

JEW, JUDAISM,
AND THE
REFORMATION IN
SIXTEENTH-CENTURY
GERMANY



Edited by
DEAN PHILLIP BELL
& STEPHEN G. BURNETT

STUDIES IN CENTRAL EUROPEAN HISTORIES

JEWS, JUDAISM, AND THE REFORMATION
IN SIXTEENTH-CENTURY GERMANY

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EDITED BY

THOMAS A. BRADY

AND

ROGER CHICKERING

VOLUME XXXVII

DEAN PHILLIP BELL AND STEPHEN G. BURNETT

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In the end, this project would not have been possible without the support of our academic institutions—the Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln—and our many colleagues there.

ABBREVIATIONS AND SHORTENED TITLES

ARG	<i>Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte</i>
BDS	<i>Martin Bucers Deutsche Schriften</i> . Ed. Robert Stupperich et al. Gütersloh, 1960–present.
BCorr	<i>Correspondance de Martin Bucer</i> . Ed. Jean Rott et al. Leiden, 1979–present.
BHR	<i>Bibliothèque d’Humanisme et Renaissance</i>
BOL	<i>Martini Bucerii opera latina</i> . Ed. F. Wendel et al. Paris and Leiden, 1954–present.
bpk	Bildarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz
Brecht, Luther	Brecht, Martin. <i>Martin Luther</i> , vol. 1: <i>His Road to Reformation, 1483–1521</i> ; vol. 2: <i>Shaping and Defining the Reformation, 1521–1532</i> ; vol. 3: <i>The Preservation of the Church, 1532–1546</i> . Philadelphia and Minneapolis, 1985–93 (German original, 1983–87).
Bromiley, <i>Zwingli</i>	Bromiley, G. W. <i>Zwingli and Bullinger. Selected Translations with Introduction and Notes</i> . Philadelphia, 1953.
Burnett, <i>From Christian Hebraism</i>	Burnett, Stephen. <i>From Christian Hebraism to Jewish Studies: Johannes Buxtorf (1564–1629) and Hebrew Learning in the Seventeenth-Century</i> . Leiden, 1996.
BZGA	<i>Basler Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Altertumskunde</i>
Carlebach, <i>Divided Souls</i>	Carlebach, Elisheva. <i>Divided Souls: Converts from Judaism in Germany 1500–1750</i> . New Haven, 2001.
CCSL	<i>Corpus Christianorum</i> , series Latina. Turnhout/Paris, 1953–present.
CH	<i>Church History</i>
CO	Calvin, Jean. <i>Opera quae supersunt omnia</i> . Ed. Wilhelm Baum et al. 44 Vols. Braunschweig, 1863–1900; repr. New York, 1964. [Corpus Reformatorum, Vols. 29–87]
CR	<i>Corpus Reformatorum: Philippi Melanthonis Opera quae supersunt omnia</i> . Vols. 1–28. Ed. Carl

- Gottlieb Bretschneider and Heinrich Ernst Bindseil. Halle, 1834–60; repr. Nieuwkoop, 1968.
- CWE *Collected Works of Erasmus*. Ed. R. J. Schoeck and B. M. Corrigan. Toronto, 1974–present.
- Detmers, *Reformation und Judentum* Detmers, Achim. *Reformation und Judentum: Israel-Lehren und Einstellungen zum Judentum von Luther bis zum frühen Calvin*. Stuttgart, 2001.
- EJ *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. 16 Vols. Jerusalem, 1971–72.
- Falk, *Jew* Falk, Gerhard. *The Jew in Christian Theology*. Jefferson, NC, 1992 [incl. trans. Martin Luther, *On the Ineffable Name*].
- Friedman, *Most Ancient Testimony* Friedman, Jerome. *The Most Ancient Testimony: Sixteenth-Century Christian-Hebraica in the Age of Renaissance Nostalgia*. Athens, OH, 1983.
- Friedrich, *Zwischen Abwehr und Bekehrung* Friedrich, Martin. *Zwischen Abwehr und Bekehrung: die Stellung der deutschen evangelischen Theologie zum Judentum im 17. Jahrhundert*. Tübingen, 1988.
- GA Andreas Osiander d. Ä. *Gesamtausgabe: Schriften und Briefe*. Ed. Gerhard Müller and Gottfried Seebass. 8 Vols. Gütersloh, 1975–90.
- GJ *Germania Judaica*. Vol. 1: *Von den ältesten Zeiten bis 1238*. Ed. Marcus Brann et al. Breslau, 1917–34; repr. Tübingen, 1963. Vol. 2, Parts 1–2: *Von 1238 bis zur Mitte des 14. Jahrhunderts*. Ed. Zvi Avneri. Tübingen, 1968; Vol. 3, Parts 1–3: *1350–1519*. Ed. Arye Maimon, Mordechai Breuer, and Yacov Guggenheim. Tübingen, 1987–2003.
- Graus, *Pest-Geissler-Judenmorde* Graus, Frantisek. *Pest-Geissler-Judenmorde: das 14. Jahrhundert als Krisenzeit*. 2nd ed. Göttingen, 1987.
- Hebraica Veritas* *Hebraica Veritas? Christian Hebraists and the Study of Judaism in Early Modern Europe*. Ed. Allison P. Coudert and Jeffrey S. Shoulsen. Philadelphia, 2004.

- Hsia, *Myth of Ritual Murder* Hsia, R. Po-chia. *The Myth of Ritual Murder: Jews and Magic in Reformation Germany*. New Haven, 1988.
- Hsia, *Trent* Hsia, R. Po-chia. *Trent 1475: Stories of a Ritual Murder Trial*. New Haven, 1992.
- HTR *Harvard Theological Review*
- Joseph of Rosheim, *Historical Writings* Joseph of Rosheim. *Historical Writings*. Ed. Hava Fraenkel-Goldschmidt. Jerusalem, 1996 [Hebrew with some German texts].
- JQR *Jewish Quarterly Review*
- JSS *Jewish Social Studies*
- Kirn, *Bild vom Juden* Kirn, Hans-Martin. *Das Bild vom Juden in Deutschland des frühen 16. Jahrhunderts dargestellt an den Schriften Johannes Pfefferkorns*. Tübingen, 1989.
- LBIYB *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*
- LW *Luther's Works*. Ed. Jaroslav Pelikan and H. T. Lehmann. 55 Vols. St. Louis and Philadelphia, 1955–86.
- MWA *Melanchthons Werke in Auswahl*. Ed. Robert Stupperich. Gütersloh, 1951–75.
- MBW *Melanchthons Briefwechsel: Kritische und Kommentierte Gesamtausgabe: Regesten*. Ed. Heinz Scheible. Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt, 1977-present [cited by *Regesten* no.].
- MBW.T *Melanchthons Briefwechsel: Kritische und Kommentierte Gesamtausgabe: Texte*. Ed. Richard Wetzell. Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt, 1991-present.
- MGH *Monumenta Germaniae historica*
- MGWJ *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums*
- MQR *Mennonite Quarterly Review*
- Oberman, *Roots of Anti-Semitism* Oberman, Heiko A. *The Roots of Anti-Semitism in the Age of Renaissance and Reformation*. Trans. James I. Porter. Philadelphia, 1984 (German original, 1981).
- OS *Joannis Calvini Opera Selecta*. Ed. Petrus Barth, Guilelmus Niesel and Dora Scheuner. 5 Vols. Munich, 1926–52. [Vol. 1. 1926; Vols. 3 (1967) and 5 (1974) from 3rd ed.]

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- PL J. P. Migne, ed. *Patrologiae Latina*. 221 Vols. Paris, 1844–64.
- REJ *Revue des études juives*
- RBW Johannes Reuchlin. *Briefwechsel*, vol. 1: 1477–1505. Ed. Stefan Rhein, Matthias Dall’Astra, and Gerard Dörner. Stuttgart, 1999; vol. 2: 1506–1513. Ed. Matthias Dall’Astra and Gerard Dörner. Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt, 2003.
- RSW Johannes Reuchlin, *Sämtliche Werke*. Ed. Widu-Wolfgang Ehlers et al. Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt, 1999-present.
- SA Staatsarchiv
- Schiess, Blaurer *Briefwechsel der Brüder Ambrosius und Thomas Blaurer, 1509–1548*. 3 Vols. Ed. Traugott Schiess. Freiburg im Breisgau, 1908–12.
- Schreckenberg, *Adversos-Judaeos-Texte* Heinz Schreckenberg, *Die christliche Adversus-Judaeos-Texte und ihr literarisches und historisches Umfeld*. Vol. 1: 1–11. *Jahrhunderte*. 2nd rev. ed. Frankfurt am Main, 1990; Vol. 2: 11–13. *Jahrhunderte: mit einer Ikonographie des Judenthemas bis zum 4. Laternankonzil*. 3rd rev. ed. Frankfurt am Main, 1997; Vol. 3: 13–20. *Jahrhunderte*. Frankfurt am Main, 1994.
- SMB Staatliche Museen zu Berlin
- StCB Steinschneider, Moritz. *Catalogus Librorum Hebraeorum in Bibliotheca Bodleiana*. Berlin, 1852–60; repr. Hildesheim, 1964.
- Stern, *Josel of Rosheim* Stern, Selma. *Josel of Rosheim: Commander of Jewry in the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation*. Trans. Gertrude Hirschler. Philadelphia, 1965.
- TRE *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*. Ed. Gerhard Krause and Gerhard Müller. Berlin and New York, 1977-present.
- UB Universitätsbibliothek

- VD 16 *Verzeichnis der im deutschen Sprachbereich erschienenen Drucke des XVI. Jahrhunderts*. Ed. Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek in Munich. 24 Vols. Stuttgart, 1983–97.
- WA *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*. 65 Vols. Weimar, 1883–1993.
- WABr *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe: Briefwechsel*. 13 Vols. Weimar, 1930–68.
- WADB *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe: Deutsche Bibel*. 12 Vols. Weimar, 1906–61.
- WATr *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe: Tischreden*. 6 Vols. Weimar, 1912–21.
- Z *Huldreich Zwinglis Sämtliche Werk*. Leipzig and Zurich, 1905-present. [Corpus Reformatorum, Vols. 88–101].
- ZGJD *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland*
- ZLW *The Latin Works and Correspondence of Huldreich Zwingli Together with Selections from his German Works*. Ed. Samuel Macauley Jackson et al. 3 Vols. New York and Philadelphia, 1912–29.
- ZO *Huldrici Zuinglii Opera*. Ed. M. Schuler and J. Schulthess. Vol. 6: 1–2. Zurich, 1836–38.
- ZTK *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*
- Zwingli, *Early Writings* Zwingli, Ulrich. *Early Writings*. [Orig. ZLW, Vol. 1, 1912]. Repr. Eugene, OR, 1999.

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INTRODUCTION

Dean Phillip Bell and Stephen G. Burnett

The Jews had had no Middle Ages, Heinrich Graetz smugly asserted, and needed no new epoch, since “[t]hey had no immoral course of life to redress, no cankering corruption to cure, no dam to raise against the insolence and rapacity of their spiritual guides.”¹ They had no religious stake in the outcome of arguments over the sacrament of penance or the sale of indulgences. Yet Luther’s objections to certain elements of traditional Catholic doctrine, ritual, and Church order were only the first tremors of an earthquake that would shake every corner of the Holy Roman Empire, and would affect every social group within it, including the Jews.

Reformation-era Germany was home to one of the largest Jewish communities in Europe, yet the ways that their physical, symbolic, and theological presence shaped the Reformation remain one of the great untold stories of German history. The Jewish experience of this period has traditionally been reported either in an episodic fashion or as a stage in the “lachrymose” history of anti-Semitism. This volume brings together experts from several related fields to provide new scholarship related to the Jews and Germany and to indicate directions for future research.

Recent research in Church history and Jewish history as well as in social and intellectual history are forcing scholars to reevaluate the Jewish experience in the German Reformation. The Luther commemoration of 1983 caused Church historians to reexamine the problem of Luther and the Jews. Their findings have been published in a plethora of different journals, essay collections, and monographs that cannot be readily searched using existing bibliographic tools. Two of the most influential studies written in the period surrounding this commemoration were Heiko A. Oberman, *The Roots of Anti-Semitism in the Age of Renaissance and Reformation* (German original, 1981;

¹ Heinrich Graetz, *History of the Jews*, vol. IV (Philadelphia, 1956, orig. 1894), 477 and 249.

English trans. 1984) and Mark U. Edwards, *Luther's Last Battles* (1983). The Luther year also sparked greater interest in the attitudes of other Protestant reformers toward Jews and Judaism, and in the study of the Jews in Reformation-era Germany generally, as a selective reporting of scholarly trends in the field since 1983 makes clear.

The *Germania Judaica* project has fundamentally changed the study of Jewish life in late medieval and early modern Germany. The third volume, which was published between 1987 and 2003, covers the period from 1350–1519, identifying Jewish communities and describing the internal life of each community within a broader historical context. A German and Israeli editorial team has begun work on a fourth volume, which will report on the Jewish communities of individual German territories between 1519 and 1815. In a related development, Hesse, the only Protestant territory with a substantial Jewish community throughout the early modern period, has benefited from the publication of document summaries (*Regesten*) of official records, preserved in the state archives of Marburg and Darmstadt and in the city archive of Frankfurt am Main.² These new reference and source collections have left their mark on scholarship in the field generally, and on a number of essays in this volume.

The relationship of German humanists and the Jews has also received renewed scrutiny in the decades since 1983. While scholars have focused upon the attitudes of Erasmus and Johannes Reuchlin toward Jews and Judaism, the significance of Christian Hebraism has also received renewed attention in the wake of Jerome Friedman's pioneering book *The Most Ancient Testimony* (1983). The International Reuchlin Congresses, hosted every two years by the city of Pforzheim, have also helped to focus scholarly attention upon the intellectual and social relations of German humanists and Jews via their published conference volumes.

Finally, the pioneering work of R. Po-chia Hsia on the portrayal of Jews in the late Middle Ages and in the Reformation era, above all in his book *The Myth of Ritual Murder* (1988), sparked a new interest

² See Uta Löwenstein, *Quellen zur Geschichte der Juden im Hessischen Staatsarchiv Marburg 1267–1600*, 3 Vols. (Wiesbaden, 1989); Dietrich Andernacht, *Regesten zur Geschichte der Juden in der Reichsstadt Frankfurt am Main von 1401–1519*, 3 Vols. (Hanover, 1996); and Friedrich Battenberg, *Quellen zur Geschichte der Juden im Hessischen Staatsarchiv Darmstadt: 1080–1650* (Wiesbaden, 1995).

in the study of anti-Semitism as reported and reflected in a plethora of archival and especially printed sources that were consumed by readers from every stratum of German Christian society. More subtly his book and his later essay “Christian Ethnographies of the Jews in Early Modern Germany” (1994),³ together with Hans-Martin Kirm’s ground-breaking study of Johannes Pfefferkorn, *Das Bild vom Juden in Deutschland des frühen 16. Jahrhunderts dargestellt an den Schriften Johannes Pfefferkorns* (1989), focused attention on the ways that Christians, particularly converts from Judaism, characterized Judaism through reporting on Jewish customs and rituals.

While our debt to the research of the past twenty years is quite clear, in this book we seek to advance scholarship in a variety of ways. The essays in this volume are arranged under four broad headings: 1. The Road to the Reformation (late medieval theology and the humanists and the Jews); 2. The Reformers and the Jews (essays on Luther, Melancthon, Bucer, Zwingli, Calvin, Osiander, the Catholic Reformers, and the Radical Reformers); 3. Representations of Jews and Judaism (the portrayal of Judaism as a religion, images of the Jews in the visual arts, and in sixteenth-century German literature); and 4. Jewish Responses to the Reformation (Jewish settlement, German Jewish printing, as well as Jewish social, religious, and political developments and responses). The contributions come from both senior and emerging scholars, from North America, Israel, and Germany, to ensure a breadth in perspective. This book represents a multi-disciplinary approach to the problem of the Jews and the German Reformation. The volume makes accessible important research in a cohesive and convenient form, which we hope will, in turn, stimulate further conversation across disciplines on this important theme.

In Part I, Erika Rummel traces the rise of humanism in Germany and the initial spread and then ideological proscription of the study of Hebrew. Providing a detailed analysis of the writings of Johannes Reuchlin and Erasmus of Rotterdam, Rummel concludes that although humanists favored encyclopedic learning and promoted the idea of cultural syncretism, they did not reject the prejudices of their time.

³ R. Po-chia Hsia, “Christian Ethnographies of Jews in Early Modern Germany,” in *The Expulsion of the Jews: 1492 and After*, ed. Raymond B. Waddington and Arthur H. Williamson (New York and London, 1994), 223–35.

Their interest in Hebrew was not linked to greater tolerance of Jews or freedom of conscience. In a similar vein, Christopher Ocker examines two famous late medieval preachers of compulsory sermons, Nicholas of Dinkelsbühl at Vienna and Peter Schwarz at Regensburg. He concludes that German theologians in late medieval Germany promoted an idealized anti-Judaism. They asserted Christian superiority, but by and large did not promote specific anti-Jewish action. In the end, in fact, they disengaged from the actual Jews living among them, perhaps because of the receding social presence of the Jews in the wake of late medieval expulsions and migrations. The essays by Rummel and Ocker both suggest that the topos of the Jews and Judaism was one that had little direct bearing on actual Jewish and Christian policies in the later Middle Ages and that the scholarly approach to Judaism was most important for Christian intellectuals and theologians themselves, though of course they would assume a new importance as appropriated by Protestant and Catholic theologians during the Reformation era.

In Part II the question of how Jews and Judaism were perceived and the relationship of this perception to internal Christian debates takes center stage. Thomas Kaufmann examines the place of Jews and Judaism within the context of Luther's theology, emphasizing that they played a particularly important role in his theology throughout his career. Luther's preoccupation with the Jews reflected his belief that opposition to Judaism was an inalienable and fundamental element of Christian existence. Judaism in its beliefs and practices represented for Luther a form of "human wisdom" that was the antithesis of what he considered critical for true Christian faith and life. Kaufmann discusses the continuities and discontinuities of Luther's attitudes toward the Jews and Judaism, carefully analyzing the historical context in which Luther wrote his books on the Jews. He concludes with a sketch of the impact of these books upon Luther's contemporaries and their reception by later generations, including German Christians during the Nazi era.

Timothy Wengert provides an analysis of Philip Melanchthon's position on the Jews by noting that Melanchthon on the one hand at times admired Jewish scholarship, defended the Jews' unique role as God's people, and even dismissed certain unfounded charges against them. On the other hand, Melanchthon called Jews pejorative names and could indulge in some of his age's worst expressions of contempt. Wengert asserts that Melanchthon's engagement with Jews

was essentially theological, related specifically to his understanding of the nature of the Church, which he saw as a poor, persecuted, God-taught assembly, always beset from both within and without by enemies championing works, power, and glory, instead of the consolation of the Gospel. R. Gerald Hobbs presents the Strasbourg reformer Martin Bucer in a similarly ambivalent way. While deeply indebted to the contemporary renaissance of Hebrew letters, and often frank in his appreciation of the value of, and frequently borrowing from, some medieval Jewish commentators, Bucer was also intimately involved in the campaign against the Jews in Hesse. Bucer accused Judaism of being sterile, superficial, and like the papacy enslaved to human tradition. While Hobbs describes an important change in Bucer's thought in the 1530s at the time of his advice regarding the Jews to the Landgrave Philip of Hesse, when Bucer apparently moved away from his (utilitarian) interest in rabbinics, he likewise points out continuities in Bucer's attitudes: Bucer's advice always had stressed the importance of magisterial regulation of religion and his understanding of election and reprobation made room for an elect remnant of the Jewish people.

Hans-Martin Kirn notes that the relationship to Jews and Judaism was never a central theme in the writings of Ulrich Zwingli, though it was nevertheless of great importance in his thought and reforming work. Zwingli's theological claim to a continuity with the "true" biblical Judaism led to rather constructive associations with Old Testament history of covenant and institutions; at the same time, pervading Zwingli's writings was a strong anti-rabbinism. Much of Zwingli's reference to Judaism was, in the end, for polemical purposes, as he battled both Catholic and Lutheran positions. Zwingli criticized Rome, for example, by associating it with Judaism as a ritualized religion of law. Yet, Zwingli nowhere demonized the Jewish faith, and even in his recommendations to limit interest taking and prohibit monopolies, he had no specifically anti-Jewish agenda in mind. Although he at times passed along standard anti-Jewish stereotypes, Zwingli demanded friendly conduct toward Jews in the hope of converting them. In the same way, Achim Detmers argues that John Calvin (whose formative years as a theologian were spent in Strasbourg and Basel) was far removed from the anti-Jewish political position of some of his contemporaries, though he did not *per se* reject anti-Jewish measures. For Calvin, the question of the Jews was primarily a theological one. Calvin distinguished between biblical,

post-biblical, and contemporary Judaism. Calvin distinguished between the Jewish people as a whole and individual Jews, allowing him to address the tension between Pauline rejection and election of the remnant of the Jews. Yet his discussions of the Jews and Judaism were primarily for polemical purposes, as Calvin argued with other Christian groups, especially the Anabaptists.

Andreas Osiander, the reformer who defended Jews against the charge of blood libel, reflects a similar tension in Reformation thought. Osiander defended Jews at times, but also preached anti-Jewish sermons in which he depicted Jews as Christ-killers, blasphemous, and sinful, even justifying many of the expulsions of the Jews throughout history. While Osiander is best known among Jewish historians for his devastating critique of the blood libel, Joy Kammerling points out that he had other reasons for writing it as well. By attacking the blood libel, Osiander also accused Catholics of intolerance and false teaching. In the end, Kammerling asserts that Osiander was not a man who was tolerant of Jews and Judaism, but rather a man who was obsessed with proving the orthodoxy of the evangelical movement and undermining popular allegiance to Rome.

The final two essays in this section are broader in focus, discussing how Catholic theologians and the Anabaptists understood and represented Jews and Judaism. Robert Bireley surveys sixteenth and early seventeenth century Catholic theologians, observing that Jewish policy varied greatly in the German Catholic states. Aside from the work of Johannes Eck, Bireley argues, a review of catechisms and sermons reveals no Catholic accusations of blood libel, ritual murder, host desecration, or symbol desecration by the Jews. The connection between Jews and usury also becomes rather tenuous. The preachers issued no provocative calls for action against the Jews, though of course expulsions of the Jews did take place in this period—Bireley ascribes these to popular pressure. This does not mean, however, that Jews were seen in a favorable light, and by the beginning of the seventeenth century a number of medieval anti-Jewish accusations again rose to the surface. Bireley ascribes this relatively favorable sixteenth-century position regarding Judaism to the spread of sixteenth-century humanism, the rather small Jewish presence in Germany, and the much greater concern with and threat from the Reformation, which occupied most of the attention of the Catholic preachers he analyzed.

In his discussion of the Radical Reformation and the Jews, Michael

Driedger acknowledges that although spiritualist Anabaptists may have been more open to the Jewish biblical tradition, it is difficult to generalize their attitudes toward Jews and Judaism. We cannot assume that careful attention to the Old Testament and openness to dialogue with Jews were indications of greater openness to Judaism (Luther's fears notwithstanding). In fact, discussion of Jews and Judaism often served primarily internal polemics. After reconsidering the Radical Reformation and confessionalization in recent historiography, Driedger examines the positions on Jews and Judaism of a few significant figures, such as Balthasar Hubmaier, Melchior Hoffman, and Menno Simons. He concludes by arguing that a focus on minority groups such as Jews and Anabaptists should not be considered marginal to current debates on confessionalization. He argues rather that their inclusion could help bring about a redefinition of the confessionalization paradigm that would be of great significance for comparative research.

In Part III the volume turns to the representation of Jews and Judaism in academic scholarship, the visual arts, and literature. Maria Diemling focuses upon an important convert from Judaism, Anthonius Margaritha. She argues that although firmly entrenched in the traditions of medieval anti-Jewish polemic, Margaritha introduced "ethnography" as a new tool in the realm of Christian discussion of the Jews and Judaism. Margaritha's works proved most popular when they examined Jewish-Christian relations, especially when they argued that Jews hated everything Christian and that their prayers and rituals contained inherently anti-Christian references. Margaritha's book *Der gantz Jüdisch glaub* became fundamentally important as a source of information that shaped the image of Jews and Judaism, especially among Protestants during the early modern period. Yaacov Deutsch, discussing Johannes Pfefferkorn and Victor von Carben, asserts that the sixteenth century marked a period of transition in writing about the Jews and Judaism. Medieval traditions of "uncovering" hidden anti-Christian expressions in Jewish writing combined with innovative new portrayals of Jewish ceremonies and customs, which, despite their generally polemical orientation, presented Judaism as a religion of human beings and not of fiends. Both Pfefferkorn and von Carben wrote in German, reaching a broader and more popular audience. Deutsch argues that the sixteenth-century works foreshadowed an eventual change in the attitude toward Jews helping pave the way for later social acceptance of the Jews.

In examining the visual representation of Jews and Judaism in sixteenth-century Germany, Petra Schöner notes a tension between Reformation enthusiasm for Hebrew and biblical philology, anchored in the recognition of the Jewish roots of the Christian faith, and the bestially demeaning depiction of contemporary Jews. Schöner argues that the medieval tradition of depiction continued to be used among both Catholics and Protestants, each making extensive use of print technology to spread their pictorial propaganda. More surprisingly, Jews and Judaism also played something of a role within Christian polemical debates during the Reformation period. The Jews, Schöner writes, had traditionally been a metonym for sinful behavior such as greed and gluttony; but now Protestants portrayed representatives of the Catholic Church using elements of the older Jewish depiction, blackening the reputation of the pope and his minions through a kind of guilt by association. Jews were no longer perceived as the only enemies of Christ and Christianity, though they were nevertheless still perceived as enemies and nothing of the sharpness of anti-Jewish polemic was lost.

Edith Wenzel finds a similar picture of continuity in Jewish representation within sixteenth-century German literature as well. After noting the effects of printing and the Reformation (particularly through the instruction of the laity) on German literature, Wenzel considers the representation of Jews and Judaism within a variety of literary genres. She focuses her attention on religious dramas such as Passion Plays, legends, and miracle stories such as those dealing with ritual murder and host desecration accusations, and the satirical literature of the sixteenth century. She concludes that the representation of Jews in sixteenth-century German literature largely followed medieval precedents, with Jews denounced as dangerous enemies and as a threat to the Christian commonwealth, or mocked as fools. The new medium of print made possible a proliferation of older hostile portrayals of the Jews, and inscribed anti-Jewish stereotypes more deeply into German cultural consciousness.

Jewish responses to the Reformation round off the volume in Part IV. Dean Bell begins his discussion with an appraisal of older Jewish historiographical assessments of the Reformation, before turning to a review of Jewish settlement in sixteenth-century Germany. He argues that in some important areas Jews maintained significant and in some cases consistent settlement patterns, calling into question the old truism that the Reformation was an inevitable cause of Jewish

expulsions. While Jewish settlement could vary widely depending upon local political conditions, it is too simplistic to assert that Jews were a negligible or invisible presence in Reformation-era Germany. Even the expulsion of Jews from certain cities or territories could occur for a variety of reasons, and they were frequently less complete than they appeared. In any case, Jewish communities could often forestall such expulsions through political activity of their own, most notably through the lobbying of Josel of Rosheim. Bell discusses the expulsions from Braunschweig and Hesse in some detail to indicate how the broader context in which Jewish and Christian relations in Reformation Germany must be assessed, and along the way, notes that Jews were active players in a variety of political and religious debates in the sixteenth century.

Elisheva Carlebach advances the discussion of Jewish responses to the Reformation by considering the themes of subtle anti-Christian expression, Jewish conversion to Christianity in its diverse new forms, messianism, and martyrdom (*Kiddush ha-Shem*). The upheaval caused by the division of Christendom made Christianity more attractive to a tiny minority of German Jews, while stirring the hopes of others that the End of Days and the Messiah's coming were drawing near. Carlebach's discussion of the secretive, subtle Jewish theological resistance to Christianity sheds light upon both the accusations of converts such as Anthonius Margaritha that Jews were involved in covert forms of blasphemy against the Christian faith, and the willingness of Jews to choose martyrdom over conversion when put to the test. While martyrdom was not something Jews actively sought, it was considered to be the supreme expression of religious loyalty, a belief that was deeply rooted within Ashkenazic tradition. Since religious martyrdom was also a feature of the Reformation era, it gave the older Jewish tradition a contemporary relevance and brisance.

While there was no simple and direct connection between changes in Jewish law and ritual and the Reformation, the disruptions of German Jewish life that occurred because of the Reformation and the rise of Poland as a new center of Jewish civilization did indeed bring about changes in these fundamentally important elements of Jewish life. Jay Berkovitz examines German Jewry's ongoing relationship to ritual and law, situating it within the context of Jewish religious and cultural development as well as wider early modern spirituality. He focuses on composition of books of customs (*minhagim*), which were related to establishing local traditions and combating the

loss of confidence in the authority and expertise of local rabbis that were brought on by expulsions and dispersion as well as the more frequent recourse to foreign Jewish courts during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century. Berkovitz concludes that German Jewish rabbinic elites were involved in serious Talmudic scholarship and the study of Kabbalah. At the same time, the customs books reveal an historic shift from elite to more popular culture; the compilation of these books represented both a strategy to counter the ascendancy of Polish Jewry and an effort to buttress the legacy of Ashkenazic culture.

Throughout this volume the significance of printing as a means of spreading ideas old and new has been emphasized by a number of authors. Printing was, if anything, even more important for Jews as a medium of cultural expression and as a means of preserving and promoting Jewish life. In his essay, Stephen Burnett draws attention to ways in which the Reformation affected the German Jewish book trade. He argues that the Jewish book trade flourished within the Empire despite numerous obstacles, including both magisterial and rabbinic oversight, restricting where and what Jews could print. The increasing proportion of Judeo-German books produced in addition to more traditional staples of rabbinic scholarship indicates a broadening of readership among Jewish women and men in this period. What is more, Jewish-Christian cooperation was essential for the production of Jewish books, providing opportunities to consider specific instances of how Jews and Christians worked and related with each other over a period of years. While the golden age of German Jewish printing began only after the Thirty Years War, the frequently embattled Jewish printers of the Reformation era had an important impact on Jewish life as well as on Christian Hebrew learning.

The Jewish contemporaries of the Protestant and Catholic reformers faced new challenges, new dangers to their communities, and sometimes even death at the hands of mobs. As they had during the later Middle Ages, Jews responded through dialogue, political means, and migration. Yet they were not the only Jews who affected the Reformation. What can only be called “abstract” Jews also peopled the imaginations of German Christians during this period. “Theological Jews,” whose essential characteristics had been identified by the Church Fathers, were much in evidence, and sometimes reformers such as Luther and Melanchthon related stories of their real life

counterparts. “Jewish fiends” appeared regularly in religious plays, stories, and works of art in churches and other public spaces, as did “usurious Jews” who seemed to exist in both the worlds of scurrilous imagination and day-to-day reality. “Halakhic Jews,” normally present only in rabbinic writings, appeared in a whole new setting in the works of Pfefferkorn, Margaritha, and others, a development that would have long term effects upon the attitudes of German Christians toward German Jews. Jews were even drafted into the conceptual service of Protestant and Catholic polemicists, each arguing that the other side was somehow in league with “the Jews,” or using the traditional verbal and visual lexicon of abuse in novel new ways to blacken their theological opponents.

Taken together, the essays in this volume suggest that the Jews did participate in the German Reformation. There was a significant Jewish presence in sixteenth-century Germany; and Jews were both affected by broader Reformation-era developments and in various ways contributed to developments in religion, politics, culture, and identity in sixteenth-century Germany. Although they tried to stay out of Christian theological quarrels, German Jews in this sense had a Reformation, whether they needed one or not.⁴

⁴ In the process of translating and editing these essays the editors found the availability of English translations of critical texts related to these topics to be very uneven. Translations of at least some of Josel of Rosheim’s Hebrew and German writings, Anthonius Margaritha’s *Der gantz Jüdisch glaub* (1531), Osiander’s *Ob es war und glaublich sei . . .* (1540), and Johannes Eck’s *Ain Judenbüchtlins Verlegung* (1541) are all a desideratum. One forthcoming volume will help redress this problem: *The Historical Writings of Joseph of Rosheim: Leader of Jewry in Early Modern Germany*. Edited with an Introduction, Commentary, and Translation by Hava Fraenkel-Goldschmidt. Translated from the Hebrew by Naomi Schendowich (Leiden, forthcoming).

PART I

ROAD TO REFORMATION

HUMANISTS, JEWS, AND JUDAISM

Erika Rummel

Until the fifteenth century knowledge of Hebrew among Christians was rare. By 1550, formal instruction in the language was widely available at universities and, indeed, regarded essential for theology students. In this development the ideas and methods promoted by the humanists played an important role. The engagement of Christian scholars with Hebrew texts was largely predicated on interests that defined the humanistic movement, notably their promotion of cultural syncretism and their preference for history and language arts over logic, the core subject of medieval studies. The humanists called for an examination of sources in the original language, disparaging reliance on summaries and commentaries. This approach, epitomized by the humanistic slogan *Ad fontes*, led to the development of philological and text-critical methods for the three languages that were of historical importance to Christianity: Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. Humanists furthermore recognized the need for putting these sources into their proper context and acquiring an understanding of the cultural milieu in which they had been composed.

The first significant contacts between humanists and Jews took place in fifteenth-century Italy, where social conditions favored intellectual discourse until an aggressive papal policy and the resulting ghettoization created a harsher climate in the middle of the sixteenth century.¹ It is instructive to compare the conditions encountered by

¹ On Jews and humanism, see *Cultural Intermediaries: Jewish Intellectuals in Early Modern Italy*, eds. David Ruderman and Giuseppe Veltri (Philadelphia, 2004); *Jewish Thought in the Sixteenth Century*, ed. Bernard Cooperman (Cambridge, MA, 1983); David Ruderman's synoptic article "Jewish Literature and Languages" in the *Renaissance Encyclopedia*, ed. Paul Grendler (New York, 1999), 3:310–47. On Christian humanists and Judaism, see David Ruderman, "The Italian Renaissance and Jewish Thought," in *Renaissance Humanism: Foundations, Forms and Legacy*, ed. Albert Rabil, Jr., 3 vols. (Philadelphia, 1988), 1:382–433; Alastair Hamilton, "Humanists and the Bible," in *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Humanism*, ed. Jill Kraye (Cambridge, 1996) 100–17; *L'Hébreu au temps de la Renaissance*, ed. Ilana Zinguer (Leiden, 1992); and *Hebraica Veritas*.

Italian and German humanists in their respective quest for Hebrew learning. In Italy there were vibrant Jewish communities in cities such as Venice, Florence, and Rome. Their proximity to humanistic centers of learning meant that Christian scholars interested in a cultural exchange were able to benefit from instruction by learned Jews in their own community. Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, for example, was initiated into the Hebrew language and philosophy by Elijah del Medigo and Johanan ben Isaac Alemanno, and supplied with translations of Hebrew texts by the Jewish convert Flavius Mithridates, who shared his household. Similarly, Cardinal Domenico Grimani befriended and learned from the physicians Jacob Sforno and Abraham ben Meir De Balmes. Egidio da Viterbo invited Elijah Levita to share his household for some years. The biblical humanist Gianozzo Manetti acquired his language skills from a Palestinian Jew and continued to study with a Jewish convert, known under the baptized name of Gianfrancesco, who shared his household. Manetti made it his practice to speak only Hebrew with his teacher and reputedly acquired the same fluency in Hebrew as in Latin and Greek. The contacts between quattrocento Italian humanists and their Jewish teachers were thus both sustained and interactive.

The conditions were significantly different in the German Empire. Some regional rulers prohibited Jews from residing in their territory altogether. Others confined them to small settlements outside urban centers. Frankfurt and Cologne were the only cities that had Jewish communities within their precincts. Italian humanists had access to Hebrew manuscripts and, from the 1470s, to printed Hebrew books; no Hebrew books were printed in Germany until Thomas Anshelm acquired Hebrew type in 1505.² In these circumstances, it was difficult for the first generation of German humanists to find teachers or books. Neither Rudolf Agricola nor Johannes Reuchlin had ready access to instruction in their native region. Agricola tells us that he learned the language by comparing Hebrew texts with existing Latin translations. “I believe I can learn Hebrew letters by reading them and by reading them learn the idiom of that language which is rife with many mysteries,” he wrote.³ In 1486 Reuchlin hired a Jew by

² On the printing of early Hebrew books, see Yeshayahu Vinograd, *Thesaurus of Hebrew Books* (Jerusalem, 1993–95); Marvin J. Heller, *The Sixteenth Century Hebrew Book*, 2 vols. (Leiden, 2004).

³ “Videor mihi eadem opera et literas hebraicas discendo eos legere et legendis

the name of Calman to teach him the Hebrew alphabet and compose a basic vocabulary list for him.⁴ He had brief personal contacts with Jewish scholars during sojourns at the imperial court and in Italy: with Jacob ben Jehiel Loans, the imperial physician, in 1492, and with Obadiah Sforno, the author of a commentary on the Pentateuch, in Rome in 1498.⁵ For further instruction Reuchlin was dependent on books, a fact he noted with regret. The Jews, he wrote, had been exiled from his native Württemberg. Nor were there any significant communities left in Swabia, where he made his home, “so that there is no more possibility of conversing with a Jew . . . I am obliged therefore to take whatever I teach about Jewish matters from books rather than from personal meetings or contacts with Jews.”⁶ The correspondence of Nicolaus Ellenbog offers further evidence for the difficulty confronting students of Hebrew. In 1508 Ellenbog contacted Alexius Wagner concerning a baptized Jew in Freiburg, offering him bed and board and instruction in Latin in return for Hebrew lessons. Wagner replied that the man in question was in the service of a canon lawyer, who was unwilling to let him go.⁷ Two years later, Reuchlin recommended to Ellenbog a converted Jew, who was willing to teach free of charge. He was “not a particularly learned teacher, but adequate for teaching pronunciation.” Once Ellenbog and his fellow Benedictines at Ottobeuren had the necessary grounding, Reuchlin said, they might proceed “without teacher, by your own effort and practice.”⁸ The man recommended

eis Hebraice discere posse simulque *ten idioteta ekeinou tou logou mysteriois pollois gemou-san* pernoscere.” RBW I:42, 58–61 (no. 12).

⁴ The manuscript is inscribed: “Calman Iudaeus, elementarius praeceptor Ioannis Reuchlin Phorcensis in alphabetho Hebraico, hec Vocabula scripsit eidem suo discipulo mercede conductus, Anno 1486.” *Ibid.*, 352 n. 6 (no. 110).

⁵ See Saverio Campanini, “Reuchlins jüdische Lehrer aus Italien,” in *Reuchlin und Italien*, ed. G. Dörner (Stuttgart, 1999), 69–86.

⁶ *De accentibus et orthographia*, LXXI: “plane nulla Iudaeorum relicta est conversatio, quippe cum fuerint prope toto vitae meae tempore a mea patria exacti et extorres Iudaei, nec in ullo ducis Suevorum territorio habitare audeant . . . Eapropter non usu et cohabitatione sed frequenti lectione de Judaicis quicquid doceo discere cogor.”

⁷ *Nikolaus Ellenbog, Briefwechsel*, ed. Andreas Bigelmair (Aschendorff, 1938), I:27–31 (nos. 48, 49), of 1508.

⁸ RBW II:130–31, 19–21, 30–33 (no. 162), of 1510: “Relicto Iudaismo ad nostram fidem conversus est et in paucis annis linguam nostram Latinam posthabitis Hebraicis perdidicit, ita ut in baccalaureum artium evaserit . . . praeceptorem licet non valde doctum, tamen ad pronuntiandum sufficientem, qui vestros monachos possit in primordiis linguae sacrae aptare formareque, ut saltem nostra Rudimenta

by Reuchlin accepted the invitation, but stayed only one month at Ottobeuren, teaching the community little more than the Hebrew alphabet.⁹ Teachers of Hebrew who were willing and able to share their knowledge could choose among many offers. Reuchlin would have liked to secure the services of the Spanish converso Matthaeus Adrianus for the University of Tübingen, but the climate did not agree with him, and he departed for Basel. In 1517 Erasmus was able to attract him to Leuven, noting that there were several candidates for the chair in Greek, but only the one Adrianus for the chair in Hebrew.¹⁰ The first generation of German humanists, then, had to overcome considerable difficulties in their quest for instruction. The next generation had an easier task. Students were able to attend regular lectures in Hebrew at a number of universities in Germany: at Heidelberg, Tübingen, Leipzig, Basel, Strasbourg, and Wittenberg, to name just a few.¹¹ Like quattrocento Italian humanists, German scholars were finally able to learn Hebrew from scholars rather than dilettantes and to sustain contact with their teachers over a prolonged period of time. Philip Melanchthon, for example, shared his household with a converted Jew, Bernard Göppingen, and Paul Fagius benefited from the presence of Elijah Levita at his workshop.¹² They also had easier access to Hebrew books. Of the sixteen printed Hebrew books in Reuchlin's library, fourteen were of Italian origin.¹³ The next generation of humanists had at their disposal a good selection of Hebrew grammars printed in Germany, ranging from Pellican's brief outline and Reuchlin's elementary grammar in the first decade of the century to the full and detailed works of

per vos ipsos tandem valeatis accipere, in eisque nullo praeceptore, sed proprio studio exercitari."

