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*Polemical Ethnographies:
Descriptions of Yom Kippur in the Writings
of Christian Hebraists and Jewish Converts
to Christianity in Early Modern Europe*

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In the foreword to his 1785 *Yehudi mi-bachutz, das ist der äußerliche Jud*, Caspar Friedenheim, a Jewish convert to Christianity, observed that many Christians had great respect for the Jewish service on Yom Kippur: "I saw at this time, often with amazement, how frequently the Christians on the so called (*Jom Kipper*), or the long day, hurry to the synagogue in order to see the Jewish service and their ceremonies. They apparently believe that these prayers are really uplifting, reverential and pious, because on my walks near the Main I heard those returning from the synagogue saying to each other that the Jewish ceremonies should really not be despised, because their prayers, lasting all day long, the lighting of their synagogue, their white linen cloaks—all these arouse attention. The Jews themselves are proud to have such respectful observers, of both sexes, in their synagogue, and they believe that the *Goim* or the Christians derive special pleasure from their service and a few converts come back to the synagogue in order to celebrate this holiday with them once more."¹

How accurate is Friedenheim's assessment? Were Christians really interested in going to the synagogues to watch the Jewish service? If they were, was it because they appreciated the Jewish way of observing this holiday, or did they have other interests and ideas in mind? In order to answer these and some other questions I will focus on Christian writings about one holiday—Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement)—as a case study for examining Christian approaches to Jewish ritual life. I have concentrated on Yom Kippur both because of its importance in the Jewish religion and because of the abundance of Christian writing about it. The discussion of Yom Kippur, more common than other holidays, also reveals its importance in Christian eyes. Those Christian authors who described Yom Kippur, however, chose to discuss some cus-

toms more than others, and it is noteworthy that these customs were usually of less importance in Jewish eyes. Concentrating on the descriptions of these customs, I will argue that they reveal four different types of motivations, all of them polemical and all aimed at discrediting Judaism.

Before turning to the specific descriptions of Yom Kippur a few words of introduction about Christian interest in the Jewish ceremonies and rituals are in order. Christian interest in and awareness of Jewish practice can be found in written sources from the very beginning of Christianity. Prior to the sixteenth century, however, there was no systematic discussion of the customs of the Jews; rather, we find fragmentary discussions of one or two specific Jewish customs or ceremonies.² The holiday of Yom Kippur was not different in this regard, and until the sixteenth century there are only a few Christian sources that refer to the ways in which this holiday was observed.³ Most of the medieval authors who mentioned the holiday restricted their observations to the *shamta* prayer, which damned the Gentiles and was recited with a special ceremony specifically on this day.⁴ Christians took this prayer as an example of Jewish anti-Christian sentiment. As the French inquisitor Bernard Gui wrote in his *Inquisitor's Manual*: "During the feast of expiation in September they have a special prayer that they offer against all enemies. This prayer is called 'cematha,' which means a ban or excommunication or a curse. And in this prayer they call Jesus the son of an illicit marriage and the blessed Virgin Mary a lustful or licentious woman, things that are not permitted to be said or thought."⁵ In the sixteenth century these brief references gave way to books that are entirely devoted to descriptions of the rituals and ceremonies of contemporary Jews. This literary genre, which since the publication of R. Po-chia Hsia's article in 1994 has generally been described as "Christian Ethnographies of Jews,"⁶ flourished between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries, and more than sixty books belonging to this genre were published during the period.⁷

Of these books describing the Jewish way of life, thirty-five discuss Yom Kippur. In some cases these are short discussions of one or two pages; in others, some thirty pages are devoted to the holiday; and in one case the holiday is the subject of almost an entire book of 110 pages.⁸ Among the various books that describe other rituals and ceremonies, only the holiday of Passover is mentioned as often as Yom Kippur (also thirty-five times). Of the books that include descriptions of Yom Kippur, five were published in the sixteenth century, ten in the seventeenth, and twenty in the eighteenth century. Twenty-five books were written by converts from Judaism and only ten by Christians from birth. As we will see, this distinction between Christian authors and Jewish converts is important for appreciating the distinctive characteristics of the writings of these two groups as well as their motives for writing. In general it

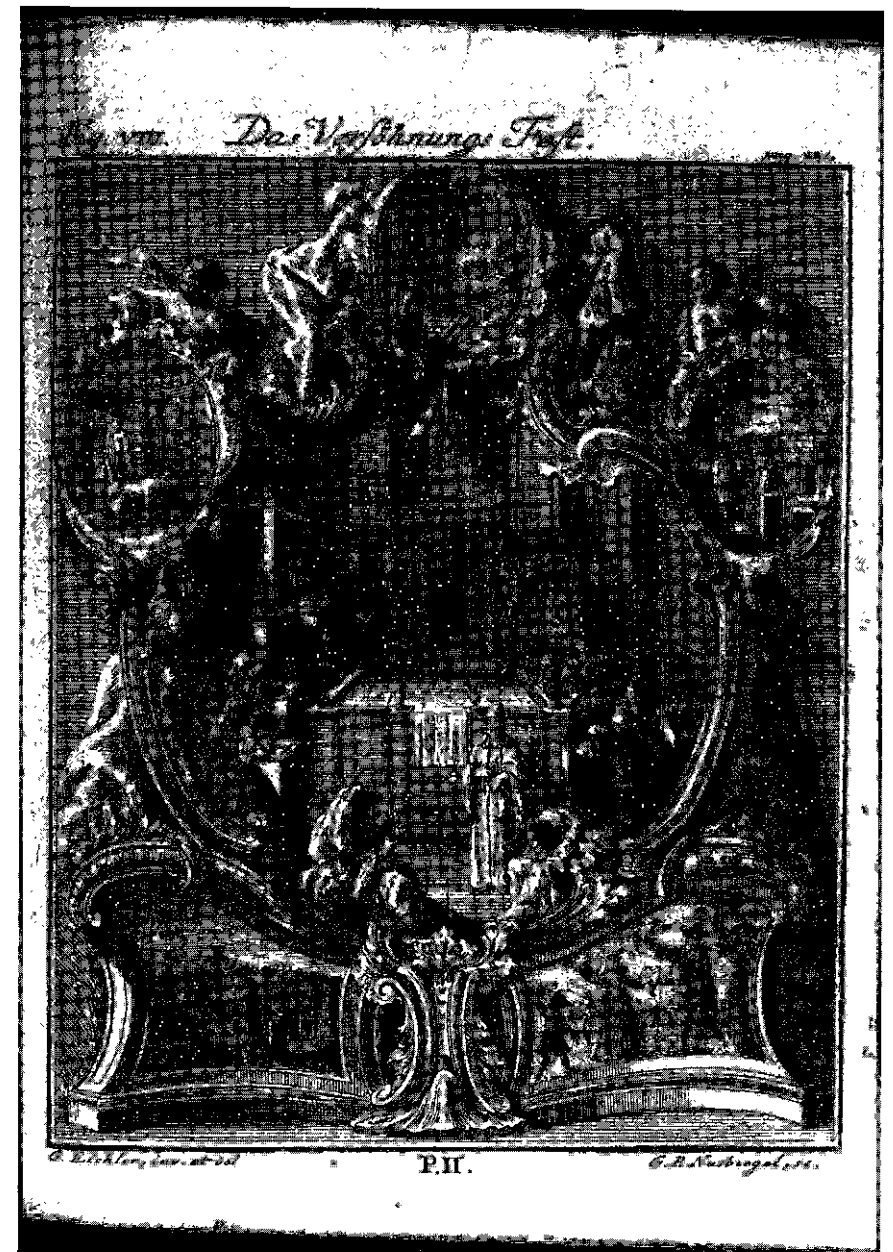
can be said that while Jewish converts stressed the anti-Christian nature of Jewish ceremonies and rituals and the absurd and superstitious nature of contemporary Jewish customs, the authors born and raised as Christians were more concerned with showing the nature of contemporary Jewish beliefs as contrary to biblical beliefs. The fact that both groups display a generally negative, if not actively hostile, attitude toward Judaism and that both groups wrote descriptions from a polemical perspective and as polemical tools suggests that Hsia's definition of this genre as "ethnographic" should be modified. Since the authors make no pretense of being impartial and objective, it would be more accurate to describe these writings as "polemical ethnographies of Judaism."

Jewish tradition includes many laws and customs that relate to Yom Kippur, but Christians writing about the holiday refer to relatively few of these (Fig. 9.1). I have listed the sixteen features that are most commonly described in the thirty-five texts. Since the decision to describe certain elements at the expense of others can help us better understand the focus of the different authors and their motives for writing, I have provided a table listing the features described by individual authors.⁹

As we can see from the table, one custom appears in almost all the descriptions of the holiday: Kapparot, the custom of discharging one's sins on a rooster, which appears in thirty-three descriptions.¹⁰ The other widely mentioned customs were the Malkot (flagellation) and the lighting of the candles in the synagogue on Yom Kippur eve. Both appear in twenty-four descriptions. The next most frequently mentioned feature is the prayers of Yom Kippur, which appear in twenty-two cases. In order to explain the reasons for depicting these ceremonies and not others we need to turn to the observations made by these authors.

