Jewry in the Age of Mercantilism*, 195–215, and the cogent remarks of Jonathan Karp in the present volume's appendix, 213–14.

5. Hazard, *The European Mind*, 502–3.

6. Salo W. Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews* (New York, 1937), 3:139, note 13. For Isaac Barzilay's expansion of Baron's position, see the present volume's appendix, note 5, and Adam Shear's recent discussion mentioned there.

7. See especially Katz, *Out of the Ghetto*; and Barukh Mevorakh's review of Azriel Shošet's *Im Hilufei ha-Tekufot* in *Kiryat Sefer* 37 (1961–62): 150–55.

8. See Jacob Katz, ed., *Toward Modernity: The European Jewish Model* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1987), and especially Todd Endelman, "The Englishness of Jewish Modernity in England," 225–46, in that volume. See also Jonathan Frankel and Steven Zipperstein, eds., *Assimilation and Community: The Jews in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, 1992), and Pierre Birnbaum and Ira Katznelson, eds., *Paths of Emancipation: Jews, States, and Citizenship* (Princeton, NJ, 1995), especially the introductions to each of these volumes. One should also note how each successive volume is a response to and refinement of the preceding one.

9. Kaplan, *An Alternative Path to Modernity*, 1–28, especially 26. See also my discussion of Kaplan in the appendix to the present volume. Compare Matt Goldish's critical remarks regarding Kaplan's position in "Jews, Christians, and Conversos: Rabbi Solomon Aalion's Struggles in the Portuguese Community of London," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 45 (1994): 256–57. Consider also Jonathan Israel's attempt to describe a Sephardic Jewish enlightenment, mentioned in chapter 4, note 43, of the present volume, as well as Adam Sutcliffe's "Imagining Amsterdam: The Dutch Golden Age and the Origins of Jewish Modernity," in Feiner and Ruderman, eds., *Early Modern Culture and Haskalah*, 79–97. I should point out, however, that Yosef Kaplan more recently appears to have raised significant reservations about Jacob Katz's approach in "The Early Modern Period in the Historiographical Production of Jacob Katz." In this essay, Kaplan argues that Katz hardly acknowledged an early modern period distinct from the medieval and failed to integrate the larger structural changes

in early modern Europe into his own internalist view of Jewish historical development. See also chap. 4, note 5 in the present volume.

10. See, for example, Silber, "The Emergence of Ultra-Orthodoxy. This is also well argued in Yosef Kaplan's own study of the development of "orthodoxy" in Amsterdam in "Secularizing the Portuguese Jews: Integration and Orthodoxy in Early Modern Judaism," in Feiner and Ruderman, eds., *Early Modern Culture and Haskalah*. See also Ferziger, *Exclusion and Hierarchy: Orthodoxy, Nonobservance and the Emergence of Modern Jewish Identity* and my discussion of orthodoxy in chapter 4 of the present volume.

11. See the views of Shmuel Feiner and David Sorkin discussed in this volume's appendix, note 21. For a different view of Mendelssohn as more of a political activist, see François Guesnet, "Moses Mendelssohns Tätigkeit als Fürsprecher im Kontext jüdischer politischer Kultur der frühen Neuzeit," *Jahrbuch für deutsch-jüdische Geschichte* 16 (2005–2006): 115–34.

12. Compare the profiles of the intellectuals collected in Ruderman and Veltri, eds., *Cultural Intermediaries*, especially the introduction, with the early maskilim of Feiner and Sorkin. The only significant difference is that the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century figures were more learned in languages other than Hebrew—especially Latin—and more catholic in their intellectual interests than their later eighteenth-century counterparts.

13. Shmuel Feiner often designates him an early maskil of the eighteenth century, although the primary stimulus for Cohen's writing was the early modern medical ambiance of the University of Padua of the seventeenth century. On Cohen, see Ruderman, *Jewish Thought and Scientific Discovery in Early Modern Europe*, 229–55.

14. On Messer Leon and his scholarly agenda, see chapter 3, note 34, of the present volume.

15. See, chapter 3, note 5, of the present volume; and especially Segal, *Historical Consciousness and Religious Tradition in Azariah de' Rossi's Me'or Einayim*. See also Sorotzkin, *Kehillat ha-Al Zeman be-Idan ha-Temurot*, 64–157.