⁹ Ibid., 138–39 (no. 165), of 1510.

¹⁰ Ibid., 362–66 (nos. 213, 214).

¹¹ Among early teachers of Hebrew lecturing at universities were, apart from Reuchlin: Paulus Phrygio at Tübingen, Johannes Cellarius at Leipzig, Conradus Pellican at Basel and Zurich, Johannes Oecolampad at Basel, Wolfgang Capito at Basel and Strasbourg, Philip Melanchthon, Johannes Böschenstein, and Matthaeus Aurogallus at Wittenberg.

¹² On Fagius, see Friedman, *Most Ancient Testimony*.

¹³ Most of his Hebrew manuscripts likewise came from Italy. See Karl Preisendanz, "Die Bibliothek Johannes Reuchlins," in *Johannes Reuchlin (1455–1522)*, ed. Hermann Kling and Stefan Rhein (Sigmaringen, 1994), 35–82; Matthias Dall'Asta, "Bücher aus Italien. Reuchlins Kontakte zu italienischen Buchhändlern und Druckern" in *Reuchlin und Italien*, 23–44.

Sebastian Münster and Theodore Bibliander in the 1530s and 40s.¹⁴

The interests of humanists were not restricted to acquiring language skills. They also extended to Jewish philosophy and exegesis. In seeking to penetrate Hebrew thought, the Italian scholars again had the advantage over their northern colleagues. It appears that Italian Jews did not adhere strictly to the traditional prohibition against teaching Gentiles. Indeed Elijah Levita justified his teaching: "Our wise men did not say that it was a sin to instruct a Christian; on the contrary they said that non-Jews may be taught the Noachian laws. That should exonerate me, for how can one teach those who know no Hebrew?"¹⁵ In Germany, Reuchlin was unable to receive such instruction, for "our Jews, either on account of envy or of ignorance, are unwilling to teach any Christian their language. They refer to the authority of a certain Rabbi Ami, who said . . . that it was forbidden to teach the Law to any Gentile."¹⁶ Pico della Mirandola was able to study the kabbalistic tradition through the agency of the convert Flavius Mithridates. German kabbalists like Reuchlin and Heinrich Agrippa of Nettesheim acquired their knowledge mostly during sojourns in the peninsula. Reuchlin acknowledged his debt to the work of the Italian humanists in the preface to *De arte cabalistica* (1516). The Medici, he wrote, had gathered at their court "Demetrius Chalcondyles, Marsilio Ficino, Georgio Vespucci, Christophoro Landino, Valori, Angelo Poliziano, Giovanni Pico count of Mirandola, and the rest of the world's best scholars." Ficino and his circle created the necessary ambiance for kabbalistic studies. "Through them the wisdom of the ancients, which the evils of time had lost or hidden, was restored to the light of day . . . [Lorenzo Medici] sowed the seeds of universal ancient philosophy which are now growing to maturity under your [Leo X's] reign so that the ears of this corn

¹⁴ On Münster see Friedman, *The Most Ancient Testimony* and the classic account, Joseph Perles, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Hebräischen und Aramäischen Studien* (Munich, 1884). On Bibliander, see Emil Egli, *Analecta Reformatoria* (Zurich, 1901), II:1–144.

¹⁵ In the preface to his *Masoreth ha masoreth* (Tradition of Traditions, Venice, 1538), trans. in: Christian David Ginsburg, *Introduction to the Rabbinic Bible by Jacob ben Chajim Adonijah and the Massoreth ha-Massoreth by Elias Levita* (London, 1867; repr. New York, 1968), 99. See Campanini, "Reuchlins jüdische Lehrer aus Italien," 73. Elijah Levita's work was disseminated in Germany from 1525 on by Sebastian Münster, who published his writings in Latin and Hebrew.

¹⁶ *Johannes Reuchlins Briefwechsel*, ed. Ludwig Geiger (Stuttgart 1875; repr. Hildesheim, 1962), 100.

can be harvested in all languages: Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Arabic, Chaldaic, and Chaldaean.¹⁷ Agrippa, first acquainted with kabbalistic studies through Reuchlin's books, also furthered his knowledge during his travels in Italy. During a stay in Pavia, in 1515/16 he befriended Agostinus Ricius, a Jewish convert and the author of the kabbalistic treatise *De motu octavae sphaerae* (1513), and through him came to know, if not Paul Ricius himself, at any rate his Latin translation of the kabbalistic *Sha'are Orah* (*Porta lucis*).

The exchange of knowledge between Christian humanists and learned Jews was not a one-way road. The works of Elijah del Medigo and Johanan Alemanno offer evidence of a cross-fertilization of thought. Del Medigo made a name for himself as a philosopher in the tradition of Averroes and appears to have taught, at least informally, at the University of Padua and at the studio in Florence. At Pico's request, he translated and summarized a number of Averroistic writings in Latin, including Averroes' commentary on Plato's *Republic*. In Florence, Del Medigo was exposed to Neo-Platonic ideas, actively participated in the philosophical discussion of the circle around Pico and Ficino, and wrote *Heshek Shlomo* (*The Passion of Solomon*), which gives expression to the Platonic ideal of love. The influence of Ficino's school is pronounced also in Johanan Alemanno's notebooks, the so-called *Collectanea*, which shows an intimate knowledge of Neo-Platonic literature and draws parallels between Platonic thought and the teaching of the Kabbalah.¹⁸ The works of David Messer Leon and Judah ben Isaac Abravanel (Leone Ebreo), offer perhaps the best examples of the absorption of humanistic culture into Jewish literature. Messer Leon introduced Jewish readers to classical rhetoric in his *Nofet Tsufim* (*The Flow of the Honeycomb*, written 1454–74, printed between 1476–80). The book contains extensive citations from the classical handbooks of Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian. Messer Leon acknowledged that the classical writers gave him a new appreciation of biblical rhetoric. His use of biblical passages to illustrate classical rules parallels the practice of Christian biblical humanists from Valla to Melancthon. Leone Ebreo's famous *Dialoghi d'amore* (*Dialogues of*

¹⁷ *On the Art of the Kabbalah*, trans. Martin and Sarah Goodman (New York, 1983) 37.

¹⁸ See Moshe Idel, "The Magical and Neoplatonic Interpretation of the Kabbalah in the Renaissance," in *Jewish Thought in the Sixteenth Century*, ed. Bernard Cooperman, 186–242.

Love, written in 1501/2, published 1535), in which he engages with Platonic thought, similarly reflect the shared interests of gentile and Jewish humanists.

It is difficult to find corresponding examples of cross-fertilization in Reformation Germany. Juan Luis Vives, the descendant of Spanish conversos, was the only Jewish humanist of note active in the German Empire. He showed no interest, however, in Hebrew or in the Hebrew tradition.¹⁹ Of course, this may be more indicative of the constraints he faced than of the inclinations he felt. His parents fell victim to the Spanish Inquisition, but Vives dared not advert to their misfortune. He used coded language in letters to his friend Frans Cranevelt, hinting at the cause of his grief and anxiety and noting the impossibility of returning to Spain because of the dangers awaiting him there.²⁰ Paul Ricius, another scholarly Jewish convert, who made his career in Germany, translated Hebrew writings into Latin and published a number of kabbalistic treatises and orations. He was, however, a physician by profession and does not quite fit the description of “humanist,” although Erasmus attested to his erudition: “I was so attracted by Paulus Ricius in our recent conversation, that I have a kind of great thirst for more frequent and intimate talk with him. Besides his knowledge of Hebrew, what a lot of philosophy he knows and theology too! And such an upright character, a great desire to learn, an open readiness to teach, a modest manner in debate. Personally, I liked him long ago at first sight in Pavia, when he was

¹⁹ Vives claimed not to know Hebrew (*Opera Omnia*, Valencia, 1785–90, I:163), although he passed judgment on the Hebrew language, describing it as undeveloped: “It is like the language of a child. There is a great deal of ambivalence in its vocabulary, it is not eloquent, it does not combine the parts [of a sentence] well, and it confuses the tenses of the verbs.” (“Ea enim similis est linguae puerorum, pleraque verbis amphibola, parum diserta, non bene conjungit partes et verborum tempora confundit;” *ibid.*, VIII:77).

²⁰ See *Litterae vivorum eruditorum ad Franciscum Craneveldium*, ed. Henry de Vocht (Leuven, 1928), 85–87, 351–53, 367–70, etc. (nos. 32, 128, 136, etc.). Vives (1492–1540) taught at Louvain. He lived for a while in England, but after becoming persona non grata at the court because of his support of Queen Catherine, he returned to the continent and resided at Bruges. He was the author of *In pseudo-dialecticos* (Louvain, 1519), an attack on the scholastics of Paris, contributed to the Froben edition of Augustine’s works, wrote commentaries on works of Virgil and Cicero, composed several pedagogical tracts (notably, *De institutione feminae christianae*, Antwerp, 1524), treatises against war, translations of classical Greek authors, and philosophical works, notably the comprehensive *De corruptione disciplinarum* (Antwerp, 1531).

teaching philosophy there; and now that I see him at closer quarters, I like him still more.”²¹

Both in Italy and in Northern Europe, Hebrew studies were initiated by humanists, but soon became the bailiwick of theologians and were promoted in the context of theological studies. Reuchlin who was principally responsible for introducing Hebrew studies in Germany, had a strong following among German humanists, but the leading Hebraists of the next generation were theologians: Conrad Pellican, Johannes Oecolampad, Sebastian Münster, Paul Fagius, and Theodore Bibliander saw Hebrew strictly as ancillary to Old Testament studies. Wolfgang Capito, the only German Hebraist in the 1520s, who could also lay claim to the title of humanist, soon abandoned his literary avocation for that of a reformer and, like his colleagues, used Hebrew studies exclusively in the service of Christian exegesis. Melanchthon, who successfully combined the vocations of humanist and reformer, showed a similar bias. In his inaugural address, he encouraged the students of Wittenberg to study the source texts in the original. “Since theological writings are partly in Hebrew, partly in Greek—for we Latins drink from these streams—we must learn foreign languages lest we go into our encounters with the theologians blindfolded. It is language studies that bring out the splendor of words and the meaning of idioms and . . . as we turn our mind to the sources, we begin to savor of Christ.”²² Melanchthon had learned the rudiments of Hebrew from Reuchlin, who was his great-uncle, but the young man’s adherence to the Lutheran confession led to an estrangement between them. When Reuchlin left his library to a monastery in Pforzheim rather than to his relative, Melanchthon spoke lightly of the loss. Reuchlin “had greatly valued his Hebrew books and acquired them at great cost,” he said, “but there are none among them of which I approve, except the biblical texts. And those are available elsewhere as well. The rest is fool’s gold.”²³

²¹ CWE 4:281, 41–48 (no. 549). Ricius (d. 1541), who served as imperial physician, lived in Augsburg from 1514. He was the author of *Sal foederis* (Augsburg, 1514), in which he used passages from the Talmud to defend the Christian religion; a translation of Joseph Gikatilla’s work, *Porta lucis* (Gate of Light, Augsburg, 1516); commentaries on the Talmud, on Psalm I, and the apostolic creed; *Apologetica . . . oratio* (Nuremberg, 1529) in defense of Reuchlin, against Hoogstraten, *Ad principes . . . oratio* (Augsburg, 1530) in favor of war against the Turks.

²² MWA III:40.

²³ MBW.T 2:93, 22–24, “Hebraicos ipse plurimi faciebat et magno emerat; in

At Catholic institutions, as well, the purpose of Hebrew studies was narrowly circumscribed. Students of Greek and Latin were usually introduced to a broad range of texts, including history, philosophy, and belles lettres, and encouraged to immerse themselves in the culture of ancient Greece and Rome. Hebrew studies were approached in a different spirit. They were often justified by reference to the instructions of the Councils of Vienne (1311) and Basel (1434), which encouraged the study of languages to facilitate the conversion of non-Christians. Hebrew studies were therefore driven by missionary considerations and focused on theological texts. Language skills served as a tool to allow a better understanding of the scriptural text rather than as a gateway to another culture. The humanist Petrus Mosellanus, who was no theologian, nevertheless defended Hebrew studies as an exegetical tool rather than an aid to cultural studies: "Christianity cannot survive without language studies, for it is totally dependent on a correct understanding of Scripture." The Old Testament must therefore be checked against the Hebrew, and the New Testament against the Greek.²⁴ Christian theologians, however, did not come to the Hebrew text without preconceived notions imbibed from Christian exegetes. They read Jewish commentaries, not to explore diverse opinions, but to disprove them and corroborate their own ideological positions. Even the Talmud was valuable for that purpose, Reuchlin noted: "The more hostile the Talmud is toward us, the better and more convincing is testimony taken from it, which supports our position and our Christian faith."²⁵ Thus even a humanist like Reuchlin, who was receptive to Jewish thought and mined Hebrew literature for universal principles of knowledge, was mindful of the missionary purpose of Hebrew studies and tended to give a Christian slant to ideas that appealed to him.²⁶

quibus nihil est quod probem praeter biblia. Et ea alioqui extant. Reliqua *anthrakon thesauros*."

²⁴ Petrus Mosellanus, *Oratio de variarum linguarum cognitione paranda* (Leipzig, 1518), Biv-Cir.

²⁵ *Gutachten über das jüdische Schriftum*, ed. Antonie Leinz-v. Dessauer (Constance, 1965), 54 = *Recommendation whether to Confiscate, Destroy and Burn all Jewish Books*, ed. and trans. Peter Wortsman (New York, 2000), 50. See above, note 21, for Ricius' use of the Talmud in support of Christian doctrine.

²⁶ A process that was, from the Jewish point of view, a misinterpretation or falsification of the material. Cf. Gershom Sholem, *Kabbalah* (New York, 1978), 198. See also Moshe Idel, "The Magical and Neoplatonic Interpretation of the Kabbalah in the Renaissance," in *Jewish Thought*, 219, on similar, forced reinterpretations of

Humanistic interests, then, were responsible for the initial rise of Hebrew studies, but ideology truncated their scope and prevented them from taking their full and proper place in the academic curriculum. Although humanists favored encyclopedic learning and promoted the idea of cultural syncretism, they did not rise above the prejudices of their time. The new interest in Hebrew studies was not paralleled by a greater acceptance of or more tolerant attitude toward Jews. Although there was much talk in Reformation Germany of putting an end to the “tyranny” of the Church, it is clear that authors speaking up against censorship and authoritarianism did not promote freedom of conscience or human rights, but merely aimed at replacing one source of authority with another. They certainly did not mean to give a voice to non-Christians.

A more detailed study of the writings of Reuchlin and Erasmus, the two men who exerted the greatest influence in early Reformation Germany, will exemplify the attitude of German humanists toward Jews. Reuchlin, whose patronage of Jewish studies eventually led to his prosecution for Judaism, galvanized the German humanists into a movement; Erasmus played a crucial role in disseminating and popularizing the New Learning. Although Reuchlin and Erasmus are often depicted as examples of tolerant minds, the comments of both men will offend modern sensibilities. Judaeophobia is endemic to Renaissance writings. Anti-Semitic clichés entered the vocabulary and were used seemingly without reflection or conscious value judgment. Thus, as Heiko Oberman notes, “much of what later generations condemn as racism . . . was a historical given.”²⁷ The negative attitude toward Jews was based on the incompatibility of Christian theology with Jewish exegesis and rooted in the early history of the Christian religion, which was defined by opposition to Judaism. Given the pervasiveness of anti-Jewish sentiments, we can do no more than

the Kabbalah by Neo-Platonists: “[T]his search for agreement was not pursued in a critical fashion; in some instances, there was no real connection between the kabbalistic and Platonic conceptions. Furthermore, there was a clear tendency to superimpose Platonic or Neoplatonic formulations upon the Kabbalah.”

²⁷ Simon Markish, “Erasmus and the Jews: A Look Backwards,” *Erasmus of Rotterdam Society Yearbook* 22 (2002): 2–3, suggests substituting the terms “Judeophobia” or “Jew-hatred” for “anti-Semitism;” Oberman, *Roots of Anti-Semitism*, 25. See also Heiko Oberman, “Three Sixteenth Century Attitudes to Judaism: Reuchlin, Erasmus and Luther,” in *Jewish Thought in the Sixteenth Century*, ed. Bernard Cooperman, 326–64, and William Nicholls, *Christian Antisemitism: A History of Hate* (Northvale, 1993).

distinguish degrees of Judaeophobia and differentiate theological from socio-political arguments, generic rejection from criticism *ad hominem*, and excessive and vituperative language from formulaic terms. Phrases stereotyping Jews as “perfidious” or “murderous” certainly grate on the ears of modern readers, but such expressions were as commonplace in sixteenth-century writings as ethnic and gender stereotyping was a generation ago in our own literature. It is with this caveat that I examine the attitudes of Reuchlin and Erasmus toward Jews and Judaism.

Johannes Reuchlin (1454/55–1522) studied at Freiburg and, after a brief stint in Paris, attended the University of Basel, graduating BA (1474) and MA (1477).²⁸ He proceeded to study law at the universities of Orleans and Poitiers and received a doctorate in law from the University of Tübingen (1484/85). Entering the service of Count Eberhard the Bearded of Württemberg, Reuchlin traveled to Italy and served on diplomatic missions to the imperial court. After the count’s death he lived for some years in political exile at Heidelberg.²⁹ He then entered the service of Philip, Elector Palatine, and from 1500 served as a judge for the Swabian League. In 1512/13 he retired from this post and devoted himself to his scholarly career. He taught Greek at the University of Tübingen from 1481 to 1485, and was appointed Professor of Greek and Hebrew at Ingolstadt in 1520. From 1521 until his death he taught Greek and Hebrew in Tübingen. The range of Reuchlin’s Hebrew studies is reflected in the titles of his main publications, which dealt with philosophy, philology, and theology: *De verbo mirifico* (On the Wonder-Working Word, 1494), *De rudimentis Hebraicis* (On the Rudiments of Hebrew, 1506), *In septem psalmos poenitentiales hebraicos interpretatio de verbo ad verbum et super eiusdem commentarioli sui* (A Literal Translation from the Hebrew of the Seven Penitential Psalms and a Brief Commentary on Them,

²⁸ The best general account of Reuchlin’s life and career is the classic biography by Ludwig Geiger, *Johann Reuchlin: Sein Leben und seine Werke* (Leipzig, 1871; repr. Nieuwkoop, 1964). For Reuchlin’s attitude toward Jews and Judaism see *Reuchlin und die Juden*, ed. Arno Herzig and Julius Schoeps (Sigmaringen, 1993). For literature on Reuchlin’s trial for Judaism and on his polemic with Pfefferkorn see below, note 48. For Reuchlin’s kabbalistic studies, see below note 30.

²⁹ There he entered the circle of Johann von Dalberg, bishop of Worms and chancellor of the University of Heidelberg, who facilitated his access to Hebrew books. Through the bishop he obtained a copy of the *Nizzahon* (Victory) and of the kabbalistic work *Ginnet Egoz* (The Garden of Nut trees) by Joseph Gikatilla.

Tübingen, 1512), *De arte cabalistica* (On the Cabbalistic Art, 1517), *De accentibus et orthographia linguae Hebraicae* (On the Accents and Orthography of the Hebrew language, 1518).

In *De verbo mirifico*³⁰ Reuchlin explored the powers of the Hebrew language, which he cast as the original language and medium of communication between God and human beings. “The language of the Hebrews,” he wrote, “is simple, pure, uncorrupted, holy, brief, and consistent. It is the language in which God spoke with man, and men with angels face to face rather than through an interpreter.”³¹ Hebrew words therefore were not arbitrary but had a divinely sanctioned relationship to their referents. The world was created by the divine word, and the Kabbalah was the science by which the reader could discern the presence of God in Scripture and communicate with his spirit.

Reuchlin supported the idea of a linear tradition of knowledge, originating in Mosaic sources and entering Christian thought through the philosophy of Pythagoras and Plato. Hebrew writings were the “fountain head of all philosophy and literature,” he wrote.³² It was his purpose to delve into the secrets concealed in the oldest philosophy and reveal to scholars of his own age how the ancient sages were able to work miracles through sacred rites, “whether they were Pythagorean . . . or Hebrew or Chaldean.”³³ Wisdom was the common good of humanity, Reuchlin noted, but the power to use sacred

³⁰ Reuchlin’s *De verbo mirifico* is clearly indebted to Pico and was published in 1494, the year in which Alexander VI acquitted Pico of charges of heresy. On Reuchlin’s kabbalistic studies see Charles Zika, *Reuchlin und die okkulte Tradition der Renaissance* (Sigmaringen, 1998); Karl Grözinger, “Reuchlin und die Kabbala,” in *Reuchlin und die Juden*, 175–188; Jerome Friedman, *Most Ancient Testimony*, chapter 4: “Johannes Reuchlin: The Discovery of the Secret Jesus.”

³¹ “Simplex autem sermo purus, incorruptus, sanctus, brevis et constans Hebraeorum est, quo Deus cum homine et homines cum angelis locuti perhibentur coram et non per interpretem facie ad faciem” (*De verbo mirifico* in RSW I, part 1:162).

³² In his prefatory letter to his Latin translation of a Hebrew wedding poem, *Rabi Joseph Hyssopaeus Parpinianensis Iudaeorum poeta dulcissimus ex hebraica lingua in latinam traductus* (Tübingen, 1512), aiv, “philosophiam universam . . . et omnem artem literariam a Iudaeis ipsis primum ortam.” Reuchlin’s view is based on Eusebius’ *Preparatio evangelica*, Book XI.

³³ “Quasi de adytis oraculorum et vetustissimae philosophiae penetralibus exponere nostro saeculo, quantum nobis memoria suppetit, universa ferme nomina, quibus superiori aetate sapientes homines et miraculosis operationibus praediti utebantur in sacris, sive Pythagorica fuerint et vetustiorum philosophorum sacramenta sive Hebraeorum Chaldaeorumque barbara memoracula, seu Christianorum devota supplicia” (*De verbo mirifico*, 10).

ceremonies and words to work miracles had now devolved on Christians and become their exclusive property: "The salutary power of words has deserted you [the Jews] and elected us."³⁴ Indeed, the ability to work miracles elevated the kabbalist above devout pagans, eloquent orators, and scholastic philosophers.³⁵ On the strength of his beliefs in the primacy of the Hebrew language, Reuchlin pursued linguistic and numerological speculations. He discussed the relationship between the Hebrew names for God and the *sefirot*, or divine emanations, a subject central to kabbalistic theurgy. Developing these ideas further and imposing on them a Christian construction, Reuchlin explained how the Hebrew tetragrammaton, YHWH, could be expanded and transformed in a mystical way into the pentagrammaton of the name Jesus.³⁶

In *De arte cabalistica*, published some twenty years later, Reuchlin declared his intention to popularize Pythagoreanism, as gleaned from the Jewish Kabbalah.³⁷ His main theme was the unity and systematic development of the pythagorean-kabbalistic tradition, which he offered as an alternative to the prevalent scholastic system. Reuchlin traced the tradition back to Adam and the Hebrew patriarchs, to whom God revealed the secrets of religion. He showed its further

³⁴ "Hoc modo universarum gentium, quae aliqua excellenti polleant philosophia, aut non illiberalibus cerimoniis, et sacrata nomina et consecrati characteres in quaestionem incidunt" (ibid., 11). "Salubris ista potestas verborum, quae vos deseruit, nos elegit, nos committitur, nobis ad nutum obedire cernitur" (ibid., 106).

³⁵ "Nihil extollit disertos esse, quod natura mulierculis concessit. Nihil etiam, quot tot et tam perplexas scholasticorum quaestiones vel intricare vel extricare profitemur . . . Vivere etiam religione gentilicia sacra invitant, et more cogunt. Quare valde minutum erit, quo nos ab indocta plebe distamus, nisi admirandam professionem nostram mirifica pariter opera consequantur" (ibid., 150). Zika interprets this as a protest against scholastics and humanists (*disertos*). Cf. his statement that Reuchlin is offering "a necessary alternative to the dominant religious and intellectual paradigms of scholastics and humanists." *Reuchlin und die okkulte Tradition der Renaissance*, 124 (my translation).

³⁶ Reuchlin's speculative interpretation is not based on sound philological principles. He explains that the name of Jesus (transcribed "Ihsuh") "differs from the name of the Lord in the tetragrammaton [transcribed Ihuh] only in the addition of the one letter 'S,' which infuses the second syllable with the divine nature of the first, subsumes and tinges it. That is to say, human nature drinks in the oil which is poured out" ("Idem ergo dei filius incarnatus est ipsum nomen suum Ihsuh, quod non est aliud a nomine domini Tetragrammato nisi unius S litterae assumptione, quae secundam syllabam deitate primae syllabae perfundat, mergat et intingat, id est, humanam naturam oleo effuso imbibitam . . . ostendimus" (*De verbo mirifico*, 384, n. 31).

³⁷ *On the Art of the Kabbalah*, p. 39.

development in pagan philosophy and its culmination in Christian thought.³⁸ Reuchlin's engagement with the Jewish Kabbalah shows an openness toward the Hebrew tradition and the typical humanistic belief in a shared universal wisdom. At the same time, he posulated a hierarchy of knowledge, claiming that the Christian tradition was superior to other cultures. This belief, which is characteristic of Reuchlin's time, is based on the theological tenet that the Old Testament, or Jewish tradition, was superseded and fulfilled by the New Testament, or Christian tradition.

Reuchlin's kabbalistic studies had little impact on German humanists of the Reformation era. They did find an echo in the works of Heinrich Agrippa of Nettesheim (1486–1535),³⁹ who lectured on *De verbo mirifico* at the University of Dole in 1509 and was promptly accused of Judaism.⁴⁰ Agrippa was, however, the only one of Reuchlin's disciples, who did not limit himself to language studies and Old Testament exegesis, and projected an interest in other aspects of Hebrew culture. Like Reuchlin, he expressed the belief that Hebrew philosophy contained sparks of divine wisdom. In *De triplici ratione cognoscendi Dei* he explained that God sent "three books of knowledge" to the world: "the first book containing [the knowledge of] created things was given to the Gentiles . . . the second book of law and words was given to the Jews . . . who had prophets superior to philosophers, taught by spirits and angelic creatures and who knew God through them . . . Finally God sent us [i.e. the Christians] the third book, namely the book of the Gospel." It was for this reason,

³⁸ Accordingly he distinguished the practical magic of the ancients from the Christian practice, and expressed disdain for the miracles, or rather clever manipulations, recorded by the Jews. "The skills of [true] cabbala tend to work for the good of man, while the poison of false magic leads to their downfall." (*On the Art of the Kabbalah*, 123 n. 17).

³⁹ For Agrippa's kabbalistic studies see Christopher Lehrich, *The Language of Demons and Angels* (Leiden, 2004); Marc Van der Poel, *Cornelius Agrippa: The Humanist Theologian and His Declamations* (Leiden, 1997); Vittoria Perrone Compagni's introduction to the critical edition of Agrippa's *De occulta philosophia* (Leiden, 1992); Charles Nauert, *Agrippa and the Crisis of Renaissance Thought* (Urbana, 1965).

⁴⁰ *De beatissimae Annae monogamia*, fol. B 6r: ". . . qui in Christianas scholas induxerim scelestissimam, damnatam ac prohibitam cabale artem, qui contemptis sacris patribus et catholicis doctoribus praeferam rabinos Iudaeorum et contorqueam sacras literas ad artes haereticas et Thalmuth Iudaeorum. Verum ego christianus sum, nec mors nec vita separavit me a fide Christi, christianosque doctores omnibus praefero, tamen Iudaeorum rabinos non contemno." Cited in Nauert, *Agrippa and the Crisis of Renaissance Thought*, 126.

Agrippa said, that he “did not disdain the Jewish rabbis.”⁴¹ Agrippa shared Reuchlin’s tendency to remove kabbalistic thought from its Jewish roots and to Christianize it. He also subscribed to the belief that Hebrew was the language of Adam and of God, the first language in which things were named. Ultimately, however, he took the position that Christ had abrogated the Hebrew Law and thereby put an end as well to the power of the Hebrew word. “The Jews are very knowledgeable about the names of God, but after Christ they can accomplish little or nothing.”⁴² Indeed language was no longer needed as a medium of communication with God. “Now the best prayer is not uttered in words, but is offered up to God with a religious silence and sincere cogitation, and is offered him with the voice of the mind and words of the intellectual world.”⁴³

While Reuchlin may have been Agrippa’s original inspiration, the purport and range of their kabbalistic writings, as well as their sources differ significantly. They both were indebted to Pico and Ficino, but Reuchlin made use of Hebrew writings as well and read them in the original. It is not known to what extent Agrippa used Hebrew texts; it appears that he relied primarily on kabbalistic works available in Latin translations and absorbed kabbalistic thought primarily through the filter of Zorzi’s (Francesco Giorgio of Venice’s) writings.⁴⁴ The direction of Reuchlin’s and Agrippa’s writings differs

⁴¹ Agrippa, *Opera Omnia* (Lyon, 1600; repr. Hildesheim, 1970) II:456–57.

⁴² *Ibid.*, II:101.

⁴³ “Melior autem et optima oratio, quae non ore profertur, sed quae silentio sancto et cogitatione integra Deo offertur, quaeque voce mentis inclamans verbis intellectualis mundi veneratur praesules deos.” *De occulta philosophia*, 575. This thought is often found in reformation writings, usually in the context of deprecating rituals and encouraging inner piety. Cf. the similar ideas expressed by Theodor Bibliander, *Hebraica Biblia* (Zurich, 1539–46): “et tunc futurum permittit, ut electi sui puro eum celebrent labio, solum nomen eius invocent, atque corde et animo uno colant” (quoted in M.-L. Demonet-Launay, “La désacralisation de l’hébreu au XVI^e siècle,” in *L’Hébreu au temps de la Renaissance*, 158, n. 15).

⁴⁴ In *De beatissimae Annae monogamia*, fol. K7r, Agrippa says about his knowledge of Hebrew: “Non hebraeam linguam aliquando leviter agnovi, postea . . . multa rursus amisi” (cited Nauert, *Agrippa and the Crisis of Renaissance Thought*, 119); Perrone Compagni (*De occulta philosophia*, 41) offers this judgment on Agrippa’s knowledge of Hebrew sources: “Agrippa’s first, youthful outline of kabbalistic magic, a somewhat superficial carbon-copy of Reuchlin is then reworked in the light of the quotations from the compendia and interpretations of Hebrew wisdom which Francesco Giorgio and a number of other pioneers had rendered accessible to Latin culture.” His borrowings from Hebrew literature are “almost always second-hand,” and his knowledge of Hebrew appears to have been “rudimentary.”

accordingly. The Jewish Kabbalah has two components: a speculative or theosophical, focusing on cosmology and creation and an ecstatic or mystical, focusing on achieving unity with God. Reuchlin placed the theosophical component of the Kabbalah at the center of his writings, whereas Agrippa tended to focus on magical powers derived from ecstatic practices elevating the practitioner into the divine sphere. In addition, Agrippa drew heavily on Albertus Magnus' works (*De mineralibus*, *Speculum astronomiae*, and [Ps. Albertus] *De mirabilibus mundi*), which deal with cosmology and the medieval view of the laws of nature. He furthermore consulted medieval handbooks of magic, such as the *Picatrix*, sources that are reflected in his use of alchemistic terminology. The use of these sources gives to Agrippa's *De occulta philosophia* a flavor rather distinct from Reuchlin's works.

Since our inquiry is concerned with the attitude of humanists toward Judaism, the question arises to what extent Reuchlin and Agrippa pursued kabbalistic studies *qua* humanists. In his kabbalistic writings, Reuchlin adopted the characteristic ideas of logocentrism and cultural syncretism. He furthermore employed dialogue, the humanistic genre of choice, and used typically humanistic slogans, characterizing the scholastic method as "sordid sophistic reasoning . . . with all the premises and corollaries that go with it," "empty-worded, thorny arguments [and] syllogisms."⁴⁵ His kabbalistic works may therefore be assigned a place in the humanistic tradition both on account of their form and their content. Agrippa's place in the history of scholarship is more difficult to determine, in part because of the lengthy genesis of *De occulta philosophia*, which was in gestation from 1510 to 1533. In the final version Agrippa explained the scope of his work: "[Wise men] seek after the powers of the elementary world in the various mixtures of natural things, with the help of medical science and natural philosophy; then of the celestial world in the rays and their influences, according to the rules of the astrologers and the doctrines of mathematicians. They combine the celestial with the natural powers and, finally, strengthen and confirm all of them in the powers of diverse intelligences through the sacred ceremonies of the religions. I shall attempt to explain the order and process of the whole in these three books: the first book contains natural magic,

⁴⁵ *On the Art of the Kabbalah*, 57 and 61.

the second celestial, and the third ritual magic.”⁴⁶ In so far as Agrippa’s book is concerned with man’s place in the divinely created universe and more particularly with the dichotomy between faith and knowledge, it deals with familiar humanistic themes. In so far as it treats of natural phenomena and the operational aspects of magic, the book might, with some justification, be located in the history of proto-science. Vittoria Perrone Compagni, the modern editor of Agrippa’s *De occulta philosophia*, adds to this a third dimension: (proto) psychology. The work, she says, is based “not on the cultural baggage, however rich, of the natural philosopher, the astrologer, or the theologian, but on man’s knowledge of himself, on his awareness of the tripartite orientation of his own psychological nature.”⁴⁷

In 1510 Reuchlin became involved in a controversy over the confiscation of Jewish books initiated by the convert Johannes Pfefferkorn.⁴⁸ Pfefferkorn’s actions had been authorized by the emperor, but the archbishop of Cologne protested the authorization as a violation of his jurisdiction. The matter was re-examined by a panel of scholars, among them Reuchlin. The commission recommended in favor of confiscating the books, with Reuchlin casting the only dissenting vote. Although the Jewish community succeeded in stopping the confiscations by bribing officials at the imperial court, the controversy did not end. Reuchlin engaged in a bitter personal polemic with Pfefferkorn, who enjoyed the support of the scholastic theologians at the University of Cologne. In the wake of their attacks Reuchlin published the report he had submitted to the commission (*Augenspiegel*, Eye Mirror, 1511). It was scrutinized by the regional inquisitor Jacob Hoogstraten, a member of the faculty of theology at Cologne, who decreed that it was dangerous to the Christian faith.

⁴⁶ “Hinc elementalium mundi vires variis rerum naturalium mixtionibus a medicina et naturali philosophia venantur; deinde coelestis mundi radiis et influxibus iuxta astrologorum regulas et mathematicorum disciplinas coelestes virtutes illis connectunt; porro haec omnia intelligentiarum diversarum potestatibus per religionem sacras ceremonias corroborant atque confirmant. Horum omnium ordinem et processum tribus his libris nunc tradere conabor, quorum primus contineat magiam naturalem, alter coelestem, tertius ceremoniam” (*De occulta philosophia*, 85).

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, introduction, 47.

⁴⁸ On the so-called Reuchlin Affair see Erika Rummel, *The Case of Johann Reuchlin: Religious and Social Controversy in Sixteenth-Century Germany* (Toronto, 2002); James Overfield, *The Humanist Scholastic Debate in the Renaissance and Reformation* (Princeton, 1984); Hans Peterse, *Jacobus Hoggstraeten gegen Johannes Reuchlin: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Antijudaismus im 16. Jahrhundert* (Mainz, 1995); Kim, *Bild vom Juden*.

As a result, Reuchlin was charged with Judaism, and after a lengthy appeal process, condemned and fined by the papal court. The trial created a stir in Germany, where humanists rallied to Reuchlin's defense, organizing a letter campaign (*Clarorum virorum epistolae*, Letters of Famous Men, 1514, enlarged 1519). In addition, two German humanists, Ulrich von Hutten and Crotus Rubeanus, collaborated on a satire, *Litterae obscurorum virorum* (Letters of Obscure Men, 1515, enlarged 1517). This collection of letters, purportedly written by Reuchlin's enemies and revealing them as paranoid boors, became an instant bestseller.

From the beginning, the Reuchlin affair focused on two issues: the legality of confiscating Jewish books and the desirability of Jewish studies. In his report to the commission, Reuchlin had pointed out to his colleagues that confiscating Jewish books without a judicial order was illegal and a violation of rights. As non-Christians, he noted, the Jews were not subject to the verdicts of the Church, such as the prohibitions against the Talmud. The imperial laws contained no prohibitions applying to Jewish books, other than the general regulations against books containing slander or concerned with black magic. In this context Reuchlin famously reminded his colleagues that Jews were the subjects of the emperor and thus their fellow citizens. "The Jew is as much a creature of God as I," he wrote.⁴⁹ This is as liberal a statement about Jews as one can find in sixteenth century writings.

Yet Reuchlin was not entirely free of the prejudice against Jews that characterized his age. In his case, however, the objections were based strictly on religious considerations. In a pamphlet entitled *Tütsch Missive, warumb die Juden so lang im Ellend sind* (A German Missive, Why the Jews Have Suffered so Long in Misery, Pforzheim, 1505), he subscribed to the view that the Jews as a people were deservedly suffering for the murder of Christ and the denial of the Messiah. Conversion to Christianity would undo the curse under which they lived. Although this belief did not affect Reuchlin's judgment of individual Jews, it filled him with a missionary spirit. Thus he expressed respect and admiration for his Jewish teachers and endowed the fictitious Jewish characters in his books with positive traits, portray-

⁴⁹ *Gutachten*, 34 and 45; "Der Jud ist unsers herrgots als wol als ich" (97) = *Recommendation*, 80.

ing them as learned, intellectually engaged, and generous in sharing their learning. He purposely subverted the cliché of the “perfidious” Jew, making one of his characters declare: “We Jews are not in the habit of adopting rhetorical embellishments, for we . . . aim at the truth of the matter rather than at well-turned speech.”⁵⁰ A recommendation Reuchlin wrote on behalf of a Hebrew teacher exemplifies his good will toward Jews, but also evinces his missionary hopes: “Do not disdain him because he is not yet converted to our faith. We must treat him even more kindly on that account, that he may be attracted by our attitude and behavior and be enticed to prepare himself to dwell with God.”⁵¹ It was Reuchlin’s opinion that Jews should be persuaded by “reason and with good will” to convert to Christianity.⁵² He vigorously objected to the idea of forced conversions and specifically to Pfefferkorn’s reasoning that depriving the Jews of their books would remove them from a “poisonous” tradition and make them more amenable to conversion. Reuchlin conducted his polemic against Pfefferkorn with considerable rancor. Although he did not directly attack Pfefferkorn for his ethnic origins, he did express doubts about the sincerity of his opponent’s conversion. The controversy deteriorated into mutual name-calling. Reuchlin referred to Pfefferkorn as a “Jew baptized with water,” Pfefferkorn called Reuchlin a “half-Jew.”⁵³ Their exchange demonstrates that “Jew” was a pejorative term in the eyes of their contemporaries, but since Reuchlin was not an ethnic Jew, the intention was clearly to impugn the orthodoxy of the opponent, not to cast racial slurs.

The second issue in the Reuchlin Affair was the censorious attitude of the scholastic theologians toward scholarly research, and more particularly their hostility to Greek and Hebrew language studies.

⁵⁰ “Iudaeis nobis in more non sit, ut fucos dicendi sequamur: nam loqui proprie non eloqui sub ferula didicimus, et causae veritatem magis quam locutionis ornatum quaerimus” (*On the Art of the Kabbalah*, 63). Reuchlin praised his teacher Jacobus Jehiel Loans in *De rudimentis* as learned and kind (“valde doctus homo; non parum literatus; humanissimus praeceptor meus doctor excellens;” quoted in Geiger, *Johann Reuchlin*, 106 n. 3).

⁵¹ “Nec contemnendum putes, quod nondum conversus ad nostram fidem est, tanto enim humanius a nobis tractandus fuerit, ut nostris moribus et operibus bonis inductus, alliciat ad se praeparandum deo habitandum.” RBW II:178, 4–6 (no. 175).

⁵² *Gutachten*, 106 = *Recommendation*, 86–87.