Johannes Pfefferkorn, a Jew who converted to Christianity in 1504, was the first to discuss Yom Kippur.¹¹ In his pamphlet *Ich heysß ain Büchlein der Iuden Peicht* (Booklet on the Jewish Confession), published in 1508,¹² Pfefferkorn describes both Rosh Hashana (New Year) and Yom Kippur. The chapter on Yom Kippur opens with the description of the Kapparot ritual and is accompanied by an engraving (Fig. 9.2):

On the ninth day of their atonement and penitence, they leave their synagogues and go home. All the Jewish men, young and old, have white roosters, and the women, married and unmarried, have white hens, if it is possible to get them. If the woman is pregnant she must take a rooster and a hen for herself and one for the unborn baby, who has not yet committed a sin but who was conceived from the lust of flesh. Everybody takes his rooster or her hen. The head of the family stands silently in the middle of the household for quite some time, contemplating his sins with great devotion. He then takes the rooster by its feet and waves it three times over his head so that the rooster has to flap its wings and put them together. Then he says to the rooster: "You

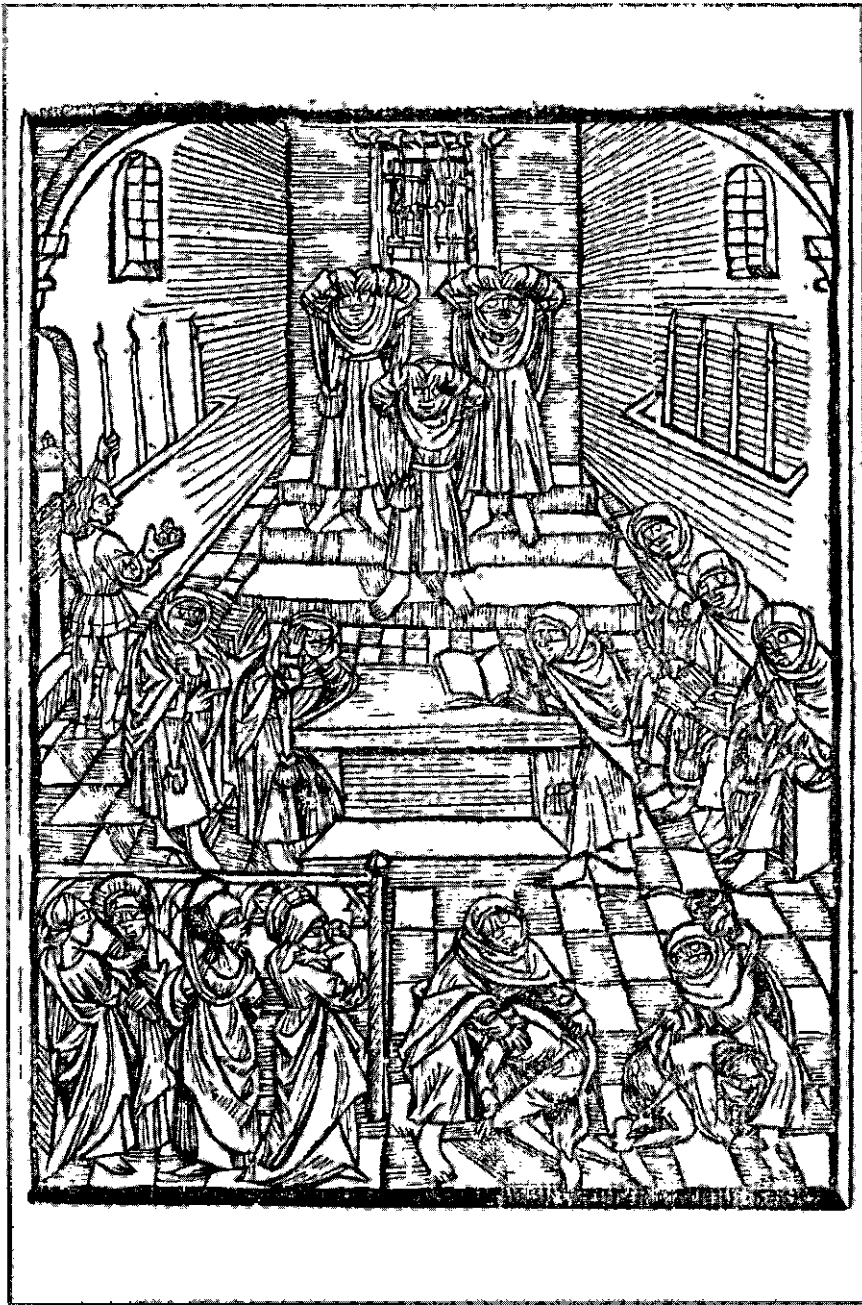


9.1. Johannes Bodenschatz, *Kirchliche Verfassung der heutigen Juden*, Frankfurt and Leipzig, 1748–49. Engraving of Yom Kippur customs. The central picture depicts the prayer in the synagogue. The vignettes depict some of the holiday ceremonies (from top left to right): flagellation, asking of forgiveness, asking forgiveness from the dead, Kapparot, visiting the cemetery. Photo courtesy of Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem.

TABLE 9.1. YOM KIPPUR RITUALS DISCUSSED IN ETHNOGRAPHIC BOOKS

Ceremony Name	Kapparot	Immersion	Visiting cemetery	Flagellation	Confession	Candle lighting	Five banned activities	Eating on Yom Kippur eve	Request of forgiveness	"Al Du'at Harnakorn" Prayer	"Kol Nidre" Prayer	Birkat Cohanim	Liturgy	Blowing of Shofar	Blessing of Moon	Building of Sukkah
J. Pfefferkorn 1508	✓	✓		✓		✓							✓			
V. von Carben 1508	✓	✓														
A. Margartha 1530	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			
M. Lombardus 1573	✓														✓	
E. F. Hess 1598	✓	✓				✓						✓				
J. Buxtorf 1603	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
A. Costerus 1608	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓	✓	✓	✓			
S. Purchas 1613	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓			
H. Fabronius 1624	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓										
T. Thunius 1624	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓			✓	✓	✓	✓			
A. Ross 1653	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓				
L. Addison 1675	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓			

P. C. Mäjer 1678	✓			✓												
G. Morosini 1683	✓			✓						✓			✓			
C. P. Mayer 1685		✓						✓			✓					
M. P. M. Alberti 1703	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			
F. A. Christiani 1705	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓							
J. Schudt 1714	✓															
F. L. Fried 1715	✓	✓				✓							✓			
P. C. Kärchner 1717	✓		✓	✓		✓							✓	✓	✓	
J. C. Salomon 1721	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓						✓	✓
M. Marcus 1723							✓						✓	✓		
S. I. Jungdres 1724	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
C. G. Seeligmann 1725	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓	✓	✓	
C. G. Christian 1731	✓		✓			✓		✓					✓	✓	✓	✓
P. Christfels 1735	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓			



9.2. Johannes Pfefferkorn, *Libellus de Judaica confessione* (Köln, 1508). Woodcut of Yom Kippur service. In the right corner a depiction of the flagellation ceremony. Photo courtesy of Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem.



9.3. Gottfried Selig, *Der Jude, oder Altes und Neues Judenthum* (Leipzig, 1781–87). Engraving of the Kapparot ceremony. Note that the man holds a rooster and the woman holds a hen. Photo courtesy of Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem.

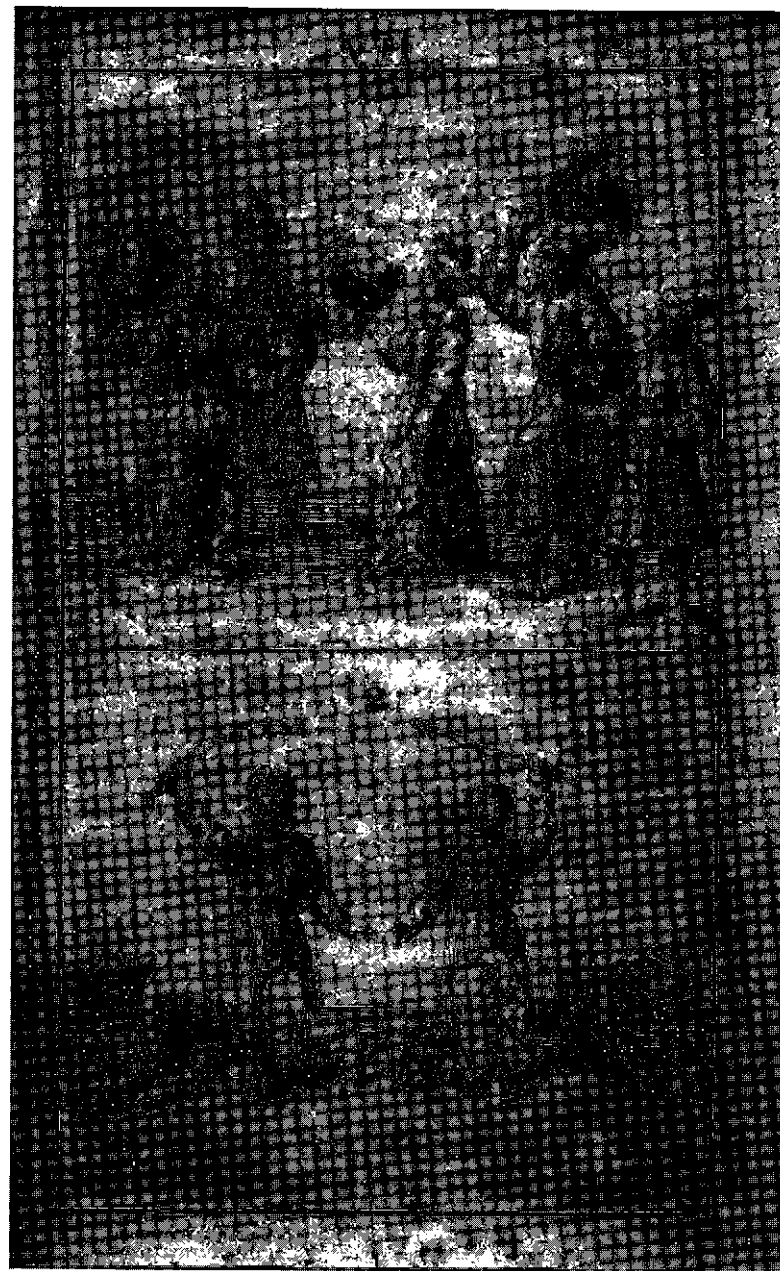
are redeeming my sins which have gone from me to you. I am now free from my sins, but you are guilty for me. You will go to death and I will go to eternal life.” Each member of the household follows with his own rooster and does what the father has done, showing great remorse for his sins and devotion to the mercy of God in his behavior and prayer. And they think and believe that in this manner their sins are forgiven.¹³

This description is an accurate one, verified by many Jewish custom books from the same period.¹⁴ One notices that at the end of his description Pfefferkorn stresses the fact that the Jews think that their actions will free them from their sins, and it seems that he scorns this assumption. Another interesting aspect of Pfefferkorn’s description is his remark about the need to perform the ritual for a fetus (Fig. 9.4), reflecting the Christian concept of original sin, which was thought to have been transmitted through the act of procreation. The idea that the *Kapparot* ritual should be applied to a fetus appears in Jewish sources for the first time in the beginning of the fifteenth century, a fact that calls for further examination. In contrast to the Christian sources, the Hebrew sources do not give a clear explanation for this practice.¹⁵