16. See David Ruderman, "The Impact of Early Modern Jewish Thought on the Eighteenth Century: A Challenge to the Notion of the Sephardic Mystique," in *Sepharad in Ashkenaz: Medieval Knowledge and Eighteenth-Century Enlightened Jewish Discourse*, ed. Resianne Smidt van Gelder-Fontaine, Andrea Schatz, and Irene Zwiép (Amsterdam, 2007); and Joanna Weinberg, introduction to Azariah de' Rossi, *The Light of the Eyes*.

17. Dubnov opened modern Jewish history with the French Revolution and the beginnings of Jewish political emancipation. Compare my position with Shmuel Feiner, “On the Threshold of the ‘New World’: Haskalah and Secularization in the Eighteenth Century,” in Feiner and Ruderman, eds., *Early Modern Culture and Haskalah*, 33–45, especially 43–45.

18. Compare François Guesnet’s assessment of Mendelssohn in “Moses Mendelssohns Tätigkeit als Fürsprecher im Kontext jüdischer politischer Kultur der frühen Neuzeit” as a new style of Jewish leader willing to address the political forum of public opinion. See also François Guesnet, “The Turkish Cavalry in Swarzędz, or: Jewish Political Culture at the Borderlines of Modern History,” in Feiner and Ruderman, eds., *Early Modern Culture and Haskalah*, 227–48.

19. The terminology is that of David Sorkin, “The Haskalah in Berlin: A Comparative Perspective“ (in Hebrew), in *Ha-Haskalah Le-Givuneah: Iyyunim Hadashim Be-Toledot Ha-Haskalah uve-Sifruta*, ed. Shmuel Feiner and Israel Bartal (Jerusalem, 2005), 3–12.

20. See David Sorkin, *The Transformation of German Jewry 1780–1840* (Oxford, 1987).

21. See Birnbaum and Katznelson, *Paths of Emancipation*, 19–20, 26–27.

22. *Out of the Ghetto* is the title of Jacob Katz’s book (see note 7, above).

23. See Jonathan Frankel, “Assimilation and the Jews in Nineteenth-Century Europe: Towards a New Historiography?” in Frankel and Zipperstein, eds., *Assimilation and Community*, 1–37. See also Garthine Walker, “Modernization,” in *Writing Early Modern History* (London, 2005), 25–48, and my discussion of this essay in the appendix to the present volume.

My own discussion here parallels the rich and perspicuous reflections of Andrea Schatz, “‘Peoples Pure of Speech’: The Religious, the Secular, and Jewish Beginnings of Modernity,” in Feiner and Ruderman, eds., *Early Modern Culture and Haskalah*, 169–87, especially its opening section titled “Beginnings”, 170–178. She persuasively explains how “modernity’s own narratives about itself”, constructed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, have distorted the transition between early modernity and modernity by overemphasizing rupture, discontinuity, and revolution while deemphasizing the co-existence, especially during most of the eighteenth century, of “elements of early modern modes of thought and practice and of later

modern modes" (176). Schatz's understanding of "modern narratives" of periodization and what Frankel called "national narratives" address the same historiographical distortion.

## Appendix: Historiographical Reflections

1. Note Israel's late dating [the late sixteenth century and not the late fifteenth] for the beginning of early modernity for Jewish civilization and the relatively early date [mid-eighteenth century] for its closing, unconnected to later modern developments such as the Haskalah or political emancipation. Compare my own dating in chapter 6 of the present volume.

Elisheva Carlebach, in "Early Modern Ashkenaz in the Writings of Jacob Katz," 66, maintains that Jacob Katz "was virtually the first historian of the Jews to view the Early Modern period as a discrete age of transition." But consider more recently Kaplan, "The Early Modern Period in the Historiographical Production of Jacob Katz," 19–35, who argues convincingly that Katz had little notion of an early modern period distinct from the Middle Ages. See also chapter 6, note 9, of the present volume.

It is also worth noting here that nineteenth-century Jewish historians, beginning with Heinrich Graetz, considered "the dark ages" for Jews not the European Middle Ages, which they viewed more positively, but the period immediately preceding the emancipatory period—that is, the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries, what Israel called early modernity! Salo W. Baron was the first historian to challenge what had previously been the standard view of this period in Jewish historiography. See Baron, "Ghetto and Emancipation"; and David Ruderman, "The Ghetto and Jewish Cultural Formation in Early Modern Europe: Towards a New Interpretation," in *Jewish Literatures and Cultures: Context and Intertext*, ed. Anita Norich and Yaron Eliav (Providence, Rhode Island, 2008), 117–27.