⁵³ Rummel, *The Case of Johann Reuchlin*, 102.

Reuchlin advocated the institution of Hebrew chairs at German universities,⁵⁴ arguing that it was important to preserve Jewish books for missionary purposes as well as for the use of scholars. In his view theologians must convince Jews of the correctness of the Christian interpretation on the basis of their own books. It was impossible, however, to study the Old Testament without recourse to the original texts. “Examine the writers of the Church,” Reuchlin wrote, “and you will see what difference there is between exegetes who have language skills and those who do not.” To understand the meaning one must know the words, and indeed every jot and tittle. “This is particularly true of the Hebrew texts in which almost nothing has been handed down and presented to our minds that is not enveloped in shadowy metaphors.”⁵⁵ Reuchlin’s argument did not sit well with conservative theologians. They expressed doubts about the usefulness of language studies and did not welcome the involvement of philologists. They claimed that the Latin Vulgate translation of the Bible was sufficient for all purposes. Humanists examining the original biblical texts, they said, acted without proper authority and, as amateurs, were liable to introduce heretical interpretations. Humanists, in turn, noted that the Vulgate translation was full of errors. They claimed that their text-critical work was necessary and did not infringe on the professional territory of the theologians because it was philological in nature.

It has been argued by modern historians that the value of Hebrew studies was not a significant issue in the Reuchlin Affair and that it should not be portrayed as an instance of a humanist-scholastic controversy.⁵⁶ However, unless we believe with Ranke that we can tell history “as it really happened,” we must respect the construction Reuchlin and his contemporaries put on the affair. They certainly saw it as a polemic between scholastic theologians and humanists. Hoogstraten, for one, characterized Reuchlin as a man of letters who did not adhere to the rules of scholastic disputation. It was difficult,

⁵⁴ *Gutachten*, 104 = *Recommendation*, 86.

⁵⁵ “Qui si libet, periculum facito scriptorum ecclesiae, visurus quid inter peritos linguarum ac expertes interpretes intersit . . . Id vel maxime verum est de scripturis hebraicis quibus prope nihil est traditum quod non umbraculi vice spirituali commendetur intelligentiae.” *De accentibus*, IIIv.

⁵⁶ See Overfield, *The Humanist Scholastic Debate in the Renaissance and Reformation*, 253; Johannes Helmuth, “Humanismus und Scholastik an den deutschen Universitäten um 1500,” *Zeitschrift für deutsche Forschung* 15 (1988): 187–203.

he said, to carry on an argument with a man “who knows nothing but stories [i.e. literature], who knows not a single proposition about ethics or things of the conscience, who does not know how to dispute in technical terms or keep to the point.”⁵⁷ Reuchlin in turn depicted Hoogstraten’s attack on him as the most recent in a series of attempts by scholastic theologians to harass men of letters. He was suffering the same fate, he said, as Filelfo, Pico della Mirandola, Sebastian Brant, and Peter of Ravenna before him. In a letter to Jacques Lefèvre he complained more specifically that he was being attacked on account of his knowledge of Greek and Hebrew.⁵⁸ He repeated these sentiments in a published response *Against the Slanderers of Cologne* and in a letter to Adrian of Utrecht, in which he typecast his opponents as *bonae artis osiores*, haters of the humanities.⁵⁹ The collective action of the humanists who came to Reuchlin’s aid with a letter-writing campaign shows that they accepted this interpretation of the affair. Crotus Rubeanus, one of the authors of the *Letters of Obscure Men*, wrote a second satire on the scholastic theologians of Paris, in which he alleged that they persecuted Reuchlin because he promoted language studies. If he succeeded in “disseminating the literature and books of the Hebrews, as he did earlier with Greek books and literature,” students would desert the subject of theology and flock to the humanities. It was for that reason that the theologians “hated Reuchlin and the other champions of the humanities.”⁶⁰ Erasmus repeated these allegations. The theologians, he said, targeted Reuchlin and the humanists. It was a clever strategy to tarnish the image of the movement. The theologians “confound the cause of the humanities with the business of Reuchlin and Luther, though there is no connection between them.” “They resented the new blossoming of the humanities and the ancient tongues, and the revival of the authors of Antiquity, who up to now were wormeaten and deep in dust, so that the world is now recalled to the fountain-head” and found it politic to “tie up the ancient tongues and the humanities and Reuchlin and Luther and even myself in the same parcel.” In truth, neither Reuchlin nor Luther had anything to do

⁵⁷ Quoted in Rummel, *The Case of Johann Reuchlin*, 21–22.

⁵⁸ RBW II:421–23 (no. 227).

⁵⁹ Quoted in Rummel, *The Case of Johann Reuchlin*, 103, *De accentibus* IIr.

⁶⁰ Text in Eduard Boecking, *Ulrichi Hutteni Equitis Operum Supplementum* (Leipzig, 1864), I:319–21.

with humanism. “And then what have I in common with Reuchlin or with Luther? But they have cunningly confused all these things, to lay on all who follow the humanities a load of ill will, which all share.”⁶¹

Erasmus was not successful in his attempts to disentangle the cause of the New Learning from the Reuchlin Affair. It became a rallying cry for humanists defending language studies. They did not necessarily approve of Reuchlin’s kabbalistic studies or care for the legal rights of Jews. Indeed in defending Reuchlin, they did not stay clear of anti-Semitic remarks. The *Letters of Obscure Men* are full of jibes against Jews. One letter-writer, who has inadvertently greeted a Jew, worries about having committed a deadly sin; another discusses earnestly whether the foreskin of a converted Jew will regrow; many sneer at Pfefferkorn and cast doubt about the sincerity of his conversion.⁶² The sentiments are put into the mouths of the purported letter-writers, that is, into the mouths of Reuchlin’s enemies, but the final letter in the collection, which drops the satirical pretense, retains the anti-Jewish rhetoric. The writer castigates the theologians of Cologne for persecuting the learned Reuchlin and allowing themselves to be misled by the machinations of Pfefferkorn, a man “sprung from the seed of Judas.”⁶³

The letters and pamphlets written by humanists in defense of Reuchlin, some of them included in *The Letters of Famous Men*, betray the same bias. Willibald Pirckheimer, for example, rejected the allegation that Reuchlin had received a bribe for speaking up against the confiscation of Jewish books: “What would have impelled such a Christian man to commit so great a crime, deigning to prefer the friendship of the Jews to faith and truth? Love for the Jews? Then he would indeed deserve to be hated.” He repeated the allegation that Pfefferkorn was no sincere Christian and generalized that “converted Jews have as much in common with pious Christians as mice with cats.”⁶⁴ He went on to praise Reuchlin’s learning and endorsed his language studies. Theologians, he said, must acquire a knowledge of Hebrew because “all the mysteries of the Old and New

⁶¹ CWE 7:114, 215–115, 231 (no. 1033); CWE 6:368, 76–79 (no. 967).

⁶² *On the Eve of the Reformation: Letters of Obscure Men [Attributed to] Ulrich von Hutten, et al.*, trans. Francis Griffin Stokes (New York, 1964) 8, 28, 74, and 7.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 249.

⁶⁴ Rummel, *Case of Johann Reuchlin*, 137–38.

Testament are hidden in it.”⁶⁵ It is clear that Pirckheimer was not concerned with the rights of the Jews but with the issue of Hebrew studies and their application to Christian exegesis. Mutianus Rufus likewise supported Reuchlin as a champion of language studies, but clearly had reservations about the Kabbalah, that “shadowy discipline” (*umbratilis disciplina*). As for Hebrew books in general, the good had to be taken with the bad. One must tolerate the “sophistries of the [Jewish] people . . . or else one would have to leave behind the prophets as well.”⁶⁶ Erasmus seems to have had similar reservations. Writing to patrons at the papal court, he made no specific mention of Reuchlin’s Hebrew studies, but merely asked them to intercede for the scholar because of his language skills and “in the name of humanistic studies.”⁶⁷ German humanists, then, gave only qualified support to Reuchlin, that is, they supported him as a champion of language studies and a victim of academic censorship, the areas that concerned them most. There is no evidence that they were interested in the rights of Jews in Germany or had an appreciation of or concern for the fate of Jewish culture.

We now turn to Erasmus, widely regarded as the leader of humanistic studies in Germany during the Reformation era. His works, including literary and educational writings, scriptural studies, and theological polemics, were widely read and generated such a massive response that his role as an opinion-maker cannot be disregarded. References to Erasmus’ works and published correspondence are ubiquitous in the literature of the sixteenth century. What he had to say about Jews and Judaism is therefore of considerable significance for an examination of humanistic views on the subject.

Erasmus (c. 1466–1536), an Augustinian canon, studied for some time at the Collège de Montaigu but departed Paris without taking a degree.⁶⁸ In 1506, the University of Turin granted him a doctorate

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 139.

⁶⁶ *Der Briefwechsel des Mutianus Rufus*, ed. Carl Krause (Kassel, 1885), 220–21 (no. 171); cf. 273–74 (no. 218), where he is lamenting the suppression of Reuchlin’s defense.

⁶⁷ CWE 3:90, 113 (no. 333, to Cardinal Riario) and *ibid.*, 98, 191 (no. 334 to Cardinal Grimani).

⁶⁸ For a general account of Erasmus’ life and career and recent literature see Cornelis Augustijn, *Erasmus: His Life, Works, and Influence*, trans. J. C. Grayson (Toronto, 1991) and Erika Rummel, *Erasmus* (London, 2003). On Erasmus’s attitude toward Jews and Judaism, Shimon Markish, *Erasmus and the Jews*, trans. Anthony Olcott

in theology *per saltum*, that is, without subjecting him to the usual course of studies. Scholastic theologians did not recognize this degree as proper accreditation and denied that Erasmus had the necessary qualifications to edit or expound scriptural texts. No one could deny, however, that he was exceptionally well read in patristic exegesis and had an excellent command of Latin and Greek, accomplishments that stood him in good stead when he edited the New Testament. Admirers therefore hailed Erasmus not only as a champion of letters, but also as a theologian, and saw the New Testament edition (1516) as his magnum opus. Although he warmly recommended Hebrew studies and was instrumental in instituting Hebrew lectures at Leuven, Erasmus never mastered the Hebrew language himself⁶⁹ and had no interest in Jewish exegesis. In the *Ratio verae theologiae* (Method of True Theology, 1518), his curriculum proposal for theology students, he wrote: "Our first care must be to learn the three languages, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, for it is plain that the mystery of all Scripture is revealed in them . . . It is quite impossible to understand what is written, if you are ignorant of the language in which it is written."⁷⁰ A modicum of knowledge was sufficient, however. There was no need to become deeply involved in the study of Hebrew. Erasmus was therefore critical of Wolfgang Capito's pursuits: "I would wish you were more inclined to Greek rather than to that Hebrew of yours, with no desire to criticize it. I see the [Jews] as a nation full of the most tedious fabrications, who spread a kind of fog over everything, Talmud, Kabbalah, Tetragrammaton, *Gates of Light*, words, words, words. I would rather have Christ mixed up with Scotus than with that rubbish of theirs. Italy is full of Jews, in Spain there are hardly any Christians. I fear this may give that pestilence that was long ago suppressed a chance to rear its ugly head. If only the Church of the Christians did not attach so much

(Chicago, 1986); Hilmar Pabel, "Erasmus of Rotterdam and Judaism: A Reexamination in the Light of New Evidence," ARG 87 (1996): 9–37; Mario Turchetti, "Une question mal posée: Erasme et la tolerance. L'idée de sykkatabasis," BHR 53 (1991): 379–95; Cornelis Augustijn, "Erasmus und die Juden," *Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis* 60 (1980): 22–38.

⁶⁹ CWE 3 63, 31 (no. 324); *ibid.*, 191, 135 (no. 334). He relied on the help of Johannes Oecolampadius and Capito for questions involving Hebrew: *ibid.*, 200, 81–83 (no. 373) and *ibid.*, 263, 300–01 (no. 396).

⁷⁰ *Desiderius Erasmus: Ausgewählte Werke*, ed. Hajo Holborn (Munich, 1933), 151.

importance to the Old Testament! It is a thing of shadows, given us for a time; and now it is almost preferred to the literature of Christians."⁷¹ For his own commentaries on the Psalms, Erasmus relied on Christian sources. He eschewed Jewish commentaries as full of "smoke and old wives' tales" and expressed reservations about them "because of their hatred of Christ."⁷² Needless to say, he objected to Jewish exegetes reading certain passages in the Psalms as references to King David, and retained the interpretation of Christian exegetes regarding them as references to Christ. "I shall not waste any time in considering how individual parts of Psalm [1] may admit of a historical interpretation; let us investigate instead the extent to which it applies to our 'David,' that is, to Jesus Christ."⁷³

In his *Paraphrases* of the New Testament Erasmus frequently took the opportunity to expand on biblical passages with a view to disparaging the Jews. Thus he broadens Luke's reference to "the Pharisees and lawyers rejecting the counsel of God" (7:29) into a warning to "the Jew, [who] through arrogance and unbelief makes himself unworthy of God's proffered kindness." Similarly, he interprets the passage "whosoever exalts himself shall be abased, and he that humbles himself shall be exalted" (Luke 14:11) as a reference to Jews and Gentiles respectively. "The Gentiles acknowledging their humbleness, have been carried up to partnership in eternal glory. The Jews, who wanted to reign alone at this banquet, now have either no place or the last place."⁷⁴ In offering this exegesis Erasmus follows patristic commentaries. It is significant, however, that he chose Augustine's interpretation, which is hostile to the Jews, over an interpretation of Cyril, who rejected the application to Jews and read the passage as a rebuke of pride in general. Similarly, Erasmus interprets the story of Lazarus (Luke 16:20–31) and God's chastisement of the rich man as a silent rebuke "of the unbelief of the Jewish race, which, since it has not really believed in Moses and the prophets, even today decries Christ returned from the grave and sitting at the right hand of the Father—yet they would believe what has happened if they had believed in Moses and the prophets, who foretold that this would

⁷¹ CWE 5:347, 20–348, 29 (no. 798); sim. *ibid.*, 267, 153–55 (no. 541).

⁷² *Opera Omnia Desiderii Erasmi*, ordo 5, vol. 2 (Amsterdam, 1985), 104, 242–243.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 104:244–46.

⁷⁴ CWE 48:62–63.

come to pass.” In this case, as well, Erasmus did not offer a novel interpretation but repeated interpretations found in Ambrose, Bede, and Hugh of St. Cher. Nevertheless it is significant that he supported an interpretation hostile to Jews rather than drawing a more generally applicable moral from the passage.⁷⁵

Erasmus’ misgivings about Jews and Judaism are also apparent from his comments on the Reuchlin Affair. In spite of wholesome praise for Reuchlin in the colloquy “The Apotheosis of Reuchlin,” published as a kind of obituary for the scholar,⁷⁶ Erasmus’ support during his lifetime was lukewarm. He was not entirely pleased to see his letters to Reuchlin published in the *Letters of Famous Men*.⁷⁷ He explained that he did not like being labeled a “Reuchlinist” or being depicted as any man’s partisan: “I am no ‘Reuchlinist.’ I belong to no man’s party, and detest these factious labels. I am a Christian . . . between me and Reuchlin nothing has passed but the civilities of ordinary friendship, and to become his champion is a thing I have never undertaken.”⁷⁸ He expressed respect for Reuchlin’s scholarship and more particularly for his language skills,⁷⁹ but disapproved of his engagement with Jewish thought and deliberately dissociated himself from the study of the Kabbalah. “Personally I never felt the attraction of Kabbalah or Talmud,” he told Cardinal Wolsey. Similarly, he declared in a letter to the archbishop of Mainz: “Kabbalah and Talmud, whatever they may be, have never appealed to me.”⁸⁰ In a letter to the inquisitor Jacob Hoogstraten, he furthermore criticized the vehemence of the polemical exchanges between the protagonists in the Reuchlin Affair and specifically declined to judge the merits of his case. “I will not touch on the question whose case appeals to me more; this field has not been entrusted to me, and if

⁷⁵ Ibid., 104 and note.

⁷⁶ In the colloquy Erasmus depicts Reuchlin as a saint in heaven, to whom one admirer prays: “O sacred spirit, bless languages and those who study them.” (CWE 39:251).

⁷⁷ CWE letters 300, 324, 457, 471, and 713 were published in that collection without Erasmus’ authorization. (CWE 3:5–8, 62–63; 4: 55–57, 85–87; 5: 203–04). See his complaints in CWE 7:129, 6–7 (no. 1041).

⁷⁸ Ibid., 129, 15–20 (no. 1041). Erasmus voiced his dislike of the bitterness with which the polemic was conducted at CWE 7:46, 29–93 (Ep. 1006), and 6:368, 85 (no. 967).

⁷⁹ In one notable passage, however, he claimed that Capito was a better Hebraist than Reuchlin! CWE 3:294, 16 (no. 413).

⁸⁰ CWE 6:368, 79–80 (no. 967), and 7:110, 42–43 (no. 1033).

it were, I can imagine I should gladly refuse.”⁸¹ Nevertheless he ventured to say that he could see nothing in Reuchlin’s *Augenspiegel* that was harmful to the Christian religion. “The only point at issue in it is that the Jews should not be unfairly treated. What was the object of such a vigorous campaign to make the Jews unpopular? Which of us does not sufficiently detest that sort of men? If it is Christian to detest the Jews, on this count we are all good Christians, and to spare.”⁸² Erasmus, then, clearly recognized the original, judicial question, which was at the heart of Reuchlin’s vote against the confiscation of Jewish books. At the same time, he acknowledged that the affair had turned into a pitched battle between theologians and humanists, a development he deplored.

Although Erasmus acknowledges the endemic anti-Semitism of his time and appears to be critical of it in the letter to Hoogstraten, his own writings contain examples of flagrant Judaeophobia. The polemic surrounding Reuchlin was distasteful, he said, because “men who are genuine Christians [should] keep their claws off that Jewish scab.” Pfefferkorn, that “half-Jew Christian by himself has done more harm to Christendom than the whole cesspool of Jewry.” “I would rather, if the New Testament could remain inviolate, see the entire Old Testament done away with than see the peace of Christendom torn to ribbons for the sake of the Jewish scripture.”⁸³ In a letter to Pirckheimer, he used racial slurs against Pfefferkorn, “a Jew and a half, whom no kind of misdeed could make worse than he already is . . . that fellow chose to be baptized for no other reason than to be in a better position to destroy Christianity, and by mixing with us, infect the whole people with his Jewish poison . . . Now at last he is true to his race. They have slandered Christ, but Christ only. He raves against many upright men of proven virtue and learning. He could not have done a more welcome favor to his fellow Jews than pretending to be an apostate and betraying the Christian cause to the enemy.”⁸⁴ Erasmus’ virulent language was confined to one context, the Reuchlin Affair, and aimed at one individual, Johannes Pfefferkorn. He shows no personal animosity to other Jews, for

⁸¹ CWE 7:46, 81–83 (no. 1006).

⁸² *Ibid.*, 49, 145–150.

⁸³ CWE 5:183, 10–11 (no. 703), 5:204, 11–12 (no. 713), and 5:181, 39–42 (no. 701).

⁸⁴ CWE 5:167, 38–169, 58 (no. 694).

example, Matthaeus Adrianus and Paul Ricius, whose scholarship he praises.⁸⁵ This may count as a mitigating circumstance, but cannot disguise the fact that Erasmus, like many of his contemporaries, felt a visceral dislike for Jews. Humanistic studies failed to make them more humane or more tolerant.

In considering Erasmus' comments on Jews and Judaism, it is important, however, to distinguish between literal and metaphorical usage. He often refers to "Judaism" to denote a legalistic attitude associated in his time with the observance of Old Testament laws and opposed to the freedom of the New Testament. He explained that he "called 'Judaism' not Jewish impiety but prescriptions about external things, such as food, fasting, clothes, which to a certain degree resemble the rituals of the Jews."⁸⁶ Thus he said that monks adhering to ceremonies rather than embodying the spirit of monasticism "displayed more of Judaism than of Christianity." In the same context, he posed the rhetorical question: "Where has this new race of Jews sprung from?"⁸⁷ More generally, he expressed the wish "to arouse a world which allowed too much importance to Jewish ceremonial to a new zeal for the true religion of the gospel."⁸⁸ Such comments, which are frequent in Erasmus' devotional writings, reflect his Pauline theology and are meant to encourage Christians to rise above external rituals and develop an inner piety. In that context, Erasmus uses "Judaism" as a religious rather than an ethnic or racial concept.

The attitude toward Jews manifested by Reuchlin and Erasmus covers a spectrum of views, ranging from a genuine interest in and respect for the Hebrew tradition to mistrust and fear of Jews. This range is typical of the sentiments expressed by German humanists. Their comments make it apparent, moreover, that Christians and Jews continued to inhabit separate worlds and the humanistic ideal of a human fellowship remained a utopia. At the same time, we must not overlook the difficulty of interpreting comments meant for public consumption, which are never entirely free of posturing. Writers of the sixteenth century could not express sympathy for Jews or take

⁸⁵ On Adrianus see CWE 5:214, 13–14 (no. 722) and 5:155, 7–10 (no. 686); on Ricius, see above, note 21.

⁸⁶ *Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami Opera Omnia*, ed. J. Leclerc (Leiden, 1703–06), IX:889D.

⁸⁷ CWE 8:277, 242 (no. 1225) and *Praise of Folly*, CWE 27:132.

⁸⁸ CWE 8:150, 40–42 (no. 1183).

an interest in the Hebrew tradition without raising suspicions of Judaism and incurring the risk of being dragged before an inquisitorial court. The danger of paying even the most conventional compliment to a Jew is clearly illustrated in a remark by Pfefferkorn, who apostrophized Reuchlin's praise for his Jewish teacher: "If I had written that, I would probably be burned."⁸⁹

⁸⁹ Boecking, *Supplementum*, I:175. For Reuchlin's praise of his teacher, see above, note 50.

GERMAN THEOLOGIANS AND THE JEWS IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY*

Christopher Ocker

The violence suffered by Jews in fifteenth-century Germany followed a Western European pattern, up to a point. The attacks of the early crusades were followed by an elaboration of anti-Jewish folklore in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, with its fantasies of Jewish ritual murder and host desecration, by repeated outbreaks of popular violence, and by political strategies to exploit the Jewish minority. Hostility eventually culminated in royal decrees of expulsion (France 1182, 1306, 1322, and 1394; England, 1290; Spain 1492). Neither folklore nor the promise of royal confiscations of Jewish property were enough to justify complete exclusion of Jews from a nation. A sufficiently centralized authority was required, with something approaching a monopoly of rights over the Jewish minority. Before expulsions occurred, there existed an intellectual elite seriously engaged with Jewish scholarship and arguments. Jeremy Cohen, Gilbert Dahan, and Robert Chazan, in complementary ways, have described a broadening rationalization of Christian hostility toward Judaism from the twelfth to the early fourteenth centuries.¹ Disputations at Paris (1240) and Barcelona (1263) and the polemics of friar-theologians seemed to demonstrate the superiority of the Christian faith, which amplified the impression of Jewish stubbornness, when Jewish scholars resisted the theologians' strenuous efforts at accommodation—the use of rabbinic sources in Christian arguments. Cohen and Chazan have both emphasized how dialectical techniques of accommodation developed

* My thanks to Julie Dietman of the Hill Manuscript Microfilm Library for providing photocopies from their films of Dinkelsbühl's sermons, to Varda Koch Ocker for help with Hebrew texts, to Daniel Matt for advice on Peter Schwarz's abbreviation of the Tetragrammaton, and to Joshua Holo for a clarifying conversation.

¹ Gilbert Dahan, *Les intellectuels chrétiens et les juifs au moyen âge* (Paris, 1990). Jeremy Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews: the Evolution of Medieval Anti-Judaism* (Ithaca, 1982). Robert Chazan, *Daggers of Faith* (Berkeley, 1989). Jeremy Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law: the Idea of the Jew in Medieval Christianity* (Berkeley, 1999).

by thirteenth-century theologians stood at the core of intensifying intellectual hostility toward Jews and Judaism.

Medieval Germany never reached the stage of complete removal of Jews from society, although enmity toward Jews was intense there. Anti-Jewish folklore often inspired popular violence in German-speaking towns.² Pogroms, associated with accusations of ritual murder and host desecration, time and again destroyed a city's Jewry and that of neighboring places within a city's economic and social orbit, for example at Bacharach (1287), Deggendorf (1337), and Pulkau (1338). The most widespread violence before the Black Death, the "Rindfleisch" rebellion of 1298 and the "Armleder" revolt of 1336–38, began as acts of personal vengeance, but host desecration and ritual murder stories were quickly attached to rehearsals of the events. From Bacharach to Armleder, between 21 and 129 communities were affected, beyond the city where each pogrom began. The spread of violence and expulsions increased exponentially at the Black Death in 1349, some of it organized by rulers.³ The number of German Jewish communities had expanded dramatically during the first half of the fourteenth century, and after this disaster the communities recovered, only to be subject to a new wave of expulsions after 1400.⁴ The fifteenth century, a period of "forced mobility" (Michael Toch), transformed German Jewry. German Jewry had been almost exclusively urban. By 1523 it was predominantly rural.

In England, France, and Spain the open practice of Judaism ended altogether. The fact can be attributed to monarchy, entirely lacking

² For this and the following, see Michael Toch, "The Formation of a Diaspora: the Settlement of Jews in the Medieval German Reich," *Aschkenas* 7 (1997): 55–78; idem, "Siedlungsstruktur der Juden Mitteleuropas im Wandel vom Mittelalter zur Neuzeit," in *Juden in der christlichen Umwelt während des späten Mittelalters* ed. Alfred Haverkamp and Franz-Josef Ziwe (Berlin, 1992), 29–39 [both repr. in Toch, *Peasants and Jews in Medieval Germany* (Aldershot, 2003)]; Alfred Haverkamp, "Die Judenverfolgungen zur Zeit des Schwarzen Todes im Gesellschaftsgefüge deutscher Städte," in *Zur Geschichte der Juden im Deutschland des späten Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Alfred Haverkamp (Stuttgart, 1981), 27–93; Dean Phillip Bell, *Sacred Communities: Jewish and Christian Identities in Fifteenth-Century Germany* (Leiden, 2001), 99–125; and especially Miri Rubin, *Gentile Tales: The Narrative Assault on Late Medieval Jews* (New Haven, 1999), 40–69.

³ Graus, *Pest-Geißler-Judenmorde*, 180, 216–18, and 224 n. 61. See also GJ III, 3:1781 and 1788 with n. 18, which to Graus adds the role of lordship in organizing persecution in Bavaria in 1349.

⁴ For changes in settlement patterns, see Toch in note 2, above. For the Rindfleisch and Armleder revolts and folklore, see Rubin in note 2, above.

in late medieval Germany, as a centralized authority with an emerging monopoly of rights over Jews. The competition of princes, cities, and the Holy Roman Emperor, all of whom claimed Jews as subjects, was such that no single authority could prevail over the others in the protection, exploitation, or humiliation of Jews.⁵ The same triangulation would soon prevent the suppression of the heresy of Martin Luther. Yet the list of German princes who experimented with expulsion as state policy is long: the elector Palatine (1390), the archbishop of Trier (1419), the archduke of Austria (1420–21), the bishop of Bamberg (1422 and c. 1485), the bishop of Würzburg (1422), the margrave of Brandenburg-Ansbach-Kulmbach (1422 and 1489), the archbishop of Mainz (1429), the duke of Saxony (1430), the duke of Bavaria (c. 1438 and 1442), the duke of Bavaria-Landshut (1450), the Bohemian king (for the duchy of Silesia, 1453), the bishop of Breslau and duke of Schweidnitz-Jauer (1453), the duke of Liegnitz-Brieg (1453), the bishop of Hildesheim (1457), the duke of Berg (1461 and 1476), the duchess of Jülich (1461), the count of Tirol (1475 or 1476), the duke of Lorraine (1477), the archbishop of Cologne (c. 1480/87), the Landgrave of Hesse (for the county of Katzenelnbogen, 1484), the count of Oettingen (1488), the dukes of Mecklenburg (1492), the count of Württemberg (1492/98), the duke of Pomerania (1492), the archbishop of Magdeburg and administrator of Halberstadt (1493), the bishop of Naumburg (1494), the duke of Carinthia (1496), the count of Isenburg-Büdingen (1497), and the archbishop of Salzburg (1498).⁶ Many of these attempts involved short-term imprisonments

⁵ A singular imperial authority over Jews as “serfs of the chamber” was seldom mentioned in German law books (it only appears in the *Schwabenspiegel*), although it was frequently mentioned in imperial sources. Legal scholars taught that Jews stood directly under the dominion of emperor, kings, or princes. The canon-law notion of Jewish servitude as a consequence of deicide also exerted little influence. Christine Magin, “Wie es umb der iuden recht stet.” *Der Status der Juden in spätmittelalterlichen deutschen Rechtsbüchern* (Göttingen, 1999), 117–26. For the competition of princely, imperial, and urban claims in the fourteenth century see Eric Zimmer, *Jewish Synods in Germany During the Late Middle Ages (1286–1603)* (New York, 1978), 42. Compare France, where the idea of servitude indicated not servitude but royal authority. Gavin Langmuir, *Toward a Definition of Antisemitism*, (Berkeley, 1990), chs. 6 and 7. For political strategies, see William Chester Jordan, *The French Monarchy and the Jews* (Philadelphia, 1989). For older literature emphasizing the failure of princes and emperors to protect Jews in general, see Shlomo Eidelberg, *Medieval Ashkenazic History: Studies on German Jewry in the Middle Ages* (Brooklyn, 1999), 94 with n. 4.

⁶ This list excludes expulsions by urban initiative that a territorial ruler permitted, as for example happened frequently in fifteenth-century Bohemian towns. See GJ

and evictions, at which rulers confiscated properties, levied special fines, and cancelled debts owed to Jews. Several cases took place during the Hussite war and occasioned the confiscation of Jewish property and the cancellation of payments owed by fighting nobility (for example, Austria, Bamberg, Würzburg, Brandenburg-Ansbach-Kulmbach, and the territory of the archbishop of Mainz).⁷ We do not always know whether or to what extent an expulsion order was implemented (for example, Bamberg and Berg). Some cases involved accusations of host desecration or ritual murder (for example, Austria, Schweidnitz-Jauer, Mecklenburg, and Magdeburg), as was true in most of the fifteenth-century urban expulsions, for example, Bacharach (1390), Cologne (1424), Bern (1427), Eger (1430 and 1480), Berlin (1446), Erfurt (1453), Passau (1478), and Brünn (1454): a complete list would be too long to be instructive, beyond the obvious point that such actions were widespread.⁸ Sometimes host desecration was named as the ground for expulsion after proceedings began (Austria). Often an expulsion's benefit was said to be the end of Jewish money-lending.

III, 2 and GJ III, 3: 1761, 1762, 1786–87, 1799, 1813, 1827–28, 1876, 1880, 1883, 1886, 1890, 1893, 1905, 1911–12 with n. 55, 1927–28, 1942, 1955, 1970–72, 1986–87, 2002–03, 2007–08, 2032, 2041, and 2076. Eric Zimmer, *Harmony and Discord: An Analysis of the Decline of Jewish Self-Government in Fifteenth Century Central Europe* (New York, 1970), 157–58. See also Rubin, *Gentile Tales*, 116–19, 129–31, 145–54, 173–81, and 190–95. Christopher Ocker, “Contempt for Friars and Contempt for Jews in Late Medieval Germany,” *Friars and Jews in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. Steven J. McMichael and Susan E. Myers (Leiden, 2004), 123–25 with notes 19 and 21 and the literature noted there, 136–37, 140–41, and 143. Christopher Ocker, “Ritual Murder and the Subjectivity of Christ: A Choice in Medieval Christianity,” *HTR* 91 (1998): 153–92, esp. 401. Ingo Ulpts, *Die Bettelorden in Mecklenburg: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Franziskaner, Klarissen, Dominikaner und Augustiner-Eremiten im Mittelalter* (Werl, 1995), 134–35.

⁷ To these cases must be added the brief imprisonment of Regensburg Jews by the duke of Bavaria-Straubing in 1421, at which time he levied special taxes. GJ III 3:1805.

⁸ See these cities in GJ III, parts 1–2, and consider Bell, *Sacred Communities*, 118–120 and 256. For Jewish credit, see Michael Toch, “‘Umb gemeyns nutz und nottdurfft willen:’ Obrigkeitliches und jurisdiktionelles Denken bei der Austreibung der Nürnberger Juden 1498/99,” *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung* 11 (1984): 1–21, and “Jüdische Geldleihe im Mittelalter,” *Geschichte und Kultur der Juden in Bayern*, ed. Manfred Treml and Josef Kirmeier (Munich, 1988), 85–94 (both repr. in Toch, *Peasants and Jews in Medieval Germany*). In Italy, too, the Christian objection involved Jewish credit to small borrowers. See Ariel Toaff, “Jews, Franciscans, and the First *Monti di pietà* in Italy (1462–1500),” in *Friars and Jews in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, 240–53.

In many cities, Jewish communities were only reestablished in the eighteenth or nineteenth century. But however devastating these trends for individual communities, Jews continued to live in the broad region of German language and culture through the early modern period.

What was the role of the German clergy in these trends? This question is surprisingly difficult to answer. It appears that only one city council mentioned, among the grounds for expulsion, allegations made about Jews from city pulpits (Augsburg 1438/40).⁹ At present, I know of only three instances in which clergy participated in the formal demonstration of Jewish religious inferiority by compulsory sermons or religious disputation—the expulsion from Austria (1420) and attempts to expel at Regensburg (1475) and at Brühl and Deutz (c. 1480–87).¹⁰ On the other hand, the media of anti-Jewish folklore expanded in the fifteenth century and helped justify if not facilitate popular violence and official actions against Jews.¹¹ To what extent did intellectuals rationalize Christian enmity beyond the specious claims of folklore? What was the place of rationalization in the frustrated but unrelenting effort to reshape German society without Jews? Answers to these questions may help us understand the anatomy of prejudice in Central Europe and the relation of learned discourse to religious folklore. A preliminary answer may be suggested by two preachers of compulsory sermons: Nicholas of Dinkelsbühl at Vienna and Peter Schwarz at Regensburg.

Nicholas of Dinkelsbühl

Nicholas of Dinkelsbühl preached his sermons in Advent 1420, during the early Hussite war, which for Austria's Jews culminated two years of growing tension.¹² Suspicions of Jews had mounted since

⁹ GJ III, 1:49.

¹⁰ Austria and Regensburg will be treated at length below. For Brühl and Deutz, in the territory of the archbishop of Cologne, GJ III, 3:1905 and 1911–12 with n. 55 (although the expulsion seems partial and small, it appears to have prompted some conversions to Christianity).

¹¹ Ocker, "Contempt for Friars and Contempt for Jews," 133–39, Bell, *Sacred Communities*, 99–113, and Rubin's important study, *Gentile Tales*.

¹² The date is indicated in the text of the first sermon, Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek 4354, f. 10r, near its beginning, where in a superscript addition

1419, when the emperor increased pressure on the Bohemian king Wenceslas, who tried to forestall an imperial invasion, and the Hussite movement became increasingly radical.¹³ That year, Sigismund's close ally, the young duke of Austria Albrecht V, whose territory bordered the troubled land, heard reports that Jews were supporting Hussite preparations for battle.¹⁴ Theologians of the University of Vienna also worried over heresy, Jewish usury, and Jewish-Hussite conspiracy. The fact that other lenders were eclipsing Jewish credit in recent years only increased Jewish vulnerability, for it diminished their fiscal usefulness (the wealth of the Austrian Jewish community was shrinking).¹⁵ Once the pope formally declared the crusade (March 1420), the duke (23 May 1420) imprisoned all the Jews of his realm.¹⁶ On 23 June 1420, he exiled some or all of the poorer Jews, ceremoniously set adrift by threes or fours on rudderless boats into the eastward current of the Danube.¹⁷ The rest were kept in custody.

The war started badly that summer. The armies of Sigismund secured Prague's cathedral long enough for his coronation as Bohemian king, but the crusade otherwise collapsed.¹⁸ In November, the Hussites took the Vyšerad, a fortress just outside Prague's walls, the last stand of Sigismund's supporters at Prague. The loss boded a long and tedious conflict.¹⁹ The first months of the imperial campaign had only galvanized the Hussite revolt as a national movement.

According to a Latin account, a rumor of Jewish host desecra-

that runs into the margin Dinkelsbühl observes that the first advent of Christ occurred *ante 1420 annos*.

¹³ Howard Kaminsky, *A History of the Hussite Revolution* (Berkeley, 1967), 265–68.

¹⁴ Klaus Lohrmann, *Judenrecht und Judenpolitik im mittelalterlichen Österreich* (Vienna, 1990), 298–309, provides the best reconstruction of the following events from the Latin chronicles, supplemented with the Viennese *Judenbuch der Scheffstrasse*. See also GJ III, 3:1986–88 and 1991 with n. 82. For the accusation of Jewish-Hussite conspiracy, see Israel Jacob Yuval, “Juden, Hussiten und Deutsche nach einer hebräischen Chronik,” in *Juden in der christlichen Umwelt während des späten Mittelalters*, 59–102, and Michael H. Shank, “Unless You Believe, You Shall Not Understand.” *Logic, University and Society in Late Medieval Vienna* (Princeton, 1988), 170–200, here at 188–89. The following account differs from Shank in a few particulars, on the basis of Lohrmann, the *Germania Judaica*, the rabbinic responsa noted below, and my reading in Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek 4353 and 4354.

¹⁵ Lohrmann, *Judenrecht und Judenpolitik*, 287–98.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 308.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 303. GJ III, 3:1986.

¹⁸ Thomas Fudge, *The Magnificent Ride: the First Reformation in Hussite Bohemia* (Aldershot, 1998), 98.

¹⁹ Kaminsky, *History of the Hussite Revolution*, 410.

tion, which was alleged to have occurred that Spring in Enns, a city upstream on the Danube, spread after the archduke of Austria's return from the Vyšerad debacle in November.²⁰ The allegation allowed or inspired the archduke to increase pressure on his imprisoned Jews.²¹ There were tortures in connection with the investigation of the Enns affair and in order to extract information about hidden Jewish stores. Jewish children were separated from their parents, some given to monasteries and baptized (more on this below). Prisoners resorted to suicide, and a significant number converted, at least for a time.²² The imprisonment finally culminated on 12 March 1421 with the burning of approximately 300 Jews. A ducal edict of permanent expulsion followed on 21 March 1421. The expulsion was followed by an imperial confirmation of Albrecht's rights over Jews (24 March), although Sigismund also took Austrian refugees under his protection.²³ Eighteen days after the expulsion, the theologians of the university commissioned Nicholas of Dinkelsbühl with a colleague to request Hebrew books from the duke's spoils for the university.²⁴

The conversions were provoked by the trauma of imprisonment, described by two contemporary rabbis soon after the event. Rabbi Israel ben Pethahiah Isserlein fled Vienna at or after the persecution (it took the life of his mother and his uncle, Rabbi Aaron Blümlein, head of a Vienna yeshiva). He settled in Marburg, in Styria, which was not affected by Albrecht's decree.²⁵ He later returned

²⁰ Thomas Ebendorfer, *Chronica Austriae*, ed. A. Lhotsky, MGH *Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum*, n.s. 13 (Berlin, 1967), 370, lines 12–13.

²¹ The *Judenbuch der Scheffstraße* says that the tortures began after the duke's return from the battle in Bohemia. This may refer to his return from the summer campaign, as Lohrmann believed, or the November campaign. Lohrmann, *Judenrecht und Judenpolitik*, 302. Lohrmann points out that the host desecration is the only possible pretext for the duke's violence (*ibid.*, 303). If the duke only took notice of reports of the host desecration after returning from Bohemia in November, then the tortures began in late November.

²² Lohrmann, *Judenrecht und Judenpolitik*, 298–309, is the best account. Lohrmann points out that Latin chronicles associating the imprisonment with the Enns allegation were written after the Enns allegation was well known. *Ibid.*, 302.

²³ *Ibid.*, 309. *Regesta imperii*, ed. J. F. Böhmer, 14 vols. (Mainz, 2002), 11/1, no. 4486, <http://regesta-imperii.uni-giessen.de/>. This was not imperial confirmation of Jewish privileges in Austria. Compare Eidelberg, *Medieval Ashkenazic History*, 99.

²⁴ Shank, *Unless You Believe*, 197.

²⁵ Shlomo Spitzer, *Bne Chet: Die österreichischen Juden im Mittelalter* (Vienna, 1997), 181–86.

to Vienna Neustadt, which since 1379 had been placed under Steiermark and thus also remained outside the expulsion decree. After the persecution of 1420/21, Vienna Neustadt emerged as the center of Austrian Jewry.²⁶ Isserlein headed a yeshiva there. But probably while he still lived in Marburg, he handled questions of Jewish marriage law that the persecution raised.