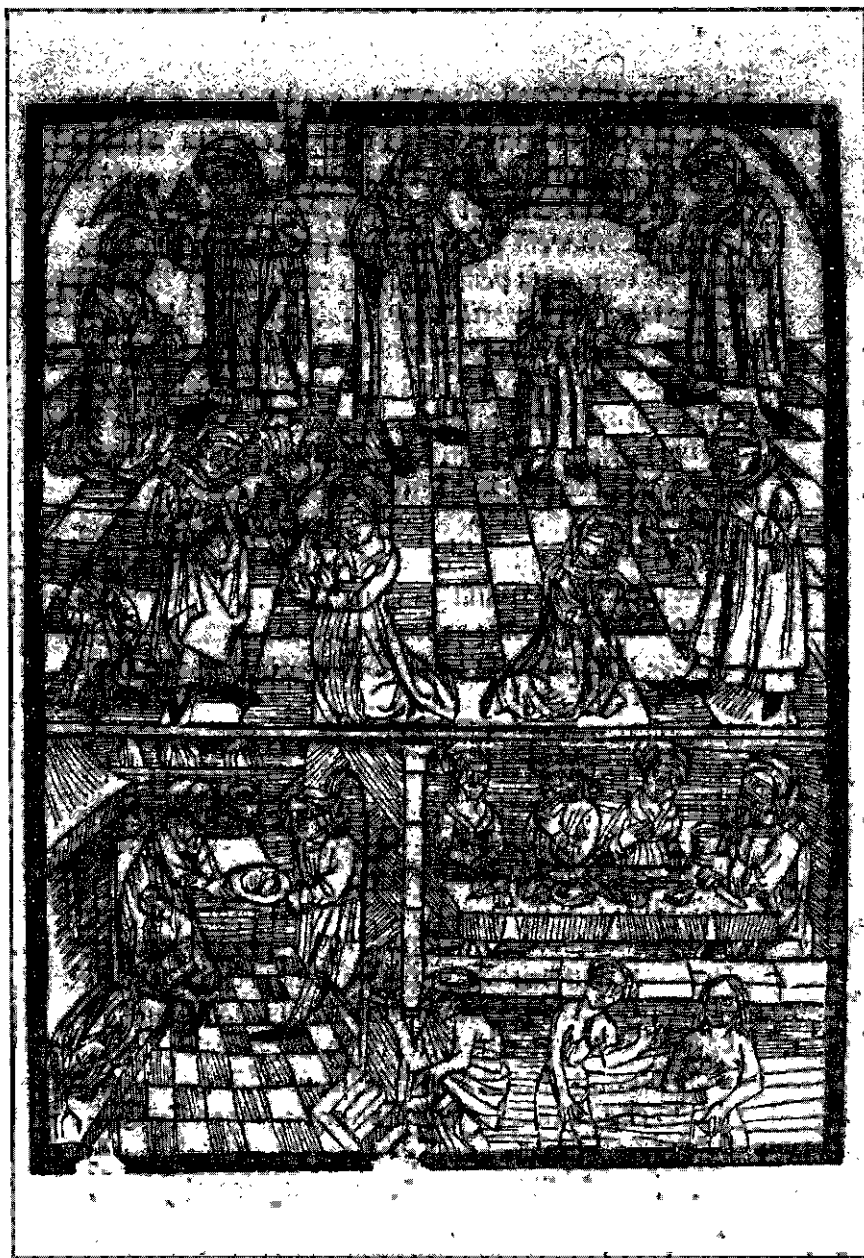
Pfefferkorn describes the purification performed in the Mikve (ritual bath) and the *Malkot* (flagellation) ritual (Fig. 9.5) as well as the lighting of the candles. He says of the first,

They go again to a place of running water, immerse once in the water so that nothing from their bodies can be seen. They go out and put on white linen robes and prepare themselves to eat. But he who thinks that he is still not clean from sins and feels pangs of conscience goes in the synagogue to a close friend or neighbor and kneels down, turning his face to the ground. The other person lifts his clothes and whips him with a strap from a belt or the like thirty-nine times. He whips him on his back, and if there are any sins kept and left they leave from behind and the man is completely pure and clean.¹⁶

Pfefferkorn writes that before the holiday starts each man takes a wax candle to the synagogue and lights it. On the next day, upon the conclusion of the holiday, each man looks at the light of his candle. If he sees that his candle is burning with a clear light, he is happy because this is a sign that God has accepted his prayers and has forgiven his sins.¹⁷ In addition Pfefferkorn mentions that in the synagogue there was a Christian who watched over the candles because the Jews do not want to touch the candles and thus desecrate the holiday.¹⁸ The figure of this Christian appears in the engraving that accompanies the booklet, and as Richard Cohen has suggested, it is probably the first visual evidence of the *Goy shel Shabbat* (Shabbos Goy).¹⁹ The custom of candle lighting is found in contemporary Jewish sources as well; however, only one of them mentions that the way in which the candles burn is a sign of the future.²⁰



9.4. Friedrich Albert Christiani, *Der Juden Glaube und Aberglaube* (Leipzig, 1705). Engraving of the Kapparot ceremony and the flagellation ceremony. Note that the woman on the left is pregnant and holds two roosters, one for herself and one for the fetus. Photo courtesy of Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem.



9.5. Johannes Pfefferkorn, *Libellus de Judaica confessione* (Köln, 1508). Woodcut of Yom Kippur customs. The upper part depicts the Kapparot ceremony; the bottom depicts the meal before the fast and the immersion in the ritual bath. Photo courtesy of Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem.

The flagellation ceremony also appears in the Jewish sources although most of them do not mention stripping of the lashed person before the flagellation begins.²¹

There are also some additions in later descriptions of the candle lighting and flagellation rituals, but these are minor, and they all reflect an intimate awareness of Jewish practice. For example, some authors add that if a person looked at his candle and the light of it seemed clouded, he took it as a bad omen for the year to come. Other authors wrote that the candle is said to stand for the soul based on Proverbs 20:27, “The lifebreath of man is the lamp of the Lord,” or that the numeric value of the word candle (*ner*) in Hebrew is 250, which is equal to the number of organs in the male body (248) together with the spirit and the soul.²² In regard to the flagellation ritual, some authors claim that the Jews recite Psalm 78:38: “But He, being merciful, forgave iniquity and would not destroy; He restrained His wrath time and again and did not give full vent to His fury.” This verse has thirteen words in the Hebrew original, and when repeated three times, it helps them count the thirty-nine lashings.²³ Others, such as Margaritha and Buxtorf, refer to the biblical basis of the flagellation ritual and point out that Paul says he was punished this way five times.²⁴ Buxtorf comments that there is no doubt that the lashings that Paul suffered were harder than those that the Jews undergo during the aforementioned ritual.²⁵

In general, later descriptions of the Kapparot ritual are similar to Pfefferkorn’s although there are some additions. For example, some report that after the Jews finished the Kapparot ceremony they tied the roosters with a rope, slit their throats, threw them to the ground, and burned them.²⁶ In doing this they were symbolically enacting the four different methods of the death penalty in the Jewish tradition—stoning, burning, decapitation, and suffocation—and thus the rooster suffered the death penalties intended for human sins. Others refer to the fact that the earlier custom was to give the rooster to the poor, but since it was not respectable for the poor people to eat the sins that were discharged upon the roosters, the custom was changed, and instead of receiving the roosters, the poor were given alms equal to the value of the rooster.²⁷

The most interesting and controversial addition to Pfefferkorn’s description is the claim that when the Jews could not afford to buy a rooster for Kapparot, they transferred their sins to a Christian. The first author who mentions this is Pfefferkorn’s contemporary, the convert Victor von Carben. In his book *Dem durchleuchtigsten hochgebornen Fürsten und Herren* (probably 1508), von Carben claims that some Jews could not afford to buy a rooster but they still wanted to purify themselves from sin. They therefore woke up early on Yom Kippur eve, went outside, and waited until they saw a Christian. Then they

secretly said to him: "God grant that this year you must be or become my Kappara."²⁸ It seems from this description that the Christian was not aware of his function for the Jew.

This particular claim about the use of a Christian as a Kappara appears in elaborate forms in later descriptions of the Jewish religion and also in other types of polemical works against Judaism. According to later sources, such as Margaritha and Hess, the Jews went into the streets, waited until they saw a Christian, and then asked him, "Do you want to be my Kappara?" offering him a few pfennigs. They then said to the Christian, "You will receive my sins and you will die instead of me," adding the phrase "Kappara Mita Meshuna." This literally means "forgiveness, a strange death," but according to the Christian writers, the meaning was far more sinister: "You should enter into death for my sins and you should die." This claim also appears in other polemical works against Judaism, especially in books that list Jewish insults and prayers against Christianity. For example, it can be found in the anonymous *Verzeichniß Jüdischer Gottes Lästerung*, in Johannes Schmid's *Feuriger Drachen Gift* and in *Juden Spiegel*.²⁹ Not all the descriptions of the Kapparot ceremony mention this procedure. Some authors, like Buxtorf, Christiani, and Bodenschatz, do not mention the custom at all, and some, like Johannes Wülfer (1681), cite it as a false accusation.³⁰

The most elaborate discussion on this point is to be found in Johannes Schudt's *Jüdische Merckwürdigkeiten* (1714).³¹ Schudt opens his discussion by citing sources claiming that Jews use Christians as Kapparot. He then attacks Wülfer for denying this and for saying that he never met anyone who knew of such a practice. Schudt claims that on the contrary while he was in Hamburg in 1688 he actually saw a Jew giving bread and money to a Christian on the eve of Yom Kippur and saying in Hebrew that he transferred his sins to him.³² Why, asked Schudt, should we not believe this claim when it is proven from other sources as well? After all, we know that the Jews claim the Christians are Edomites and that God transferred the sins of the Jews to Esau and to the Edomites. Schudt also refutes Wülfer's claim that Christians would never agree to take the Jews' sins upon themselves.³³ He argues that while this is a desecration, there are common people who are willing to give up their salvation for money. To prove his argument Schudt recounts the story of a servant in Lübeck who agreed to take his master's sins upon himself in order to obtain a nice piece of cloth.³⁴ He does not fail to mention this servant's fate: he was heard screaming and then found dead, his blood covering the walls,³⁵ a clear message for those who might consider serving as Kapparot for the Jews. Schudt continues his attack on Wülfer, adducing further counterexamples of Jews collectively and individually transferring their sins to Christians.³⁶