2. The book was first published by Oxford University Press in 1985, revised in 1989, and then revised and updated in 1998 by the Littman Library of Jewish Civilization. My citations here are from this latter edition.

3. Among Israel's many books, I should mention especially *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness, and Fall 1477–1713* (Oxford, 1995); *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650–1750*; and its sequel, *Enlightenment Contested: Philosophy, Modernity, and the Emancipation of Man 1670–1752*



(Oxford, 2006). He has edited, with Reiner Salverda, *Dutch Jewry: Its History and Secular Culture (1500–2000)* (Leiden, Netherlands, 2002) and also published *Diasporas within a Diaspora*.

4. The subject is succinctly summarized by Michael Meyer, with additional references, in “Where Does Modern Jewish History Begin?” *Judaism* 23 (1975): 329–38. See also Moshe Rosman, “Defining the Postmodern Period in Jewish History,” in *Text and Context: Essays in Modern Jewish History and Historiography in Honor of Ismar Schorsch*, ed. Eli Lendhendler and Jack Wertheimer (New York, 2005), 95–130, reprinted in Moshe Rosman, *How Jewish Is Jewish History?* (Oxford, 2007), 56–81; and David Ruderman, “Michael A. Meyer’s Periodization of Modern Jewish History: Revisiting a Seminal Essay,” in Strauss and Brenner, eds., *Mediating Modernity*, 27–42.

5. Much of this is already noted in the Meyer article mentioned in note 4, above. On Baron’s early position, see his *Social and Religious History of the Jews* (1937), 2: 205–10 and 3:139, note 13. This was elaborated upon by his student Isaac Barzilay in “The Italian and Berlin Haskalah (Parallels and Differences),” *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 29 (1960–61): 17–54. On this position, see Adam Shear, “‘The Italian and Berlin Haskalah’ Revisited,” in Feiner and Ruderman, eds., *Early Modern Culture and Haskalah*, 49–66. On the modernity of the converso experience, see Kaplan, *An Alternative Path to Modernity*, 1–28; Yerushalmi, *From Spanish Court to Italian Ghetto*, 44. On the modernity of the Sabbatean movement, see, for example, Scholem, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism and Other Essays in Jewish Spirituality*, especially 140–41.

6. David Katz, review of Jonathan Israel’s *European Jewry in the Age of Mercantilism*, *English Historical Review* 102 (1987): 427.

7. John Edwards, *The Jews in Christian Europe 1400–1700* (London, 1988); Anna Foa, *The Jews of Europe after the Black Death* (Berkeley, CA, 2000), originally published as *Ebrei in Europa dalla peste nera all’emancipazione, XIV–XVIII secolo* (Rome, 1992). See my review of the English version of the Foa book in the *American Historical Review* 106 (December 2001): 1863–64.

Most recently, a new synthetic treatment of early modern Jewry has appeared, written by Dean Phillip Bell and titled *Jews in the Early Modern World* (Lanham, MD, 2008). Unfortunately, this work is disappointing. It displays almost no awareness of the vast critical scholarship on the subject in Hebrew; its periodization between 1400 and 1700 appears arbitrary, with little justification offered by the author; and most important, it sorely lacks a clear interpretative strategy for defining a transregional early modern Jewish culture and

distinguishing it from either medievalism or modernity. Instead, Bell merely lists a cluster of conventional early modern characteristics such as globalization, population growth, increased social stratification, economic development, challenge to authority, and increased cultural interaction and applies them uncritically to the Jews. He concludes with the following banalities: Jews straddle a world that is simultaneously internal and external, traditional and transitional; their migratory patterns and settlement are “volatile” and that, following Jacob Katz, they absorb and “neutralize” new ideas without forcing current structures to crumble.

8. See, for example, my review of Israel’s book in *Jewish Quarterly Review* 78 (1987): 154–59, and that of Gershon Hundert in *Polin* 2 (1987): 407–11.