The law presupposed that a married woman secluded with a man other than her husband was an adultress and as such forbidden to her husband. But the persecution posed an exception. Isserlein tells us,

It is well known [literally, a revealed and known fact in this world] with regard to the imprisonment and persecution of Austria that happened on 10 Sivan 180 [= 1 June 1420] to 9 Nisan 181 [= 21 March 1421], there were women who were held hostage alone for several days, because they distributed them in houses here and there, and they separated them so that they would be more easily tempted to stray from the way. Some of them in this world strayed from the way with their husbands, some without husbands altogether or about a month, more or less, before their husbands. Some of them returned at once to the true law when they were able to escape. Some stayed without their husbands a certain time or longer, and some escaped without converting, and this fact came before all the great of the generation who lived in those days, and they were all permitted [i.e. to resume sexual relations with their husbands].²⁷

Isserlein then further explains the liberal position taken by the Jewish scholars (“the great of the generation”) on the point of Jewish law,

²⁶ Vienna’s Old City and Krems ceased to be centers of Jewish learning after 1420. See Spitzer, *Bne Chet*, 180.

²⁷ I thank Varda Koch Ocker for the translation. Israel ben Pethahiah Isserlein, *Terumat ha-deshen, she’elot u-teshuvot* (New York, 1957), no. 241:

עוברא מנולה ומפורסמת בעו"ה בתפיסה ובנזירה אושטרייך שדיתה ביומי סיון שנת ק"ף לפרט עד קפ"א פ' ניסן נמצאו נששים שהיו שביות יחידות כמה ימים כי חלקום בבתיים אנה אנה והפידום בשביל שהיו נזדים להתפתות ולסור מן הדרך יש מהן בעו"ה סרו מן הדרך עם בעליהן יש בלא בעליהן כלל או קודם בעליהן כמו חדש או יותר או פחות יש מהן שהורו מיד לדת האמת כאשר מצאו יד לברות יש ששהו בלא בעליהן כמו תקופה ויותר ויש שברחו בלא המרה ואחא ההוא עוברא לפני כל גדולי הדור שהיו בימים ההם והותרו כולם.

Part of the text is quoted by Eidelberg, *Medieval Ashkenazic History*, 98 n. 17, who takes *gezerat*, “and with regard to the *gezerat*,” to refer to the decree of expulsion. The term *gezerah* may mean both decree and persecution. If it refers to an official order, it must be the order to imprison the Jews: there is no mention of expulsion in this text. Thomas Ebendorfer also noted that among the baptized Jews, some persisted in the new religion and others returned to the old faith, while some in despair killed themselves and their children. *Cronica Austriae*, 371 lines 8–10. The persecution is known as the Vienna Geserah (the aforementioned Hebrew term transliterated with German pronunciation).

whether the women so placed in gentile homes could resume marital relations with their Jewish spouses. He does not tell us the exact locale of the imprisonment or whose houses were used (should we assume noble houses or include monasteries?). In another place, Isserlein tells us that the decision to allow the women to return to their husbands was based on the testimony of Gentiles and women who had been forcibly converted.²⁸

Rabbi Jacob Molin of Mainz, who had studied in a Vienna Neustadt yeshiva in 1415 or 1416, treated the same problem, presumably at Mainz shortly after the persecution, in answer to a question posed by Rabbi Abraham bar Eliahu Katz of Halle.²⁹ He also noted that women were separated from their husbands and placed alone in gentile homes for some days to be tormented to the point of conversion, that some succumbed and others resisted, and some of those who succumbed returned quickly to Judaism. Abraham believed, too, that the women should be allowed to return to their husbands, except those whose husbands were of priestly origin (higher standards of observance applied to them). Jacob's discussion of the legal problem adds one piece of new information, that the pope sent letters to the duke, thanks to the efforts of Italian Jews.³⁰ This likely refers to a papal order of 1 January 1421 demanding that Jewish children, baptized against the will of their parents in "parts of Germany," be returned to their parents.³¹

The theologians of the university must have realized that these conversions were problematic, however prone they were to see God's hand in such horrid events (it happened *domino operante*).³² Suspicion of the conversions, as much as enmity toward Jews, may have shaped the sermons of the Viennese professor Nicholas of Dinkelsbühl, which

²⁸ Israel ben Pethahiah Isserlein, *Terumat ha-deschen, pesa'qim u-ketavim*, (printed with Isserlein's previously cited work), no. 34. My thanks to Varda Koch Ocker for bringing this to my attention.

²⁹ For Abraham bar Eliahu Katz, who we know was in Halle in 1429 and 1430, see GJ III, 1:500–01. For Molin's connection with Vienna, Spitzer, *Bne Chet*, 172. Rabbi Yaacov Molin-Maharil, *She'elot u-teshuvot Maharil*, ed. Yitzchok Satz (Jerusalem, 1979), no. 72. I owe a summary of the text to Varda Koch Ocker.

³⁰ Molin, *She'elot u-teshuvot*, no. 72, at notes 27 and 28: ... אחריו שנתנו לו ... כתבי האפיפיור.

³¹ Shlomo Simonsohn, *The Apostolic See and the Jews*, 8 vols. (Toronto, 1988), 2:695–97 no. 606. Pope Martin V also referred to such conversions in the territory of the dukes of Venice. The text mentions a supplication, but not the supplicant.

³² Note 38, below.

he preached to the Jews of Vienna in Advent 1420, just after the archduke's return from Bohemia.³³ A prominent theologian at court, Dinkelsbühl was a member of the Viennese commission that charged Jan Hus' associate, Jerome of Prague, with heresy in 1410. He went to the Council of Constance as the duke's delegate, where he sat on the commission investigating Jerome again in 1415–16, which led to Jerome's execution.³⁴ Jewish attendance at Dinkelsbühl's sermons was guaranteed by the fact that they were still under arrest, making this one of very few instances of compulsory sermons known for the fifteenth-century Empire.³⁵ May we count them among the later coercions the duke employed?³⁶ Nicholas suggests his purpose in a note tipped into another collection of Advent sermons. The note appends arguments against a Jewish claim that Jesus performed miracles by magic: "to these, the savior's arguments, may now be added others against contemporary Jews," the note begins.³⁷ In the middle of his ninth point, he placed this hurried observation:

Such arguments are sort of vulgar, against the vulgar and unknowing Jews, and the work [the sermons] is not for them as [it would be] for confirmation of the faithful, but for the refutation of the chief Jews and perhaps for some information to the newly converted, that they might more fully recover from the idiocies in which they were submerged and drenched before their conversion in as great a multitude as happened according to bail-payment in this city of Vienna, by God's agency, in the year 1420.³⁸

³³ Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek 4354, ff. 10r–9r–19r. The sermons circulated in at least 128 additional manuscripts and one incunabulum edition. Alois Madre, *Nikolaus von Dinkelsbühl: Leben und Schriften* (Münster, 1965), 127–33 and 153–54. Consider also Rubin, *Gentile Tales*, 116–19. Madre made the sinister claim that the sermons failed to have the desired effect because of "Jewish stubbornness." He provides the questions with incipits and explicits, and he notes the order in which the folios must be read (*Nikolaus von Dinkelsbühl*, 130–33). Dinkelsbühl's additions are made in the margins and on tipped-in pages of smaller size, marked with unique signs to indicate insertion points. For compulsory sermons, see Ocker, "Contempt for Friars," 124.

³⁴ Shank, *Unless You Believe*, 178 and 183. Madre, *Nikolaus von Dinkelsbühl*, 27. The Constance theological commission was formed after Jerome's recantation at the Council.

³⁵ Shank *Unless You Believe*, 192, only notes that his audience "included several Jews" and does not describe the imprisonment.

³⁶ See Madre, *Nikolaus von Dinkelsbühl*, 128–30 and 154.

³⁷ Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek 4353, f. 42bis r–v (between ff. 42–43), here f. 42bis r: "Ad illa saluatoris argumenta possunt nunc addi alique (*ms* aliqua) contra presentes judeos et sextum sit." He in fact added ten arguments.

³⁸ This note appears in one of the two collections of sermons in autograph,

The phrase I have italicized is then corrected to read “as converted recently.” The meaning of his reference to bail payment (*de vadi*) is unclear. But another point seems unambiguous, that arguments *might* confirm the conversions. Dinkelsbühl’s reluctance is consistent with his fideism,³⁹ but one should not make too much of it. His uncertainty also shows that his purpose was more academic than missionary, not merely because these points were unprovable by “vulgar arguments,” but because his failure to engage the “great Jews”—present before him, imprisoned, resisting conversion, or susceptible to conversion by fear—was so glaring.

He preached in Latin. He made no apparent effort to accommodate Jewish thinking beyond the occasional reference to Aramaic translations (in the manner of Nicholas of Lyra). His biblical proofs only confirmed Christian common places, which he could select and adapt from any number of polemical treatises written by theologians two hundred years before and widely available, for example, the *Epistola ad Rabbi Isaacum* by the Dominican Alphonsus Bonihominis, the *Questio de adventu Christi* and the *Responsio ad quendam Iudeum* of the Franciscan Nicholas of Lyra, and the *Pharetra fidei contra Judeos*

Vienna Österreichische Nationalbibliothek 4353, f. 42bis r (between ff. 42–43) “Talia argumenta sunt quasi vulgaria contra vulgares et ignaros Iudaeos, nec opus est eis ut pro fidelium confirmatione, sed pro grossorum judeorum confutatione, et forte pro noviter conversorum aliquali informatione, ut plenius respiscant a fatuitatibus quibus immersi erant et imbuti ante eorum conversionem in tanta multitudine *quanta de vadi factum est* [the italicized words are corrected by the same hand in subscript to say *in quanta noviter conversi sunt*] in hac civitate Wiennensi, domino operante, de anno domini 1420.” Compare Madre, *Nikolaus von Dinkelsbühl*, 128–29, who quotes this passage but skips the words “grossorum judeorum confutatione, et forte pro,” neglects to mention the correction, and gives the correction as the text. The compulsory sermons appear in the first autograph collection Vienna Österreichische Nationalbibliothek 4354, ff. 9r–19r. It is possible that the note was incorrectly tipped into the second collection. The phrase “tanta multitudine quanta de vadi factum est” is peculiar and obscure. Dinkelsbühl may have made the correction on that account.

³⁹ Shank, *Unless You Believe*, 192–93, links his appeal to faith to Heinrich of Langenstein’s changing position on paralogisms. The quotation appears at the end of Dinkelsbühl’s treatment of question 2, which begins on f. 10v, continues at the top of 11r, includes additional text from 11v, then concludes on 11r. The question begins “Quis sit benedictus, qui sic venit in nomine Domini. Respondetur, quod ipse est dei filius unus deo patri sanctoque et coeterno spiritui coequalis et consubstantialis creator celi et terre.” The text then treats the consubstantiality of the first and second persons of the Trinity and the union of divine and human natures in Christ. It concludes with the passage quoted and translated by Shank, loc. cit.

super Talmuth, based on translated excerpts of the Talmud made by the converted Jew Thibald de Sézanne for the famous Paris disputation of 1240.⁴⁰ The arguments are grouped under nine questions which treat Jewish objections to the Incarnation and the indignity of God's human birth, themes familiar from Jewish polemical literature and common in Christian counter-arguments since the twelfth century.⁴¹ He is somewhat famous for having argued, in these sermons, that Jews who converted tenuously should not wait for logical demonstrations to confirm their faith, *nisi credideritis, non intelligetis* (unless you believe, you will not understand. Isa. 7:9).⁴² Beyond his apparent debt to a Viennese theological tradition—Heinrich of Langenstein's doubts, late in life, about the logical demonstration of certain points of revelation—his true audience, the university, may well have remembered the famous paraphrase of this same biblical verse by St. Anselm: *credo, ut intelligam* (I believe that I might understand).⁴³ Dinkelsbühl showed no interest in the Talmud, the Midrash, or Jewish commentary on the Bible—sources known to frame Jewish thinking.⁴⁴ The Jews merely contributed to the sermons' staging.

Dinkelsbühl *intended* to avoid Jewish thinking. He believed that disputation was dangerous, or so he later said in Bible lectures five

⁴⁰ Ocker, "Contempt for Friars," 133. For a summary of Lyra's *Questio*, which circulated with early editions of his *Postilla litteralis* and independently, Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews*, 180–91, and Deena Copeland Klepper, "Nicholas of Lyra's *Questio de adventu Christi* and the Franciscan Encounter with Jewish Tradition in the Middle Ages" (PhD diss., Northwestern University, 1995). For the *Pharetra*, Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews*, 78 and Dahan, *Les intellectuels*, 250 and Gilbert Dahan, *The Christian Polemic against the Jews in the Middle Ages* trans. J. Gladding (Notre Dame, 1998), 33–4, 76, 84, and 92. For Alphonsus Bonihominis, see Dahan, *Les intellectuels*, 265.

⁴¹ The questions are provided by Madre, *Nikolaus von Dinkelsbühl*, 131–32: 1) whether "the blessed one who comes in the name of the Lord" (Matt. 21:9) has come; 2) who "the blessed one who comes in the name of the Lord" might be; 3) the divinity of Christ; 4) the cause of Jewish unbelief, in the face of the Old Law's clear proofs of Catholic truth; 5) why the incarnation occurred; 6) whether God could save the world apart from the incarnation; 7) why God wanted to be made man and conceived of the blessed virgin; 8) whether Mary was and remained a virgin; 9) why he wanted to be born a poor boy and experience the annoyances of childhood, when he could have rather appeared formed and honored (*decens et honorificum*).

⁴² Note 39, above.

⁴³ Anselm, *Proslogion* i.

⁴⁴ Note 93, below.

years after the compulsory sermons.⁴⁵ There he interposed two questions on the necessity of the incarnation and the limits of public disputations with Jews, heretics, and pagans. Disputation could only have the goal of enticing and pushing Jews away from the unbelievers who want to corrupt their faith, *sunt sollicitati vel pulsati ab infidelibus, puta Judeis vel hereticis seu paganis intendentibus corrumpere in eis fidem*.⁴⁶ But it was a strange seduction, remarkably disengaged from a Jewish audience. Although his Advent sermons are not known to contain any reference to the folkloric accusations lately appearing at Enns, the theologian's testimony seems complicit with the duke's actions, insofar as this: Dinkelsbühl showed that there was no acceptable reason for Jews to resist conversion, whether he really communicated with them or not.⁴⁷ Even so, his views fall short of a justification for the destruction of the Jewish community. It was the story of host desecration at Enns that allowed the duke's catastrophic treatment of "his" Jews.

⁴⁵ He also added quodlibetal questions to the lectures which treat the New Testament problem of circumcising the baptized (Paul submitted a Christian, his disciple Timothy, to circumcision but denied the necessity of circumcision) and the doctrine that the validity of Mosaic Law ended after the advent of Christ. See Rudolf Damerau, *Der Galaterbriefkommentar des Nikolaus von Dinkelsbühl* (Giessen, 1968), x for the date, xxix–xxxi and questions 2, 5, 6, 7, and 8.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 10–14, 27–29, 28 for the quotation.

⁴⁷ The sermons have yet to be studied carefully, so this conclusion remains hypothetical. Consider the beginning of q. 4, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 4354 f. 11bis: "Est questio quarta, que sit causa perfidie iudaice, cum tamen scripture veteris testamenti, quas etiam ipsi recipiunt, tam clare ueritatibus catholicis testificantur. Et maxime de Christi Jesu aduentu et persona causa [*sup add et*] modo nascendi, conuersandi, moriendi, resurgendi, ad celos ascendi, et legem suam publicandi clarissime attestantur mones scripture legis et prophetarum, que de messia predictae fuerit et omnes figure legales et hystoriales, quas omnes addicere esset nimis longum." In addition to the witness of the Old Testament to Jesus Christ, Christ also fulfills gentile prophecy, such as Sybilline oracles and the dream of Scipio, which also extends the correlation of New Testament with Jewish history to the history of other nations. Dinkelsbühl quotes the three reasons for Jewish resistance named by Nicholas of Lyra: the fear of penury, which he alleges stems from Jewish cupidity; the fear of their own malediction in synagogues after conversion; a carnal understanding of the Eucharist and a belief that the adoration of it is idolatry (for Lyra, see Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews*, 185). Dinkelsbühl then presents biblical texts as evidence of two comings of the Messiah (f. 11r–v) and treats anonymous Jewish arguments against the Christian interpretation of them (f. 12r–v). The arguments are likely drawn from Lyra. Consider Deana Copeland Klepper, "Nicholas of Lyra's *Questio de aduentu Christi*." I see nothing to suggest that Dinkelsbühl had Yom Tov Lipmann's *Sefer ha-Nizzahon*, recently produced at Prague, in mind. For Lipmann, see Peter Browe, *Die Judenmission in Mittelalter und die Päpste* (Rome, 1942), 68–69; Schreckenber, *Adversos-Judaeos-Texte*, 3: 424–25; and GJ III, 2:1146 no. 293.

Peter Schwarz

In 1474, soon after Easter (it fell on 10 April), a Dominican *lector* at the University of Ingolstadt named Peter Schwarz preached a series of open-air sermons against Judaism in the city of Regensburg. Duke Ludwig IX “the Rich” of Bavaria-Landshut instructed the bishop, Heinrich IV of Abensberg, to order Jews to attend, for this Schwarz was prepared to preach “in Hebrew . . . in the hope to do the Jewish community good by his sermon.”⁴⁸ The same letter was sent to Regensburg’s city council.⁴⁹ By Peter’s testimony, the bishop was pleased with his performance:

You, prince[-bishop], urgently asked that I depict by pen to everlasting memory those things that I declared from the books of the Jews in the Hebrew, Latin, and German languages in the season of Easter in the open air from a distinguished pulpit to the honor of the most holy Trinity and its indivisible unity and to the honor of the glorious mother of our Lord Jesus Christ the true Messiah, and to the curse of Jewish unbelief, in the celebrated city of Regensburg, in your diocese, by your most reverend paternity’s assistance with an illustrious assembly of prelates, before the city’s so very judicious councilmen, before a countless number of the most faithful people of both genders, before the most distinguished Jewish rabbis of Germany, and before a great crowd of their sect of every status and both genders.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ For the ducal instruction to the bishop, see Carl Theodor Gemeiner, *Reichsstadt Regensburgische Chronik*, 4 vols. (Munich, 1971 reprint of the edition published in 1824), 3:530–31. See Browe, *Judenmission*, 32 n. 64 (he refers to Gemeiner with an incorrect page number); Schreckenberger, *Adversos-Judaeos-Texte*, 3:544–47; Ocker, “Contempt for Friars,” 130–32. For the development of the duchy’s Jewish policy during the reign of Ludwig’s father, Heinrich XVI (it has not yet been studied for Ludwig’s reign), see Karin Kaltwasser, “Herzog und Adel in Bayern-Landshut unter Heinrich XVI dem Reichen (1393–1450),” (PhD diss., University of Regensburg, 2004), (<http://www.opus-bayern.de/uni-regensburg/volltexte/2004/410>), 9, 66, 126, and 132 and the literature noted there.

⁴⁹ Gemeiner, *Reichsstadt Regensburgische Chronik*, 3:350–51.

⁵⁰ The treatise, composed in Latin, is called *Tractatus contra perfidos Judeos* (1475). I have its preface from Jacques Quetif and Jacques Echard, *Scriptores Ordinis Praedicatorum*, (Louvain, 1961), 1:861: “Ea quae ad honorem sanctissimae Trinitatis ac individuae unitatis gloriosaeque genitricis d.n. Jesu Christi veri messiae, ac in judaicae perfidiae execrationem in inclita tuae dioecesis civitate ratisponensi reverendissima tua paternitate assistente cum clarissimo praelatorum coitu, prudentissimis ejusdem civitatis consulibus, innumerabilique utriusque sexus fidelissimo populo, nominatissimis denique totius Alamanniae Judaeorum rabinis, ac copiosa ejusdem sectae omnis status et sexus multitudine, ex judaeorum voluminibus, hebraica, latina, teutonicaque linguis tempore paschali sub divo in ambone clare pronunciaveram, ut calamo pingere perpetuae memoriae reservanda, instanter postulasti optime praesul.”

The bishop of Regensburg was apparently not the only prelate to endorse this unforgettable public display (“your most reverend paternity’s assistance with an illustrious assembly of prelates”).⁵¹ Here was the seed of a public reputation. Schwarz’s Latin report, replete with Hebrew quotations and translations (on the strength of his study of Hebrew with Jewish children while a student in Spain), sought to increase his public, or at the least train Dominican students to follow his example.⁵² A version of the sermons was published in 1475 at Esslingen, an imperial free city with an important Dominican convent. But 1475 was an auspicious year.

Some 350 kilometers to the south of Regensburg, in the city of Trent, during Lent, the popular Franciscan preacher, Bernardino da Feltre, predicted that at the coming Passover Jews would perform a ritual murder. When Passover came, a child disappeared. The child’s disappearance was immediately attributed to the city’s Jews. The allegation quickly brought to life a local cult around this child, St. Simon of Trent, almost instantly famous throughout much of Europe, in part thanks to papal scepticism and the long investigation that followed.⁵³

Could it happen in Regensburg? Accusations of ritual murder had appeared at Nuremberg in 1464 and of host desecration at Regensburg in 1470.⁵⁴ Both cases show the complex position of Jews in Germany at the time. In the first instance, the Jews claimed and won imperial protection; in the second, the plaintiff was executed for false testimony.⁵⁵ The city also hoped to increase its control of the Jewish

⁵¹ Schwarz claimed to speak German poorly, as though he preferred speaking Hebrew. But the prior of the Regensburg Dominican convent, a Johannes Nigri, may well have been a blood relative, and there is little doubt that Peter Schwarz was himself a German. See Walde, *Christliche Hebraisten*, 75 n. 2 and 90.

⁵² *Ibid.*, for his study of Hebrew: “Quamvis enim ea quae in Hispaniis cum parvulis Judaeorum in latibulis degens, ab ejusdem linguae doctis audieram, tenaciter memoriae recondita habeam, nimia tamen paupertate pressus, huic occupationi saluberrimae pluribus annis dare operam quivi minime.” For thirteenth-century precedents of Hebrew transliteration into Latin characters, see Dahan, *Les intellectuels*, 250–52.

⁵³ Treue, *Die Trienter Judenprozess*, 225–84 for the most complete account of the birth and development of the cult, and 285–392 for the most complete account of the media that propagated it. Consider also Hsia, *Trent*, and idem, *Myth of Ritual Murder*, 50–53; Rubin, *Gentile Tales*, 129–30.

⁵⁴ Rubin, *Gentile Tales*, 129–31, and Treue, *Die Trienter Judenprozess*, 396.

⁵⁵ Treue, *Die Trienter Judenprozess*, 395 notes the city’s complaint that Regensburg Jews had made oaths to Bohemian nobles, who in some cases were at feud with the city, so that in the slightest conflict they might evade local justice.

community, for in 1473, when a conflict occurred over the Jews' failure to pay imperial fees, the city added this complaint: the Regensburg Jews had over-reached their local privileges by receiving Bohemian Jews within the city walls without prior city-council permission. A number of Jews were taken into custody but released upon payments to the city.⁵⁶ Finally, in late 1473 or 1474, a more frightening allegation began to circulate, shortly before Schwarz's sermons. An accused thief, a converted Jew, accused Rabbi Israel of Brünn of purchasing a child from him.⁵⁷ But the accused was freed by imperial order, and the accuser was executed for false testimony (14 May). In 1475, yet another man accused of theft alleged that he had sold hosts to Jews. The council petitioned the emperor to allow the expulsion of the city's Jews, but the emperor instead reasserted imperial fiscal claims. He was awaiting a Jewish payment of 4,000 Gulden to support his Burgundian war, a sum the Jewish community was hard-pressed to produce.⁵⁸ When the emperor asked the council to force payment by barricading the Regensburg synagogue, the council agreed only to restrict Jews from leaving the city. But the council renewed Jewish protections that September.⁵⁹

Bishop Heinrich IV of Abensberg went to Rome in September 1475.⁶⁰ While he was there, a Jewish suspect at Trent told the story of an earlier ritual murder at Regensburg. The suspect, a vagrant scribe and illuminator from Germany named Israel, upon his incarceration, had requested and received baptism and the Christian name Wolfgang.⁶¹ Israel/Wolfgang suffered some eighteen interrogations

⁵⁶ Gemeiner, *Regensburgische Chronik*, 3:528.

⁵⁷ The imprisonment of the head of the Jewish community, Israel of Brünn, was protested by Wladislaus, the king of Bohemia 18 March 1474, and soon after by the emperor. Gemeiner described the imprisonment as protective, the council acting in response to the danger posed by rumors. Gemeiner, *Regensburgische Chronik* 3:532. See also Raphael Straus, *Die Judengemeinde Regensburg im ausgehenden Mittelalter* (Heidelberg, 1932, repr. Nendeln, Liechtenstein, 1979), 37.

⁵⁸ Treue, *Die Trienter Judenprozess*, 394.

⁵⁹ Rubin, *Gentile Tales*, 129–31.

⁶⁰ Heinrich IV's visit to Rome was likely in support of efforts by both Duke Ludwig and the city to gain leverage over the emperor to control, or expel, Regensburg's Jews. See Gemeiner, *Regensburgische Chronik*, 3:529–30 with n. 1053.

⁶¹ Treue, *Die Trienter Judenprozess*, 72–73, 97–98, 106–08, 112–14, and 183. It is also possible that the bishop's own suspicion of the Jews was first aroused by his discovery of the Simon of Trent affair and the accusation against Regensburg Jews made in Trent.

under torture before the Trent investigation was over, and he would soon also play a role as contact between the papal commissioner and Jewish witnesses at Trent, while the allegations of a broad Jewish conspiracy took shape.⁶² The Regensburg bishop learned of his testimony. As Heinrich passed by Trent on his return to Germany in early 1476, he received a summary of Israel/Wolfgang's testimony, and he brought it home with him. The summary included the names of seventeen Regensburg Jews, some of whom Israel/Wolfgang had identified as perpetrators, others as people who *might* have been involved.⁶³

He had named seventeen of the richest and most prominent members of the city's Jewish community.⁶⁴ Heinrich of Abensberg presented the document to the city council and demanded action. 29 March 1476, six Jews were imprisoned; 9 April, eleven more. Several of them had been jailed before, in the conflict of 1474.⁶⁵ The council then prepared a German translation of Israel/Wolfgang's testimony, from which the interrogator's brief was composed. The interrogation produced six confessions, two of which were later withdrawn. One suspect claimed, in an incident supposed to have occurred eight years before, that he had held the silver bowl that collected a child-victim's blood.⁶⁶ As the interrogations continued, the story grew more elaborate.

Trent's bishop promoted the cult of Simon. Nothing similar happened at Regensburg. In fact, the Regensburg trial had hardly begun when events were immediately overtaken by an utterly typical legal conflict over competing jurisdictions. In April, within a month of the council's initial action, the emperor protested the imprisonment of Regensburg Jews and demanded their release. The city countered with a proposal to expel the Jews, take their properties, and take over Jewish payments to the duke of Bavaria-Landshut. This ignored the emperor's necessary compensation. He responded by withdrawing the city's right to try capital cases and threatened an imperial ban.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 85, 97–98, 106–08, 112–14, and 183.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 98, 180, and 393–403 for the Regensburg trial and the subsequent negotiations.

⁶⁴ Treue in the previous note and Wilhelm Volkert, "Das Regensburger Judenregister von 1476," *Festschrift für Andreas Kraus zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Pankraz Fried and Walter Ziegler (Kallmünz, 1982), 115–41.

⁶⁵ Gemeiner, *Regensburgische Chronik* 3: 528 n. 1045.

⁶⁶ Gemeiner, *Regensburgisch Chronik* 3: 571–72.

No one could have been surprised. The duke of Bavaria-Landshut quickly withdrew from the controversy, in September 1476, while the Regensburg council entered negotiations with the emperor. Negotiations continued for four years. Although Regensburg Jews were named as accomplices in host desecrations at Passau in 1478 (the allegations at Passau led to the destruction of Passau's synagogue and expulsion of its Jews), no riots took place in Regensburg, nothing to justify ultimate actions by a peace-keeping urban aristocracy. There was no local cult for Regensburg's bishop to promote or protect. Predictably enough, the conflict came down to money. A ransom was raised, probably by a national synod of German Jewry held in Nuremberg in 1476 or 1477.⁶⁷ The prisoners were released when the city and emperor reached this compromise: the Jewish community would pay 10,000 Gulden to the emperor for their release and 8,000 Gulden to the city, with a promise to continue to pay urban fees in the future. In effect, the city and the emperor agreed to share incomes from Jews.⁶⁸

When Heinrich of Abensberg returned to Regensburg from Trent and initiated this latest crisis of Regensburg's Jewry, he already considered Peter Schwarz an expert in Jewish things. The Dominican soon found himself among the delegation sent by the bishop of Trent to the papal court to defend the new cult of little Simon, we may assume by Heinrich's recommendation.⁶⁹ Yet it is difficult to say how great a role Schwarz may have played in defense of the cult and its lurid, conspiratorial legend.⁷⁰ Dominicans could both succumb to and resist these stories.⁷¹ They could praise an emperor's justice in debunk-

⁶⁷ Zimmer, *Jewish Synods*, 44–46.

⁶⁸ Cities increasingly won such privileges from emperors and princes since the late fourteenth century. See Zimmer, *Harmony and Discord*, 149.

⁶⁹ Treue, *Die Trienter Judenprozess*, 109–10 and 223. Walde, *Christliche Hebräisten*, 94 n. 2.

⁷⁰ The opposite is sometimes assumed. Consider Treue, *Die Trienter Judenprozess*, 223 n. 14.

⁷¹ The Dominican Johannes Nider in 1435 criticized the emergence of a cult to a child saint on flimsy evidence in the city of Ravensburg. Johannes Nider, *Formicarius*, iii.11 (Graz, 1971), 144–45. For the date, *ibid.*, v. The Dominican Heinrich of Schlettstadt, the author of the *Malleus malleficarum*, on the other hand, also a member of the theological commission, did assemble ritual murder verdicts from German cities. See R. Po-chia Hsia, "Witchcraft, Magic, and the Jews in Late Medieval and Early Modern Germany," in *From Witness to Witchcraft: Jews and Judaism in Medieval Christian Thought*, ed. Jeremy Cohen (Wiesbaden, 1996), 419–33. I have argued elsewhere that the stronger evidence for mendicant preaching and provocation against Jews came from Italy. See Ocker, "Contempt for Friars," 131 n. 29.

ing a local cult and destroying its pilgrimage chapel.⁷² Schwarz himself may have wavered.

For, like Bishop Heinrich, Trent's testimonies first impressed him. Soon after completing the Latin *Tractatus*, published in 1475, Schwarz lectured on the Psalms, probably at the University of Ingolstadt, and the lectures include this note on Ps. 13:4 and the text "devouring my people:"

Which is expounded according to the letter as the Jews, who eat Christians, that is by taking the whole for the part by synecdoche, because they kill innocent people and the children of Christians and eat their blood in matzot, that is, unleavened bread, and drink it by mixing with wine in the *paza*, that is the paschal meal, as a trial has brought to light with regard to the holy martyr Simon in the city of Trent, which is most certain to me, who personally intervened at the correction procedures for many Jewish defendents still alive yet jailed, others sentenced, in the year of the Lord 1475, which was also a Jubilee year by indulgence of the pope. Again, there was a trial in the famous city of Regensburg in the following year and in very many other places.⁷³

Schwarz takes the recent allegations to demonstrate the rhetorical synecdoche of the biblical passage. The cannibalized child, Simon (the part), is indicated by the Psalm's suggestion that the whole (the Christian people) is victimized. But the *Stern Meschiah*, produced in 1477, which refers to this passage of commentary, drops the explicit reference to ritual murder. It presents a rather different case against Judaism, free of folkloric notions.⁷⁴

⁷² Nider so praised Sigismund in the case of Ravensburg, *Formicarius* iii.11, 144.

⁷³ Walde discovered this passage, to which the *Stern Meschiah* vi.4 refers, in a Munich manuscript (Bayerische Staatsbibliothek 23818, f. 39b). Walde, *Christliche Hebraisten*, 94 n. 2: "(deuorantes populum meum): quod ad literam de Judeis exponitur, qui comedunt christianos i.e. accipiendo totum pro parte per synodochen, quia interficiunt innocentes et paruulos christianorum et comedunt in mazot i.e. fogaciis uel azimis panibus sanguinem ipsorum et bibunt miscendo in vino in paza i.e. pascate in cena, ut expertum claret in sancto martire symone in ciuitate Tridentina, quod mihi optime constat, qui processibus corrigendis personaliter interfui pluribus Judeis reis existentibus uiuis tamen captis aliis sentenciatis anno domini MCCCCLXXV, qui et jubileus fuit ex indulto pape. Idem expertum est in ciuitate inclita Ratisponensi anno sequenti et in compluribus aliis locis." For the location, consider the dedication to Pope Sixtus IV, *ibid.*, 90.

⁷⁴ There is, in addition, no particular anti-Judaism in his collection of sixty-three questions on metaphysics and logic produced later at the University of Buda. Petrus Nigri, *Clypeus Thomistarum* (Venice, 1487, repr. Frankfurt, 1967). Walde considered the attacks on Jews in the Psalms commentary far less polemical than those of the *Tractatus* and the *Stern Meschiah*.

Schwarz's reputation grew, for unlike any other preacher in the Holy Roman Empire, he argued from Hebrew texts. He was invited to preach in other cities: Frankfurt, Bamberg, Worms, and Nuremberg.⁷⁵ He produced an expanded German version of the Latin treatise in 1476 and 1477, which almost surely reflects the content of those sermons.⁷⁶ He enjoyed a brief season of fame.

His preaching followed the Regensburg pattern, to judge by a Nuremberg account. In Nuremberg, he delivered sermons over seventeen days from a pulpit built along the wall of a collegiate church on a public square, attracting crushing throngs, while he demanded that rabbis come to debate him. When the rabbis refused, he asked the city council to publish a certificate declaring him the victor by default, and they did.⁷⁷ But what was the impact of such theater? Certainly no greater than that of Bernardino da Feltre, who railed against Jewish usury in Italy, in the manner of Bernardino of Siena and John of Capistrano. His impact was, perhaps, less.

Da Feltre inspired, at best, limited urban controls of moneylending.⁷⁸ In Schwarz's case, we do not know that his preaching prompted a single specific anti-Jewish action. To judge from his vernacular treatise, his sermons lacked the vivid hate-mongering by which preachers inspired Italian crowds, and it lacked the threats of excommunication that persuaded Italian magistrates to restrict Jewish moneylending, at least on paper, or the extravagant allegations of Jewish anti-Christian cruelties repeated in polemic by Spanish theologians.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ Browe, *Judenmission*, 32 n. 65. GJ III, 3:1762 and 1768 with n. 83.

⁷⁶ A sermon audience is suggested by the simplicity of his arguments. *Stern Meschiah* ii.1 refers to the birth of Christ in 1476, "der sun gottes solt etwan mensch werden vor [*superscript add Mo*] lcccc.xxvi. jaren und nun ist worden mensch." But the introduction to tractate iii refers to the fulfillment of messianic prophecy "vor tausent vierhundert und siben und sibentzigk jar in welichem ich das büchlein schreib." The text is approximately 320 folios long, with 28 lines to the page.

⁷⁷ *Die Chroniken der deutschen Städte vom 14.–16. Jahrhundert*, 10 (1872): 353–54. Browe, *Judenmission*, 69–70. Ocker, "Contempt for Friars," 131–32. Bell, *Sacred Communities*, 122.

⁷⁸ Toaff, "Jews, Franciscans, and the First *Monti di pietà*," 240–53. For Bernardino of Siena, Franco Mormando, *The Preacher's Inner Demons: Bernardino of Siena and the Social Underworld of Early Renaissance Italy* (Chicago, 1999), 164–218.

⁷⁹ Petrus Niger, *Stern Meschiah* (or *Stella Meschia* at the explicit) (Eßlingen: Conrad Feyner, 1477), no folio numbers. The text includes a preface, eleven tractates divided into chapters, an explanation of the Hebrew alphabet, a brief Hebrew grammar, and a concluding summary of the work. Schwarz identifies Jewish moneylending as evidence of Jewish enmity to Christians and a reason for their reluctance to convert. At *Stern Meschiah*, xi.7 (= tractate 11, chapter 7), he answers biblical passages

Yet the vernacular version of Schwarz's treatise appears to have been the most important, original anti-Jewish treatise produced in fifteenth-century Germany. How should we judge it?

His trifling threats against lay rulers, along with his avoidance of usury, which had become a centerpiece of Christian fantasies of Jewish danger, suggest that social policy was not Schwarz's aim.⁸⁰ The Jews are already destitute, Christians ascendant, he observed.⁸¹

that support such enmity. The first is Deut. 7:1–2, which he takes as evidence that the Jews believe they may kill Gentiles at will, “Nun darumb daz die genennten cristen sindt auch goim und beten an abgöterey darumb meynen sie, sie mügen an alle sündt auch tödten die kristen wie sie mügen.” The second is Deut. 13:2 (a rare instance in which he does not refer to the Bible in Hebrew), which he also presents as the basis of a Jewish claim to have a license to kill Christians. This is the closest Schwarz comes to alleging that Jews actually do murder Christians (he argues that the passages were intended to prevent the Jews from falling into idolatry and do not apply to their relations with Christians, but applied only to the seven nations mentioned in Deut. 13). In addition, Schwarz did not allege Jewish host desecrations. Rather, he answers objections to transubstantiation. *Ibid.*, vii.8. The objections were common in Jewish polemical literature but also reflect standard problems of the metaphysics of the Eucharist in Christian theology. Consider David Burr, *Eucharistic Presence and Conversion in Late Thirteenth-Century Franciscan Thought* (Philadelphia, 1984). Contrast Alphonso de Espina's *Fortalitium fidei*; see Steven McMichael, *Was Jesus of Nazareth the Messiah? Alphonso de Espina's Argument Against the Jews in the Fortalitium Fidei (c. 1464)* (Atlanta, 1994), 50.

⁸⁰ For friars, Jews, and usury, consider Giacomo Todeschini, “Franciscan Economics and the Jews in the Middle Ages,” in *Friars and Jews in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, 99–117, Rubin, *Gentile Tales*, 117, and Ocker, “Contempt for Friars,” 135–39. Schwarz's brief treatment of usury in *Stem Meschiah*, xi.7 (2.5 folios) further relativizes the problem by including usurious Christians and temporal rulers who profit from Jewish usury among the accused (explaining Ps. 15:1–2, 4–5): “Auß welchem erscheindt das alle die wücherer werden ewigklichen vertümt und kummen nymmer mer auff den heiligen perg gotes, nicht allein die jüden sunder auch die valschen kristen und die untrewen und unverschemten herenn und fürsten welche yre landt wider got und recht bescheezen und verderben durch die jüden und nemen der wucherer gut wider got und recht und vertümen yre seel und yrer erben seel welche nicht mügen solich valsch gewinnen gut besiczen und erben sunder sie sindt vor got schuldig das wider czu geeben disen menschen von welchen die jüden das gewuchert haben.”

⁸¹ Petrus Niger, *Stem Meschiah*, preface, for this and the following, appearing just after his first biblical citation, Isa. 33:18, which he explains to mean that Jews nowhere are learned in divine doctrine, “Und als yn diser czeit die kristlich kirch am aller reichsten ist in allen künsten und nemlichen in der erkenntnoß des almechtigen gots, also das jüdisch vertrieben volck ist am aler armensten. Dar um yren geistlichen hunger czu püsen hab ich diß büchlein gemacht und nicht sie czu verolgen wann ich hab yer person lieb oder yre verstockung und yren mißglauben und yer poßheit haß ich alle czeit und thu nicht das böest als ich mag dar ümb das yn allen sachen die bescheidenheit ist zu preysen und czu loben. Dar czu kan mire nymant das für ein ubel haben das ich eer und erheb und beweer den glauben yn welchem ich sterben wil. Dar czu steet czu wissen, das ich hab mich nicht

He wants only to satisfy their spiritual hunger, not persecute them, however much he “hates” Jewish stubbornness, error, and wickedness: he restrains himself. Who, he asks, can blame him for defending the faith in which he intends to die? But he sticks to the most important points of Christian doctrine, which he will prove “in the eyes of the unbelieving Jews” from Jewish books and the Old Law.⁸² To this purpose he joined three others: to show that God must be worshiped as the Trinity, to teach Christians how privately or publicly to rebut Jewish arguments, and to show how obdurate the cursed Jews are, a demonstration helpful to erring Christians, too, he said.⁸³

Schwarz called the result the *Chochaf Hamschiach* (his transliteration of כוכב המשיח), or *Eyn stern des meschiah*, “the Messiah’s star.”⁸⁴ The text suggests, as do reports of his bilingual sermons, that he strained above all to impress *non-Jews* with his command of the Hebrew Bible, instructing his readers to cite texts by the Hebrew names for books.⁸⁵ His Hebrew quotations are transliterated into Latin characters, accompanied by an interlinear translation. But he showed no interest in rabbinic literature; he always cited Jewish opinion vaguely (“Jews say”); and he restricted himself entirely to biblical arguments, at one point showing his mastery of Jewish codices by arguing from an abbreviation for the Tetragrammaton he claims to have observed in Aramaic Targums in Spain.⁸⁶ His intention is to show how trans-

understanden alle yrrung der jüden melden und auß reuten sunder allein dise welche sie haben wider die trefflichste stück dess kristlichen glaubens.”