Schudt's detailed discussion of this claim and the sources he cites (seven

in number) as well as the account of his personal observation of the practice are all aimed at proving his claim.³⁷ One might conclude from Schudt's vehemence in this matter that he was motivated by an anti-Jewish approach, but this is an overly simplistic analysis. For example, at the end of his discussion of Yom Kippur, Schudt categorically denies that the Jews use Christian blood on Yom Kippur.³⁸ One therefore cannot characterize his motivations as purely anti-Jewish.³⁹ Rather, I would suggest that Schudt accepted the first claim because he believed his sources supported it, but he rejected the second for lack of evidence.⁴⁰

These three ceremonies, Kapparot, Malkot, and candle lighting, receive by far the most attention in the thirty-five "Jewish ethnographies" that discuss Yom Kippur. This is true not only in terms of their frequent appearance in the various descriptions but also in terms of the length of these descriptions. Usually the longest account is devoted to the Kapparot ceremony, but the descriptions of the candle lighting and flagellation are also quite long.⁴¹ Nevertheless, we should not ignore other details about Yom Kippur that appear in some of the descriptions and are an integral part of the way the holiday is portrayed. In certain cases we find general observations about the liturgy performed on the day. Most of these deal with the length of the prayers and describe the way they were recited with loud singing and crying. Some descriptions single out specific prayers, such as the prayers on Yom Kippur eve, *al da'at hamakom* and *Kol Nidrei*. In the first of these, the cantor summons everyone to join the community, even sinners, and then offers a prayer that Christians believed absolved Jews of any past and future vows they made. Another prayer that is mentioned on a few occasions is the blessing of the priests, which is recited in the afternoon. As can be seen from the chart, other frequently mentioned practices that are part of the Yom Kippur ritual are immersion in the ritual bath, which is mentioned fifteen times, and visiting the cemetery before the holiday, which is mentioned fourteen times.

All the customs and practices associated with Yom Kippur mentioned by Christian Hebraists and Jewish converts also appear in Jewish sources. But while most of the Jewish sources are devoted to descriptions of the prayers that should be said on this day and to the laws and customs regarding fasting and other prohibited activities, the Kapparot, flagellation, and candle lighting rituals are generally not the focus of the Jewish sources. For example, in Rabbi Eisik Tirna's custom book from the fifteenth century, a work that many Hebraists consulted, only five lines deal with the Kapparot ceremony, three lines with flagellation, and one line with candle lighting. In contrast, about 110 lines discuss the prayers of the holiday.⁴² In Rabbi Juspa Kashman's custom and ruling book from the beginning of the eighteenth century 300 lines discuss

the prayers while only 50 lines deal with the Kapparot, 5 lines with the flagellation, and 18 lines with candle lighting.⁴³

On the basis of this comparison between Jewish and Christian sources we can conclude that Christian authors were not concerned with giving a full and complete account of Yom Kippur. They focused on those aspects of the Yom Kippur ritual that furthered their own Christian and anti-Jewish agenda. Altogether, I have distinguished four different motivations, related to one another but not identical: revealing the absurdity of Jewish ritual; revealing the superstitious character of Jewish ceremony; revealing the anti-Christian nature of Jewish practice; and showing the deviation of Judaism from the biblical text.

Pfefferkorn, who was among the first authors to describe the ritual life of the Jews and consequently one of the founders of this literary genre, makes his hostile intent clear in a chapter outlining his reasons for describing Jewish customs. As he says, "First, I have revealed here the unfounded bad habits of the Jews (so that everybody understands my point of view in this matter), in order to show them to them in a mocking light."⁴⁴ Pfefferkorn's desire to demonstrate the ridiculous character of the Jewish customs is dominant in the work of later authors as well and is revealed by their propensity for sarcasm. For example, they ridicule the traditional Jewish explanation for the use of a rooster to atone for the sins of a human on the grounds that a *Gever*, rooster in Aramaic, can replace a *Gever*, man in Hebrew. Buxtorf comments on this in his *Juden Schul*:

The reason for taking a rooster rather than any other animal is that a man is called *Gebher* in Hebrew. If a *Gebher* sins, a *Gebher* should be punished. But that punishment would be painful, therefore they take a rooster in place of themselves, a rooster, which is called in the Babylonian language of the Talmud *Gebher*. This is done because of the just treatment of God since a *Gebher* has sinned, a *Gebher*, meaning the rooster, will be punished. The blind and stupid Jews also believe that they can confuse God as they do the devil (as was shown in the previous chapter) and make him think that a rooster is a man.⁴⁵

This sarcastic depiction of the Jewish ceremonies as absurd is also evident in the use of adjectives such as *seltsam* (strange) and *merckwürdig* (peculiar).⁴⁶ Margaritha's description of the flagellation ceremony is laced with sarcasm when he writes: "*Doch beyssen die Füchs aneinander nit hart*"—that is, the Jewish "foxes . . . bite one another rather gently." As I already mentioned, Buxtorf claimed that the lashings endured by Paul were harder than those suffered by contemporary Jews during their ceremony. Sarcasm is especially prevalent in Christian descriptions of the customs of Kapparot and flagellation.

Another tendency among Christian authors is to emphasize the superstitious nature of Jewish customs. These accounts repeatedly resort to the words

Aberglauben and *abergläubisch* (superstition and superstitious).⁴⁷ In *Der Gantz Judisch Glaub* Margaritha describes the custom of lighting a candle on Yom Kippur eve. He mentions that each Jew takes a candle that will burn for at least twenty-four hours, and he writes that he himself saw a Jew who was so pious that he prepared a candle weighing thirty pounds. He emphasizes the superstitions the Jews have in regard to these candles and the way they are burnt.⁴⁸ The fact that Christian authors view the custom of lighting candles as superstitious explains why they refer to it so frequently even though it was not considered important from the Jewish point of view.⁴⁹

The Kapparot ceremony is also attacked as superstitious. For example, Johannes Christian Salomon, a converted Jew, writes that on the ninth of Tishri, in preparation for Yom Kippur, the Jews have an *erschrecklichen Aberglauben* (an appalling superstition), namely the Kapparot ceremony. In his description he mentions that after bestowing their sins upon their respective roosters the Jews take them, bind their feet, bring them to the slaughterer, and then eat them. In his opinion this is clear evidence of how superstitious Jews are.⁵⁰ It should be pointed out that during the same period this ceremony was attacked and condemned by Jewish rabbis as well. The criticism of the Kapparot ceremony started as early as the medieval period when some prominent Jewish figures such as Nahmanides and Rashba (Rabbi Shlomo ibn Aderet) said that it is the custom of the Gentiles, but later on some of these attacks referred to the Kapparot ceremony as superstitious without mentioning Christians.⁵¹

Criticism of the Kapparot ceremony is in some ways reminiscent of the criticism Protestants often voiced against Catholic practices. An examination of the authors who discussed the Jewish ceremonies reveals that most of the Christians authors who wrote descriptions of Jewish rituals and ceremonies were Protestants; only a few were Catholics. It is noteworthy, however, that the attacks on the Jewish rituals and their superstitious nature are common to both the Protestant and the Catholic authors. It is difficult to determine whether religious differences between the authors influenced their opinions in other matters. Thus, for example, the criticism on the candle lighting is common to both Protestants and Catholics although Protestant scholars tend to attack the Catholic practice of candle lighting as well.⁵² At the same time, although Protestants argued against the practices of flagellants, there is no hint that their criticism of the Jewish ceremony of flagellation was aimed at the Catholic practice.

A further reason Christians were inclined to describe the Kapparot ceremony and the different prayers for Yom Kippur is their anti-Christian character. Besides the long discussions about the use of Christians as Kapparot, there are references to the curses against Christians that, according to some descrip-

tions, play an important role in the services of Yom Kippur. Authors like Margaritha and Hess refer to special prayers against Christians, and it is likely that they mean the *shamta*. Margaritha claims that Jews recite a very rare prayer against all the nations, including the Christians, but states that there are many reasons he prefers not to mention this prayer explicitly. Hess concludes his discussion of Yom Kippur with a prayer to God that he might help the poor Christians on this day by bringing it to an end since the Jews pray for the suffering of all Christians. Other parts of the service are singled out for their anti-Christian bias, for example, the prayer '*aleinu l'shabe'ach*. Although cited three times every day, it is accompanied on Yom Kippur (as well as on Rosh Hashana) with a special ceremony and was believed by many Christians to include insults against Jesus.⁵³ Christian writers also attacked the prayer *kol nidrei*. The basis for these attacks was the Christian claim that the Jews used this prayer to break promises they had previously made to Christians under oath. In his comments and additions to Hess's book, for example, Alberti claims Jews do this.⁵⁴

Another example of the way Christian authors attack what they perceive as the anti-Christian character of some of the customs is found in Friedenheim, who claims that the custom of starting the building of the Sukkah immediately after the end of Yom Kippur reflects disdain for Christians. According to Friedenheim, one of the rabbis wrote:

During the time of the Temple, God ordered that on *Yom Kippur* two he-goats, which in Hebrew are called *se'irim*, will be sacrificed, one of them for God himself and the other one to *Azazel*, or according to their translation to Satan (Lev. 16:1). In the story of the patriarchs, however, we read (Gen. 33:16-7) that Esau chose the way to *Seir* and Jacob the way to *Sukkot*. Since *Seir* in the singular form means a he-goat, they claim that Esau went there to participate in the he-goat of Satan; Jacob in contrast went to *Sukkot* or the tabernacle to prepare for the holiday there. According to this also we, so ends this rabbi, can deal now with the laws of the feast of Tabernacle since we have sent the he-goat to Satan.⁵⁵

Since for Jews, Esau was a symbol of Christianity, this passage, with its stark contrast between god-fearing Jacob and devil-worshipping Esau, clearly associates Christianity with the devil and Judaism with God.