9. Recent work has already been noted in the present volume’s introduction; other works are mentioned throughout this book and listed in its bibliography.

10. So, for example, in his preface to the third edition (1998), v–vi, we read, “Also central is the proposition that it was less the internal dynamics of Jewish life and culture than the external tensions and contradictions in the wider European world around the Jews which formed the principal driving force behind the changes within Jewish society in this period. This external dynamic, I argue, is best conceived of as a duality—a set of economic changes on the one hand and a set of intellectual and cultural shifts on the other.”

11. Israel, *European Jewry*, xii.

12. So Israel writes in *European Jewry* (1998), xiii, “Yet strangely enough, the first half of the eighteenth century . . . was not a period of comparable expansion of the Jews. On the contrary, the predominant trend was one of stagnation and even decline. The explanation for this paradox . . . lies in the limitations of mercantilism itself. . . . The eighteenth-century European mercantilist state had no use for the Jewish poor or for those who were modestly placed and had no special skills or trading connections to offer.”

13. Israel’s perspective on Jewish history is most readily understood by reading it together with his *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650–1750*. In the latter work, he puts forward a bold hypothesis of a universal enlightenment that demolishes the notion of monarchy, aristocracy, women’s subordination, ecclesiastical authority, and slavery in a more profound way than that of either the Renaissance or Reformation that preceded it or the eighteenth-century Enlightenment that followed in its footsteps. Unmistakably indebted to the classic formulation of Paul

Hazard regarding the crisis of the European mind and surely written in some respects as a response to Margaret Jacob's own construction of a radical enlightenment, Israel emphasizes the creative and revolutionary impact of seventeenth-century Amsterdam as an *entrepot* of culture and the centrality of Spinozism in the emergence of a modern secular consciousness through an exhaustive examination of a multiplicity of authors and ideas. Israel's extraordinary reconstructions of the various manifestations of the radical enlightenment all over the continent reinforce at the same time the notion of a universal intellectual culture common to Europeans of variant backgrounds and affiliations. In privileging the seventeenth over the eighteenth century as the decisive critical break in European culture, and in underscoring Spinoza's central position in this crisis, the symmetry between Israel's two books is obvious. For more on the notion of "crisis" in European and Jewish history, see chapter 4 of the present volume. See also Hazard, *The European Mind 1680-1715*; Jacob, *The Radical Enlightenment: Pantheists, Freemasons, and Republicans*, and Jacob, "The Crisis of the European Mind: Hazard Revisited," 251-71.

14. Jonathan Karp, "Economic History and Jewish Modernity: Ideological versus Structural Change," in Feiner and Ruderman, eds., *Early Modern Culture and Haskalah*, 249-66. See Werner Sombart, *The Jews and Modern Capitalism* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1982), trans. M. Epstein with a new introduction by Samuel Klausner.

15. What follows is hardly a survey of approaches, but only a sampling of some recent contributions.

16. Robert Bonfil, "Aliens Within: The Jews and Anti-Judaism," in *Handbook of European History 1400-1600: Late Middle Ages, Renaissance, and Reformation*, ed. Thomas Brady, Heiko Obermann, and James Tracey (Leiden, Netherlands, 1994), 263-97; Robert Bonfil, "Changes in the Cultural Patterns of a Jewish Society in Crisis: Italian Jewry at the Close of the Sixteenth Century," in Ruderman, ed., *Essential Papers*, 401-25; Robert Bonfil, "Changing Mentalities of Italian Jews between the Periods of the Renaissance and the Baroque," *Italia* 11 (1994): 61-79; Robert Bonfil, "Lo spazio culturale degli ebrei d'Italia fra Rinascimento ed eta barocca," *Storia d'Italia: Gli ebrei in Italia*, vol. 11, ed. Corrado Vivanti (Turin, Italy, 1996), 413-73; Bonfil "Dubious Crimes in Sixteenth-Century Italy," 299-310; and Bonfil, "The History of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews in Italy," 217-39. Some parallel reflections on the converso in early modern culture are found in Gutwirth, "Amatus Lusitanus and the Locations of Sixteenth-Century Cultures," 216-38, and Gutwirth, "Language and Medicine in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire," 79-95.