⁸² Niger, *Stern Meschiah*, from the beginning of the preface, where this is listed as the second of four purposes.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, the first, third, and fourth purposes of writing. His purpose to edify Christians is repeated at the introduction to tractate xi.

⁸⁴ The Hebrew title appears at the beginning of the concluding summary of the work.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, near the conclusion of the preface, where he lists the books of the Old Testament in “jüdisch.” Consider earlier attempts to provide Latin readers with at least some access to Hebrew noted by Dahan, *Les intellectuels*, 242–49.

⁸⁶ This appears in the last of eight examples of the three persons of the Trinity found in mystical language of the Bible (“vil sprüch die do bezeigen alle drey personen mit einander in verborgner reed”). The first seven involve mystical interpretations of numerous Old Testament passages. *Stern Meschiah* i.5. The abbreviation is a curved semi-circle stroke rising from the left and to the right, with three points within its arch, which are in fact the Hebrew letter yod repeated three times, an abbreviation for the secret name of God found in medieval manuscripts, which may have originated with ancient amulets. See Herschel Shanks, “Earliest Abbreviation for the Hebrew Name for God,” *Archeology Odyssey* Summer (1998) (<http://www.tfba.org/articles.php?articleid=15>). See Jacob Z. Lauterbach, “Substitutes for the Tetragrammaton,” *Proceedings of the American Academy of Jewish Research* (1931): 61–67. The

parent the Christian meaning of prophecy is, emphasized by editorial comments such as this, on Jer. 14:7–9: “Notice, dear Christians, how clearly the prophet speaks of the incarnation and poverty of the son of the almighty God, who has appeared in the world to redeem us on account of our sin. Therefore Jeremiah prays to him. On this passage, which is so very clear and obvious, I have never heard any Jew who had anything sensible to answer. Therefore, all their answers to it are to be discarded and mocked.”⁸⁷

The positions Schwarz took were prosaic. With stock Christian interpretations of Hebrew Scripture, he demonstrated the Trinity, the incarnation, the virgin birth, the first advent of Christ in humility as miracle-worker and teacher, the invalidity of the Old Law,

stroke must be a truncation mark. My thanks to Joshua Holo and Daniel Matt for help with this. Schwarz interprets the stroke to represent the divine nature, and the points (yods), the distinct persons. German Jews, he claims, have removed the sign from their Hebrew codices. The text: “Zum achten mal, wirt klerlich erkant die hailige dreyer eyngkait des götlichen wesens in einer figur, die do gemeinklich steet in den jüdischen büchern nemlich in der Caldaisch sprach, an der stat, des hailigen namen gottes, mit vier puchstab geschriben. Und auch in der jüdischen czungen in den büchern in hispania. Die do vil warhafter sindt wenn die bücher unser jüden in deücz landt. Weliche figur ist ein signet oder ein sigill der hailigen dreyer eyngkait, und hat ein söliche gestalt (here appears the figure with a curved line that rises from the left and curves in a semi-circle to the right, with three points/diamonds in it). Durch die drey stüpphle werden bedeut die dreyen personen, und durch den halben rinck wirt deutet daz götlich wesen . . . Und darumb vernüftiglicher wird die dreyer götlicher personen eyngkeit mit ordnung der fruchtperkeit bedeutet mit einem halben ring umgebende drey stüpphle, wenn durch eynen ganczen ringk. Und darumb unsere Jüden yn deüczlandt yn yeren büchern der jüdischen sprach haben abgetilgt dise figur, jdoch ym Targum das ist in der tülmelzung der Caldaischen sprach die do gemaincklich stet in den jüdischen büchern mit jüdischen büchstaben geschriben vindet man dise figur unuersert an der stat des aller hailigsten namens gottes, der mit vier büchstaben geschriben ist dar von ich jm ersten capitel diß tractats gesagt hab.” Consider also *ibid.*, ii.3, where Schwarz discusses the interpretation of Isa. 9:6–7. He claims that reading the Hebrew as *va iiqra* (“he will call”) rather than *va iiqre* (“he will be called”) falsifies the text, on the evidence of the Targum of Jonathan ben Uziel, which he quotes with interlinear translation. Schwarz’s argument from the Tetragrammaton appears to be independent of Nicholas of Lyra, *Contra perfidiam iudeorum*, published at the conclusion of *idem, Postilla literalis super bibliam* (Nuremberg: Anton Koberger, 1497), ff. 346ra–351vb, here ff. 347vb–348ra.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, ii.6, at the end: “O ir lieben cristen merckt, wie gancz clärlich der prophet redet von der menschwerdung und von der armut des suns des almechtigen gottes der do also erscheinen ist auff der erden umb unser sünd willen die zü büßen. Darumb auch yn der prophet Jrmejah bittet in seinem gebeet. Zü disem spruch der also gancz clar und offenbar ist hab ich nye kein jüden gehört der etwas vernüftigs möcht antwurten. Und darumb alle ir antwort dar zü ist zü verwerfen und zü verspotten.”

divine rejection of the Jews, and the finality of their expulsion from the holy land.⁸⁸ The arguments are decidedly biblicist, focused entirely on the rebuttal of Jews that are never cited by name, which also serves to underscore his biblical erudition. Schwarz showed no interest in the Talmud, Midrash, or rabbinic commentaries on the Bible.

This omission distinguishes Schwarz from the most-studied earlier friars, who innovated a form of argument that sought to persuade Jews of Christian truth from Jewish literature. Recognizing the authority of the Talmud among Jews, they aimed both to uncover talmudic “errors” and talmudic confirmation of Christian claims. The tactic was promoted by treatises emerging from the Jewish-Christian disputations of Paris (1240) and Barcelona (1263).⁸⁹ The most elaborate example of the strategy is the massive *Pugio fidei* of the Catalonian Raymond Martini, teacher of Hebrew in Barcelona’s Dominican cloister, which he completed in 1278.⁹⁰ Martini offered a comprehensive counter-theology to Judaism, of sorts. He begins with philosophical arguments for the existence of God and the creation of the universe (part 1), progresses through an account of the Christian interpretation of biblical prophecy and history (part 2), and ends with detailed consideration of human nature, sin, and the necessity of the incarnation (part 3).⁹¹ He is most original for the extent of his use of rabbinic literature, which he excerpts in Hebrew with Latin translations. A condensed version of this technique was also widely available in two brief treatises by Nicholas of Lyra and supported by a third treatise comparing the Targums with the Vulgate.⁹²

⁸⁸ The earlier Latin version of the treatise demonstrated the first advent of Christ in humility, the Trinity and incarnation, Christian supercession of Israel, the end of the Old Law, and the virgin birth. Summarized by Quetif, Echard, *Scriptores*, 1:861, and noted by Schreckenberg, *Adversos-Judaeos-Texte*, 3:544–45.

⁸⁹ Dahan, *Christian Polemic*, 33–34, 36, and 92. For the twelfth-century origins of the use of the Talmud in Christian argument against Judaism, a tactic innovated by the Jewish convert Petrus Alphonsus and published in his *Dialogue*, see Dahan, *Les intellectuels*, 237–38 and 459–60; Dahan, *Christian Polemic*, 58.

⁹⁰ Robert Chazan, *Daggers of Faith* (Berkeley, 1989), 67–85 and 115–36. Dahan, *Christian Polemic*, 27–40. Dahan, *Les intellectuels*, 259 and 411.

⁹¹ Raymund Marti, *Pugio fidei adversus Mauros et Judaeos cum observationibus Josephi de Voisin et introductione Johannis Benedicti Carpzovi* (Leipzig: Johannes Wittigau, 1687; repr. Farnborough, 1967). The introduction by Johannes Benedict Carpzov II, Lutheran professor of theology at Leipzig and opponent of the pietist Jacob Spener, gives evidence of Martini’s appeal to later Hebraists across the confessional divide. Chazan has argued the limitations of his immediate impact. Chazan, *Daggers*, 163.

⁹² Note 40, above. Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews*, 180. Dahan, *Les intellectuels*,

Lyra notes the authority, among Jews, of the Bible in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, along with the Talmud and Midrash, the glosses of which, he says, are considered “dependable by them, much more so than the sayings of Jerome, Augustine, and other Catholic doctors among us.”⁹³ Yet although Lyra mentions Jewish teachers, Maimonides and Rashi, and a variety of rabbinic claims, his arguments depend largely on biblical proofs. If Lyra represents movement away from rabbinic argument, Schwarz marks a point more distant still.

Schwarz’s *Stern Meschiah* compares poorly with Raymond Martini’s *Pugio fidei*. His use of Hebrew literature was much narrower, as a review of his first and second tractates shows. Schwarz, as throughout the treatise, limits his arguments to the Bible, while alleging Jewish opinions anonymously. For example, he begins with Exod. 6:1–2 to review the ten Hebrew names for God, which were subjected to Trinity-friendly definitions.⁹⁴ But when Martini cites the text, he adds commentary from Rashi.⁹⁵ Schwarz cites Jerome.⁹⁶ Schwarz argues that the name Elohim, a plural noun, was used by Moses in Gen. 1:1–4 and 26 to indicate plurality in the Godhead. He then adduces, transliterates, translates, and briefly explains other passages in support of the claim (Josh. 24:19, Deut. 5:26, 2 Sam. 7:22–23, Jer. 23:35–36).⁹⁷ But Martini’s treatment of Genesis 1 appeals to Bereshit Rabba, Bereshit Ketanna, and the Targum of Jonathan ben Uziel to try to demonstrate that the plural force of the noun was recognized by the rabbis before they reduced its force to the oneness of God.⁹⁸ Schwarz refers casually to Augustine.⁹⁹ Where Schwarz obscurely mentions a Jewish interpretation of the plural Elohim in Genesis 1 as a kind of divine council, then dismisses it, Martini cites a similar

452–54. Nicolaus de Lyra, *Contra perfidiam iudeorum*, published at the conclusion of idem, *Postilla literalis super bibliam* (Nuremberg: Anton Koberger, 1497), ff. 346ra–351vb.

⁹³ Nicolaus de Lyra, *Contra perfidiam*, f. 346rb and passim.

⁹⁴ Petrus Nigri, *Stern Meschiah*, i.1. For such arguments among earlier authors, consider Dahan, *Les intellectuels*, 490–91.

⁹⁵ Raymund Marti, *Pugio fidei*, 655.

⁹⁶ Hieronymus, *Epistola ad Marcellam*, Ep. 26, PL 22:430–31.

⁹⁷ Petrus Nigri, *Stern Meschiah*, i.2.

⁹⁸ Raymund Marti, *Pugio fidei*, 485: “Nota quod aliae multae auctoritates istis similes sunt quae in divinis pluralitatem ostendunt, quam semper ante, vel post se sub unitatem recludunt.” He then turns to further evidence from Bereshit Rabba, before alleging further midrashic evidence for the Trinity. *Ibid.*, 485–88.

⁹⁹ Cf. Augustine, *De Trinitate*, vii.6. PL 42:943–45.

idea, then gives it a Christian, Trinitarian meaning.¹⁰⁰ Schwarz repeats Christian messianic interpretations of passages that declare divine favor on Israel's king in the Psalms. He dismisses with curt arguments something "the Jews would say," that these refer to King David and not the Messiah.¹⁰¹ Martini, on the other hand, within his arguments for the temporariness of the Old Law, cites and translates a passage from the Midrash Bemidbar Sinai that says, in passing, the Messiah is named in the Psalms.¹⁰² Schwarz presents Mic. 5:2 and its reference to Bethlehem as evidence of the Messiah's two natures, divine and human. He corrects an opinion of "false Jews" that the text indicates two processions of the Messiah from God, one of the soul from eternity and another according to the body, which has not yet occurred.¹⁰³ Martini also defends the Christian view that Hebrew prophecy predicted the Messiah would have divine and human natures, but in his hands, Mic. 5 bears only the weight of predicting the Messiah's birthplace, a point reinforced with arguments from the Targum of Jonathan ben Uziel and a comment by Rashi.¹⁰⁴ Schwarz defends the Christian interpretation of Zech. 12:8–10 (especially verse 10, "they will look on the one whom they have pierced") as a reference to the crucifixion. "Certain false and deceitful

¹⁰⁰ Petrus Nigri, *Stern Meschiah*, i.2: "Item das die Jüden sprechen das got hat eyn hauß seyns rats gleich als er rats bedürft ist eyn kezerei, wann darauß entsprung das gott west nicht alle ding, item das er yem nicht selber genuncksam were." Raymund Marti, *Pugio fidei*, 486: "Intende quod neque iste rabbi, neque praedicti, nec aliquis de antiquis, cujus dicta de ista materia viderim inficiatur mysterium Trinitatis; sed tantum plura principia, vel plures deos; quod certe omnis Christiana religio non minus ipsis, imo amplius detestatur. In duorum quippe, vel plurium mundi principiorum, sive deorum detestationem praedictum de Deo loquendi modum, quandocunque de Deo agitur, omnino recusat. Item nota quod in proxima glossa ubi dicitur quod Deus sanctus et benedictus est, domus iudicii ejus fecit Adam; salvo meliori iudicio, Deus sanctus et benedictus est pater, et domus iudicii ejus filius, et spiritus sanctus, qui non sunt quidem secundum fidem Christianam duo, vel tria principia, sed unum tantum principium omnium creaturarum visibilium, et invisibilium." Cf. Nicholas of Lyra, who noted an opinion of Maimonides in the *Guide for the Perplexed* (cf. *Guide* i.61) that the names of God derive from divine action, *Heloym* and *adonay* proceeding from divine providence, "Unde iudices et sapientes et diuina sapientia predicti aliquando nominatur heloy in sacra scripture, ut dicit psalmus *Ego dixi dii estis* et cetera (Ps. 82:6). In hebraico ponitur heloym: et consimilia habentur in pluribus locis." Lyra, *Contra perfidiam*, ff. 347vb–348ra.

¹⁰¹ Petrus Nigri, *Stern Meschiah*, i.3 (Pss. 2:6–12, 71:17, 44:7–9, and 109:1–3.)

¹⁰² Ps. 71:17. Raymund Marti, *Pugio fidei*, 516–17.

¹⁰³ Petrus Nigri, *Stern Meschiah*, ii.1.

¹⁰⁴ Raymund Marti, *Pugio fidei*, 526.

Jews” claim that the Hebrew contradicts this messianic interpretation because it says “they will look on me” (i.e. on the prophet who writes this; Schwarz transcribes *vehibbitu elai* for וְהִבִּיטוּ אֵלַי) rather than “they will look on him” (Schwarz writes *vehibbitu elaf* for וְהִבִּיטוּ אֵלָיו).¹⁰⁵ But Schwarz declares, “I have seen Jewish Bibles and have access to them and see them daily, and I’ve never found anything written in your Bible like *vehibbitu elai*, ‘and they will look on me,’ and not *vehibbitu elaf*, ‘and they will look to him,’ as I will visibly prove and show to anyone who wants to see!”¹⁰⁶ Martini notes the Jewish textual claim, and that the Targum supports it, then rejects it still, because other texts, including Talmud, Midrash, and Rashi, suggest that the Messiah must suffer and die.¹⁰⁷ Martini presents a better case. The issue for Martini rests not on a questionable textual variation but on doctrine.

This is sufficient to suggest the overwhelming impression left by Schwarz’s treatise, and how much this contrasts with the appropriation of Jewish literature in Christian polemic by the most innovative medieval theologians. It is his biblical erudition that is meant to stand out. Raymond Martini sought to build the impression that a close study of Jewish tradition supported Christian claims. Nicholas of Lyra had chosen to reinforce biblical arguments with an examination and appropriation of rabbinic literature, because it would be more effective, he said.¹⁰⁸ Schwarz, less optimistic for conversion, contented himself with a virtuoso performance of biblical erudition. But apart from this, his treatise, which is renowned for its Hebrew, is impressively unoriginal.

¹⁰⁵ The Christian reading to which Schwarz refers is found in the Vulgate (“et aspicient ad me, quem confixerunt,” following the Greek Septuagint. The actual Hebrew variant manuscript reading of this text differs from what Schwarz reports: וְהִבִּיטוּ אֵל־אִשְׁרֵי־דָקְרִי, *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (Stuttgart, 1977), 1078, Zech. 12:10 with note.

¹⁰⁶ Petrus Nigri, *Stern Meschiah*, ii.2: “Wann auf meyn gewissen und auff die cristliche warhait sprich ich das, Das ich vil jüdische bibbel gesehen hab, und hab bey mir und teglichen sich, und hab nye anders geschriben funden in deynrer bibbel wenn also vehibbitu elai ‘und sie werden sehen zü mir,’ und nicht vehibbitu elaf, ‘und sie werden seehen zü jm,’ als ich sichtigklichen will beweren und zeigen czeigen eynem yeglichem der das begert zü seehen.” Peter Schwarz, *Stern Meschiah*, ii.3, argues again over a divergent reading in Isa. 9:6–7. There he appeals to the Targum of Jonathan ben Uziel in his defense. Such use of the Targum was also promoted by Nicholas of Lyra. See Dahan, *Les intellectuels*, 442.

¹⁰⁷ Raymund Marti, *Pugio fidei* 855–73.

¹⁰⁸ Lyra, *Contra perfidiam*, f. 346ra.

Fifteenth-Century German Theological Polemics Against the Jews

Dinkelsbühl and Schwarz therefore present two distinct cases of missionary indifference. They lacked the engagement with Jewish texts still found, for example, on the Iberian peninsula.¹⁰⁹ Nor did they recommend anti-Jewish policy, as others had done, for example participants in the Council of Constance, popes, and the travelling church celebrities John of Capistrano and Nicholas of Cusa.¹¹⁰ They could have. Theologians enjoyed a certain prominence. In the new German universities they made their topical pronouncements, for example, on usury, indulgences, Hussite heresy, and miraculous bleeding hosts.¹¹¹ When the duke of Austria asked Nicholas of Dinkelsbühl to preach to Vienna's Jews, the professor was probably still lecturing on the Gospel according to Matthew in the university, completing a sacramental treatise for reforms in the bishopric of Salzburg, and preparing lectures on Peter Lombard's *Sentences* to be delivered to the Benedictines of Melk, as part of the Habsburg duke's effort

¹⁰⁹ The Talmud was frequently discussed in the 69 sessions of the Tortosa disputation (7 February 1413–12 November 1414), and the disputation was followed by a papal order to confiscate copies. Simonsohn, *The Apostolic See and the Jews*, 594–95 no. 538. Antonio Pacios Lopez, *La disputa de Tortosa*, 2 vols. (Madrid, 1957). Consider also Mark D. Meyerson, "Samuel of Granada and the Dominican Inquisitor," in *Friars and Jews in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, 179–81. The *Fortalium fidei* of the Franciscan Alphonso de Espina refers repeatedly to the Talmud, Rashi, Rabbi Moses ha-Darshan, and Maimonides, but relied entirely on Christian sources, especially Marti's *Pugio fidei* for his knowledge of them. McMichael, *Was Jesus of Nazareth the Messiah?*, 45–106. McMichael, "Alfonso de Espina on the Mosaic Law," in *Friars and Jews in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, 199–223, especially 222.

¹¹⁰ See Ocker, "Contempt for Friars," 124–26 and 139–41.

¹¹¹ Rubin, *Gentile Tales*, 175–79. For Hussites, consider the University of Heidelberg's commission for the prosecution of Hussite errors. Hermann Heimpel, *Drei Inquisitions-Verfahren aus dem Jahre 1425: Akten der Prozesses gegen die deutschen Hussiten Johannes Drändorf und Peter Turnau sowie gegen Drändorfs Diener Martin Borchard* (Göttingen, 1969), 22–23 and 96–97. Theological opinions on the bleeding host of Wilsnack were rendered from the end of fourteenth century to the late fifteenth century. See Erich Kleineidam, *Universitas studii Erfordensis*, 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1969), 1:145–53 and 2:101–06. Ludger Meier, "Der Erfurter Franziskanertheologe Johannes Bremer und der Streit um das Wilsnacker Wunderblut," in *Aus der Geisteswelt des Mittelalters: Studien und Texte Martin Grabmann zur Vollendung des 60. Lebensjahres von Freunden und Schülern gewidmet*, ed. Albert Lang, Joseph Lechner, and Michael Schmaus (Münster, 1935): 1247–64. Thomas Fudge, *The Magnificent Ride*, 65. Adolar Zumkeller, *Erbsünde, Gnade, Rechtfertigung und Verdienst nach der Lehre der Erfurter Augustinertheologen des Mittelalters* (Würzburg, 1984), 311. Anton Lübke, *Nikolaus von Kues: Kirchenfürst zwischen Mittelalter und Neuzeit* (Munich, 1968), 131–32.

to reform the monastery.¹¹² Peter Schwarz was a professor at Ingolstadt. He later became a regent master at the university founded by King Mathew of Hungary and Bohemia at Buda.¹¹³ Instead, Dinkelsbühl and Schwarz enunciated a set of ideas that declared the superiority of a Christian view of biblical faith. What should we make of this?

To judge by Dinkelsbühl and Schwarz, German theologians promoted an idealized, even antiseptic anti-Judaism, an assertion of Christian superiority disengaged from Jews still living among them. Of the six other known tracts written against Jews in fifteenth-century Germany, only one shows a particular interest in rebutting talmudic arguments, a brief treatise *On the Antichrist and His Disciples* produced in the third quarter of the century.¹¹⁴ Another, written by Thomas Ebendorfer who witnessed the Vienna persecutions of 1420, provided a fresh translation of the *Toldot Yeshu* but then merely rendered routine biblical proofs.¹¹⁵ A glance at the treatment of Judaism in more general theological works may confirm the impression of disengaged rebuttal. Let us consider some prominent examples.

Denis the Carthusian dedicated book seven of his *Dialogon de fide Catholica* to a demonstration of the Christian faith from the Law and the Prophets, in which he also addressed Jewish objections.¹¹⁶ The objections come from nowhere in particular. They are all recorded by the character of a theologian and explained to a philosopher-interlocutor, not even an imagined Jew. In the figure of the philosopher, Denis addresses his rebuttals to the human intellect, not to the synagogue. The answers treat such general topics as the Jewish refusal

¹¹² Madre, *Nikolaus von Dinkelsbühl*, 35–40 and 97–121.

¹¹³ Petrus Nigri, *Clypeus Thomistarum*, preface.

¹¹⁴ Schreckenber, *Adversos-Judaeos-Texte*, 3:531–32. The other five are the following treatise by Thomas Ebendorfer; a concordance by the Heidelberg theologian Johannes of Frankfurt; an anonymous German proof of Jewish error that draws from Jerome, Lyra, and Nicholas of Dinkelsbühl; an anonymous *Seelenwurzgarten* of 1483 that takes arguments from Lyra, Dinkelsbühl, Jerome, and possibly Schwartz; and Johannes Batista Gratia Dei's refutation of Judaism. *Ibid.*, 502, 532–33, and 569–71. Ernst Weil, "Zu Petrus Negrus Judendisputation," *Soncino-Blätter* 3 (1929): 57–62, here at 57–61.

¹¹⁵ His *Falsitatis judeorum* was probably written at mid-century, late in his life, and provoked by John of Capistrano's preaching in Vienna Neustadt. Brigitta Callsen et al., *Das jüdische Leben Jesu Toldot Jeschu: Die älteste lateinische Übersetzung in den Falsitates Judeorum von Thomas Ebendorfer* (Vienna, 2003), 25–33 and 87–95.

¹¹⁶ Dionysius Carthusiensis, *Dialogon de fide Catholica* vii, *Opera*, 42 vols. (Monstrolius, 1896–1912), 18:471–509.

to agree that the Messiah was promised or prefigured in this or that passage; that he has come; that he is God; Jewish objections to the Trinity, the Eucharist and its adoration, and the incarnation. The Bible is the predominant authority, elucidated by the sharp light of reason, or so the reader is meant to believe. The traditional form of dialogue, as we know it from Gilbert Crispin, Peter Abelard, or Raymond Lull (to cite three famous examples with somewhat different purposes), at least included the figure of a Jew.¹¹⁷ Denis' arguments, moreover, had ceased to be innovative over two hundred years before.¹¹⁸ The dialogue is a dispassionate conversation that no longer included a real opponent.

The erasure of Jews as a living intellectual presence from the minds of city-dwelling scholars may have been natural to the era of forced migration. Jews were a diminishing urban presence over the course of the fifteenth century. The best evidence for the drift of intellectuals from living Jews may await the paleographer in unpublished school-commentaries treating the relevant passages of Peter Lombard's *Sentences* and the Bible. There is evidence that scholars who accepted the value of Jewish commentary for Christian study of the Bible's literal sense, for example, which gave birth to an infant Christian Hebraism in the twelfth century, now contented themselves with Nicholas of Lyra's *Postilla*.¹¹⁹ It may no longer have been felt necessary to scour Jewish books for potential anti-Jewish arguments. This too suggests how far theologians have drifted from their former curiosity about Jewish thinking. The Jews are already destitute; the Christians, ascendant, Peter Schwarz observed.

Threats to the Christian ascendancy in Germany came from other quarters: Hussites undermining Catholic order, other heresies, the lingering danger of papal schism, demon-worshipping women, and

¹¹⁷ Dahan, *Les intellectuels*, 415–22.

¹¹⁸ The most prominent points of Christian polemic are summarized by Dahan, *The Christian Polemic*, 105–16, but see also Dahan, *Les intellectuels*, 473–508. See also Jeremy Cohen, *Living Letters*, part four.

¹¹⁹ For example, Lyra was defended as a source by the Carthusian prior Egher of Kalkar and by the Franciscan provincial prior of Saxony, Matthew Doering. Heinrich Rütting, "Kritische Bemerkungen zu einer mittelalterlichen Biographie des Nikolaus von Lyra," *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 60 (1967): 42–54, here at 51–52. For Doering, his rebuttal of Paul of Burgos' criticisms of Lyra, included in Lyra *Postilla*, ff. 8vb–9rb. See also Christopher Ocker, *Biblical poetics before Humanism and Reformation* (Cambridge, 2002), 179–83.

all that. One may find much more worry over beguines and the Free Spirit among German theologians in the early fifteenth century than over Jews.¹²⁰ Nicholas of Cusa tackled the greatest threat. A year after the fall of Constantinople and after the completion of his tour as papal legate, he completed a treatise dedicated to peaceful conquest, his *De pace fidei* (1453).¹²¹ The only safe defense against the Ottomans, he said in a letter introducing the work to John of Segovia, is the Christian one, an alternative to the sword.¹²² The dialogue takes place between a large cast of characters: the Word, a Greek, an Italian, an Indian, a Chaldean, a Persian, a Syrian, an Arab, the Apostles Peter and Paul, and more. It includes a Jew. Cusa famously expressed a generous religious pluralism. The religious rites of all the nations are reducible to the worship of the one God, he argued.¹²³ *De pace fidei* therefore explains the sheer reasonableness of Christian beliefs: the Trinity, the deity of Christ, the Christian view of paradise, the truth of the incarnation, and the logic of the Eucharist. Muslims and Jews objected to it all. Yet Cusa believed the advancing Ottomans were more susceptible to Christian doctrine than Jews. Jews admit nothing about Christ to be true, he said, yet they have it all written in the Bible.¹²⁴

Cusa points us again to what may be a prevalent biblicism in German scholastic anti-Jewish argument, combined with missionary apathy. The same may be observed in Dinkelsbühl, Schwarz, and Johannes of Frankfurt, a Heidelberg theologian who polemicized

¹²⁰ See Sabine von Heusinger, *Johannes Mulberg OP (g. 1414): Ein Leben im Spannungsfeld von Dominikanerobservanz und Beginenstreit* (Berlin, 2000), 39–89; Michael D. Bailey, *Battling Demons: Witchcraft, Heresy, and Reform in the Late Middle Ages* (University Park, PA, 2003), chapter 4; Aloys Schmidt, “*Tractatus contra hereticos Beckardos, Lulhardos et Svestriones* des Wasmud von Homburg,” *Archiv für mittelh rheinischen Kirchengeschichte*, 14 (1962): 359–60; Adolph Franz, *Der Magister Nikolaus Magni de Jawor: Ein Beitrag zur Literatur- und Gelehrten Geschichte des 14. und 15. Jahrhunderts*, (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1898), 109f and 206–16.

¹²¹ During his tour he called for restrictions on Jews, sometimes temporarily winning them (Cologne, Salzburg, Bamberg, and Würzburg), praised the expulsion of Jews that sometimes followed, and provided an indulgence for at least one church replacing the synagogue of an expelled community (Munich). Ocker, “Contempt for Friars,” 132–33. GJ III, 3: 1799.

¹²² Nicolas de Cusa, *Epistula ad Ioannem de Segobia*, ii, eds. Raymund Klibansky and Hildebrand Bascour, in *Opera omnia*, 22 vols. (Leipzig, 1959–), 7:91–102, here at 94 and 97.

¹²³ Nicolas de Cusa, *De pace fidei*, in *ibid.*, xlii, 61 ll 11–62 ll 5–8.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 39 ll 12–15.

against Hussite heresy. He dedicated a “concordance” to the Count Palatine in 1420 that correlated Old Testament passages with New Testament meanings. He intended to “clobber” Jews with it, for which the work won the title *Malleus iudeorum*, “hammer of the Jews.”¹²⁵ Such efforts could have little to do with real people. Instead, they projected an image of Christianity as a biblical faith.

Stephan Bodecker may be the exception to the rule of malais and the erasure of Jewish intellectual presence from the minds of the intellectuals. A Premonstratensian and the bishop of Brandenburg from 1421 to his death in 1459, Bodecker studied Alphonsus Bonihominis, Nicholas of Lyra, anonymous instructions for effective religious disputation, Thibald de Sézanne’s Talmud excerpts, another more extensive Latin translation of three of the Talmud’s six books (88 folios long) with an explanation of eighteen rabbinic concepts, instructions for pronunciation and transcription, and an introduction to the Talmud’s arrangement, all collected in his miscellany volume.¹²⁶ His marginal notes show that he worked carefully through the Talmud translation.¹²⁷ Shortly before he died, he composed his own treatise *Contra iudeos*, with guidelines that would fulfill in Brandenburg the Council of Basel’s demand for sermons to Jews and refutation of Rabbi Yom Tov Lipmann of Mühlhausen’s *Sefer ha-Nizzahon*, which answered Christian interpretations of biblical prophecy.¹²⁸ Preach during Advent, he advised; show that the Messiah has come from their own writings.¹²⁹ Avoid preaching during Easter,

¹²⁵ Schreckenberg, *Adversos-Judaeos-Texte*, 3:502. Browe, *Judenmission*, 100.

¹²⁶ Annette Wigger, *Stephan Bodeker O. Praem., Bischof von Brandenburg (1421–1459): Leben, Wirken und ausgewählte Werke* (Frankfurt am Main, 1992), 114–75, here at 115–27. Wigger notes that the longer Talmud translation was made after 1244, since it claims to be commissioned by a papal legate, Odo of Chateauroux, who became legate in that year. *Ibid.*, 119. She notes that Bodecker’s Talmud translation has greater detail than its other three mss, including Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, ms lat. 16558. *Ibid.*, 120 with notes 119–20. For the Paris ms, see also Dahan, *Les intellectuels*, 250. For Bodecker, see also Walde, *Christliche Hebraisten*, 30–63. Schreckenberg, *Adversos-Judaeos-Texte*, 3:515–18. Alexander Patschovsky, “Der ‘Talmudjude:’ Vom mittelalterlichen Ursprung eines neuzeitlichen Themas,” in *Juden in der christlichen Umwelt während des späten Mittelalters*, ed. Alfred Haverkamp and Franz-Josef Ziwes (Berlin, 1992), 13–27, here at 19. Bodecker also protested the expulsion of Jews from Brandenburg in 1446. See GJ, III, 1:146.

¹²⁷ Wigger, *Stephan Bodeker*, 121–25, esp. 125 with n. 142.

¹²⁸ Bodecker completed forty-one chapters. See *ibid.*, 133–75, esp. 137–38. Giuseppe Alberigo, *Concilium Oecumenicum Decreta*, (Bologna, 1973), 483–84. *Concilium Basiliense*, 8 vols., (Basel, 1896–1936), 3:197–98. For Lipmann, note 47 above.

¹²⁹ See Wigger, *Stephan Bodeker*, 143.

which conflicts with Passover, but do it in Lent. When the Sunday lesson is Christ's lament over Jerusalem (Matt. 23:37, Luke 13:34–35), impress on them their servitude. He reviews the standard reasons for resistance to conversion (they come from Nicholas of Lyra): fear for loss of property, the stigma of heresy, and objections to the Trinity and the Eucharist.¹³⁰ Do not try to prove Christ's divinity from Jewish writings. Emphasize the fulfillment of prophecy, then the two natures can be demonstrated from the New Testament.¹³¹ He gives instructions on the Hebrew names for biblical books and Hebrew pronunciation, an introduction to the two Aramaic Targums and their use, an account of how Jews believe the Talmud preserves oral law: argue from the writings of Mosaic religion, he advises.¹³² Argue from the literal sense and avoid equivocating interpretations (he briefly compares Jewish and Christian interpretation of the Bible).¹³³ These were his preliminaries. The second half of the work is a refutation of Jewish blindness, an argument for spiritual Israel (the Church), and an assertion of Jewish servitude.¹³⁴ His promised refutation of Yom Tov Lipmann of Mühlhausen appears here, with the rabbi brought out as evidence of Jewish resistance.¹³⁵ The persecutions of the day, Bodecker argues, are really divine retribution for resistance to Christian truth.

Bodecker, it must be conceded, took serious measures to engage a Jewish audience, which if we take Christian hostility for granted, had the virtue of admitting the existence of Jews as religious subjects, impossible without serious consideration of the Talmud and Jewish tradition. To his credit, Bodecker had at least one conversation with an actual Jew.¹³⁶ Of course, he dismissed the Talmud as a book full of heresies rightfully condemned by popes Gregory IX and Innocent IV a century before.¹³⁷ His plan to take on Jewish viewpoints affected no one. To intellectuals, it may have seemed pointless, and to the rest, hardly worth the attention commanded by lurid anti-Jewish tales.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 144–45. Langenstein also referred to them (Shank, *Unless You Believe*, 167); so too did Dinkelsbühl, note 47, above.

¹³¹ Wigger, *Stephan Bodeker*, 146.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 147–52.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 154–57.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 157–75.

¹³⁵ But only in one chapter (36) of nine treating this theme (32–41). *Ibid.*, 161–65.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 168 and 207–09.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 168.

PART II

REFORMERS AND THE JEWS

LUTHER AND THE JEWS

Thomas Kaufmann

It would be naïve or careless to think that a German Protestant church historian could approach the extraordinarily complex topic of “Martin Luther and the Jews” without considering the fatal historical effects, particularly of Luther’s so-called later “Jewish writings” [Judenschriften] in Nazi Germany.¹ But it would be no less problematic to conclude that the noticeable attention that Luther’s “Jewish writings” received in the time of the Third Reich was “necessary” or “inevitable” in a teleological sense, or to condemn the Wittenberg Reformer as the spiritual ancestor of the murderous anti-Semitism of Nazi Germany as he has been characterized beginning in the Second World War by the phrase “from Luther to Hitler.”

Translated by Stephen G. Burnett

¹ “Luther and the Jews” is among the best-known, most intensely, and most controversially researched areas in Luther studies, and within Reformation history generally. From this enormous literature I will mention only the milestones in research. Reinhold Lewin, *Luthers Stellung zu den Juden: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland während des Reformationszeitalters* (Berlin, 1911; repr. Aalen, 1973); Wilhelm Maurer, “Die Zeit der Reformation,” in *Kirche und Synagoge: Handbuch zur Geschichte von Christen und Juden: Darstellung mit Quellen*, vol. 1, ed. Karl Heinrich Rengstorf and Siegfried von Kortzfleisch (Stuttgart, 1968), 363–452; Johannes Brosseder, *Luthers Stellung zu den Juden im Spiegel seiner Interpreten* (Munich, 1972); Heiko A. Oberman, *Roots of Antisemitism*. For a summary of the relevant Luther texts, see Walther Bienert, *Martin Luther und die Juden* (Frankfurt am Main, 1982); important orientation is provided by Schreckenberg, *Adversus-Judaeos-Text*, 3:616–17; Brecht, *Luther*, 3: 334–51; Bernhard Lohse, *Luthers Theologie* (Göttingen, 1995), 356–67; Reinhard Schwarz, *Luther*, 2nd ed. (Göttingen, 1998), 248–54; Mark U. Edwards Jr., *Luther’s Last Battles: Politics and Polemics, 1531–46* (Ithaca, 1983), 115–42; Helmar Junghans, “Martin Luther und die Juden,” in his *Spätmittelalter, Luthers Reformation, Kirche in Sachsen* (Leipzig, 2001), 297–322; instructive and bibliographically helpful references to the discussion of the Jews in the Reformation era generally are provided by Detmers, *Reformation und Judentum*—for Luther, see especially 63ff. Most recently Peter von der Osten-Sacken has provided an inclusive historical study, which relates also to the history of research and the reception of Luther’s Jewish writings in *Martin Luther*. I have written a longer study entitled *Luthers Judenschriften in ihren historischen Kontexten* that will appear in the series *Nachrichten von der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen*, where I will discuss at greater length many of the topics that are presented in this essay as theses.

Just as no continuous reception of the inhumane stereotypes (as judged by modern standards of human rights) in Luther's "Jewish writings" can be demonstrated from the sixteenth through the twentieth centuries, it would be equally impossible to speak of an "absence" of Luther in anti-Semitic discourse during the early modern period, or indeed during the modern era, including the Nazi period.

For German Protestantism the drama of the theme "Martin Luther and the Jews" lies in the fact that Luther was at no time an uninteresting or indifferent figure during the history of the Protestant study and reception of his works. Luther's later stance on the Jews was never the only one that was considered valid within Lutheran Protestantism, although of course every epoch constructed its own portrait of Luther.² The significance that Luther has assumed within the identity politics of Protestantism, which has few if any comparable parallels within other Christian traditions, has also directly or indirectly affected and provoked both indictments of Luther and apologetic responses within the recent research on Luther and the Jews. Such studies, whether they view Luther positively or negatively, are frequently no less problematic, since they assume a quasi-normative authority for him.

The process of scholarly and theological evaluation is further complicated because Luther, when he judged and characterized Judaism, reflected not only the kinds of resentments that were typical of his time, but he followed the anti-Jewish judgments of New Testament texts, and understood the Old Testament traditions, which he interpreted in light of their Christological significance, as an indictment of Judaism. Luther's contention that he was proclaiming the biblical truth of the Christian faith brought with it motives for anti-Judaism, which from an historical and theological perspective were fundamental to Christianity, and gave them a new potency. By con-

² From the enormous literature on the history of portrayals of Luther, Robert Kolb, *Martin Luther as Prophet, Teacher and Hero: Images of the Reformer 1530–1620* (Grand Rapids, 1999); Horst Stephan, *Luther in den Wandlungen seiner Kirche*, 2nd ed. (Berlin, 1951); Heinrich Bornkamm, *Luther im Spiegel der deutschen Geistesgeschichte*, 2nd ed. (Göttingen, 1970); on Luther scholarship in the twentieth century, see *Lutherforschung im 20. Jahrhundert: Rückblick-Bilanz-Ausblick*, ed. Rainer Vinke (Mainz, 2004); Walter Mostert, "Luther III. Wirkungsgeschichte," in TRE 21 (1991): 567–94; *Lutherinszenierung und Reformationserinnerung*, ed. Stefan Laube and Karl-Heinz Fix (Leipzig, 2002); *Protestantische Identität und Erinnerung*, ed. Joachim Eibe and Marcus Sandl (Göttingen, 2003); *Luther zwischen den Kulturen: Zeitgenossenschaft-Weltwirkung*, ed. Hans Medick and Peer Schmidt (Göttingen, 2004).

trast, more common late medieval motives for Jew-hatred such as accusations of well poisoning, ritual murder, or host desecration³ retreated into the background within Protestantism as a whole.