I turn now to another aspect of the descriptions of Jewish customs, one that relates primarily to the motives of those authors who were Christian from birth. In his discussion of Yom Kippur, Buxtorf quotes the biblical verses that deal with this day. Buxtorf does not follow Luther's German translation but gives his own.⁵⁶ A comparison of the two translations shows that although there is no real difference between them, Buxtorf follows the word order of the Hebrew text more closely.⁵⁷ Buxtorf's concern with the exact translation

of the Hebrew text arose from his conviction that the Jews had deviated from the biblical law. This claim appears in the first chapter of his book and again in the conclusion, where he writes: "It will be enough for the Christian reader to hear and understand from all of that, that the Jewish faith and their entire religion is not based on Moses, but on empty lies, false and ungrounded laws and fables that their rabbis and corrupted scholars invented, and thus among the Christians it should not be said any more that the Jews strongly adhere to the Mosaic law."⁵⁸ Buxtorf's literal translation of the Hebrew text is part of his attempt to show that while he understands the Hebrew text and follows it to the letter, the Jews do not, and they consequently deviate from the true meaning of the Bible.

A similar tactic of comparing the verses from the Bible that deal with Yom Kippur with a description of the holiday as it was performed by contemporary Jews is found in the work of Johannes Christoph Bodenschatz. Bodenschatz does not limit himself to citing the biblical verses about the holiday. In addition to these he provides a long description of the way in which Yom Kippur was observed during the biblical period. In this respect one of his central purposes is to highlight the discrepancies between the biblical and the rabbinic understanding of the holiday and to show the way the rabbis have distorted contemporary Jewish practice.⁵⁹ While Margaritha does not explicitly refer to Jewish deviations from specific biblical passages, as Buxtorf and Bodenschatz do, he does charge the rabbis with introducing customs and practices that are not mentioned in the Bible. As he says in the case of the Kapparot ceremony, "Listen to this, you blind Jew, and not to your Talmud which has blurred the truth with the rooster. A rooster cannot take over your sins. A man must redeem these sins again."⁶⁰

These arguments belong to the theological sphere and are reminiscent of earlier Christian attacks on Judaism as a religion that no longer adheres to the Bible. As opposed to earlier attacks that concentrated mainly on the Jewish lack of understanding of the spiritual meaning of the biblical laws, the Christian focus in this case was on the way Jews have deviated from the meaning of the biblical text. This marks the first appearance of a systematic Christian attack on the Jewish law and on rabbinical Judaism as a different religion and on the Jews as a nation that no longer adheres to God's revelation but to a religion that is a human fabrication of fables and lies.⁶¹ These theological arguments reveal that Christian interest in contemporary Judaism was an extension of the traditional theological polemics against the Jewish religion.

As we have seen, the different motives of the various authors discussed and the reasons they chose one way of presenting Jewish customs rather than another are varied. This is all the more true because later authors read the works of their predecessors and in many cases quote from them extensively.

Our ability to recognize the sources an author used gives us the opportunity to trace what he chose to transmit to his readers and what he chose to omit. For example, as Stephen Burnett has shown, Margaritha's *Der Gantz Judisch Glaub* was one of the main sources for Buxtorf's *Juden Schul*, as was Hess's *Juden Geissel*, although to a lesser degree.⁶² Both Margaritha and Hess highlight different anti-Christian components in the ceremonies of Yom Kippur. Margaritha refers to the custom of using a Christian as a Kappara and to the special anti-Christian prayers that the Jews recite on this day. Both these customs appear in Hess's description; in addition he mentions the alleged custom that on Yom Kippur the Jews ask each other if they cheated Christians in business. Yet none of these details are mentioned by Buxtorf. This omission creates the impression that although Buxtorf employed sharp and sarcastic remarks about the Jews, he kept his focus on theological issues and refrained from depicting Judaism as an anti-Christian religion. A similar attitude can also be found in Fabronius's *Bekehrung der Juden und von mancherley abergläubischen Ceremonien*, which makes extensive use of Hess's *Juden Geissel*. Like Buxtorf, whose book he also used as a source, Fabronius does not mention the anti-Christian prayers or the questions that dealt with cheating Christians in business, and he also refrains from mentioning Hess's criticism of the Kapparat ceremony. The only anti-Christian element that he takes from Hess is the claim that the Jews use Christians as Kapparat.⁶³

The Hess case shows us that not all later authors refrained from emphasizing the anti-Christian character of some of the Yom Kippur ceremonies. As Maria Diemling has shown, Hess made extensive use of Margaritha's book.⁶⁴ Not only does he mention the anti-Christian prayers and the use of Christians as Kapparat, but, as we have seen, he also adds another practice he viewed as an anti-Christian, namely that of questioning Jews about cheating Christians. The same is true for Lothar Fried who based his description on Margaritha and Hess and referred to the anti-Christian ceremonies they mentioned.⁶⁵

The common denominator uniting the first group of authors I mentioned, namely Buxtorf and Fabronius,⁶⁶ is that they were Christians from birth while the other two authors, Hess and Fried, were converts. Those born Christian showed only a limited interest in discussing the anti-Christian character of the Jewish ceremonies. Their major concern was with proving that the Jewish ceremonies were ridiculous and absurd, and that from a theological perspective contemporary Judaism is no longer based on the Bible but on the fables of the rabbis. The approach of the converts was different: from their point of view the unveiling of the anti-Christian characteristics of the Jewish ceremonies was crucial. Thus those converts who used the works of their predecessors adopted the anti-Christian claims and even added to them.

From a historical perspective one can see that the references to the anti-

Christian character of the Jewish ceremonies, especially in regard to the claim that the Jews use Christians as Kapparat, are characteristic of the early literature that tended to be written by converts to Christianity. Three out of the four descriptions written in the sixteenth century, those of von Carben, Margaritha, and Hess, refer to this claim, and the fourth, Pfefferkorn, refers to the Jewish curses against Christians and Christianity during Yom Kippur. These authors were all converts.

In later descriptions, references to the anti-Christian character of Jewish ritual and practice are less extensive. For example, the claim that Jews use Christians as Kapparat appears only twice in the seventeenth century, and at least three out of the four references to it in the eighteenth century, those made by Fried in his *Juden Spiegel* (1715), by Jungendres in his notes to Kirchner's *Judisches Ceremoniel* (1724), and by Selig in his *Der Jude*, are based on Margaritha's description and not on their own experience.⁶⁷ It is still telling, however, that they raised this claim again after a century of silence. Although further study is necessary, it appears that there is a shift in the nature of the literature dealing with Jewish customs. The earlier works were written by converts, and their main focus was on revealing the anti-Christian character of Judaism. The books written in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, including those written by converts, are less concerned with this aspect of Judaism. They focus instead on the superstitious and ridiculous nature of the Jewish religion. Altogether we can see that both the origin of the authors, namely if they were Christian from birth or converts, and the change in time influenced the writings about Judaism in the early modern period.

I began this essay by noting the problems related to categorizing the literature under discussion as "Christian ethnographies of Jews." Hsia, who coined the term, points to the similarity between the rise of modern ethnography and the writings about the Jews.⁶⁸ While I agree with Hsia that there are parallels between the subjects discussed in books about the Jews and books about other nations and religions, there are also profound differences. One of the main tools of the ethnographer is firsthand observation, and this was the tool for most of the authors who wrote about other nations and religions. As we have seen, however, most of the writers examined in this essay based themselves on literary sources. This is especially true in the case of Christian authors, who rarely include their own observations, but it is also the case with most of the converts, who, in spite of their personal knowledge, often refer to the printed word. In addition we should remember that the converts are not typical outsiders who view another culture as strangers. They viewed Judaism from within and from without at the same time, a unique phenomenon that characterizes writings about Jews and has almost no parallels in the vast literature about other nations. In addition the literature about the Jews is characterized

by religious and theological polemics, which are less prevalent in the writings about other nations.

In his article Hsia hints at the theological nature of the works about Jewish ritual life but fails to emphasize the crucial importance of either the polemical criticism of the Jews or of the actual relationships between Jews and Christians and the way they influenced the attitudes of the authors toward Jews.⁶⁹ As we have seen, the arguments in the works about Jews were *theological* inasmuch as they emphasize the deviation of contemporary Jewish customs from the original precepts of Mosaic law and their superstitious character and *social* when they underline the anti-Christian aspects of the Jewish way of life as it was expressed in Jewish prayers and ceremonies. But whichever aspect they singled out, it is clear that Christian authors had a defined polemical agenda.⁷⁰ Based on this conclusion, the use of the term *ethnography* to describe Christian writings about Jews is problematic because of the obvious religious bias shown by the authors. I would suggest that we describe this literature not simply as ethnographies but modify the term calling these texts polemical ethnographies.⁷¹ In my opinion the use of this new term should not be limited to the literature about the Jews; it could be very useful in discussions of ethnographies about other nations as well.⁷² This definition indicates that while much of the information in the books about the Jewish religion is ethnographic, namely it belongs to “the scientific description of nations or races of men, their customs, habits, and differences” (to quote the definition in the *Oxford English Dictionary*), most of them had a clearly polemical anti-Judaic agenda. Although today this definition seems a bit naive because we know that there is no “objective” ethnography, there is a difference between descriptions that focus on polemical aspects and descriptions that are biased due to their author’s incapability to fully understand a different culture from outside.

However, one should notice that my definition of this literary genre as polemical ethnography does not imply that its consequences for European Jewry at the time were only negative. As mentioned before, this literary genre also fostered the process of disenchantment with Judaism and shifted the Christian interest from dealing with Judaism to dealing with Jews—a shift that later paved the road to the naturalization of the Jews. In addition one cannot ignore the influence of this literature, both directly and indirectly, on the internal Jewish process of abandoning customs that were considered by many as superstitious. Modena’s work is one example of this approach.⁷³

The quotation from Friedenheim’s book with which I began recounted the interest and the impression that Yom Kippur made on the Christians. The numerous descriptions of Yom Kippur that were written by Christian authors as well as the fact that among the different holidays Yom Kippur (together with Passover) received the most attention prove the truth of the first part

of Friedenheim’s statement. The attitudes toward Yom Kippur as they were discussed here, however, show that it was not appreciation that induced Christians to write about the holiday but the polemical desire to discredit Judaism. Only at the end of the period we are dealing with, namely the second half of the eighteenth century, are there descriptions that not only criticize the Jews but also praise them.

Notes

1.