17. See especially Yosef Kaplan, "An Alternative Path to Modernity," in *An Alternative Path to Modernity*, 1–28, as well as the other essays in that volume; and Kaplan, *From Christianity to Judaism: The Story of Isaac Orobrio de Castro*. In this respect, he is unlike Bonfil in seeing no broader relationship between developments in Amsterdam and those elsewhere. See also chapter 6, note 9 of the present volume.

18. Hundert, "A Reconsideration of Jewish Modernity," in Graetz, ed. *Schöpferische Momente des europäischen Judentums in der frühen Neuzeit*, 321–32. See also Gershon Hundert, "Poland: Paradisus Judaeorum," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 48 (1997): 335–48; and Gershon Hundert, "On the Jewish Community of Poland during the Seventeenth Century: Some Comparative Perspectives," *Revue des études juives* 142 (1983): 349–72.

19. See Hundert, *Jews in Poland-Lithuania in the Eighteenth Century: A Genealogy of Modernity*.

20. Moshe Rosman, "A Prolegomenon to Jewish Cultural History," *JSIS: Jewish Studies, An Internet Journal* 1 (2002): 109–127, available online at <http://www.biu.ac.il/JS/JSIJ/jsij1.html>, and reprinted in Rosman, *How Jewish Is Jewish History?*, 131–53; Rosman, "Innovative Tradition: Jewish Culture in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth," 519–70. And see, generally, Rosman, *How Jewish is Jewish History?*

21. Shmuel Feiner, "The Early Haskalah in Eighteenth Century Judaism" (in Hebrew), *Tarbiz* 67 (1997–98): 189–240; Shmuel Feiner, *The Jewish Enlightenment* (Philadelphia, 2004); and David Sorkin, "The Early Haskalah," in *The Berlin Haskalah and German Religious Thought: Orphans of Knowledge* (London, 2000), 38–92. See also Shmuel Feiner, "Mendelssohn and Mendelssohn's Disciples: A Re-examination," *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 40 (1995): 133–67. I should point out that Feiner's and Sorkin's positions are not identical although they adopt the same term. Feiner particularly emphasizes the aspect of "seduction" in describing the passionate pursuit of non-Jewish knowledge by these early maskilim. See especially his "Seductive Science and the Emergence of the Secular Jewish Intellectual," *Science in Context* 15 (2002): 121–35. Sorkin's more recent work has moved away from describing a specific Jewish enlightenment and focuses more on how the latter participates in a more general religious enlightenment. See David Sorkin, *The Religious Enlightenment: Protestants, Jews, and Catholics from London to Vienna* (Princeton, NJ, 2008). On the views of Baron, Scholem, and Yerushalmi, see note 5 above. Samuel Ettinger's position can

be found in his printed lectures, *Toledot Am Yisrael Memei Ha-Absolutism ad le-Hakamat Medinat Yisrael* (Jerusalem, 1968).

22. See Lois Dubin, *The Port Jews of Hapsburg Trieste: Absolutist Politics and Enlightenment Culture* (Stanford, CA, 1999); Lois Dubin, "Researching Port Jews and Port Jewries: Trieste and Beyond," in *Port Jews: Jewish Communities in Cosmopolitan Maritime Trading Centres, 1550-1950*, a special issue of *Jewish Culture and History* 4 (2001): 47-58; and David Sorokin, "The Port Jew: Notes towards a Social Type," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 50 (1999): 87-97. See also Francesca Trivellato, "The Port Jews of Livorno and their Global Networks of Trade in the Early Modern Period," in *Jews and Port Cities 1590-1990: Commerce, Community, and Cosmopolitanism*, ed. David Cesarani and Gemma Romain, a special issue of *Jewish Culture and History* 7 (2004): 31-48.