An historically rigorous discussion of the theme “Luther and the Jews” would seek above all to answer the following questions: 1. How did Luther’s position on Judaism fit within the context of the discussions and opinions of the late Middle Ages and of his own contemporaries? 2. What are the continuities and discontinuities in Luther’s position, and what are the most characteristic features of his fear of the Jews or his Jew-hatred? 3. How should we evaluate the influence of Luther’s “Jewish writings?”

The “Sitz im Leben” of Luther’s “Judenschriften”

Luther’s preoccupation with Judaism as a theological, historical, and contemporary factor spanned his entire literary output from the first lectures on the Psalms (*Dictata super Psalterium* 1513/14)⁴ until his *Admonition against the Jews* (*Vermahnung wider die Juden*),⁵ which he read from the pulpit a few days before his death in Eisleben. Luther’s comments may be found in a multitude of different genres, in biblical commentaries, letters, tractates, and utterances in his *Table Talk*, sermons, and elsewhere. They differ considerably in their length, in the intensity of Luther’s polemical tone, and in the wide variety of argumentative constellations in which they appear. For Luther a preoccupation with the Jews was an inalienable, fundamental fact of Christian existence. The Jews interested and irritated Luther, because for him their simple existence in their dispersion, persecution, and

³ Surveys of Jewish history in the Holy Roman Empire during the late Middle Ages and the Reformation include: Friedrich Battenberg, *Das europäische Zeitalter der Juden*, vol. 1: *Von den Anfängen bis 1650* (Darmstadt, 1990); Mordechai Breuer and Michael Graetz, *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*, vol. 1: *Tradition and Enlightenment 1600–1780* (New York, 1996), 53–77; Arno Herzig, *Jüdische Geschichte in Deutschland: Von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (Munich, 1997; 2nd ed., 2002); Haim Hillel Ben-Sasson, *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes*, vol. 2 (Munich, 1979), especially 318f; Michael Toch, *Die Juden im mittelalterlichen Reich* (Munich, 1998); J. Friedrich Battenberg, *Die Juden in Deutschland vom 16. bis zum Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Munich, 2001), 16f and 153–58; short, but instructive is Wolfgang Reinhard, *Lebensformen Europas: Eine historische Kulturanthropologie* (Munich, 2004), 335–37.

⁴ WA 55, parts 1–2.

⁵ WA 51:195f; for context, see Brecht, *Luther*, 3:350–51.

marginalization through Christian society was a witness of divine judgment, as he saw in the Bible.

Jewish existence took place for Luther under the wrath of God and so, he believed, had a symbolic significance for Christians. It showed what it meant to be rejected by God, and it was a witness paradoxically to the truth and might of the Messiah Jesus, whom the Jews reviled. The reasons why Luther concerned himself far more intensively and far longer with the Jews than any other reformer⁶ were rooted deeply in his theology and mental world. The Jews were the opposite of what Luther considered to be fundamental to being a Christian: they rejected Christ and refused to acknowledge the irrefutable witnesses to him that were present in their own holy writings, the Old Testament. They deviated from the normative biblical text in that they entrusted themselves to questionable traditions, especially the Talmud. They represented a social form of "religion" subscribing to "legalism," which was characterized by a denial of the unconditionality of divine grace, and by a genealogically based "arrogance" and "lovelessness" toward the Christian world. To the extent that commitment to Christ and the divine Word, faith, and love were understood to be the marks of Christianity, the Jews represented for Luther the opposite of what it meant to be a Christian or what it ought to mean.

In Luther's mental world the Jews represented the fundamental opposition to Christians. They shared this role with the papacy, the Devil, the Enthusiasts (*Schwärmern*), and sometimes other acutely threatening foes such as the Turks, who tried repeatedly with new assaults to wipe out the small remnant of hard-pressed Christendom. The apocalyptic character of the mental world of the Wittenberg reformer, which came more and more clearly to the fore with its threatening features in the final years of his life, increased his fear of the foes of Christ and his unforgiving judgment of them. Yet in contrast to the rest of these foes, who were affected by historical developments and trends, the Jews were constant enemies, who had to be dealt with over and over again, because the biblical writings dealt with them.

⁶ References to the relevant works concerning the position of individual reformers on the Jews may be found in the works of Detmers, Osten-Sacken, Oberman, Schreckenberger, and Maurer listed in note 1.

The reasons why and the extent to which the Jews represented such an antithesis, or to put it in Luther's terms why the Jews were Jews and remained so, varied over time. In addition to divine hardening Luther at times emphasized the responsibility of Christians, who under the papacy had failed to provide an adequate proclamation of the Gospel to the Jews. He could also recognize the enormous importance of the guilt of Christians, which provoked the wrath of God and strengthened the foes of Christ at the End of Time. As the antithesis of the Christians, the Jews served also as a mirror of Christian sin and unbelief. In this way they acquired a central theological significance for Luther.

It is characteristic of Luther's relationship to the Jews, to the extent that it found literary expression and had a public impact, that as a rule he spoke *about* the Jews, not however *with* or *to* them. Even in *That Jesus Christ was Born a Jew* (1523) he was concerned primarily with how others might speak with the Jews. For Luther the Jews were never at any point in his lifetime "conversation-partners" in the sense that they had something to say that might have influenced either Christian theologians in their conversations with Jews or their theological judgments about them. There is no evidence Luther ever took the initiative to make contact with learned Jews to learn from them as some of his contemporaries did, including the Christian Hebraists⁷ Capito, Pellican, Osiander, and Münster or even the

⁷ Friedman, *Most Ancient Testimony*; Thomas Willi, "Christliche Hebraisten der Renaissance und Reformation," *Judaica* 30 (1974): 78–135; Willi, "Hebraica veritas in Basel, Christliche Hebraistik aus jüdischen Quellen," in *Congress Volume Basel 2001, Supplements to Vetus Testamentum*, Volume 92, ed. A. Lemaire (Leiden, 2002), 377–97; Eric Zimmer, "Jewish and Christian Hebraist Collaboration in Sixteenth Century Germany," *JQR* 71 (1980): 69–88 (an excellent summary with suggestive further references!); Emil Silberstein, *Conrad Pellicanus: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Studiums der hebräischen Sprache in der ersten Hälfte des XVI. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin, 1900); still important is Ludwig Geiger, *Das Studium der hebräischen Sprache in Deutschland vom Ende des XV. bis zur Mitte des XVI. Jahrhunderts* (Breslau, 1870); Burnett, *From Christian Hebraism*; R. Gerald Hobbs, "Monitio amica: Pellican à Capiton sur le danger des lectures rabbinique," in *Horizons Européen de la Réforme en Alsace*, ed. Marijn de Kroon and Marc Lienhard (Strasbourg, 1980), 61–93; see also Detmers, *Reformation und Judentum*, 71–72 and 268–69; on Münster see also Stephen G. Burnett, "A Dialogue of the Deaf: Hebrew Pedagogy and Anti-Jewish Polemic in Sebastian Münster's Messiah of the Christians and the Jews (1529/39)," *ARG* 91 (2000): 168–90; on Osiander see Gerhard Philipp Wolf, "Osiander und die Juden im Kontext seiner Theologie," in *Zeitschrift für bayerische Kirchengeschichte* 53 (1984): 49–77; Brigitte Hägler, *Die Christen und die Judenfrage: Am Beispiel der Schriften Osianders und Ecks zum Ritualmordvorwurf* (Erlangen, 1992).

translators of the Worms Prophets, Hätzer and Denck.⁸ His own narrowly bounded world was located far even from the few remnants of formerly flourishing urban centers of Jewish life⁹ and Jewish learning in the Empire, and the few personal contacts which Luther had had with Jews during the course of his life occurred because others sought him out and asked for his support. One of these encounters had the effect of hardening Luther's negative attitudes against Jews, which, when taken as a whole, were based less on personal experience than upon exegetically based observations, theological judgments, opponents from within Christian tradition, religious-political considerations, and deeply rooted resentments.¹⁰

⁸ On Hätzer und Denck see J. F. Gerhard Goeters, *Ludwig Hätzer [ca. 1500 bis 1529]: Spiritualist und Antitrinitarier* (Gütersloh, 1957); Georg Baring, "Die 'Wormser Propheten': Eine vor-Luthersche evangelische Prophetenübersetzung aus dem Jahre 1527," ARG 31 (1934): 23–41; Baring, "Die 'Wormser Propheten': Eine vor-Luthersche evangelische Prophetenübersetzung aus dem Jahre 1527," in *Dritter Bericht des "Deutschen Bibelarchivs Hamburg"* (1933): 1–9 (Discussion and comparison between Zainer, Luther, and Hätzer imprints), especially 8f; see also WADB 11 II, CXIII–CXIV; for important references to the Jewish community milieu in Worms, see James Beck, "The Anabaptists and the Jews: The Case of Hätzer, Denck and the *Worms Prophets*," MQR 75 (2001): 407–27, especially 409–12. Hätzer mentioned in the preface to his translation of the prophet Baruch of 1528 (VD 16 B 3727; Ex. SB München Catech. 224/2, f. iiv), "that 'some Hebrews' had supported him and provided him with a Hebrew version of the books of Maccabees." On the basis of a textual comparison, Hätzer concluded that "the Latins . . . had a better Bible . . . than the Greeks, which is also many many times closer to the Hebrew and more accurate (to the extent that it concerns the Old Testament)." On the critical significance of the Worms prophets for the Zurich Bible translation and the edition of the prophets of Leo Jud of 1529, see Traudel Himmighöfer, *Die Zürcher Bibel bis zum Tode Zwinglis (1531)* (Mainz, 1995), 286–87 and 308–09.

⁹ For information for the places where Luther lived and might have encountered Jews: *Eisleben*, see GJ III, 1:294: since 1418 the *Mansfeld* counts as lords of the town had allowed Jewish residence; there was one expulsion of the Jews before 1451, which had no lasting impact. The final expulsion of the Jews by Count Albrecht that took place in 1547 can be considered a late consequence of Luther's particular efforts in the wake of his final journey to Eisenach (Luther to his wife, 1 February 1546, WABr 11:275–77 (no. 4195, 275–77, esp. 276, 16–17); cf. 287, 17–18 = LW 50:290–92 and 301–04). In Eisenach in 1510 Jews were allowed to conduct business, but had no right to live there until the modern period. (GJ III, 1:293). In *Mansfeld* one Jew was mentioned in 1434 but nothing further is known (see GJ III, 2:832). In *Magdeburg* (town and archdiocese) the Jews had been driven out on the basis of a decree of Archbishop Ernst in 1493 (*ibid.*, 778); in *Erfurt* there is no reference to Jews between 1453/54 through the eighteenth century (GJ III, 1:310–11). In Wittenberg there had been no Jews in the later Middle Ages or the Reformation period. The only town where Luther had lived and which tolerated Jews was therefore Eisleben where he sought their expulsion. A town that had no Jews living in it was the norm in Luther's experience.

¹⁰ In Luther research two personal encounters, which Luther was said to have

The context then of Luther's preoccupation with Judaism was at no point in his life the "mission to the Jews," but rather the struggle of a Christian professor of theology for the truth of the Gospel and the purity of the embattled Church, which required defense against the enemies of Christ in the woes of the End of Days. Luther neither developed his own initiative nor visibly encouraged the efforts of Protestant pamphleteers,¹¹ who, in the wake of *That Jesus Christ was Born a Jew* (1523) sought to persuade Jews of the truth of the Gospel as understood by Protestants and from their side to open a "dialogue" with Jews. The theological foundations for a mission to

had with Jews, are often mentioned with reference to the question of whether they can be considered to have played a significant role for his attitude toward Judaism or the development of his position. Reinhold Lewin in his still fundamentally important analysis of Luther's discussions concerning the Jews assigned great importance to the conversations, said to have taken place during the Diet of Worms in 1521 in Luther's lodgings. The meeting was first mentioned in a source dated 1575. (*Luthers Stellung*, 8–9 and 15–25) When discussing Isa. 7:14, one of the traditional *Loci classici* for a Christological interpretation of the Old Testament, an argument erupted between Luther and the two Jewish visitors. The Jews were then ejected from the room while the rest of those present laughed. See also Osten-Sacken, *Martin Luther* 77 and n. 214–15, and 108 for further discussion of the authenticity of this encounter. Because this story resists any critical enquiry into its authenticity and no other reference to an encounter between Luther and Jews during the Diet of Worms has been attested, I shall not discuss it further here. Other traces of this Worms tradition can be found in a story that Luther himself told many times of the visit of two or three rabbis to Wittenberg (1525–26). This encounter, which had clearly agitated Luther, confirmed his conviction, based upon biblical interpretation, that the Jews in their obduracy indulged in blaspheming against Christ and appears to have been decisively important for Luther. (For the particulars see Osten-Sacken, *Martin Luther*, 103–04, 158, and 224.) Afterwards Luther began to condemn the Jews with pitiless severity. The first example of this harshness was his exposition of Ps. 109, dedicated to the Hungarian Queen Mary in 1526 (WA 15:595–615 = LW 14:257–77; see Osten-Sacken, *Martin Luther*, 96–97). Alternatively, Luther may have returned to his decisively anti-Jewish position, already apparent in 1513–14, which he had not emphasized in the period when he wrote *That Jesus Christ was Born a Jew* (1523). Even if one is not prepared to attribute any shred of historical reliability, in the sense of a "genuine encounter" (Osten-Sacken, *Martin Luther*, 108–09) to the report that Jews planned to murder Luther (Lewin, *Luthers Stellung*, 39–41; Luther to Amsdorf, 23 January 1525, WABr 3:428, 14–15 with 429 n. 15; Luther to Spalatin, 11 February 1525, WABr 3:439, 4–5; Luther to Amsdorf, before 9 February 1533, WABr 6:427), one must consider the significance of the fact that the idea that the Jews sought to cause Luther's death through some kind of secretive means was believed by some in Luther's immediate circle, such as his wife. See Luther to his wife, 1 February 1546 WABr 11:275–77 = LW 50:290–92. On Katharina von Bora, see *Katharina von Bora: Die Lutherin*, ed. Martin Treu (Wittenberg, 1999), as well as the exhibit catalogue under the same title.

¹¹ Thomas Kaufmann, "Das Judentum in der frühreformatorischen Flugschriftenpublizistik," ZTK 95 (1998): 429–61.

the Jews that Luther spelled out in literary form in 1523, were not for him a reason to take part in missionary activities to the Jews.¹² Despite their argumentative and stylistic peculiarities, the context and significance of the so-called “Jewish writings” can be summarized as “Christian apologetic for Christians.”¹³

Luther's Stance toward Judaism in the Context of Late Medieval and Contemporary Discussion

Among Luther's contemporaries there was a kind of consensus that his book *That Jesus Christ was Born a Jew* represented in various respects a “new” position on the relationship to Judaism, whether or not one accepted such “innovations.” It is equally undeniable that Luther broke with some of his earlier opinions in the comprehensive anti-Jewish policy recommendations that he revealed in the book *On the Jews and Their Lies*, which appeared two decades later. While Luther had earlier regarded accusations of blood libel, host desecration, and ritual murder against the Jews as the “foolish work”¹⁴ of papal atrocity propaganda, he later considered the possibility that these stories could contain a kernel of truth, because “a Christian

¹² The letter to the “baptized Jew” Bernhard is no exception. Rabbi Jacob Gipher came from Göppingen, and later lived in Schweinitz. He had accepted the baptism name of Bernhard, and after his baptism was the recipient of a letter from Luther. Luther had participated in the baptism of his son in March 1523 and sought with his letter and a copy of his book *That Jesus Christ was Born a Jew*, to confront discrimination against converted Jews and their frequent lack of instruction in the Christian faith.

¹³ Kenneth Hagen, “Luther's So-called *Judenschriften*: A Genre Approach,” ARG 90 (1999): 130–58, esp. 150.

¹⁴ WA 11:336, 26 = LW 45:229. Luther adduced one concrete example of the indefensible or absurd accusations against the Jews by referring to the assertion that the Jews had to have “Christian blood so that they do not stink,” adding “I know not what other foolishness.” On the notion that the Jews needed the blood of Christian children to conceal their odor, see the example of the Eendingen ritual murder trial of 1470. (Hsia, *Myth of Ritual Murder*, 21) Hsia provided an instructive reference to an “ethnography of blood” using the example of the Trent ritual murder trial in *Trent*, 81–94. Detmers also provides statistical information about ritual murder trials in *Reformation und Judentum*, 104. One example of host desecration was the Breslau case of 1453. See Hermina Joldersma, “Specific or Generic ‘Gentile Tale?’ Sources on the Breslau Host Desecration (1453) Reconsidered,” ARG 95 (2004): 6–33. Still useful for its collection of material is Peter Browe, “Die Hostien-schändung der Juden im Mittelalter,” *Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde* 34 (1926): 167–97.

could have no worse enemy than a Jew."¹⁵ This transformation in the practical alternatives for dealing with Jews is reflected in the reformer, who had criticized Christians in 1523, because they had previously treated the Jews as "dogs not human beings,"¹⁶ yet twenty years later demanded that the Jews should be "hunted down like rabid dogs."¹⁷

A publicly measurable effect of Luther's *That Jesus Christ was Born a Jew*, which appeared in early 1523, may be seen in that it was the first of several pamphlets by Protestant authors that were concerned specifically with the conversion of the Jews. When Strasbourg Protestant printer Johannes Herwagen¹⁸ printed a Latin translation of a letter of instruction from Moroccan Rabbi Samuel to one Rabbi Isaac (which had been widely circulated in the Middle Ages), in

¹⁵ See WA 53:482, 8–18 = LW 47:217. See also WA 53:520, 12–14; 522, 3–4; 526, 35; 530, 18–19, and 538, 28–29 = LW 47:265, 267, 273, 277, and 288.

¹⁶ WA 11:315, 3–4 = LW 45:200.

¹⁷ WA 53:541, 36–542, 1 = LW 47:292.

¹⁸ On Herwagen, see Josef Benzing, *Die Buchdrucker des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts im deutschen Sprachgebiet*, 2nd ed. (Wiesbaden, 1982), 441; Miriam Usher Chrisman, *Lay Culture, Learned Culture: Books and Social Change in Strasbourg 1480–1599* (New Haven, 1982), 4 and 6; Benzing and Chrisman attribute 67 imprints to the university graduate (Chrisman, *Learned Culture*, 14–15 and 67) and classify him among the "intermediate printers," although he regularly used more than his own presses (9). Herwagen later married Johann Froben's widow and became the head of the most important Basel printing house (22), decisively increasing his Protestant publication profile (42 and 157). For a list of his imprints, see Josef Benzing, *Bibliographie Strasbourgeoise* (Baden-Baden, 1981), and Jean Muller, *Bibliographie Strasbourgeoise*, vols. 2–3 (Baden-Baden, 1985/86). I consider it probable that Herwagen received the encouragement to print this letter of instruction and probably even a trial exemplar of it from the Hebraist Capito who had moved to Strasbourg in early 1523. See Thomas Kaufmann, *Die Abendmahlstheologie der Straßburger Reformatoren bis 1528* (Tübingen, 1992), 122–23. The translation of Herwagen's book was made by Capito's Basel student Ludwig Hätzer (VD 16 S 1564; cf. Goeters, *Hätzer*, 36–37; Evidence from Hätzer's own copy (*ibid.*, 36 n. 2), suggests, with regard to Hätzer's programmatic interest, that the Word of God "would teach . . . all people, including the Jews." (Hätzer in the context of the second Zurich disputation; see Z 2:674 and 15–16). It was probably not done at the initiative of Augsburg printer Silvan Otmar (according to Goeters, *Hätzer*, 36), but was his own. Hätzer had contact with Augsburg patrician Andreas Rem, to whom he dedicated a translation of Bugenhagen's exposition of the smaller Pauline epistles he had made. (*Ibid.*, 38–39 and 44; Hans-Joachim Köhler, *Bibliographie der Flugschriften des 16. Jahrhunderts*, part I: *Das frühe 16. Jahrhundert (1501–1530)*, vol. 1, 1991, no. 441; microfiche nos. 1835–37, no. 4695; VD 16 B 9243). Rem sought, for his part, a Latin translation of *That Jesus Christ was Born a Jew* from from Justus Jonas. See WA 11:310: "vestrum [sc. Rems] [. . .] consilium [. . .] hoc opusculum in eam transfundi linguam, cuius usus in omnibus gentibus latissime patet." Had Rem been encouraged by Hätzer to do this?

which the former “demonstrated” the plausibility of a Christological interpretation of the Old Testament without recourse to the New Testament, he noted in the preface to the reader that the Jews could be won through a pious spirit for the true Christian faith, but not through superstitious arrogance or “Pharisaical ceremonies.”¹⁹ This implicit criticism of the previous attempts of the papal church to propagate the faith among the Jews reflects a conviction that Luther had expressed shortly before in print, that “our fools the popes, bishops, sophists and monks, the crude donkey heads” who “up until now have treated the Jews” so that “a good Christian” would have fallen from faith, and a Jew would sooner “become a sow than a Christian.”²⁰ Even if a Jew had been baptized, he would have been subject to “popery and monkery” and would have lacked “Christian doctrine and life.”²¹ But now the “rising Gospel” confronts the Jews for the first time in centuries with Christian truth. If they were treated, as Luther said, in a “brotherly” way [brüderlich]²² or as Herwagen expressed it “with piety” [pie],²³ it opened a new opportunity “that also some Jews [. . .] would be attracted to the Christian faith,”²⁴ that is, they could be “converted.”²⁵

The reason for the deep disappointment that Luther’s later “Jewish writings” clearly caused even among Jews must be sought in the expectations that he aroused in his pamphlet of 1523.²⁶ A Jewish contemporary summarized the importance of the pamphlet this way.

He [Luther] and his followers said that one should not place a heavy yoke upon the Jews, but should treat them honorably and with love

¹⁹ WA 11:314, 28–315, 2 = LW 45:200.

²⁰ Ibid., 315, 5–6 = ibid.

²¹ Ibid., 315, 22 = ibid.

²² Ibid. for both.

²³ Ibid. for both.

²⁴ WA 11:314, 27–28 = LW 45:200.

²⁵ Ibid., 315, 23 = LW 45:201.

²⁶ Fundamental, and not yet superseded for present research remains: Haim Hillel Ben-Sasson, “The Reformation in Contemporary Jewish Eyes,” *Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities* 4 (1969–70): 239–326, especially 255–56; Stefan Schreiner, “Jüdische Reaktionen auf die Reformation—einige Bemerkungen,” *Judaica* 39 (1983): 150–65; Osten-Sacken, *Martin Luther*, 35–37 [edition and translation of a Jewish manuscript, probably written soon after 1543, referring to Luther]. Ben-Sasson, “Disputation,” 385–89; Carl Cohen, “Martin Luther and his Jewish Contemporaries,” *JSS* 25 (1963): 195–204.

and so bring them nearer [in this way to the Church]. He provided proof for this and wrote a book “Jesus is from the Family of Israel.”²⁷

While it is not unlikely that the symptoms of a messianic-apocalyptic movement, which demonstrably grew stronger among Jews during the 1520s,²⁸ had a direct connection to the Reformation movement, it is perhaps no longer possible to provide a definitive answer. Since Luther had advocated in as publicly effective a way as any of his contemporaries that Jews should be tolerated and that they should be allowed “to labor, to do business and to have human fellowship among us,”²⁹ and he blamed the papal church that the Jews had up until now remained excluded from the Christian faith,³⁰ his position would have seemed to the majority of knowledgeable contemporaries

²⁷ Quoted by Osten-Sacken, *Martin Luther*, 37; cf. Schreiner, “Jüdische Reaktion,” 44 and 157–58.

²⁸ Some references in Kaufmann, “Das Judentum,” 442–43; Ben-Sasson, “Reformation;” Andrew C. Gow, *The Red Jews: Antisemitism in an Apocalyptic Age 1200–1600* (Leiden, 1995), especially 141–42; on the report of the reconquest of Jerusalem by a Jewish army in 1530, see also CR 2:119; CR 10:130; on David Reubeni see the few references in Detmers, *Reformation und Judentum*, 82–83 and 133. A. Z. Aescoly attempted, on the basis of philological observations, to ascribe to Reubeni a European origin: “David Reubeni in the Light of History,” *JQR* 28 (1937/38): 1–45. Martin Jacobs sought to interpret Reubeni’s mission in the context of early modern European expansion in “David Ha-Re’uveni—ein ‘zionistisches Experiment’ im Kontext der europäischen Expansion des 16. Jahrhunderts?” in *An der Schwelle zur Moderne: Jüden in der Renaissance*, ed. Giuseppe Velti and Annette Winkelmann (Leiden, 2003) 191–206 [referring also to the standard edition of Reubeni’s travel account on 191–92, n. 3]. Jacobs also refers to the messianic expectations among Portuguese conversos (200), connecting Reubeni’s mission with the expulsion of the Jews from Spain and Portugal. A direct link between Reubeni’s mission and the Reformation can almost certainly be dismissed out of hand, but not the impact upon Reformation-era pamphleteers of the news that a Jewish army had reconquered Palestine. On the controversial question of whether Reubeni’s messianism was influenced by Jerusalem kabbalist R. Abraham b. Eliezer ha-Levi’s calculation concerning the immediate arrival of the Messiah during the 1520s, see the references in Jacobs (206 n. 63). In the Prague Jewish community the messianic leader Solomon Molkho was honored by a schismatic group, standing in opposition to Josel of Rosheim. They preserved relics, including a cloak and a banner belonging to him. Illustrations in *Prague Ghetto in the Renaissance Period*, ed. Otto Muneles and Jan Herman (Prague, 1965), 27–28. On Josel’s reaction to Solomon Molkho, see the references in Schreiner’s, “Jüdische Reaktionen,” 26 and 153; Joseph [i.e., Josel] of Rosheim, *Historical Writings*, 187ff. From a letter of Abraham b. Eliezer ha-Levi from 1525, in which Luther was mentioned (cited by Schreiner, *ibid.*, 151f and 155), it is clear at least that the messianic expectations of some Jewish kabbalists were connected to news of Luther.

²⁹ WA 11:336, 28–29 = LW 45:229.

³⁰ Cf. especially WA 11:314, 28–29 = LW 45:200.

to be closer to that of Reuchlin, the “friend of the Jews”³¹ than to his opponents. The practical tensions, or mental dissonance, between Luther’s retreat from the position on Jewish policy that he advocated in 1523 and its effect upon the Jewish policies of Protestant cities and territorial states through the 1540s constitutes a key issue within the larger problem of Luther and the Jews. The policy of Jewish toleration for the purpose of Jewish conversion in Luther’s first “Jewish writing” also offered Luther’s Catholic opponents an excuse to charge Luther and his followers with “Judaizing tendencies.”³²

³¹ Note Oberman’s important distinctions in *Roots of Anti-Semitism*, 45–50; see also *Reuchlin und die Juden*, ed. Arno Herzig and Julius H. Schoeps (Sigmaringen, 1993); for historical context, see Kirn, *Bild vom Juden*; Hans Peterse, *Jacobus Hoogstraeten gegen Johannes Reuchlin* (Mainz, 1995); on the pamphlet war between Pfefferkorn and Reuchlin, see Johannes Schwitalla, “Dialogisches im Reuchlin-Pfefferkorn-Streit,” in *Die Welt im Augenspiegel: Johannes Reuchlin und seine Zeit*, ed. Daniela Hacke and Bernd Roeck (Stuttgart, 2002), 169–86; Ellen Martin, *Die deutschen Schriften des Johannes Pfefferkorn: Zum Problem des Judenhasses und der Intoleranz in der Zeit der Vorreformation* (Göppingen, 1994), especially 134–35 and 210–11; Erika Rummel, *The Case Against Johann Reuchlin: Religious and Social Controversy in Sixteenth-Century Germany* (Toronto, 2002), especially part A, 3–40. On Reuchlin’s kabbalistic interests, Karl E. Grözinger, “Reuchlin und die Kabbala,” in *Reuchlin und die Juden*, 175–87; on the overall intellectual context see *Christliche Kabbala*, ed. Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann (Stuttgart, 2003) (see the editor’s introduction, “Johannes Reuchlin und die Anfänge der christlichen Kabbala,” 4–48; Stéphane Toussaint, “Ficin, Pic de Mirandole, Reuchlin et le pouvoir des noms,” 67–76; and Pierre Béhar, “Von der Mystik zur Magie: Die Verwandlung der christlichen Kabbala von Reuchlin zu Agrippa von Nettesheim,” 101–08). Reuchlin supported—as the Luther of 1523 did!—a Jewish right to reside in the Holy Roman Empire, qua citizenship, on the basis of civil law, a thesis which rejected an enduring divine punishment for Jewish rejection of the messianic claims of Jesus. See his *Tütsch Missive: Warumb die Juden solang im ellend sind* (Pforzheim [Thomas Anshelm 1505?]); microfiche 395 no. 1075; (fols. A 2v; A 5r), repr. RSW IV, 1:6, 9–10 and 10, 31–32).

³² Petrus Sylvius, for example, around 1527 saw Luther’s stance on the Turks, in which he favored no active military resistance, as a decisive motive for a Turkish invasion. In an analogous fashion, Luther approved the subordination of Christians by the Jews. “[. . .] so die verstockten Juden durch ihren jüdischen neyd und hass wollten den christlichen glauben und alle christliche stette und lande verwüsten und alle christgleubige erschlagen und umbbringen, solte man solchen neyd und bösen fürnemen nicht widerstehen, darumb das mann möchte sprechen, es were der wille odder straffunge odder verhengnis Gottes? Und one zweyffel durch dise unchristliche betriegliche ertichtung [i.e., Luthers], ja schedlicher und strefflicher denn verretterische rathgebunge würden nicht alleyn die Türcken vor IX hundert jaren, sonder auch die Juden vor tausent jaren die ganze christenheit ausgetilget haben.” Petrus Sylvius, *Eine klare Beweysung, wie Luther würde sein eine Ursache des steten Einzugs der Türcken*, quoted from a version in *Flugschriften gegen die Reformation (1525–1530)* vol. 1 (Berlin, 2000), ed. Adolf Laube and Ulman Weis, 429–53, here at 433, 26–35. For Eck, the anonymously written (by Osiander) attack upon accusations of

Luther's pamphlet of 1523 was, from the perspective of quantitative history, one of the most successful publications concerning the Jewish question of the entire sixteenth century.³³ The historical significance

ritual murder (see Osiander, GA 7:216–48) was a blasphemous defense of the “blood-thirsty Jews.” [A 3r] through a “Jew-father,” a “Lutheran deceiver” [G 2r], who would even “make beautiful” child murder by Jews, a “fact” that Eck had already asserted [N 4r]. [Osiander's] assertion that through the Hebrew language Christians could “again come to a correct understanding of their faith” (Osiander, GA 7:233, 14–15), which represented an implicit agreement with Reuchlin's criticism of the burning of Jewish books (cf. *ibid.*, 233, 12f), was turned by Eck against the “Jew-father” into a plea for the burning of the Talmud. (O 3rf). With reference both to the destruction of images and sacramental profanation Eck saw the “Lutherans” acting in accordance with Jewish perspectives (cf. T 1vf); cf. Johannes Eck, *Ains Judenbüchtlins verlegung: darin ain Christ / gantzer Christenheit zu schmach / will es geschehe den Juden unrecht in bezichtigung der Christen Kinder mordt . . .* (Ingolstadt: Alexander Weissenhorn, 1541); VD 16 E 383; microfiche [after 1530] 592–93 no. 1129. On the conflict between Eck and Osiander concerning the Jews, see most recently Hsia, *Myth of Ritual Murder*, 124–31 and Oberman, *Roots of Anti-Semitism*, 47, and especially Hägler, *Die Christen und die ‘Judenfrage,’* 64–65. “Old believers” assumed that some adherents of the Reformation were of Jewish descent (for example Johannes Böschenstein in 1523 [cf. Osiander, GA 1:67–76] and Andreas Osiander [“quod Iudeus esset et insidiaretur rei christianae tranquillitati,” Melancthon to Spalatin, ca. mid-March 1523, MBW.T. 2:61, 9–10 (no. 271), and later also Bucer [see Friedman, *The Most Ancient Testimony*, 201–02, n. 17]). This should be understood as a deliberate polemical strategy to trace the Reformation back to Judaism. This was the goal of the rumor about Alexander, probably floated by Erasmus in order to discredit him, that he was of Jewish descent. Luther gladly made use of it from a polemical perspective. See Brecht, *Luther* 1:395, 416, and 440; Capito to Luther, 4 December 1520, WABr 2:222–26 (no. 357), here at 223, 29–31 and n. 16, and 225 [reference to the source of the rumor]. To Lazarus Spengler's acceptance of the rumor as an example of the “religious and ideological anti-Judaism contained within a biological and genetic anti-Semitism,” Berndt Hamm demonstrated that the defamation of persons through the imputation of Jewish ancestry even in the early Reformation period took different forms. See Hamm, *Lazarus Spengler (1479–1534)* (Tübingen, 2004), 231–32. The Hebraist Böschenstein, whose tenure as an instructor in Wittenberg during 1519 failed because of Luther's primarily theological interest in the Hebrew language and his own distance from Hebrew philology as an academic instructor, was characterized by Luther as “a Christian in name, but in essence most Jewish.” (WABr 1:368, 13 (no. 167); Luther to Lang 13 April 1519), a Jewish ancestry which Böschenstein himself denied and which itself stemmed from a denunciation. (Osiander, GA 1:69, 1–3, 70, 12–13, and 75, 22–23), and which reflected Luther's own critical stance toward a non-theological “domesticated” study of Hebrew. Luther himself assumed in 1523 that the “papists” were “denouncing me as a Jew.” (WA 11:316, 3 = LW 45:201). On Böschenstein, see Gustav Bauch, “Die Einführung des Hebräischen in Wittenberg,” *MGWJ* 48 [n. s. 12] (1904): 22–32, 77–86, 145–60, 214–23, 283–99, 328–40, and 461–90, here at 151f; Cf. MBW.T 1:90–91 (no. 34).

³³ See the references in Kaufmann, “Das Judentum,” and “Die theologische Bewertung des Judentums im Protestantismus des späteren 16. Jahrhunderts (1530–1600),” *ARG* 91 (2000): 191–237; see also B. Schanner, “Flugschrift und Pasquill

of the position Luther developed can be seen above all in his lack of mention of the “hardening” of the Jews as a motive of their refusal of Christianity, and his charge that the Roman Church bore guilt and responsibility for the Jews’ not finding their way to the Christian faith. Luther’s exegetical and rhetorical strategy consisted of demonstrating on the basis of the Old Testament, referring to relevant texts interpreted according to the literal sense, that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah who was promised in the Old Testament, and that a faith that was “true to their fathers, the Prophets and the Patriarchs”³⁴ was only possible if they turned to Christ. Luther’s most significant statements, from the perspective of practical consequences, were his criticism of violent measures against the Jews as a “defense of lies”—such as the accusation that “they must have Christian blood”³⁵—as well as his demand of a revocation of the prohibition on Jewish work and membership in guilds, and for a repeal of ghettoization.³⁶ By making social and economic daily contacts possible between Christians and Jews, Luther was confidently convinced that the attractiveness of the Gospel would be brought near to them.³⁷ This idea of a Christianization process implemented through the use of individual communication and social interactions in daily life, a utopian idea under the conditions of the early sixteenth century, bore the stamp of Luther’s euphoric experience of the effective power of the Word of God. It pushed to the side the commonly held anti-Jewish resentments, which were known to the Wittenberg theology professor and which he in part shared and had expressed in his earlier writings and would do so again later. The “utopian” character of Luther’s conception of the Christian congregation was reflected in a tractate that appeared about the same time as Luther’s “Jewish writing” in 1523: *That the Christian Assembly or Congregation has the Right and Power*

als Kampfmittel gegen die Juden,” (PhD diss., Vienna: Grund- und Integrativwissenschaftlichen Fakultät, 1983 [typewritten]) [NB Wien 1.210.656-C].

³⁴ WA 11:315, 16 = LW 45:200.

³⁵ Ibid., 336, 25–26 = *ibid.*, 229.

³⁶ Ibid., 336, 27ff = *ibid.*

³⁷ “If we really want to help them, we must be guided in our dealings with them not by papal law but by the law of Christian love. We must receive them cordially, and permit them to trade and work with us, that they may have occasion and opportunity to associate with us, hear our Christian teaching, and witness our Christian life. If some of them should prove stiff-necked, what of it? After all, we ourselves are not all good Christians either.” LW 45:229 = WA 11:336, 40–34.

to *Judge All Teaching*,³⁸ in which he conferred to the congregation the right to judge doctrine, deriving the right from the nature of being a Christian as such, including the right “to preach and teach the Gospel to the heathen or non-Christians.”³⁹ Also this idealistic portrait of a congregation moved by faith and love, which Luther assumed here, could not be translated into the genuine conditions of early Reformation church organization.

Luther’s *That Jesus Christ was Born a Jew* was intended to deepen the understanding of the Christian Gospel for a Jew who had already been baptized,⁴⁰ or for those who wished to accept the Jewish mission, to provide an aid intended to simplify the rebuttal of Jewish charges against Christianity, and to offer the Jews the mention of their blood relationship with Christ as a strategy for their conversion. Luther himself never attempted to establish direct contact with Jews, either with this or any of the other “Jewish writings.”⁴¹ He

³⁸ WA 11:401–16 = LW 39:301–14. Otto Clemen dated it no later than May 18/19, 1523. Clemen and Albert Leitzmann, *Luthers Werke in Auswahl*, 8 vols. (Bonn, 1912–33; repr. Berlin, 1959–67), 2:395 [text in 3:72–84].

³⁹ WA 11:412,18–19 = LW 11:310.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 315, 3–13 = LW 45:200.

⁴¹ Detmers’ thesis that had Luther “addressing the Jews directly” with his book *That Jesus Christ was Born a Jew*, (*Reformation und Judentum*, 106) is left behind in the differentiated perspectives which the author develops in other passages (66–67) and cannot be maintained, even if one understands “baptized Jews” to be among the “Jews.” Luther admitted that he would “like to do a service to the Jews,” (WA 11:325, 17–18 = LW 45: 213), wishing and hoping even “to win . . . some Jews to the Christian faith” (*ibid.*, 314, 27–28 = *ibid.*, 200), yet he only occasionally asks rhetorical questions, which would imply a context of disputation: “Now I ask the Jews . . .” and “Now I ask them both, Jews and everyone else . . .” (*ibid.*, 330, 27 = *ibid.*, 220 and *ibid.*, 323, 31 = *ibid.*, 223) Jews are not directly addressed as Jews, but rather Luther spoke to insufficiently educated adherents of the Reformation (*ibid.*, 333, 23–24 and 333, 34 = *ibid.*, 224), who might wish to take up the Jewish mission or to participate in intensive catechetical work with baptized Jews. “Baptized” Jews should henceforth no longer, like the Marranos, “remain Jews under the cloak of Christianity for the rest of their days” (*ibid.*, 315, 11–12 = *ibid.*, 200). For them Luther made available a manual for argumentation in order to counter Jewish objections against belief in Christ. Hence he proceeds, like Paul with the “weak” in Corinth, to provide “milk” first, that is to bring people to Jesus as Messiah first (*ibid.*, 336, 16–17 = *ibid.*, 229). “After that they may drink wine, and learn also that he is true God. For they have been led astray so long and so far that one must deal gently with them, as with people who have been all too strongly indoctrinated to believe that God cannot be man.” (*ibid.*, 336, 18–21 = *ibid.*, 229). From this perspective the title of the book is a summary of the first fundamental goal for understanding, which was to bring the Jews near through a strategy of accommodation: that they were “of the lineage of Christ,” the “blood relatives, cousins and brothers of our Lord” (*ibid.*, 315, 26–27 = *ibid.*, 201).

offered a theological and didactic foundation for the Jewish mission, but offered no advice on how, through whom, and in what form it should be carried out. He was obligated as a prophet of God to proclaim the Gospel to the Jews also, but whether it bore fruit or remained without effect was not his responsibility.