Ich sah diese Zeit hindurch oft mit Verwunderung, wie häufig die Christen, an den sogenannten (Jom Kipper) oder langen Tage in die Synagogen eilen, um die jüdische Andacht und ihre Gebräuche mit anzusehen; sie glauben vielleicht dem Scheine nach wunder, wie auferbäulich, gottesfürchtig, und andächtig diese Gebräuchen seyen; denn ich hörte bey meinen Spaziergängen am Main, selbst von denen, die aus der Synagoge zurückkamen, daß sie zueinander sagten, die jüdischen Ceremonien seyen wirklich nicht zu verachten, denn ihr Gebeth, des den ganzen Tag über dauerte, die Beleuchtung ihrer Synagoge, ihre weissen leinenen Röcke, alles erregt Aufmerksamkeit. Die Juden selbst sind stolz darauf, so vornehme Zuschauer beyderley Geschlechts in ihren Synagogen zu haben; denn sie glauben die Goim oder Christen haben einen besondern Wohlgefallen an ihrem Gottesdienste, und einige Meschmodim oder Neugetaufte aber kämen in die Synagoge zurück, um dieses Fest noch einmal mitfeiern zu können.

Caspar Friedenheim, *Yehudi mi-bachutz, das ist der äußerliche Jud in Ansehung ihres dermaligen vermeintlichen Gottesdienstes und besonders in Absicht auf das ihnen so wichtige Stück Jom Kipur, das ist der Versöhnungstag und dessen dermaligen Feyer und Begehung* (Würzburg, Ger., 1785), Vorrede, first and second page (no pagination).

2. Yaacov Deutsch, “A View of the Jewish Religion’: Conceptions of Jewish Practice and Ritual in Early Modern Europe,” *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* 3 (2001): 273–95.

3. For a survey of earlier descriptions of Yom Kippur see Daniel Stökl, “The Impact of Yom Kippur on Early Christianity” (Ph.D. diss., Hebrew University, 2001), 65–75. Stökl mentions a number of authors who described Yom Kippur; however, as he writes, most of them did not go into detail about the rituals of the day.

4. On this prayer and on some of the Christian references to it, see Chen Merhavya, “The Caustic Poetic Rebuke (Shamta) in Medieval Christian Polemic Literature,” *Tarbiz* 41 (1971): 95–115 (in Hebrew), and Israel J. Yuval, “Vengeance and Damnation, Blood Defamation: From Jewish Martyrdom to Blood Libel Accusations” (in Hebrew), *Zion* 58 (1993): 52–55.

5. “Item in festo propitiationum, in septembri, habent quamdam specialem orationem quam faciunt contra omnes inimicos, quam orationem vocant ‘cematha,’ quod est dictum anathema vel separatio, vel maledictio. Et in illa oratione per circumlocutionem verborum vocant Christum spurium filium meretricis et beatam Mariam Virginem mulierem calefactionis seu luxurie; quod nephandum est loqui et etiam cogitare.” Bernard Gui, *Manuel de l’inquisiteur*, vol. 2, ed. and trans. G. Mollat and G. Drioux (New York: AMS Press 1980), 16–18.

6. Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia, “Christian Ethnography of Jews in Early Modern Ger-

many," in *The Expulsion of the Jews: 1492 and After*, ed. Raymond B. Waddington and Arthur H. Williamson (New York: Garland, 1994), 223–35.

7. For a list of these books and a discussion of their content, see Deutsch, "A View of the Jewish Religion."

8. See Friedenheim, *Yehudi mi-bachutz, das ist der äußerliche Jud.*

9. For practical reasons, I have mentioned in the table only the names of the authors. I have appended a list with full bibliographical references to the works.

10. On this custom and its history, see Jacob Z. Lauterbach, "The Ritual for the Kapparot Ceremony," in *Jewish Studies in Memory of George A. Kohut*, ed. Salo W. Baron and Alexander Marx (New York: Alexander Kohut Memorial Foundation 1935), 413–22 (reprinted in Jacob Z. Lauterbach, *Studies in Jewish Law, Custom, and Folklore*, selected with an introduction by Bernard J. Bamberger [New York: Ktav, 1970], 133–42); and idem, "Tashlik: A Study in Jewish Ceremonies," *HUCA* 11 (1936): 207–340.

11. On Pfefferkorn and his works, see Hans-Martin Kirn, *Das Bild vom Juden im Deutschland des frühen 16. Jahrhunderts: dargestellt an den Schriften Johannes Pfefferkorns*, Texts and Studies in Medieval and Early Modern Judaism 3 (Tübingen, Ger.: Mohr, 1989).

12. The pamphlet was printed six times during 1508, four times in German dialects and twice in Latin. See Kirn, *Das Bild vom Juden*, 202. The title above is that of the Nürnberg edition. In addition the booklet was published in 1516 in Danish. See Martin S. Lausten, "Jodernes hemmeligheder; den danske udgave af det antijødiske skrift *Libellus de Judaica confessione* (1516)," *Rambam* 31 (1991–92): 67–81.

13.

Uff den newenten tag yrer puß und penitentz, wan sy auß yrem tempel heym zu hauß kûmen. So hant allē juden iunck und alt manß personen weyß hanen, die frawen und iunckfrawen sulch weyß hennen so vere als mûglich ist die zu uber kûmmen und zu kriegen. Ob aber ein fraw schwanger ist so mûß sy ein hanen und ein hennen fur sich und die ungeborne frucht die noch kein sundt gethan hat, doch in wollust des fleÿsch empfangen ist. Ein ytlicher nympt seinen hanen und hennen bey sich. Der herr des hauß stet mit seinem hannen in das mittel seins haußgesyndes mit grosser andach still schweigende ein gûte weil bedencken sein sunden, wan die also bedacht seind, nympt er seinen hannen bey den fûssen schwingt den drey mall umb sein haut also das der hann mit seinem flûgellen flattern und die zusammen flagen muß und spricht zu dem hannen, du pist ein vergeber meiner sund, welche von mir zu dir verwandelt und ubetragen und gesetzt werden. Ich byn nun vonn meynen sunden gefreyhet aber du pist schuldig fur mich, du geest in den todt und ich das ewig leben, dan kumpt ein ytlicher der ein nach dem andern mit seinen hannen und thut gleich wie der vater des haußgesins gethan hat mit gestalt und gepet gantzer grosser reu fur die sunden und andacht zu der barmhertzigkeyt gotz, meinen halden und glauben das gantzlich das in yre sunden verzyhen und vergeben sein.

Johannes Pfefferkorn, *Ich heÿß ain Bûchlein der Iuden Peicht* (Nürnberg, 1508), B1r–v.

14. See, for example, the description in the fifteenth-century *Book of Maharil: Customs by Rabbi Yaacov Mulin* (in Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Mifal Torath Chachmey Ashkenaz, Machon Yerushalayim, 1989), 313–15.

15. The first reference to taking a rooster for the fetus is found in the *Book of Maharil*, 314; and see the note of the editor in *Sefer Haminhagim (Rulings and Customs) of Rabbi Eisik Tirna* (Jerusalem: Mifal Torath Chachmey Ashkenaz, Machon Yerushalayim, 1979), 105 §139 n. 1.

16.

Geen darnach widerumb zu einen fliessenden wasser ducken sich aber ein mal darunder das nit von yrem leibe gesehen wirt, geen auß und thun weysse lynen kytel ann und rusten sich zu essen. Wer aber sach das sich eyner nit reyn von sunden bedeuht zu sein dannoch ein wydernagen leiner conscientz hette, der geet zu seinen negsten freunden aber nachtpawren in yr synagog knyet nyder, pucht sich mit dem haubte zu der erden so hebet im der ander die cleyder hynden uff und schlecht yn mit einem ryemen von einer gurtel oder sunst xxxix. Schlege fur das hynderst, wo dan noch eyniche sunde verhalten und geblieben gewest weren die faren also hynden auß dan ist der man gantz und gar lautter und reyn.

Pfefferkorn, *Iuden Peicht*, B1v.

17. "Und wer dan den selbigen tag umb die vesper zeyt wol nyesen mag aber dem sein kertz hell und clar geprant hat der erfrewet sich, wann sy halten das fur ein gewysstes zeichen das got die selbigen erhört hab." *Ibid.*, B3r.

18. "Darbey ein christen menßch sein unnd die erwarten müß das kein schad dar von uff stan, sy rûren die kertzen mit an uff das yr feyr nit gebrochen werde." *Ibid.*, B2r.

19. Richard I. Cohen, *Jewish Icons: Art and Society in Modern Europe* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), 267 n. 33. This function of the Shabbos Goy appears also in Jewish sources, for example Yosef Juspa Hahn Neuerlingen, *Sefer Yosef Ometz* (in Hebrew) (Frankfurt: Hermon Verlag, 1928), 224.

20. For example, the description of Rabbi Eisik Tirna, who refers only to the blessing on the candles: *Sefer Haminhagim (Rulings and Customs) of Rabbi Eisik Tirna*, 107. The Maharil is the only one who refers to looking at the way the candles were burning as a sign for the future. See *The Book of Maharil*, 332.

21. For example, the description of Avraham Kleusner (d. ca. 1400), *Custom Book, according to the Trent edition printed on 1559* (in Hebrew), ed. Hayim Yehuda Ehrenreich (Deva, Rum., 1929), 12. The only reference to the stripping of the lashed person is found in the seventeenth-century description of Juspa Shammash who writes, "And they are accustomed to take the cloth at his waist." See *Wormser Minhagbuch des R. Jousep (Juspa) Schammes. Nach Handschriften des Verfassers zum ersten Male vollständig herausgegeben, Erläuterungen und Quellen von Benjamin Salomon Hamburger*, vol. 1 (in Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Machon Jeruschalajim, Mifal Torath Chachmey Aschkenaz, 1988), 173.

22. For example, see Johannes Buxtorf, *Synagoga Judaica: Das ist Juden Schul: Darinnen der gantz Jüdische Glaub und Glaubens ubung, mit allen Ceremonien, Satzungen, Sitten und Gebräuchen, wie sie bey ihnen öffentlich und Heimlich im Brauche* (Basel, Switz., 1603), 517. According to this explanation, the female body has 252 organs, and therefore this explanation does not include her.

23. Johannes Christoph Georg Bodenschatz, *Kirchliche Verfassung der heutigen Juden sonderlich derer in Deutschland in IV. Haupt-Theile abgefasset aus ihren eigenen und anderen Schriften umständlich dargethan und mit 30 sauberen Kupfern erläutert* (Frankfurt, 1748–49), 215.

24. Anthonius Margaritha, *Der gantz Jüdisch Glaub* (Augsburg, 1530), Fir (note in the margins); Buxtorf, *Juden Schul*, 522.