23. See, for example, Eugene F. Rice Jr. and Anthony Grafton, *The Foundations of Early Modern Europe, 1460-1559*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1994); Herbert Rowen, *A History of Early Modern Europe 1500-1789* (London, 1989); Henry Kamen, *Early Modern European Society* (London, 2000); Euan Cameron, ed., *Early Modern Europe: An Oxford History* (Oxford, 1999); Cris Cook and Philip Broadhead, *The Longman Handbook of Early Modern Europe 1453-1763* (New York, 2001); Helmut G. Koenigsberger, *Early Modern Europe 1500-1789* (London, 1987); Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, *Early Modern Europe, 1450-1789* (Cambridge, 2006); and James B. Collins and Karen L. Taylor, eds., *Early Modern Europe: Issues and Interpretations* (Malden, MA, 2006). Compare also Charles G. Nauert, *Humanism and the Culture of Renaissance Europe* (Cambridge, 1995) and William Bouwsma, *The Waning of the Renaissance 1550-1640* (New Haven, CT, 2000). On the use of the term *early modern* in the writing of Catholic history, see John O'Malley, *Trent and All That: Renaming Catholicism in the Early Modern Era* (Cambridge, MA, 2000); John O'Malley, "Was Ignatius Loyola a Church Reformer? How to Look at Early Modern Catholicism," *Catholic Historical Review* 77 (1991): 177-93; R. Po-chia Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal 1540-1770* (Cambridge, 1998); and Kathleen Comerford and Hilmar Pabel, eds., *Early Modern Catholicism: Essays in Honour of John W. O'Malley, S.J.* (Toronto, 2001).

24. Randolph Starn, "The Early Modern Muddle," *Journal of Early Modern History* 6 (2002): 296-307.

25. See, for example, Shmuel Eisenstadt and Wolfgang Schluchter, "Paths to Early Modernities: A Comparative View," *Daedalus* 127 (1998): 1-18; Björn Wittoch, "Early Modernities: Varieties and

Transitions," *Daedalus* 127 (1998): 19–40; On-cho Ng, "The Epochal Concept of 'Early Modernity' and the Intellectual History of Late Imperial China," *Journal of World History* 14 (2003): 37–61; Jack Goldstein, *Revolution and Rebellion in the Early Modern World* (Berkeley, CA, 1991); James D. Tracy, ed., *The Rise of Merchant Empires: Long Distance Trade in the Early Modern World, 1500–1800* (Cambridge, 1990); Shirine Hamadeh, "Ottoman Expressions of Early Modernity and the 'Inevitable' Question of Westernization," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 63 (2004) 32–51; and Daniel Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 2002). On the problem of employing early modernity in treating Ottoman Jewish history, see Lewis, *The Late Medieval and Early Modern Periods*, 107–111.

26. John F. Richards, "Early Modern India and World History," *Journal of World History* 8 (1997): 197–209.

27. See Jerry H. Bentley, "Early Modern Europe and the Early Modern World," in Charles H. Parker and Jerry H. Bentley, eds., *Between the Middle Ages and Modernity: Individual and Community in the Modern World* (Lanham, MD, 2007), 13–31 (the citation herein is from 22); and Jerry H. Bentley, "Cross-Cultural Interactions and Periodization in World History," *American Historical Review* 101 (1996): 749–70. See also Stuart Schwartz, ed., *Implicit Understandings: Observing, Reporting and Reflecting on the Encounters between European and Other Peoples in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1994).

28. Robert Muchembled and William Monter, eds., *Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe*, 4 vols. (Cambridge, 2006); the citation is found in a statement on the first inside page of volume 1, which summarizes the entire collection and lists the four separate volumes and their editors.

29. Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Connected Histories: Notes towards a Reconfiguration of Early Modern Eurasia," *Modern Asian Studies* 31 (1997): 735–62; reprinted in *Beyond Binary Histories: Re-Imagining Eurasia to 1800*, ed. Victor Liebermann (Ann Arbor, MI, 1999), 289–316. See also Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Explorations in Connected History: From the Tagus to the Ganges* (Oxford, 2004) and its companion volume, *Explorations in Connected History: Mughals and Franks* (Oxford, 2004). On the related notion of *histoire croisée*, see Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann, "Beyond Comparison: *Histoire Croisée* and the Challenge of Reflexivity," *History and Theory* 45 (2006): 30–50, and the extensive bibliography they supply.

30. See note 28, above.

31. Jack Goldstone, "The Problem of the 'Early Modern World,'" *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 41 (1998): 249–84

32. Walker, "Modernization"; see also Garthine Walker, introduction to *Writing Early Modern History* (London, 2005), xvi. Compare the critique of modernization as disenchantment in Michael Saler, "Modernity and Enchantment: A Historiographical Review," *American Historical Review* 111 (2006): 692–716. See also my remarks on early modern Jewish history as they apply to Walker's at the end of chapter 6 of the present volume.

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