With the pamphlet *That Jesus Christ was Born a Jew* Luther raised the level of the religious claims on those Jews who had turned to Christianity in relationship to the conversion policy of the pre-Reformation sacramental church, whose guarantees of legal privileges and material property were tied to baptism,⁴² in an almost dramatic fashion. For Luther what mattered was that the Jews became “true Christians,”⁴³ that they should “convert,”⁴⁴ that is, find a relationship with the true faith of their Fathers,⁴⁵ as in Luther’s understanding could be won only in light of the Gospel of Christ contained in the Old Testament. Baptism as the goal of a Christian Jewish mission played no role in the first of his “Jewish writings.” The “pious baptized Jew,”⁴⁶ who Luther mentioned had told him that “had the baptized Jews of our time not heard the Gospel” they would have “remained Jews under a Christian cloak,”⁴⁷ demonstrated that a Christianization strategy that had Jewish baptism as its goal had not reached far enough. In the background of the pamphlet stood accusations by adherents of the “old faith” of Luther’s Christological and Mariological errors that they raised at the Diet of Nuremberg in 1523. They were probably based upon misunderstood references in Luther’s exposition of the Magnificat in 1521. The accusation that Luther denied the true divinity of Christ especially may have induced him to write his proof of the divinity of Christ on the basis of Old Testament texts with reference to the Jews.

⁴² Battenberg provides instructive orientation for the political tensions between ecclesiastical, imperial, and territorial Jewish policies in the Empire in *Das europäische Zeitalter*, vol. 1, 157–58; concerning canon law issues in the fifteenth century, which above all bear the marks of developments in Spain, see Max Simonsohn, *Die kirchliche Judengesetzgebung im Zeitalter der Reformkonzilien von Konstanz und Basel* (Breslau, 1912) and Wilhelm Güde, *Die rechtliche Stellung der Juden in den Schriften deutscher Juristen des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts* (Sigmaringen, 1981).

⁴³ WA 11:315, 9 and 15 = LW 45:200; “right, good Christians.”

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 315, 23; in so doing, Luther assumes that also among “us Christians” that there was still room for improvement. “For even we ourselves are not yet all very far along, not to speak of having arrived.” *Ibid.*, 315: 23–24 = LW 45:201.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 315, 15–16 and 325, 16–21 = *ibid.*, 200 and 213.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 315, 10 = *ibid.*, 200 [Case changed by the author].

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 315, 11–12 = *ibid.*

Apart from the accusations made by “old believers,” the only reference to Luther’s own historical context was his conversation with a “pious baptized Jew,”⁴⁸ from whom he learned that baptized Jews “had they not heard the Gospel, would have remained Jews for their entire life under a Christian cloak.”⁴⁹ Since as far as I can determine there were no baptized Jews in Luther’s circle at this time except a one-time rabbi, Jacob Gipher of Göppingen, who took the baptism name Bernhard,⁵⁰ Luther’s conversation with a baptized Jew very likely took place with him. Luther met Bernhard, who was baptized sometime before the summer of 1519, and who had taught Hebrew for a time at Wittenberg,⁵¹ at the beginning of March 1523. Luther and a small group from Wittenberg went to nearby Schweinitz, where they witnessed the baptism of Bernhard’s son, born of his marriage with Karlstadt’s maid.⁵²

⁴⁸ Ibid., 315, 10 = *ibid.*

⁴⁹ Ibid., 315, 10–12 = *ibid.*

⁵⁰ See the biographical information in WABr 2:102–04 and n. 1; Lewin, *Luthers Stellung*, 32.

⁵¹ Bauch, “Die Einführung des Hebräischen in Wittenberg,” especially 291–97. Bauch emphasized that the academic establishment of Hebrew began in Wittenberg through the motivation of the “church militant” rather than through humanism. (WABr 2:22) They began it with the goal of making Hebrew “serviceable and to use the stranger in the struggle with its natural mother [i.e., Judaism].” See Bauch’s excellent survey of the Christian efforts to establish Hebrew learning in the Western Middle Ages. (*Ibid.*, 24–25).

⁵² Luther to Spalatin, Schweinitz, 8 March 1523, WABr 3:41–43 (no. 590). Among the Wittenberg participants were also Justus Jonas, who had probably known Bernhard since 1520, as the latter had matriculated at the University of Erfurt, and had been demonstrably present there since 1519. (WABr 3:102–03 n. 1) The report that occurs in a polemical passage from the context of the competition of the universities of Wittenberg and Leipzig, which states that “a certain Bernhard [speaks] German and “does not know a single word of Latin or Greek” (cited according to WABr 3:103), should not be overstressed. See also Osten-Sacken, *Martin Luther*, 94–95 n. 336. From the dedicatory entry of Bernhard upon a Hebrew imprint that he sent to Melanchthon, it is clear that he knew at least elementary Latin. A German text in Hebrew characters was reprinted by Bauch, “Einführung,” 292 n. 3. The latest possible date for the appearance of the Wittenberg or already the Strasbourg printing of *That Jesus Christ was Born a Jew* (so WA 11:307) (see Kaufmann, “Das Judentum,” 432–33 n. 22) must have been the beginning of June. Brosseder’s assertion that “Luther must have written his book [*That Jesus Christ was Born a Jew*] immediately after the letter of 22 January (WABr 3, no. 574, 18–20 [Luther’s news concerning the accusations of Archduke Ferdinand against him regarding Spalatin]) because already a reprint of the book was in preparation in Strasbourg at the beginning of June (Brosseder, *Luthers Stellung*, 345 n. 3), an assertion which does not decisively follow from the statement of Nicolaus Grebel that he quotes (Kaufman, “Das

Luther seems to have played a crucial role in Bernhard's intensive conversion to Christianity, which exceeded any outward Christianization of baptism.⁵³ Bernhard exemplified in his own person that deeper turning to the Christian faith, which in Luther's judgment was possible for a Jew only in the wake of the present "rise of the Gospel." In the same letter where Luther described to Spalatin his participation in the baptism of Bernhard's son, he referred to the decisions of the Diet of Nuremberg that related to the *Causa Lutheri*, which had just arrived in Wittenberg.⁵⁴ He planned to answer these decisions with his own publication.⁵⁵ It was probably Luther's contact with the baptized Jew Bernhard in early 1523 that provided the occasion to address the position of the Reformation movement toward Jewish conversion, a question he raised in his exposition of the Magnificat, and which the indictments against him made by the Diet of Nuremberg had drawn attention to. By responding with a book on that topic, Luther could provide an in-depth discussion, which at the same time allowed him to respond to rumors about his teaching. Luther sought with his book *That Jesus Christ was Born a Jew* to prepare the way for a "Christianization" of Jewish converts that would go further than simple "baptism-conversion." The most important means to this end would be the promises of Christ contained in the Old Testament. Justus Jonas' Latin translation of the book also contained a letter of Luther to "Bernhard, who had converted from Judaism,"⁵⁶ which documented a successful example of Protestant

Judentum"), reflects a lack of familiarity with the speed of printing in the early Reformation generally, and with reference to Luther's works in particular.

⁵³ Petrus Mosellanus, at whose house Bernhard had lived in Leipzig, emphasized that he was a trustworthy person. Bernhard acted as the carrier of a letter from Mosellanus to Capito (13 November 1520). Oliver Millet, *Correspondence de Wolfgang Capiton [1478–1541]* (Strasbourg, 1982), 20. Mosellanus, who was one of the best regarded Hebraists in the service of Electoral Mainz, whom the University of Leipzig sought to call there, characterized Bernhard as "a Jew and friend" who had been converted "whole heartedly" [von Herzensgrunde] (cited according to translated partial quote in Johann Wilhelm Baum, *Capito und Butzer, Straßburgs Reformatoren* (Elberfeld, 1860), 52). In 1520 Bernhard carried around with him a "certain small book of Luther's." WABr 3:103.

⁵⁴ Concerning the book see *Deutsche Reichstagsakten, Jüngere Reihe*, vol. 3: *Deutsche Reichstagsakten unter Kaiser Karl V*, ed. Adolf Wrede (Gotha, 1901; repr. 1963), 418 n.; WABr 3:42 n. 3.

⁵⁵ WA 12:58–67.

⁵⁶ The inscription read, "Epistola . . . Lutheri ad Bernhardum e Iudaismo conversum," WA 11:310; printed in WABr 3:101–04 (no. 629). The letter is not dated;

Jewish conversion, whose goal was not simply outward baptism, but above all a spiritual rebirth.⁵⁷ Bernhard's conversion gave a measure of the plausibility and effectiveness of the evangelical movement that had emerged from Wittenberg in regard to the Jewish mission, which the papal church had never matched.⁵⁸ The Latin translation of *That Jesus Christ was Born a Jew* was intended to demonstrate at the level of "international opinion" the superiority of the renewal of Christendom, which was emerging from Wittenberg by using the successful Reformation Jewish mission, as exemplified by Bernhard. It appeared to justify the hope that "many"⁵⁹ Jews would find their way to the Christian faith.

the only persuasive reference point for dating the letter is the letter from Jonas and Andreas Rem in Augsburg, which was also included in the Latin translation (1524). Gustav Kawerau, *Der Briefwechsel des Justus Jonas*, vol. 1 (Halle, 1884; repr. Hildesheim 1964), 92–93 (no. 87). WA 11:309–10. The proposed date of June 1523 for the letter from Luther to Bernhard in WABr 3, no. 629 is hypothetical. It is uncertain whether Luther sent a German printing of the book to Bernhard and, if so, whether he sent the letter that was printed in Latin in 1524 to him either in German or Latin with the book. I think it probable that the Latin printing was the original use of the letter to Bernhard. In so doing, the "baptized Jew" achieved the status of an example of the successful Protestant Jewish mission and policy, but which was at the same time intended to equip the addressee for the task of missionizing among the Jews. (WABr 3:102, 44–45).

⁵⁷ "Proinde ad te visum est mittere hunc libellum pro roboranda et certa facienda fide tua in Christum, quem recenter et evangelio didicisti, ac nunc demum etiam in spiritu baptisatus et ex Deo natus es." WABr 3:102, 41–44.

⁵⁸ Cf the "frightening" reference to mere outward conversion under the popes, WABr 3:101:6–7 and Lewin, *Luthers Stellung*, 76; WA 47:466, 22–23; WATr 5:83, 1–19 (no. 5354): examination of Michael, a Jew wishing to be baptized, as to the sincerity of his motives by Luther in the summer of 1540; WATr 6:352, 16–30 (no. 7038): story of a Cologne dean whose epitaph symbolized the deadly hatred of Christians and Jews.

⁵⁹ "Verum cum iam oriatur et fulgeat lux aurea euangelii, spes est, fore, ut multi Iudeorum serio et fideliter convertantur et sic rapiantur ex animo ad Christum [. . .]" WABr 3:107, 37–39. The "being led to Christ" Luther understood in the sense of a "strategic accommodation" to Jews, because he wished that they recognize at first only that "this man Jesus as the true Messiah." (WA 11:336, 17 = LW 45:201). But he refrained from explaining the doctrine of the two natures of Christ. In a sermon given in the presence of Christian II of Denmark (2 February 1524), Luther explained this missionary strategy this way: "Although it is indeed an important article of faith, that Christ is the Son of God, [that is, for bringing Jews to faith in Christ], at first I would not speak of it but would conduct and send him, so that he would first conceive a love toward the Lord Christ. I would say that he was a man like other men who was sent from God, and what good God had done for humanity through him. Once I have helped this to break into his heart . . . I would wish to bring him further, so that he believes that Christ was God." WA 15:447, 13–20.

The “truly converted” Jew had a strategic significance in the conflict with the Roman foe and was an important argument during the early 1520s in the debate for public opinion in a Christian society. For Luther, the conflict over the conversion of the Jews in the year 1523 was indivisibly linked with the fight against the enemies of Christ in the Roman Church whose failure with regard to the Jews was exposed. To be sure, the propagandistic use of Jewish conversion in early Reformation pamphlets produced a growth in expectations concerning the Jews and the adherents of the Reformation, which indirectly contributed to Luther’s making a fundamental change in his position on the Jewish question.

*Instances of Continuity and Discontinuity in Luther’s Stance
Concerning the Jews*

The religious, exegetical, and theological argument with Judaism comprises a theme in the life of Luther that came to dominate the final years of his life for reasons both external and internal. Luther’s long preoccupation with his commentary on the book of Genesis, the bulk of whose content comprises the academic activity of the last decade of his life (1535–45),⁶⁰ intensified his conflict with rabbinic exegesis.⁶¹ His abhorrence of it, and the polemical and scatological diction⁶² characteristic of Luther’s “last battles,”⁶³ which he employed in his fight against the enemies of Christ at the immanent approach of the End of Days, stamped both the form and content of his later “Jewish writings.”

The external causes which spurred Luther to compose four thematically unique polemical writings against the Jews between 1538 and 1543, are diverse and only partially discernable. For example,

⁶⁰ Concerning the editorial and transmission-historical problems of the Genesis lectures (WA 42–44 = LW 1–8) see Erich Seeberg, *Studien zu Luthers Genesis-Vorlesung: Zugleich ein Beitrag zur Frage nach dem alten Luther* (Gütersloh, 1932); Peter Meinhold, *Die Genesisvorlesung Luthers und ihre Herausgeber* (Stuttgart, 1936); and Brecht, *Luther*, 3:136–41.

⁶¹ See above all Osten-Sacken, *Martin Luther*, 142–43.

⁶² Edwards, *Luther’s Last Battles*, especially 115–42.

⁶³ Heiko A. Oberman, “Teufelsdreck: Eschatology and Scatology in the ‘old’ Luther,” in Oberman, *The Impact of the Reformation* (Grand Rapids, 1994), 51–68.

we cannot establish from a source critical investigation, who or what actually moved Luther to write *Against the Sabbatarians*. Luther had already known of this group for five and a half years without taking any particular interest in or even publishing something on them, when he presumably began to write *Against the Sabbatarians* (beginning of 1538). His charge that they had themselves circumcised⁶⁴ stands in direct contradiction to his earlier references to the Sabbatarians⁶⁵ and what is presently known about them. In my opinion it is therefore most probable that Luther's "Sabbatarians" should be understood according the first usage of the term in polemical argumentation: a bogey man that grew out of the Christian fear that Jews would make proselytes of Christians. Luther built upon this use of the term so that he could demonstrate the position that he advanced, based above all upon exegetical arguments, that the Jews were a "hopeless" people,⁶⁶ "plagued with blindness,"⁶⁷ and "evil,"⁶⁸ giving his overall argument persuasive power and plausibility. When read in the context of the shifting Jewish policies of not only Electoral Saxony, but also Electoral Hesse,⁶⁹ which in 1538 was also newly regulated by Bucer with Luther's partial agreement, *Against the Sabbatarians* served as an effective rhetorical and polemical means

⁶⁴ WA 50:312, 10 = LW 47:65.

⁶⁵ Cf. WATr 1:149, 4–6 (no. 356) = LW 54:51–52; Cf. WA 42:520, 22–23 = LW 2:361. Most recently on Sabbatarianism, see Jürgen Kaiser, *Ruhe der Seele und Siegel der Hoffnung: Die Deutungen des Sabbats in der Reformation* (Göttingen, 1996), especially 184–229, and for its importance to Luther, 229ff. Martin Rothhegel, *Die Nikolsburger Reformation 1520–1530: Vom Humanismus zum Sabbatismus* (Diss. Theol., Prague, 2001); reported in *Mennonitische Geschichtsblätter* 59 (2002): 181–86.

⁶⁶ WA 50:327,14 = LW 47:85.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 329, 13 = *ibid.*, 87.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 335, 25 = *ibid.*, 96.

⁶⁹ Concerning Jewish policy in Hesse, especially from the perspective of Bucer's Advice, see BDS 7:321–22; Ernst Wilhelm Kohls, "Die Judenfrage in Hessen während der Reformationszeit," *Jahrbuch der hessischen kirchengeschichtlichen Vereinigung* 21 (1970): 87–100; further literature also in Joseph of Rosheim, *Historical Writings*, 313 n. 1; on Philip of Hesse's position, see also Cornelis Augustijn, "Ein fürstlicher Theologe: Landgraf Philipp von Hessen über Juden in einer christlichen Gesellschaft," in *Reformiertes Erbe: Festschrift für Gottfried W. Locher*, ed. Heiko A. Oberman, Ernst Saxer, and Alfred Schindler, vol. 2 (Zurich, 1993), 1–11; see also Leonore Siegele-Wenschkewitz, "Josel von Rosheim: Juden und Christen im Zeitalter der Reformation," in *Kirche und Israel* 6 (1991): 3–16, especially 9–10; Wilhelm Maurer, "Butzer und die Judenfrage in Hessen," in Maurer, *Kirche und Geschichte*, vol. 2, ed. Ernst Wilhelm Kohls and Gerhard Müller (Göttingen, 1970), 347–65, especially 362–63; Friedrich Battenberg, "Judenordnungen in der frühen Neuzeit in Hessen," in *Neunhundert Jahre Geschichte der Juden in Hessen* (Wiesbaden, 1983), 83–122.

that could be used to counter the toleration of Jews in Protestant cities and territories. For nothing could make the necessity of hedging Jewish life in with sharp restrictions unequivocally plain than the fact that Jews had sought to draw Christians whether partially or fully to their faith.

If Luther had limited himself in *Against the Sabbatarians* to stigmatizing the missionary assaults of Jews against Christians (in addition to his largely exegetical confrontation with Judaism), he employed anti-Jewish resentments to an excessive degree in *On the Jews and Their Lies*. The book was probably directed against Sebastian Münster's dialogue *Messiah of the Christians and the Jews*, presumably in its 1539 printing. Luther's book can probably only be explained as his attempt to use *all* rhetorical means to achieve the goal of expelling the Jews from all Protestant lands. This supposition rests upon the conclusion that the primary exegetically argued strategy of *Against the Sabbatarians* had not been as successful as Luther himself had wished. On the contrary: in 1539 the Saxon Elector issued a decree, allowing "under certain conditions Jews could travel through the electorate."⁷⁰ Only in early 1543, after the publication of *On the Jews and Their Lies*, was the mandate revoked, with a sharp, specific reference to Luther. Probably the expulsion of the Jews from the territories ruled by the crown of Bohemia in 1541–42 had resulted in more frequent Jewish transit through Saxony, or even had led to a more visible Jewish presence in neighboring Ducal Saxony, increasing pressure on the Saxon territorial lord to act. Against this background Luther's *On the Jews and Their Lies* can be understood as a clear vote on a political "migration problem," which considering the size of the Prague Jewish community was probably quite considerable.

Melanchthon and Spalatin became involved in the sending of *On the Jews and Their Lies* to a number of German territorial princes and in early 1543, at Wittenberg's initiative, not only did Electoral Saxony and Anhalt⁷¹ issue Jewish decrees, but a number of more or less successful expulsion initiatives took place in other places, led by Protestant opponents of the Jews.⁷² It is clear that Luther's Jewish writings of

⁷⁰ C. A. H. Burkhardt, "Die Judenverfolgungen im Kurfürstentum Sachsen von 1536 an," *Theologische Studien und Kritiken* 70 (1897): 595.

⁷¹ Brecht, *Luther*, 3:349 and 439 nn. 53–54; cf. Burkhardt, *Die Judenverfolgungen im Kurfürstentum Sachsen*.

⁷² Luther to Anton Lauterbach, 9 February 1544, WABr 10:526–28 (no. 3967),

1543 were considered to be the impetus for a unified Protestant Jewish policy, and in this sense it succeeded in some places. It clearly galled Luther that the young Lords of Mansfeld even after the appearance of the first two “Jewish writings” continued to tolerate Jews in their territory.⁷³ The circumstance that “one group” of Protestant “lords” accepted the Jews, was finally an important reason that Luther wrote “one more time against the Jews,” for he wished that “they be hunted and expelled from the land.”⁷⁴

Luther wished to make a personal confession with his Jewish writings as well. It was based upon his conviction that God would hold Christian society guilty because they tolerated sinful blasphemies, which to Luther’s “knowledge” the Jews endlessly perpetrated.⁷⁵ The relief of his own conscience that Luther wished to achieve through his sharp renunciation of the Jews, presupposed that he now regarded as a burden his own earlier position on the “Jewish question,” which had been accepted by evangelical governments and Protestant preachers as a strategic policy of toleration with the goal of Jewish conversion,

here at 526, 8–9. For Luther’s complaint that the lordship of the Jews in the Mark “on account of money” and in Prague thanks to the support of Ferdinand, see Luther to Joachim II of Brandenburg 9 March 1545, WABr 11:49–52 (no. 4081), especially 51, 24ff, an admonition to support the anti-Jewish agitation of Provost Buchholzer.

⁷³ WATr 5:11–13 (no. 5576) = LW 54:426. At first Melancthon’s notification in favor of Luther’s harsh new course did not convince Philip of Hesse to change his policy. See Brecht, *Luther*, 3:341; concerning the expulsion of the Jews from the county of *Mansfeld* shortly after Luther’s death, see note 9 above. In a presentation before the Strasbourg city council in the summer of 1543, Josel of Rosheim reported that “I have been told by my brethren that when such writings (i.e., Luther’s Jewish writings of 1543) have reached Meissen and in the domains of Brunswick, they have been harassed, robbed, hunted, and had their persons and goods damaged.” (“... itzundt meine brüder umb solche uß gangene truck [sc. von Luthers ‘Judenschriften’ des Jahres 1543] an etliche Orten in Mayssen und in brunswiger oberkeiten und zirckels weiß dor umb an fil orten hart beschwert, brabt, verjagt und an jren leib und gütern gischedigt worden allis ich bericht worden [...]”) Joseph of Rosheim, *Historical Writings*, 381).

⁷⁴ WATr 5:166, 27–28 (no. 5462) [Summer/Fall 1542] = LW 54:426.

⁷⁵ “We have enough sin of our own without this, dating back to the papacy, and we add to it daily with our own ingratitude and our contempt of God’s word and all his grace; so it is not necessary to burden ourselves also with these alien, shameful vices of the Jews and, over and above it all, to pay them for it with money and property. Let us consider that we are now daily struggling with the Turks, which surely calls for a lessening of our sins and a reformation of our life. With this faithful counsel and warning I wish to cleanse and exonerate my conscience.” LW 47:274 = WA 53:527, 23–31.

and which had been understood, perhaps from the Jewish side on occasion, as an “opportunity for self-assertion.” An interpretation of Luther that assigns a positive value to the young Luther’s “friendly” stance toward the Jews, but criticizes his later writings as a departure from fundamental insights of the Reformation, overlooks the severe burden of conscience that had grown in the older Luther precisely from his “liberal” stance toward the Jews and his “utopian” hope for Jewish conversion as a consequence of peaceful coexistence with the Christian congregation.

Even if Luther’s “knowledge” of Jewish blasphemies against Christ can be found already in 1514,⁷⁶ his contention that he had until now “not known”⁷⁷ that the Jews cursed and blasphemed against Christ and Christians must be recognized as decisively important for the interpretation of his stance on the “Jewish question.” His older “knowledge” had played no significant role in his work of 1523, since he had assigned full blame for Jewish refusal to accept the Christian witness to the papal church for reasons of confessional strategy. Luther saw the correctness of his negative appraisal of the diabolical blasphemer, supported by medieval authors such as Nicholas of Lyra, Paul of Burgos, and Salvagus Porchetus⁷⁸ as more than justified through both the book of the Jewish convert Margaritha, who urged his Christian readers that Jews misused every expression of kindness to practice their anti-Christian rites without inhibition,⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Osten-Sacken, *Martin Luther*, 50–51 and 158.

⁷⁷ WA 53:523, 7 = LW 47:268 and Luther, *Vom Schem Hamphoras und Vom Geschlecht Christi*, WA 53:605, 35 = Falk, *Jew*, 188, para. 77. Josel of Rosheim also referred to this “previous un-knowing” of Luther’s when discussing the 1523 book, but asserted that Luther’s previous knowledge was more accurate. Joseph of Rosheim, *Historical Writings*, 381.

⁷⁸ See only WA 53:417, 24 = LW 47:138; concerning Luther’s informants, see also Osten-Sacken, *Martin Luther*, 40–41 and *passim*.

⁷⁹ Margaritha’s book was intended to counter the position of those who maintained that “Jews are good, the Jews have kept their law better than we have.” (“der Juden wesen sey gut / die Juden halten jre gesatz baß dann wir.”) Anthonius Margaritha, *Der gantz Jüdisch glaub mit sampt einer gründtlichen und warhafften anzeygungge Aller Satzungen . . . Mit schönen und gegründten Argumenten wyder jren glauben . . .* (Augsburg: H. Steiner, 1530); VD 16 M 972; microfiche 1833–35, no. 4694, A 2v. In the contemporary spectrum of opinion it seems to me that the dismissive evaluation of Margaritha, especially in the printed anonymous opinion [Osiander’s] that may have appeared first in 1529 (so Oberman, *Roots of Anti-Semitism*, 35) is palpable (see especially Osiander, GA 7:226, 19–22; see also Kaufmann, “Bewertung des Judentums,” 200 n. 22; on Margaritha, apart from *ibid.*, 197–98, see most recently Osten-Sacken, *Martin Luther*, especially 162–63; on Osten-Sacken’s criticism of my position (317–18)

and probably also through the literary representation of the type of obdurate, hostile, blasphemous Jew in Sebastian Münster's *Messiah of the Christians and the Jews*. The fact that Luther's *On the Jews and Their Lies* rested upon a broader knowledge of the relevant older and

see my response in "Religions- und konfessionskulturelle Konflikte in der Nachbarschaft," in *Achtung oder Verachtung—stiftet oder stört Religion eine Kultur des Respekts*, ed. Georg Pfeleiderer and Ekkehard Stegemann (Zurich, forthcoming in 2005). Margaritha positioned himself within the contemporary discussion of Jewish policy: "To summarize, a Christian magistrate is responsible before God to put the Jews to work, going out of their futile hell's kitchen, where there are probably some now, who speak and learn. The Jews should not be forbidden from living [among us], but they should be protected in town and countryside. They should not be despised or chased away from their possessions, but they should be treated in a friendly fashion, with love and brotherly kindness, so that they might be moved to accept the Christian faith. This is what I say, that the more friendly, brotherly, and kindly a Christian treats a Jew, the more the Jew curses the Christian and his faith, mocks, and despises, and thinks to himself, this Christian knows that I am an enemy both to his God and to his faith, and that I curse and despise it. Therefore it must be from God that he loves me." ("Inn summa ein Christlich oberkeit ist vor Got schuldig / die Juden zu der Arbeit pringen und treiben / und yrer hellküchlein müssig gehen / wir wol yetz ettlich seind / die da sprechenn unnd leren / Man soll den Juden das erdtreich nicht verpietten / sonder man solt sye handthalten / in die stett und flecken setzen / sy nicht verachten / kein scheuchnuß an ynen habun ec. sonder man solt sych freuntlich / lieblich und brüderlich gegen yhnen erzaigen / damit sye dester ehe zu Christlichem glauben bewegt werden / darzu sag ich / ye meer sich ain Christ freuntlich / brüderlich / und güttiglich gegen ainen Juden erzaigt / ye mer der Jud inn mit sampt Christum und seinem glauben verflucht / verspottet / und verachtet / unn bedenckt bey yhm selbs / sich diser Christ weißt das ich in mit sampt seinem got unnd Glauben / feind habe / verfluche unnd verachte / noch [d. i.: dennoch] schickt es got / das er nicht muß lieb haben" (a 3v). Margaritha then comments that Christian toleration of the Jews is understood by them presently as a sign of the imminent coming of the Messiah together with the punishment of the Christians (a 3v–a 4r). Concerning the ideas, above all of the circle of the Jerusalem kabbalist Abraham ben-Eliezer ha-Levi (1460/70–after 1528), who expected the beginning of the salvation of Israel and the arrival of the Messiah around 1530 (the year of the appearance of Margaritha's influential book), and therefore made a great impression upon Jews within the Holy Roman Empire, see Ben-Sasson, "Reformation in Contemporary Jewish Eyes;" Ira Robinson, "Abraham ben Eliezer Halevi: Kabbalist and Messianic Visionary of the Early Sixteenth Century," (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1980). Concerning the intensive calculations concerning the End of Days and the acute expectation of the coming of the Messiah as a consequence of the Jewish expulsion from the Iberian peninsula, see also Ben-Sasson, "Reformation in Contemporary Jewish Eyes," 261ff. Concerning the apocalyptic interpretation of Luther as a crypto-Jew, who prepared the way for the turning of the heathen to Judaism, see the references to Reubeni in note 28. According to a report by Otto Muneles und Vládímír Sadeck ("The Prague Jewish Community in the Sixteenth Century [Spiritual Life]," in *Prague Ghetto in the Renaissance Period*, 75), Margaritha was the son of Isaac (!) Margaliyot (recte: Samuel, cf. RBW 194 n. 2), who had died in 1525. He had been president of the rabbinic court in Prague and had corresponded with Reuchlin.

contemporary “professional literature” than his earlier statements and treatises on the matter reveals the earnest wish of the reformer to arrive at a conclusive scholarly judgment on the “Jewish question.” The expert knowledge of two of his contemporaries, the learned convert Margaritha and the recognized Hebraist Münster, confirmed for the reformer and biblical theologian Luther what he “knew” from the witness of Church history and from the Bible, namely that the doctrine and life of the Jews was marked by hatred of Christ. Luther made pragmatic use of this “knowledge” to provide concrete suggestions for what in his opinion constituted a responsible Jewish policy, which served to protect Christian society. The measures of “sharp mercy”⁸⁰ or “mercilessness,”⁸¹ which were intended to abolish the foundation of Jewish life in Protestant cities and territories, to force the Jews “through their suffering to soften,” and to force them to confess that “the messiah has come and that he is our Christ,”⁸² were understood by Luther as an act of veneration or Christian service to God.⁸³

Since experience with the Jews had confirmed the “judgment of

⁸⁰ WA 53:522, 35 = LW 47:268. This idiosyncratic use of the concept of “mercy” finds parallels in Anthonius Margaritha (see Kaufmann, “Bewertung des Judentums,” 206), who wrote: “Therefore I say that that the Jews should be left as an example out of compassion, and should work, for God cursed them once, therefore you cannot envy them. To summarize, what God has rejected and despised no one ought to raise up or make great. . . .” (“Darumb sag ich man sol dye Juden auß barmhertzigkeit uns zu ainem Exempel beleyben lassen / unnd zur arbeit treyben / dann ein mal hat sy got verflucht / darumb kanst du sy nycht benedeyen / Inn summa / was Got hinwürfft und verachtet soll niemandt auffheben und großmachen [. . .]”) *Der gantz Jüdisch glaub*, 2. 4v. Bucer too used the concept of mercy in connection with compulsory measures against the Jews: “Our superiors should enforce solemn divine law (Deut. 28:43f) upon the Jews and not dare to be compassionate, for the Lord God himself is compassionate, although it is not compassionate and is no true compassion to spare the wolf at the cost of the sheep.” BDS 7:354, 2–6. For Luther the harsh measures were an act of “compassion” toward the Jews, in order to rescue “some” of them from the flames of depravity (WA 53:522, 35 = LW 47:268). Bucer specifically rejected compassion for the Jews and Margaritha described the punishment and disciplining as “compassion” with respect to the soteriological goal of the salvation of the Jews. For it could only be distinguished from revenge by the goal, not by the measures themselves (WA 53:522, 36–37 = LW 47:268).

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 541, 32 = *ibid.*, 292.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 419, 7–8 = *ibid.*, 139.

⁸³ “This is to be done (i. e., burning down the synagogues) in honor of our Lord and of Christendom, so that God might see that we are Christians, and do not condone or knowingly tolerate such public lying, cursing, and blaspheming of his Son and of his Christians.” LW 47:268 = WA 53:523, 3–6.

Christ,” that they are “venomous, bitter, tricky snakes, assassins and children of the devil” [cf. John 8:44],⁸⁴ the “best solution” for the “Jewish question” would be that they live “where there are no Christians,”⁸⁵ among the “Turks” or the other “heathen,” for these would not have to bear what Christians had had to suffer from the Jews. The measures of a “sharp mercy,” which were to be carried out by the secular authorities and the preachers,⁸⁶ or if necessary through spontaneous popular violence,⁸⁷ when compared with the complete expulsion of the Jews, represented for Luther the poorer solution.

In my opinion the problem must be resolved thus: If we wish to wash our hands of the Jews’ blasphemy and not share in their guilt, we have to part company with them. They must be driven from our country. Let them think of their fatherland; then they need no longer wail and lie before God against us that we are holding them captive, nor need we then any longer complain that they are burdening us with their blasphemy and their usury. This is the most natural and the best course of action, which will safeguard the interest of both parties.⁸⁸

In the end, Luther’s suggested measures are nothing more than “pragmatic” concessions to those Protestant magistrates, who were unwilling to implement the only true option in Jewish policy, the expulsion of the Jews, and therefore had to be pressured into taking the hard, intolerant action. In this respect Luther’s position did not differ from that taken by the Hessian commission of theologians led by Martin Bucer.⁸⁹ Luther’s vote in favor of the expulsion of the Jews represented

⁸⁴ WA 53:530, 25–27 = LW 47:278.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 530, 28 = ibid.

⁸⁶ See the direct address to “princes and lords,” ibid., 527, 15 = ibid., 273; and to “pastors and preachers,” ibid., 527, 32 and 529, 28 = ibid., 274 and 276.

⁸⁷ See Luther’s unconcealed threat with an “uprooting” of the Jews, because they will have “learned from this booklet the true nature of the Jews” (WA 53:524, 13–14) and the cost if the lords did not proceed against the Jews in an “orderly manner.” (both LW 47:270).

⁸⁸ WA 53:538, 7–13 = LW 47:287–88.

⁸⁹ See Maurer, “Butzer”; Maurer, “Zeit der Reformation,” 439f; BDS 7:319–77; R. Gerald Hobbs, “Martin Bucer et les Juifs,” in *Martin Bucer and Sixteenth Century Europe*, ed. Christian Krieger and Marc Lienhard, vol. 2 (Leiden, 1993), 681–89; Detmers, *Reformation und Judentum*, 185ff. Josel of Rosheim’s “Letter of Consolation to his Brethren against Bucer’s Book” is printed in Joseph of Rosheim, *Historical Writings*, 329–49; Josel reported among other things that on the streets of Friedberg (Hesse) a Jew was told, as he was beaten and robbed, “Look Jew, Bucer’s book permits us to take your goods and to divide them among the poor” (330).

a complete reversal of his recommendation of 1523. The considerable amount of argumentation that Luther extravagantly used to ensure the success of his recommendation⁹⁰ was employed in 1543, because he wished to introduce a decisive change from his earlier position on Jewish policy given in 1523. The sharp polemic against rabbinic exegesis, by which he sought to prove the truth of a Christological exegesis of key Old Testament texts, the inhumane demonization of the Jews, and his conditional support for Jewish toleration according to standards of his list of measures⁹¹ are the primary strategies of argumentation he used in order to make his “best course of action,” the expulsion of Jews from Protestant territories, seem convincing.

Nevertheless, one should observe the tangible motifs of continuity in Luther’s condemnation of Judaism—leaving aside for the moment his pronounced change with reference to practical Jewish policy!—which cannot reasonably be divided into an earlier stage of development of “friendliness to the Jews” and a later one of “hostility to the Jews.” At no stage in his life had Luther understood Judaism to be a legitimate expression of biblical interpretation or religious expression, based upon Old Testament tradition. That Judaism in its misunderstanding and distortion of the messianic promises of the Old Testament had turned to error in a guilty way, was never a question for Luther, although he had been willing during the 1520s to recognize that the papal church, which had held Christendom captive, shared a significant degree of responsibility for what he later perceived to be the obduracy of the Jews. That the Jewish history of the past 1,400 to 1,500 years, since the crucifixion of Jesus, constituted a single “proof” for the truth of God in his Old Testament promises, and for Israel’s punishment for rejecting the Messiah, was indisputable to Luther at every stage of his theological development. The same was true of his radical rejection of a “genealogical arrogance” in which Jews laid claim to their descent from Abraham, although Luther recognized the quality of Jewish descent of Jesus in his 1523 writing as a point of contact for a conversion strategy, and he underscored the distinction that the Jewish people had enjoyed, with the birth of the Messiah at its center.⁹²

⁹⁰ See Osten-Sacken, *Martin Luther*, 128–29; Lewin, *Luthers Stellung*, and Brosseder, *Luthers Stellung zu den Juden*, 355–56.

⁹¹ WA 53:523, 1–2 and 536, 23–24 = LW 47:268 and 285.

⁹² See only WA 12:402, 1–3.

Luther had always been skeptical of a conversion of the Jews which involved an outward attempt to acculturate them, beginning with baptism, and he had never had anything else but a “genuine,” authentic conversion in mind, yet he himself had never produced, or wished to produce, his own contribution to missionary strategy. These twin attitudes were characteristic of Luther’s stance toward the Jews throughout his career. The higher religious level, a standard of true faith, in contrast to the pre-Reformation practice of conversion, and the growing pressure of expectation, based upon an attribution of guilt to the papal church where it related to Jewish conversion in the Reformation must have served to reduce Luther’s “impatient frustration” with the lack of “missionary success.” To this extent the appeal for tolerance of the younger Luther, partly determined by the strategic implications of the fight against the Roman enemy, and the Jew-hatred of the older Luther are coherent.

Relationship to Christ was the fulcrum and hinge in Luther’s evaluation of Judaism. The Talmud, which Luther condemned throughout his career, seemed to him to be the most important barrier to a “reasonable” understanding of the Old Testament. An exegetical approach to the Old Testament,⁹³ which did not have Christ as its center and theological scopus, Luther condemned as a theological betrayal. Some Christian Hebraists such as Sebastian Münster, who followed Luther’s Christological interpretation of the Old Testament seldom or not at all, Luther saw as standing under the influence of rabbinic exegesis. To this extent Luther attacked simultaneously both Christian Hebraists themselves for following the “Judaizing” Hebrew scholarship of the Jews (for their lack of a Christological hermeneutic), and the Jews when he attacked Christian Hebraists.⁹⁴ This struggle was based upon Luther’s understanding of both faith and the

⁹³ See still Heinrich Bornkamm, *Luther und das Alte Testament*, (Tübingen, 1948) (= *Luther and the Old Testament* (Philadelphia, 1969)); Siegfried Raeder, “Luther als Ausleger und Übersetzer der Heiligen Schrift,” in *Leben und Werk Martin Luthers von 1526 bis 1546*, ed. Helmar Junghans, 2nd ed. (Berlin, 1985), vol. 1, 253–78; vol. 2, 800–05; see also Karl-Heinz zur Mühlen, “Luther II Theologie,” TRE 21 (1991): 530–67, especially 533–35; Lohse, *Luthers Theologie*, 209–11; the opposition to Christian humanist exegesis emphasized this, referring to Luther’s later books against the Jews: Maurer, “Zeit der Reformation,” especially 407–08.

⁹⁴ Luther’s dealing with Christian Hebraists in relation to his critics concerning the Jews in the early 1540s is reflected in the article of Stephen G. Burnett, “Reassessing the ‘Basel-Wittenberg Conflict:’ Dimensions of the Reformation-Era Discussion of Hebrew Scholarship,” in *Hebraica Veritas*, 181–201, esp. 188ff.

Bible, and upon his convictions about the truth. Judaism was for the Reformer a religion of human self-exultation and self-justification before God per se, and it stood in fundamental opposition to justifying faith. To this degree the theological antithesis of Judaism became for Luther the acceptance of the relevant New Testament convictions as an inalienable question of Christian identity and conviction of the truth.

*Indications for the History of the Reception and Impact of Luther's
"Jewish Writings"*

A history of the reception and impact of the relevant statements of Luther concerning the Jews, which can make any claim to representativeness, cannot be written in the present state of research. At best some basic trends, primarily for the "Jewish writings," particularly for *That Jesus Christ was Born a Jew* and *On the Jews and Their Lies*, can be sketched out.⁹⁵ The primary and historically representative reception of Luther's "Jewish writings" developed within the Lutheran confession itself, although occasionally Reformed theologians also referred to Luther's most important "Jewish writings" of 1543, some critically as Bullinger,⁹⁶ some positively as Buxtorf the Elder.⁹⁷ Bullinger was concerned because he saw Luther's attacks upon rabbinic exegesis, above all as a questioning of the *Hebraica veritas*, the Hebrew textual foundation of biblical truth.⁹⁸ Buxtorf,

⁹⁵ On the following, see above all, Osten-Sacken, *Martin Luther*, 271–72; Johannes Wallmann, "The Reception of Luther's Writing on the Jews from the Reformation to the End of the 19th Century," *Lutheran Quarterly* 1 (1987): 72–97; on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, detailed and not superceded: Brosseder, *Luthers Stellung*; concerning the "Jewish question" in Protestantism, still suggestive is Johann F. de le Roi, *Die evangelische Christenheit und die Juden*, vols. 1–3 (1884–92; repr. Karlsruhe, 1974).