25. "Dise strafe der, ein weniger denn viertzig schlägen, sagt der Apostel Paulus, daß er zum fünfften mal, von den Jüden erlitten habe, ohne zweiffel viel härter unnd

anderst, denn sie heutiges tages einander in der Kirchen schlagen." Buxtorf, *Juden Schul*, 522.

26. Johannes Jacob Schudt, *Jüdische Merckwürdigkeiten*, vol. 2, no. 2 (Frankfurt: 1714), 299.

27. Paul Christian Kirchner, *Jüdisches Ceremoniel . . . nunmehr aber bey dieser neuen Auflage mit accuraten Kupfer versehen; Nicht weniger aus den besten Scribenten so wol, als aus Erzählung glaubwürdiger Personen und selbst eigener Erfahrung, um vieles vermehret und mit Anmerkungen erläutert*, ed. Sebastian Jacob Jungendres (Nürnberg, 1724), 118 n. b.

28. "Gott gebe dass du diss jair meyn Caporo must seyn oder werden." Victor von Carben, *Dem durchleuchtigsten hochgebornen fursten und herren Herren Ludwigen Phaltzgrauen bey Rein . . . Hier inne wirt gelesen wie Her Victor von Carben, welcher eyn Rabi der Jüden gewest ist, zu cristlichem glauben komm. Weiter vindet man dar in eyn costliche disputatz eynes gelerten Cristen, und eyns gelerten Jude, dar inne alle Irthumb der Juden durch yr aygen schrifft aufgelost werden* (Köln?, probably 1508), Civ. Concerning the date and place of publication, see Maria Diemling, "Christliche Ethnographien über Juden und Judentum in der Frühen Neuzeit: Die Konvertiten Victor von Carben und Anthonius Margaritha und ihre Darstellung jüdischen Lebens und jüdischer Religion" (Ph.D. diss., Universität Wien, 1999), 14.

29. Johannes Schmid, *Feuriger Drachen Gift und wütiger Ottern Gall Mit welchem Des Teuffels Leibigen Juden Volck durch greuliches und abscheuliches Gotteslästern Schänden Fluchen Lügen Schrifftverkehren Betriegen und andere unmenschliche Boßheit Den Heiligen Drey-Einigen Gott frey speiset und trüncket . . . Nebst einem Anhang oder kurtzen Verlauff der Sabbats-Bedienung zu Hoerde* (Coburg, Ger., 1682), 35; *Verzeichniss und kurtzer Auszug aus etlicher Hochgelehrter (auch vieler anderer Gottseliger Menner und erfahrner der Hebrayschen Sprach) von den erschrocklichen Gotteslästern wieder unsern Herrn Christum die Jungfrau Maria wieder alle Christen und Weltliche Obrigkeit so von den Juden täglich geübet werden* (Leipzig, Ger., 1577), Aa3r + v; *Juden Spiegel in welchem kurz wahr und klürlich deren Juden herkommen jetziger Stand Glauben argerlicher Handel und Wandel Zur Gründlicher Nachricht und Freundlicher Warnung allen ihrer Seelen Heyl liebenden Christen aus bewehrten Christlichen und Judischen Schrifften Büchern und Exempelen fürgestellt werden* (Cölln, 1714), 73–75.

30. Johannes Wülfer, a Protestant preacher, published the book *Theriaca Judaica ad examen revocata* (Nürnberg) in 1681, in which he brought the text of Samuel Friedrich Brenz, *Jüdischer abgestreiffter Schlangen-Balg* (Nürnberg, Ger., 1614), and Solomon Zvi Aufhausen's response to it, *Jüdischer Theriak* (Hanau, Ger., 1615), and appended his remarks to both. Wülfer quotes the passage in Margaritha's book that mentions this claim and writes that he never saw or heard the claim. "Nec unquam vel oculis suis idipsum eos vidisse, vel ex aliis audivisse, deprehendi" (246).

31. Schudt, *Jüdische Merckwürdigkeiten*, vol. 2, no. 2 298–307.

32. "Allein ich bezeuge nochmalen mit Grund der Wahrheit, dass ich selbst An. 1688 zu Hamburg auf dem Ellern Steinweg Juden gesehen, so Geld und Brod an armen Christen, den Tag vor den Versöhnung Fest gegeben, und auff Hebräisch ihnen ihre Sünde auffgelegt." Schudt, *Jüdische Merckwürdigkeiten*, vol. 2, no. 2, 305.

33. Wülfer, *Theriaca Judaica*, 245.

34. Schudt, *Jüdische Merckwürdigkeiten*, vol. 2, no. 2, 304–5.

35. "Dabey sich dann dieser Diener gar lustig mit gemacht und umb seine Burgschafft sich wenig bekümmert, da er nun, gleich andern, zur Ruhe sich gelegt, ist in

des Dieners Kammer umb Mitternacht ein grosses Gepolter und Getümmel gehöret worden, daß da man aber bey anbrechenden Tage die Kammer eröffnet, hat man den Diener auf der Erden mit umgedrehten Halse und zerquetschten Fliedern erwürgt gefunden, daß man auch das an der Wand gesprützte Blut weder abwäschen noch mit Kalck übertünchen können." Schudt, *Jüdische Merckwürdigkeiten*, vol. 2, no. 2, 305.

36. *Ibid.*, 306–7.

37. Altogether, Schudt mentions the following sources: Margaritha, *Der gantz Jüdisch Glaub*: E3r + v; *Verzeichniss und kurtzer Auszug*: Aa3r + v; Ernst Ferdinand Hess, *Flagellum Iudeorum, Juden Geissel, das ist ein neuwe sehr nütze und gründliche Erweiterung, dass Jesus Christus, Gottes und der H. Jungfrau Marien Sohn der wahre verheissene und gesandte Messias sey* (s.l., 1598), 92–93; Schmid, *Feuriger Drachen Gift*, 35; Johannes Andreas Eisenmenger, *Entdecktes Judenthum*, vol. 2 (Frankfurt: 1700), 150; Sigismund Hossman, *Das schwer zu bekehrende Juden Hertz* (Helmstädt, Ger., 1701), 311; Johannes Christian Harphstadt, *Das gottslästerliche Judenthum* (1701), 45. I could not find a library that holds a copy of this book. However, the author and the book are mentioned by Jöcher in his lexicon: Christian Gottlieb Jöcher, *Allgemeines Gelehrten-Lexicon*, vol. 2 (Leipzig, Ger., 1750), col. 1372.

38. "Daß aber die Juden an ihrem Versöhntag solten Christen Blut gebrauchen ist gantz irrig." Schudt, *Jüdische Merckwürdigkeiten*, vol. 2, no. 2, 307.

39. This is how he was described in Reuven Michael, "Schudt, Johann Jakob," *Encyclopedia Judaica*, vol. 14 (1971), cols. 1003–4.

40. In the preface to his work Schudt himself wrote that he tried to be impartial and objective: Schudt, *Jüdische Merckwürdigkeiten*, vol. 1, "Vorrede an der geneigten Leser," especially the third and fourth page (no pagination). Although Schudt was surely not impartial, we cannot ignore the fact that he supports many of his claims either by his own experience or by quoting from other people's works. For a different view of Schudt, see Allison P. Coudert, "Seventeenth-Century Christian Hebraists: Philosemites or Antisemites," in *Judaeo-Christian Intellectual Culture in the Seventeenth Century: A Celebration of the Library of Narcissus Marsh, 1638–1713*, ed. Allison P. Coudert et al. (Dordrecht, Neth., Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1999), 49–54.

41. For example, in Buxtorf's narrative the length of each part is as follows: *Kapparat*, 10 pages; going to the cemetery, 5 lines; immersion, 5 lines; candle lighting, 1 1/2 pages; request of forgiveness, 1 page; flagellation, 3 pages; eating on Yom Kippur eve, 1/2 page; 5 banned activities, 1 1/2 page; *al da'at Hamakom*, 1/2 page; *kol nidrei*, almost a page; priestly blessing, 1 page; horn blowing, 1/2 page.

42. *Sefer Haminhagim (Rulings and Customs) of Rabbi Eisik Tirna*, 105–18.

43. Yosef Juspa Kashman Segal, *Sefer Noheg Ka'tzon Yosef*, Laws, Customs, and Addenda (in Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: H. Vagshal Publishing, 1969), 275–89.

44. "Zu dem ersten han ich der iuden ungegrunte Böse gewonhait geöffnet (Uff das ein ytlicher verstee mein meynung hier yn) darumb das solchs in gespözt weyse ynn fur gehalten werde." Pfefferkorn, *Juden Peicht*, B3r.

45. "Ursuche daz sie ein Hanen lieber dann andere deir brauchen, ist, daz ein Mann auff Hebraeische *Gebher* genennt wird: wann nun ein *Gebher* sündiget, so soll auch ein *Gebher* umb die sünde gestraffet werden. Weil aber den Juden die Straft beschwärllich fallen wurde, so nemmen sie ein Hanen an ihr statt, der wird auch der Talmudischer oder Babylonischer Sprache *Gebher* genennt, und geschicht also der Gerechtigkeit Gottes genüg, dieweil ein *Gebher* gesündiget, so wird auch ein *Gebher* nemlich der Han, gestraffet. Vermeynen also die Blinden und Unvernünftigen Juden, sie

wollen auch also ihren Gott *Mebulbal*, irrig und verwirret machen, wie sie dem Teufel auch können thun (als im vorigen Capitel angezeigt), das er ein Hanen für ein Menschen ansehe." Buxtorf, *Juden Schul*, 511.

46. See, for example, the titles of Fabronius's and Schudt's books on p. 209.

47. See, for example, the titles of Friedrich Albrecht Christiani's, Salomon's, and Seeligmann's books on p. 209.

48. Margaritha, *Der gantz Jüdisch Glaub*, Fr.

49. As I mentioned above (note 20), only the Maharil relates to the futuristic omens that could be seen in the candles. In addition, not only does this custom not appear in other sources, but some of the contemporary Jewish sources do not mention the candle lighting at all. See, for example, Kleusner, *Custom Book*, 11–15.

50. "Hier siehest du nun lieber Christ, was das vor ein erschrecklicher Aberglaube ist." Johannes Christian Salomon, *Sefer min'hagim shel yamim tovim v'nora'im, das ist: Jüdisches Ceremonien Buch von der Juden Feyer und Fest Tagen, Welche so wol ausser als in ihren Synagogen durch das gantze Jahr gebräuchlich sind: Auch was sie dabey voe Aberglauben haben und wie solche von denen Feyer Tagen derer Christen unterschieden sind* (Halle, Ger., 1721), 12.

51. On the attitudes of the rabbis, see Lauterbach, "The Ritual for the *Kapparot* Ceremony," esp. 418–22; Joshua Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition: A Study in Folk Religion* (Cleveland: Meridian and Jewish Publication Society of America, 1961), 163–65. Although I cannot expand on this point here, I think that at least in some cases there is a link between the Christian approach to the Jewish customs and the way in which they were perceived by Jewish figures. The most striking example is probably Leone Modena, *Historia de gli riti Hebraici* (Paris, 1637), which is a response to Buxtorf's *Juden Schul*, where Modena omits references to customs that Buxtorf described as superstitious or refers to them as false customs that should not be celebrated. See Mark R. Cohen, "Leone da Modena's *Riti*: A Seventeenth-Century Plea for Social Toleration of Jews," *Jewish Social Studies* 34 (1972): 287–319.

52. See, for example, Susan C. Karant-Nunn, *The Reformation of Ritual: An Interpretation of Early Modern Germany* (London: Routledge, 1997), 50–51.

53. The special ceremony that accompanied this prayer was probably the reason for referring to the prayer in the description of Yom Kippur and not in the description of the daily services.

54. Paul Martin M. Alberti, *Neuverfertigte Aus Gottes Wort und der Rabbinen Schrifften wolmeinend geflochtene Jüden-Geißel oder Gründliche Anführung derer zur Bekehrung der Jüden hauptsächlich dienenden Mittel, erstlich von einem bekehrten Juden Ernesto Ferdinando Heß, Med. Doct. herausgegeben; Nun aber mit einigen statt nützlicher Anmerkungen abgefasten Fragen und darauf ertheilten Antworten, welche zu desto nachdrücklicherer Überzeugung dieser blinden Leute, mehrentheils mit Anführung ihrer und ihrer Lehrer eigenen Worten hergeholt sind, erweitert und vermehrt* (Frankfurt, 1703), 458.

55.

Der Hochgelobte Gott, heist es, hat zu Zeiten des Tempels am langen Tage gebothen, zween Böcke, die auf hebräisch *Sirim* heissen, zu opfern, einen Gott selbst, und den andern dem Asasel, oder nach ihrer Uebersetzung, dem Teufel. (3B. Mos. 16K. 1V). In der Geschichte der Patriarchen aber lesen wir (1B. Mos. 33Kap. 16–17V): Esau nahm seinen Weg gegen Seir; Jakob aber gegen Suchot. Da nun Seir in der einfachen Zahl einen Bock bedeuten soll, so sagen sie, Esau sey hingezogen, um an dem Bock des Teufels theil zu nehmen; Jakob habe sich aber nach Suchot, oder den

Lauberhütten begeben, um zu diesem Feste sich allda vorzubereiten; so wollen wir dann auch, schleist dieser Rabbi, da wir den Bock dem Teufel zugesandt haben, uns mit dem Gebothe des Lauberhüttenfestes beschäftigen.

Friedenheim, *Yehudi mi-bachutz, das ist der äußerliche Jud*, 96–97. According to Friedenheim, this explanation is found in a book called "Kaph Haiasher." This paragraph appears indeed in the book *Kav Hayashar*, which was first printed in 1705. See Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch Kaidenover, *The Complete Kav Hayashar*, vol. 2 (Jerusalem: Kav Hayashar Hashalem, 1999), 497–98.

56. Buxtorf, *Juden Schul*, 524.

57. For example, Luther translates Lev. 23:32 as, "Am Neundten Tage des Monden zu Abend solt ihr diesen Sabbath halten von Abend bis wieder zu Abend" while Buxtorf translates it as, "Am neunnden tag desselben Monats zu abend, vom abend an biß wider zu abend solt ir disen eweren Feyrtag halten."

58. "Es wird aber der Christliche Läser genugsam auß diesem allem vernommen unnd verstanden haben, daß der Jüdisch Glaub und ihre gantze Religion nicht auff Mosen, sondern auff eitel Lügen, falsche und ungegründte Satzungen und Fabeln ihrer Rabbinen und weitverführten Schrifftgelehrten gegründet sey, und desshalben unter den Christen nicht mehr soll geredt werden, daß die Juden starck auff dem Gesetz Mosis halten." Buxtorf, *Juden Schul*, 663. For other places in the book where Buxtorf refers to the deviation of the Jews from the Bible, see Stephen Burnett, "Distorted Mirrors: Antonius Margaritha, Johannes Buxtorf, and Christian Ethnographies of the Jews," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 25 (1994): 281, n. 30–32.

59. Similar arguments are used by Schudt, who devotes his attention almost exclusively to the *Kapparot* ceremony. He attacks the blindness of the Jews, stating that there is no place in the Old Testament where such a precept is found. See Schudt, *Jüdische Merckwürdigkeiten*, vol. 2, no. 2, 299. Also see the same argument in Jungendres's opening remarks about the holiday: "Wie weit aber jene Ceremonien von den heutigen unterschieden sind, wird man bey Gegeneinanderhaltung derselbigen leicht sehen können." Jungendres, *Jüdisches Ceremoniel*, 116.

60. "Höre hie zu blinder Jude und nicht deinem Talmudt der dir hie mit dem hanen die warheit verstuncket hatt. Ein han kan deine Sund nicht ertragen. Ein person mus sollich sund widerumb auffheben." Margaritha, *Der gantz Jüdisch Glaub*, E4r; and see Burnett, "Distorted Mirrors," 278. For a more detailed discussion of Margaritha's attacks on the differences between biblical and rabbinical Judaism, see Diemling, "Christliche Ethnographien," 93–97.

61. Attacks on the abandoning of the Mosaic law and the preference of the sayings of the rabbis are found, probably for the first time, in the attacks on the Talmud from 1239, but there is no systematic discussion of particular precepts. See Chen Merhavva, *The Church versus Talmudic and Midrashic Literature (500–1248)* (in Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1970), 251–52.

62. Stephen G. Burnett, *From Christian Hebraism to Jewish Studies: Johannes Buxtorf, 1564–1629, and Hebrew Learning in the Seventeenth Century* (Leiden, Neth.: Brill, 1996), 66–67.

63. Hermann Fabronius, *Bekehrung der Juden und von mancherley abergläubischen Ceremonien unnd seltsamen Sitten so die zerstreuten Jüden haben: und wie sie in der Christenheit zu dulden seyn, neben Theologische und Historische Beschreibung der Göttlichen Weissagung Danielis von Verwüstung der Stadt Jerusalem. Darinnen begriffen*

das der wahre Messias gehören sey. Alles aus heiliger Schrift Flavio Iosepho, Ernst Ferdinando, Ioanne Buxdorffio und sonst zusammen geschrieben (Erfurt, Ger., 1624), 67–68. A similar attitude is found in Thumius who refers to the custom of using a Christian as a Kappara, but not to the other anti-Christian components that are mentioned by Margaritha. See Theodor Thumius (Thumm), *Tractatum de Festis Iudaeorum* (Tübingen, Ger., 1624), 61.

64. Diemling, "Christliche Ethnographien," 213–14.

65. Lothar Franz Fried (Joseph Marcus), *Neupolierter und wohlgeschliffener Juden-Spiegel* (Mayntz, Ger., 1715), 15.

66. And Thumius as well. See note 63 above.

67. Lothar Franz Fried, *Neupolierter und wohlgeschliffener*, 15; Jungendres, *Jüdisches Ceremoniel*, 118; Gottfried Selig, *Der Jude eine Wochenschrift*, vol. 3 (Leipzig, Ger., 1769), 69–70. It should be noted that two of them, Fried and Selig, report that Margaritha wrote that the Jews use Christians for Kappara, but they themselves do not say that this is a true accusation.

68. Hsia, "Christian Ethnography," 233.

69. *Idem*, 226–27.

70. In his classic article Amos Funkenstein distinguished four types in the Jewish-Christian debate of the Middle Ages: the old pattern—proofs from the Bible for the truth of Christianity, the rationalistic polemic—a deduction of the Christian dogma, the attack against the Talmud—the accusation that it is heretical, and the use of Jewish tradition against the Jews—the use of postbiblical Jewish sources to prove the veracity of Christianity. See Amos Funkenstein, "Basic Types of Christian Anti-Jewish Polemics in the Later Middle Ages," *Viator* 2 (1971): 373–82. I suggest that this use of the Jewish ritual for polemical purposes is another phase in the history of the Jewish-Christian debate.

71. As far as I know the term has never been used in scholarly discussion of ethnography. Many works deal with the biased nature of Western ethnographies of other peoples, but usually they have emphasized the Eurocentric character of these ethnographies, and only rarely have they touched upon the polemical aspects of this literature. In my opinion the study of the ethnographic literature, especially that of the early modern period, with the focus on its polemical character, could be very fruitful.

72. Even if the term applies to ethnographic literature in general, there are, as I have shown, some crucial differences between the ethnographic literature about the Jews and the ethnographic literature about other nations that one needs to keep in mind while comparing them to each other.

73. See note 51.

74. Alberti's book brings the entire text of Hess's *Flagellum Iudeorum* but adds a lot of information to it. Altogether, Hess's book is only about a quarter of Alberti's book.

75. The title page of the book was lost, and this title is taken from the second page. The only known copy of the book is at the British Museum Library (1412. e. 19). I thank Maria Diemling for providing me a copy of the book. The book was published again in German in 1550 with the title *Juden Büchlein*. A Latin version appeared in 1509 under the title *Opus aureum*; and see Diemling, "Christliche Ethnographien," 14–16.

76. On the title page only the initials C. G. C. appear, but according to the catalog of the library of Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati the author is Christian Gustav Christoph.

77. As the title of the book states, this is a revised and corrected edition of Kirchner's book. Since Jungendres not only added notes and references but also made extensive changes to Kirchner's work and discussed new subjects, I deal with it as a different book. For the differences between Kirchner's book and Jungendres' edition, see Elishava Carlebach, *Divided Souls: Converts from Judaism in Germany, 1500–1750* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 205–10.

78. In this book the name of the author is written with a Y, Mayer. However, the same author wrote the book *Der heutigen Juden Ceremonien und Gebräuche*, but in the latter case the name that appears on the title page is Majer.

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