⁹⁶ See Lewin, *Luthers Stellung*, 98–99; more systematically organized: Joachim Staedtke, "Die Juden im historischen und theologischen Urteil des Schweizer Reformators Heinrich Bullinger," *Judaica* 11 (1955): 236–56, repr. in *Reformation und Zeugnis der Kirche: Gesammelte Studien*, ed. Dietrich Blaufuss (Zurich, 1978), 29–49; also instructive: Detmers, *Reformation und Judentum*, 161–62, including the text of a relevant letter from Bullinger to Bucer, 8 December 1543, (162–63 n. 6); see also Brosseder, *Luthers Stellung*, 80 und n. 21 above.

⁹⁷ Fundamental: Burnett, *From Christian Hebraism to Jewish Studies*; on earlier Basel Hebraism, see most recently Willi, "Hebraica veritas in Basel."

⁹⁸ See above all, *Vom Schem Hamphoras*, WA 53:637, 7–8; 644, 24–25; 646, 19–20,

by contrast, shared Luther's rejection of the salvation historical privileges of the Jews.⁹⁹

Catholic references to Luther's "Jewish writings," it appears, were shaped to a considerable extent by political trends. Besides criticism of Luther's stance of "friendliness to the Jews," which predominated during the Reformation era, distancing references concerning *On the Jews and Their Lies* can be found, for example, in the context of the Dreyfus trial. As the *Osservatore Romano* stated, the papal policy toward the Jews had always been marked by its "compassion, tolerance, and love" in contrast to the "high priest of Protestantism," Martin Luther who demanded that "all synagogues be put to the torch."¹⁰⁰ Whether from the Roman Catholic or the Reformed side, the confessional interests reflected by the mention of Luther's "Jewish writings" are indicative of a very characteristic circumstance in the reception of Luther concerning the "Jewish question:" Luther's "Jewish writings" were quoted, whether positively or negatively, chiefly to justify a stance and position on the "Jewish question," which had been decided completely independently of a study of Luther, reflecting time-specific needs that had to be justified and made persuasive.

Lutheran theologians of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries tended to focus primarily on Luther's "Jewish writings" of 1543, without attempting to draw from it a corresponding Jewish policy for Protestant magistrates to accept. Particular trends within the Lutheran tradition as it consolidated itself confessionally in the second half of the sixteenth century connected a "Lutheran" confessional profile in the "Jewish question" with an uncompromising orientation toward the later "Jewish writings" of the Wittenberg reformer. At the level of confessionally distinct identities, "Lutheran" could be the same as "anti-Jewish." In the polemical vocabulary of confessionalism, the practice of characterizing the Reformed as "Judaizers" or connecting them with "Mohammedanism" was a way that this tendency was concretely expressed.¹⁰¹

and 647, 10–11 = Falk, *Jew*, 214, para. 158; 221, para. 181; 222, para. 187; and 223, para. 189. In connection with Bullinger's criticism, Detmers, *Reformation und Judentum*, 162–63.

⁹⁹ See the quotation from *On the Jews and Their Lies* (LW 47:215 = WA 53:480, 30–481, 22) at the conclusion of some printings of Buxtorf's *Synagoga Judaica*, referred to in Kaufmann, "Bewertung des Judentums," 193–94 n. 5.

¹⁰⁰ *l'Osservatore Romano*, 16 September 1899, 1, quoted by David I. Kerzer, *Die Päpste gegen die Juden: Der Vatikan und die Entstehung des modernen Antisemitismus* (Munich, 2004), 249.

¹⁰¹ Characteristic was Ägidius Hunnius, *Calvinus Iudaizans. Das ist: Jüdische Glossen*

In the context of the relevant Lutheran confessional public discussion of the “Jewish question” during the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which oscillated between “defense and conversion,”¹⁰² Luther’s statements as expressed in his later writings remained the strongest presence of any theological authority of the Reformation period. Together with Luther the works of converts such as Victor von Carben, Margaritha, and Marcus Lombardus¹⁰³ constituted an important basis for Lutheran judgments on Judaism until well into the eighteenth century. The opinions provided by the theological faculties of Frankfurt an der Oder and Jena, in which they voted¹⁰⁴ in favor of Jews who had fled from Portugal having the right of residence, doubtless in the interest of the Hamburg city council which consulted them, referred to Luther’s “Jewish writing” of 1523, and represented no new trend in the treatment of the “Jewish question.” Rather, it reflected the historically conditioned regional and territorial differences within early modern Lutheranism—which was in no way unified or permanently in favor of the expulsion of the Jews—that affected its dealings with the Jews.

The ever-changing fate of the Jews, tolerated for a short period

und Verkehrungen / mit welchen Johannes Calvinus die allertrefflichste Spruch und Zeugniß der heiligen Schrift von der heyligen Dreyfaltigkeit / von der Gottheit Christi . . . zu verfälschen sich nicht geschewet hat. . . (Frankfurt am Main: Johann Spies, 1595); VD 16 H 5999; SB München 8 Polem. 1364 y; MF ‘after 1530’ 1265 no. 2096; most recently on Hunn: Markus Matthias, *Theologie und Konfession: der Beitrag von Ägidius Hunnius (1550–1603) zur Entstehung einer lutherischen Religionskultur* (Leipzig, 2004); concerning “Judaizing” (iudaizare) in the context of interconfessional polemic, see Robert Dan, “‘Judaizare’ the career of a term,” in *Antitrinitarism in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century*, ed. Robert Dan (Budapest, 1992), 25–34. Bullinger resisted Luther’s later Jewish books because he feared that criticism of “Jewish glosses” could also discredit reformed exegesis. See Detmers, *Reformation und Judentum*, 161–62.

¹⁰² Friedrich, *Zwischen Abwehr und Bekehrung*; idem, “Die evangelische Theologie des konfessionellen Zeitalters und ihre Sicht des Judentums,” in *Im Zeichen der Krise: Religiosität im Europa des 17. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Hartmut Lehmann and Anne-Charlott Trepp (Göttingen, 1999), 225–42.

¹⁰³ Gabi Knoch-Mund, *Disputationsliteratur als Instrument antijüdischer Polemik: Leben und Werk des Marcus Lombardus, eines Grenzgängers zwischen Judentum und Christentum im Zeitalter des deutschen Humanismus* (Tübingen, 1997).

¹⁰⁴ For specific references, see Kaufmann, “Bewertung des Judentums,” 193. When interpreting formal opinions (Gutachten) of theological faculties as a genre, one must also consider the interests of the party requesting the advice. Thomas Kaufmann, “Die Gutachtertätigkeit der Theologischen Fakultät Rostock in der zweiten Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts,” in Hartmut Boockmann, Bernd Moeller et al., *Recht und Verfassung im Übergang von Mittelalter und Neuzeit* (Göttingen, 2001), 297–334.

of time, only to be driven out soon thereafter, continued to be determined by governmental and territorial conditions during the early modern period, even in the Protestant territorial states. Therefore, it appears that, taken as a whole, Luther's major goal of Jewish policy, that all of German Protestant society would be "free of Jews," was at no time fully realized, and indeed it was possible for theologians to argue for a limited toleration of Jews when it seemed opportune, in accordance with the standard paradigm of conversion. However, "Jewish policy" in the early modern period was always "financial," "economic," and "social" policy as well, and rested upon mechanisms of regulation, which were accompanied by standard theological models, but were also determined by political and economic interests or were marked by resentments. The structural conditions of the Jewish policies of early modern territorial states were closer neither to the "positive" impact of the reception of Luther's early "Jewish writing," nor to the "negative" consequences of the reception of his later "Jewish writings."

The stronger connection to Luther's "Jewish writing" of 1523, which can be detected within Pietism,¹⁰⁵ reflects primarily an historical transformation of theology and spirituality in the area of eschatology, in which the expectation of a Jewish conversion before the end of time in the sense of Rom. 11:25f came to the fore.¹⁰⁶ There

¹⁰⁵ See Johannes Wallmann, "Reception of Luther's Writing," 83f; fundamental to any study of evaluation of Judaism by Pietists is Udo Arnoldi, *Pro Iudaeis: Die Gutachten der hallischen Theologen im 18. Jahrhundert zu Fragen der Judentoleranz* (Berlin, 1993), 229; Martin Jung, *Die württembergische Kirche und die Juden in der Zeit des Pietismus (1675–1780)* (Berlin 1992), 49–50, 71, 84, 202, and 283. When discussing Württemberg in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries he concluded that, "the study of these books [Luther's Judenschriften] did not evoke either a philo-Semitic or anti-Semitic stance, but rather Luther's position was apparently only used to strengthen one that had already been established." See also Martin Schmidt, "Judentum und Christentum im Pietismus des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts," in *Kirche und Synagoge*, vol. 2 (Stuttgart, 1970), 87–128; most recently, see Johannes Wallmann, "Der alte und der neue Bund: Zur Haltung des Pietismus gegenüber den Juden," in *Glaubenswelt und Lebenswelten*, ed. Hartmut Lehmann (Göttingen, 2004), 143–65, especially 146–47 (Spener's and Arnold's acceptance of Luther's position of 1523).

¹⁰⁶ On the interpretation of Rom. 11 by Lutherans during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, see the important references in Johannes Wallmann, "Pietismus und Chiliasmus," in his *Theologie und Frömmigkeit im Zeitalter des Barock* (Tübingen, 1995), 390–421, especially 401–02; see also Klaus Beckmann, *Die fremde Wurzel: Altes Testament und Judentum in der evangelischen Theologie des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Göttingen, 2002), 304–05 n. 830.

appears to be no evidence of any great influence of Luther's later polemical anti-Jewish works upon the Pietists, the theologians of the eighteenth century who were influenced by the Enlightenment, or the leading theologians or churchmen of the nineteenth century.¹⁰⁷ At the same time we cannot exclude the possibility that in the midst of the social developments leading to a fundamental, authentic emancipation of the Jews, anti-Jewish mentalities remained alive in specifically Protestant milieus also, which found support in the conceptions that had been articulated by the older Luther.

That Martin Luther, the most important identifying figure of Lutheran Protestantism was also an embodiment of combative Jew-hatred, was, until the late nineteenth century at least, no particularly important part of the dominant portrayal of Luther. Until the beginning of the twentieth century Luther's influence upon the "Jewish question" remained ambivalent. Even the Jewish scholar Gotthard Deutsch, Professor of Jewish History at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, Ohio stated at the conclusion of his article on Luther in the *Jewish Encyclopedia* (1901–06): "The totally different attitudes which he took at different times with regard to the Jews made him during the anti-Semitic controversies of the end of the nineteenth century, an authority quoted alike by friends and enemies of the Jews."¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ So Wallmann, "Reception," especially 89; this evaluation was received positively and accepted by von der Osten-Sacken, *Martin Luther*, 274. The missionary theology of confessional Lutheran Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg reflects Luther's 1523 position, but no corresponding impact from Luther's later Jewish books can be identified. See Beckmann, *Die fremde Wurzel*, 263 and 327 n. 7; for an explicit criticism of Luther's later Jewish writings by Hengstenberg, see Wallmann, "Der alte und der neue Bund," 153; for a study of the evaluation of Judaism during the Enlightenment in the religious as opposed to ethnic motives for hostility toward Jews, see Anna-Ruth Löwenbruch, *Judenfeindschaft im Zeitalter der Aufklärung: Eine Studie zur Vorgeschichte des modernen Antisemitismus am Beispiel des Göttinger Theologen und Orientalisten Johann David Michaelis (1717–1791)* (Frankfurt am Main, 1995), especially ch. 6). See also on the background of the problem, Kurt Nowak, *Vernünftiges Christentum? Über die Erforschung der Aufklärung in der evangelischen Theologie Deutschlands seit 1945* (Leipzig, 1999), 65–66.

¹⁰⁸ Cited according to Christian Wiese, "'Unheilsspuren': Zur Rezeption von Martin Luthers 'Judenschriften' im Kontext antisemitischen Denkens in den Jahrzehnten vor der Shoah," in *Das mißbrauchte Evangelium: Studien zur Theologie und Praxis der Thüringer Deutschen Christen*, ed. Peter von der Osten-Sacken (Berlin, 2002), 91–135, here at 98; for Jewish approaches to Luther, Christian Wiese, "'Auch uns sei sein Andenken heilig!' Idealisierung, Symbolisierung und Kritik in der jüdischen Lutherdeutung von der Aufklärung bis zur Schoa," in *Luther zwischen den Kulturen: Zeitgenossenschaft-Weltwirkung*, ed. Hans Medick and Peer Schmidt (Göttingen, 2004), 215–59.

The practice of using the “knowledge” of Luther’s statements concerning the Jews, depended upon the directing interests, which led first in the late nineteenth century, in the context of the origins and articulation of modern racist anti-Semitism, to an aggressive use of Luther’s later “Jewish writings,” a campaign that was also in part critical of both the Church and Christianity.¹⁰⁹

There was no lack of Protestant theologians and Church leaders who promoted the view, with the help of the Jew-hatred of Luther, that the Evangelical Church and theology had knowingly moved to an apogee of the anti-Semitic spirit of the times, and they professed a special affinity for the ideology of National Socialism. The Thuringian territorial Bishop Martin Sasse saw in *Reichskristallnacht* of 1938 the fulfillment of a demand made by Luther. “On the tenth of November 1938, on Luther’s birthday, the synagogues of Germany are burning [. . .] In this hour the voice of the man must be heard, who as a German prophet of the sixteenth century began as a friend of the Jews out of ignorance, but then driven by experience and reality to become the greatest anti-Semite of his time, the admonisher of his people against the Jews.”¹¹⁰ Academic theologians such as Königsberg Luther researcher Erich Vogelsang also made their contribution to a “necessary anti-Semitism today” through recourse to Luther.¹¹¹ The Jewish policy of the Nazi state seemed to many reputable Protestant theologians and churchmen to be the realization of Luther’s ideas.

From a completely antithetical perspective, the genealogical line “From Luther to Hitler” has found acceptance also among Anglo-American authors,¹¹² and has led to the historically and politically

¹⁰⁹ Brosseder offers an exhaustive analysis of the reception of Luther in the context of the Jewish question from the nineteenth through the mid-twentieth centuries in Brosseder, *Luthers Stellung*; in addition, see several of the contributions to *Die Juden und Martin Luther-Martin Luther und die Juden*, ed. Heinz Kremers et al., 2nd ed. (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1987) including especially, Günther B. Ginzler, “Martin Luther: Kronzeuge des Antisemitismus,” 189–210 and Wiese, “‘Unheilsspuren,’” 91–135; on Luther reception during the Third Reich, see also Osten-Sacken, “Der nationalsozialistische Lutherforscher Theodor Paul: Vervollständigung eines fragmentarischen Bildes,” in *Das mißbrauchte Evangelium*, 136–66 as well as his *Martin Luther*, 275–76 (literature).

¹¹⁰ Martin Sasse, *Martin Luther über die Juden: Weg mit ihnen!* (Freiburg, 1938), 2.

¹¹¹ Erich Vogelsang, *Luthers Kampf gegen die Juden* (Tübingen, 1933), 6; see also Wiese, “‘Unheilsspuren,’” 125f and Brosseder, *Luthers Stellung*, 131–32.

¹¹² See my article, “Luther zwischen den Wissenschaftskulturen,” in *Luther zwischen den Kulturen*, 455–81; see Brosseder, *Luthers Stellung*, 209–10, and also Eberhard Mannack, “Luther-ein ‘geistiger Ahnherr Hitlers?’” in Ferdinand van Ingen and

firm conviction that Luther was one of the most important spiritual ancestors of the Holocaust.¹¹³ That this position shows remarkable parallels with for example that of the self conception of Julius Streicher, the spiritus rector of the anti-Semitic Jew-baiting paper *Der Stürmer*, should perhaps give grounds for hesitation. In the Nuremberg trials before the international military tribunal Streicher quoted Luther as the source for his inhumane hate propaganda,¹¹⁴ and in so doing he tried to bring the Wittenberg reformer with him onto the chair of the accused. Yet Luther did not properly belong there, no matter how scurrilous even his contemporaries such as Bucer found his hateful tirades against the Jews,¹¹⁵ which offered every hater of Jews a variety of excuses to call upon him. For the Nuremberg judges sat in judgment over the mass-murderers of the twentieth century, not over the delusions of a misguided sixteenth-century theology professor, according to both our own standards of theology and moral reasoning, and according to the “command of ecclesiastical law to love one’s neighbor” and the “provisions of Roman law concerning the Jews.”¹¹⁶ Another judge must judge Luther.

Gerd Labrousse, *Luther-Bilder im 20. Jahrhundert: Symposion an der Freien Universität Amsterdam* (Amsterdam, 1984), 167–86.

¹¹³ Daniel J. Goldhagen, *Hitler’s Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (New York, 1996), 53 and 111, sees Luther as one of the decisive ancestors of the “eliminationist Antisemitism that pervaded the Protestant churches” by the late 1930s. Richard L. Rubenstein speculates that Luther “would have interpreted . . . [the Holocaust] as decisive proof of God’s rejection of the Jews.” Idem, “Luther and the Roots of the Holocaust,” in *Persistent Prejudice: Perspectives on Anti-Semitism*, ed. Herbert Hirsch and Jack D. Spiro (Fairfax, VA, 1988), 35.

¹¹⁴ “Dr. Martin Luther would very probably sit in my place in the defendants’ dock today, if this book had been taken into consideration by the Prosecution. In the book *The Jews and their Lies*, Dr. Martin Luther writes that the Jews are a serpent’s brood and one should burn down their synagogues and destroy them. . . .” *Trial of the Major War Criminals Before the International Military Tribunal, Nuremberg 14 November 1945–1 October 1946* (Nuremberg, 1947), 318; see Wiese, “‘Unheilsspuren,’” 91.

¹¹⁵ Bucer to Bullinger 28 December 1543, printed as an excursus in *Briefwechsel Landgraf Philipps des Großmüthigen von Hessen mit Bucer*, part 2, ed. Max Lenz (Leipzig, 1887; repr. Osnabrück, 1965), 221–22, here at 226 and n. 15.

¹¹⁶ Güde, *Die rechtliche Stellung*, 27, referring to the legal norms advanced by Josel of Rosheim in 1548 against the Landvogt in Hanau; see Ludwig Feilchenfeld, *Rabbi Josel von Rosheim: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Juden im Reformationszeitalter* (Strasbourg, 1898), 198.

PHILIP MELANCHTHON AND THE JEWS: A REAPPRAISAL

Timothy J. Wengert

Given the number of articles and monographs that have appeared over the past fifty years on the relations between Jews and Christians in early modern Europe, absence of work on Philip Melanchthon (1497–1560) may come as a surprise. In 1993 one article, written by the premier twentieth-century Melanchthon scholar Heinz Scheible, broke the scholarly silence.¹ A more recent work by Achim Detmers also touches on Melanchthon's work but for the most part as a foil for his interest in Calvin.² (In Detmer's view, Melanchthon offers little to distinguish his position from that of Luther's own.) Philip Melanchthon—second only to Martin Luther as a theologian of the Reformation, second only to Erasmus of Rotterdam as a humanist and scholar, and the premier teacher in early modern central Europe—deserves more scrutiny on this important issue. To be sure, such work will fill in a noticeable lacuna in research on Melanchthon.³

¹ Heinz Scheible, "Reuchlins Einfluß auf Melanchthon," in *Reuchlin und die Juden*, ed. Arno Herzig et al. (Sigmaringen, 1993), 123–49; now in his *Melanchthon und die Reformation: Forschungsbeiträge*, ed. Gerhard May and Rolf Decot (Mainz, 1996), 71–97. As the title indicates, a large portion of this article looks at the broader issue of Reuchlin's influence on Melanchthon, so that only nine pages deal specifically with the question of relations with the Jews. I am also grateful to Dr. Nicole Kuroпка for her careful reading of this paper, for the preparation of which I had access to her unpublished paper, "Melanchthon and the Jews."

² See Detmers, *Reformation und Judentum*, 119–43. His analysis of Melanchthon is in some respects inadequate. For example, on 122 he mistakes Melanchthon's comments about "Old" and "New" Testaments in CR 12:469 and CR 21:201–02 as descriptions of the thirty-nine books of Hebrew Scripture contrasted to the twenty-seven books of the Greek New Testament, when in fact Melanchthon is interpreting Paul in 2 Cor. 3 and expressly defines these terms in both instances to mean simply Law and Gospel, in one case even emphasizing that "Old" and "New" testaments are found throughout the Scriptures. Moreover, on 135 he tries to impose modern, Reformed categories (especially of "covenant") upon Melanchthon, as if they were obvious categories Melanchthon refused to see, instead of later systematic constructs. It is no wonder that he dismisses out of hand the work of Peter Fraenkel. His judgment against Melanchthon is clearly a reaction against the more positive statements of Scheible and others.

³ Heiko Oberman's *Roots of Anti-Semitism*, does include a brief biography of Melanchthon in its opening chapter but otherwise mentions him only in passing.

More importantly, although Melanchthon wrote no specific tract on the Jews, examination of his occasional comments will demonstrate the complexities of Jewish-Christian interaction in that era of religious upheaval so crucial for Christianity in the West.

Scheible's article, while certainly having paved the way for future research, left several sources for Melanchthon's views on this issue unexplored. By adding them to this investigation, the complex, ambiguous, and sometimes contradictory contours of Melanchthon's relation to the Jews emerge even more clearly.⁴ On the one hand, Melanchthon could admire Jewish scholarship, defend the Jews' unique role as God's people, and dismiss certain unfounded charges against them. At the same time, on the other, he called them pejorative names, passed on misinformation, and expressed disapproval at their being allowed back into certain territories of the Empire.

Nevertheless, Melanchthon's dispute with Jews was chiefly theological in nature and grew out of his understanding of the nature of the Church. He dismissed their beliefs out of hand and even went so far as to recommend Luther's harshest tracts against them on theological grounds. But he also engaged in exegetical disputes with them, both face-to-face and in his writings. This maelstrom of conflicting approaches, far from arising out of a weak personality (the standard explanation for many aspects of Melanchthon's behavior), reveals the intricacies of Melanchthon's own thought. He unwaveringly championed the Christian Church, its doctrine, and its interpretation of the Bible. At the same time, he found ways both to tolerate a variety of views on this (for him) bewildering religious and social issue and to indulge in some of his age's worst and most hackneyed expressions of contempt.

In the midst of such tension, however, the faint contours of development in Melanchthon's thought emerge. Especially on the critical text of Rom. 11:25f, Melanchthon's view narrowed, so that the more clearly he applied Romans 9–11 to the persecuted, evangelical Church the less room he gave to God's conversion of Jews before the End. While he still supported such an interpretation, in his later exegesis it must compete with another, harsher view. To some extent, Melanchthon's thought mirrored Luther's, who also changed his opin-

⁴ Even Detmers appealed for more work on Melanchthon's exegetical commentaries.

ion at least regarding the possibility of Jewish conversions to Christianity.⁵ However, in the one matter that triggered the worst of Luther's anti-Jewish comments—the alleged conversion of Christians to Judaism—Melanchthon remained unfazed and instead consistently criticized rumor-mongering and upheld what he imagined was a fairer attitude toward Jews.

First Impressions

In 1508 Philip Melanchthon's father Georg Schwarzerdt, armorer to the Elector of the Rhenish Palatinate, died. Shortly thereafter, young Philip left his hometown of Bretten with his brother and headed for Pforzheim, a city in the principality of Baden and hometown of his relative by marriage, Johannes Reuchlin, the, by then, famous German humanist and jurist, whose journeys often took him back home. There, young Philip studied at the town's up-and-coming Latin school under Georg Simler. Among the tourist attractions in Pforzheim was the chapel dedicated to a young girl purportedly abducted by Jews but unwilling to deny her faith, even to the point of giving her life. Portions of this chapel even survived the Allied bombing attack of World War II, including a depiction of her supposed Jewish murderers atop one of the outside pilasters. Although Melanchthon never made mention of this site, its very presence in the place where he first received a formal education, polished his Latin, and began his study of Greek is worth noting. The "roots" of anti-Semitism or anti-Judaism were everywhere in the Holy Roman Empire of early modern Europe.

In later life, however, he did relate a singular story of kidnapping involving Jews. Johannes Manlius, a onetime student of Melanchthon and later collector of his teacher's stories and anecdotes is the source for this story.⁶ In 1554 some "buffoon" (*scura*) was sentenced in

⁵ They also agreed that the Jews were not guilty of the death of Jesus. For Melanchthon's view, see below. Luther's most widely published comments come in his *Kirchenpostil* of 1525 (republished in its most popular form by Caspar Cruciger, Sr. in 1544), which contains a sermon on Christ's suffering and death originally published in 1519 (see especially WA 2:136, 3–10 and 137, 22–29).

⁶ Johannes Manlius, *Locorum communium collectanea*, 4 vols. (Basel: Operinus, 1562–63), 2:154. (Henceforth cited as Manlius, 2:154.)

Wittenberg for having stolen eleven boys and sold them to Jews in Prague. Afterwards he joined up with a group of beggars and feigned epilepsy by spitting blood he had previously hidden in his mouth. As is always the case with the stories Manlius assembled, there is no context for these remarks. From what Manlius recorded, however, there is no evidence that Melanchthon challenged the basic premise (the sale of eleven boys to Jews in Prague), even though his interest was in the behavior of the original kidnapper.

Although such stories and chapels were a part of the late-medieval air Melanchthon breathed, so was a much more “modern” event: the learning of Hebrew by Christian humanists, in this case embodied in the person of Johannes Reuchlin himself. Not only did Melanchthon and his brother take rooms with Reuchlin’s sister and study under teachers influenced by him. Melanchthon also performed one of Reuchlin’s Latin plays in the doctor’s presence and received the hellenized form of his name from the older man at what Scheible and others have described as a humanist “baptism.”⁷ By the time Melanchthon entered Pforzheim’s school, Reuchlin had published a Hebrew grammar and an initial paean to the Kabbalah, *De verbo mirifico*, taking a position on these mystical Jewish writings that would lead him into direct conflict with Johannes Pfefferkorn and other “obscure” scholastic theologians.⁸ People with humanist leanings such as Martin Luther and Philip Melanchthon came to Reuchlin’s defense, or at least considered themselves in his corner against the attacks of ignorant scholastic theologians.

In Melanchthon’s case, the defense was quite real. By 1514 he had received a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Heidelberg and was completing a Master of Arts at the University of Tübingen with his old teacher, Simler. Simler and Reuchlin’s connections to the local printer, Thomas Anshelm (formerly of Pforzheim), doubtless helped young Philip obtain a position as copy editor. He also had increased contacts with the now retired Reuchlin at his estate near Stuttgart. As the controversy with Pfefferkorn heated up, Melanchthon took up arms against his relative’s detractors, editing *Clarorum virorum epistolae latinae graecae et hebraicae variis temporibus missae*

⁷ Heinz Scheible, *Melanchthon: eine Biographie* (Munich, 1997), 14–16.

⁸ For Reuchlin’s relation to the Jews, see Oberman, *Roots of Anti-Semitism*, 24–31 and *Reuchlin und die Juden*, ed. Arno Herzig et al.

ad Ioannem Reuchlin Phorcensem LL. doctorem (Tübingen: Anshelm, 1514) and providing a preface for it.⁹ This work revealed nothing about Melanchthon's position toward Jews and instead shed light on his disdain for scholasticism and his unabashed championing of Reuchlin. In the preface, Melanchthon argued that the letters showed by their erudition the high quality of Reuchlin's supporters (and by inference the ignorance of his detractors). In a letter to Reuchlin in 1518, he promised to write against Pfefferkorn, something he never did.¹⁰

Only later in life did Melanchthon express his own position on the Kabbalah. He seemed truly divided on the issue. As Scheible notes, in his textbook on rhetoric from 1531 Melanchthon warned readers to avoid neologisms, not only those of the scholastics, philosophers, and heretics, but also those of the kabbalists. "Not less inept are the kabbalists of the Jews, who invent new words and promise wondrous mysteries, when they teach pure nonsense."¹¹ Over against such speculation and unnatural speech (*oratio monstrosa*), Melanchthon encouraged the students to learn the language from the writers of that age.

From another, neglected source for Melanchthon's thought, however, a more positive relation to the Kabbalah appears. Starting in the 1530s and reinstated in the 1550s, Melanchthon delivered lectures in Latin early Sunday morning on the Gospel text for the day. He held them initially in his home and designed them for foreign students who could not easily understand German sermons, but so many attended that he quickly transferred his talks to a lecture hall. Despite that, they remain (in both a published text from the 1590s and in manuscripts) among the least formal of his biblical lectures—filled with stories, anecdotes, and wide-ranging excursus. Here, too, are some of the most telling comments about Jews, in this case one about the Kabbalah. In an exposition of the Gospel for the second Sunday in Advent, Melanchthon spoke about the age of the earth and the date for the end of the world, something Scheible notes he had discussed since 1532.¹² His source for the notion that the world

⁹ MBW 1 (MBW.T, 1:35–36).

¹⁰ MBW 15 (MBW.T, 1:61), referred to in Detmers, *Reformation und Judentum*, 136 n. 52.

¹¹ CR 13:462, cited in Scheible, "Reuchlins Einfluß," 139–40.

¹² Scheible, "Reuchlins Einfluß," 140. See CR 24:31–32. Actually, this began already in 1531 with the appearance of Halley's comet. See the following note.

will experience three ages of 2,000 years each before the end was a saying of the prophet Elijah, handed down through the Kabbalah. Melanchthon went on to describe the Kabbalah—"teaching passed down by hand"—as a collection of sayings of the prophets, especially Elijah and Elisha, who said far more than is recorded in the biblical witness. Of course, Melanchthon did not accord this collection nearly as much authority as the Scripture. Thus, he warned his listeners, "I recount this saying not as an indubitable proof but as a conjecture. Nor do I want to twist this into another meaning as many do through chicanery." Nevertheless this tri-fold division of human history shaped his own history of the world, the *Chronicon Carionis*.¹³ Compared with Reuchlin, Melanchthon's assessment of the Kabbalah in later years was extremely wary, if not downright hostile. Such skepticism, however, did not prevent him from using it. He accepted some of its content (sayings of the prophets) while rejecting its methods of biblical interpretation.¹⁴

Professor in Wittenberg

In 1518, by virtue of the recommendation of Johannes Reuchlin, Philip Melanchthon became professor of Greek at the University of Wittenberg. Not only did he bring his mastery of Latin and Greek and his highly developed skills in rhetoric and dialectic to the university's arts faculty, he also fell under the influence of Martin Luther's theology. By 1519 he had broken with Reuchlin and appeared in Luther's corner at the Leipzig debates. Despite the fact that Luther "lost" the debates according to the supporters of the Roman Church, Melanchthon's description of them in a (quickly published) letter to

¹³ See CR 12:717: "Utile est, semper in conspectu habere, quantum fieri potest, omnium temporum seriem, et praecipuas generis humani mutationes. Ad id maxime conducit nosse dictum, quod recitatur in Iudaeorum commentariis." In a letter to Johannes Carion, dated 17 August 1531, Melanchthon described how he had inserted this material already at this early date. See MBW 1177 (in A. Warburg, "Heidnisch-antike Weissagung in Wort und Bild zu Luthers Zeiten," in *Sitzungsberichte der Heidelberger Akademie* 10 (1920): 72–75) and the digest of this letter by Scheible in MBW, *Regesten* 2:42–43.

¹⁴ In his 1552 oration, "Declamatio de Capnione Phorcensi" (CR 11:999–1010), Melanchthon praised Reuchlin for protecting Jewish "letters" (that is, literature) and mastering the Hebrew language. There is, again, no support for his kabbalistic interpretation of the Scripture. I thank Nicole Kuroпка for this reference.

Johannes Oecolampad, gave Luther the victory in public opinion.¹⁵ In the same year, Melanchthon took his first and only step toward a higher degree in theology, obtaining a Baccalaureus Biblicus under the aegis of Luther. This allowed Melanchthon to lecture on the (Latin) biblical text (his Greek professorship already gave him leave to lecture on the Greek text) and its content. As a result, for the rest of his career, Melanchthon lectured in both the arts and theology faculties. His biblical lectures, which became published commentaries, for example, on Romans, Colossians, the Psalms, Proverbs, and Daniel, comprised much of his work in theology and were especially influential. It is from these sources, as well as from his lectures on world history and the assigned Gospel readings for Sundays, that we learn the most about his attitude toward Jews. Two further sources include his vast correspondence and collections of “table talk” assembled by his students, such as Manlius. From these, the following profile of Melanchthon’s attitudes takes shape.

Melanchthon’s Toleration of Jews

If Melanchthon learned anything from his relative Johannes Reuchlin, it was a certain level of toleration for Jews and their writings. The sources are simply too scanty to determine completely the depth of this conviction.¹⁶ An early letter from 1523 may indicate that he needed money for a Jewish Christian, Bernardus Hebraeus (Bernard the Hebrew), and asked his erstwhile friend, Johann Agricola, for a loan.¹⁷ Luther dedicated the tract *That Jesus Christ Was Born a Jew* to the same person in 1523. Scheible mentions that Hebraeus, later a sexton in Wittenberg, was often used as a messenger and was later in life often in debt. In 1537, Melanchthon reported having received correspondence from a Jew named Anthony in Vienna, who wrote

¹⁵ MBW 59 (MBW.T, 1:132–41), dated 21 July 1519.

¹⁶ For references to the correspondence, I am indebted to Walter Thüringer of the Melanchthon-Forschungsstelle in Heidelberg.

¹⁷ MBW 302 (MBW.T, 2:103), dated by MBW to around 1523. The person in question is named Bernard Helvius, which *MBW* corrects to Hebraeus, that is, Bernard the Hebrew. See Scheible, “Reuchlins Einfluß,” 134 n. 88 and 138f for various interpretations of this reference. Melanchthon supported him at various times throughout his life.

to inform him that the mathematician, Johann Vögelin, had no position there and should be called to Wittenberg.¹⁸ He reported (favorably) to his most faithful correspondent, Joachim Camerarius, that a Jew had purchased the freedom of two former Wittenberg students from the Turks.¹⁹ Although (non-Christian) Jews were not allowed to live in Saxony, among Melanchthon's students in the 1550s was another baptized Jew, Paul Tobias Levith, who matriculated on 2 December 1550. In 1557, the Elector Augustus offered a stipend to him for more study at Wittenberg with the understanding he would teach Hebrew there.²⁰

One of the most notorious cases involving persecution of Jews took place on 19 July 1510 in Brandenburg, where thirty-eight Jews were burned at the stake for allegedly having desecrated the sacramental bread of the Eucharist. It became the excuse Elector Joachim I used to expel Jews from his principality. We know from a reference in a collection of Melanchthon's stories that he was familiar with the event.²¹ However, Manlius gave no hint whether his teacher believed it or not. Only an account from Rabbi Josel of Rosheim makes clear that at the meeting of princes in 1539 at Frankfurt, Melanchthon presented the case to the son, Elector Joachim II, arguing that the Jews had been unjustly condemned. As a result, Joachim II again allowed Jews into his lands.²² (When Josel of Rosheim had approached Luther two years earlier over a similar ban from Saxony, Luther had refused to intervene.)

Whatever Melanchthon's motives for instructing the elector, it seems that this concern for legal fairness extended throughout his

¹⁸ MBW 1842 (CR 3:265–66) to Jakob Milichius on the morning of 1 February 1537.

¹⁹ MBW 2014 (CR 3:506–09), dated 31 March 1538.

²⁰ MBW 8150 (not yet published), a letter of recommendation from Elector Augustus to Melanchthon, dated 8 March 1557. Levith apparently never picked it up. For Levith's matriculation, see *Album Academiae Vitebergensis*, ed. Karl Eduard Förstemann, 2 vols. (Hamburg, 1842), 1:263b.

²¹ Manlius, 1:100. This story was published in 1523 in Nuremberg. For a more complete account, see Oberman, *Roots of Anti-Semitism*, 97–100. He does not mention Melanchthon's connection to this story. For a different twist on this story, see Detmers, *Reformation und Judentum*, 136–37.

²² Scheible, "Reuchlins Einfluß," 137, especially n. 104. Scheible argues that Melanchthon made a theological case and not the case for the admission of Jews into Brandenburg directly. This would correspond better with his later criticism of the Jewish return to Hesse.

life. In 1556, he wrote to Adam Silber in Grimma, commiserating with him over a recent fire in the town.²³ He noted other fires in Poland, Russia, and Silesia that were blamed on the Turks and the Jews. He then added contemptuously, “But it is typical to accuse others when we ought rather accuse ourselves and emend our own behavior.”²⁴

This sense of fairness, a crucial part of Melanchthon’s teaching on ethics spilled over into his discussions of the guilt for Christ’s crucifixion. To be sure, Melanchthon never denied that Jews were responsible for Jesus’ death. However, he consistently connected their guilt to that of all people. In 1544, Melanchthon produced annotations on the Gospel lessons appointed for Sundays. When discussing the word sin in the text from Peter’s sermon in Acts 2 (for Pentecost Day), he commented that the people around Jesus had condemned the divine signs and manifest miracles performed by Christ and killed him. He then added, “Reason does not judge these things to be sins, and nevertheless we are all guilty.”²⁵ He also recounted present persecutions of saints and other people’s failure to prevent such things. The only answer to that guilt, as Peter says in Acts 15, is forgiveness through the name of Jesus for those who believe.

One of the most striking examples of Melanchthon’s insistence on humanity’s guilt for Christ’s death came in a discussion of Peter’s sermon in Acts 2, in which the apostle had accused his Jerusalem audience of having put Jesus Christ to death. First, Melanchthon called it a very terrible and sad sermon. Immediately thereafter, however, he addressed his hearers directly.

Now think! Sin was not alone in those who crucified Christ although ignorant, but in us, too, reside manifold sins. There is in all people great infirmity, because we do not so firmly believe that God wants to redeem us through and because of the Son. When someone commits a murder or a great crime, the one who does it thinks it to be a great sin and is completely filled with anguish and sorrow. But we scarcely think it a sin not to believe in the Son or not to give thanks for the gift of the Son.²⁶

²³ MBW 7933 (CR 8:830–31), dated 29 August 1556.

²⁴ CR 8:831.

²⁵ CR 14:513.

²⁶ CR 24:933.

Melanchthon also often argued that God had stripped the Jews of their homeland for persecuting Christ and later Christians. For him, this frightening example of God's punishment against sin gave Christians nothing over which to gloat—only a stern warning about what might happen to them if they, too, neglected the Gospel.²⁷

Not only did Melanchthon demonstrate his commitment to fairness with direct reference to Jews, he also showed toleration for those evangelical theologians who advocated an even more open-minded attitude toward Jews than he did. Oberman discusses two figures: Justus Jonas, Melanchthon's friend and fellow teacher at Wittenberg, and Andreas Osiander, a preacher in Nuremberg.²⁸ We have no record of Melanchthon's comments concerning Jonas. However, on several occasions, Melanchthon expressed his views about Osiander, an independent thinker with whom later in life Melanchthon vehemently disagreed concerning the imputative nature of justification by faith alone.

Already in 1523, Melanchthon wrote to Georg Spalatin, the advisor to the Elector of Saxony in charge of educational matters in the principality, about charges by the papal legate (Francesco Chiericati) regarding Osiander's preaching. Melanchthon scornfully recounted that, according to the legate's report, Osiander denied the perpetual virginity of Mary and was nothing more than a Jew and rabble-rouser.²⁹ Thirteen years later, while drawing up Wittenberg's response to Henry VIII's divorce, Melanchthon called upon Osiander, well-known for his thorough knowledge of rabbinic sources, for the rabbis' interpretation of certain Old Testament passages regarding marriage.³⁰ Four years later, Melanchthon again called upon the expertise of Osiander and Wolfgang Capito at the Colloquy of Worms, this time using rabbinic sources to help interpret the apostolic decree in Acts 15.³¹

His most important contact with Osiander over Judaism came in

²⁷ CR 25:287–89 in a section entitled already in the sixteenth century, “Cur deleta est politia Iudaica.” See below for a fuller analysis of this issue.

²⁸ Oberman, *Roots of Anti-Semitism*, 101.

²⁹ MBW 271 (MBW.T, 2:60–62), dated around 15 March 1523.

³⁰ MBW 1705 (unpublished) to Andreas Osiander, dated the second half of February 1536.

³¹ MBW 2863 (CR 4:722–28), a preface to the *Colloquium Wormaciense institutum anno 1540* (Wittenberg: J. Klug, 1542), dated December 1541.

1545. In a letter dated 3 April, Melanchthon wrote to assure Osiander that Luther had not read his letter to Rabbi Elijah Levita in Venice or the rabbi's reply.³² Moreover, Melanchthon asserted that Luther was broadminded enough to tolerate Osiander's more positive opinion about Jews. What distressed Melanchthon most were the fables (in this case presumably about Osiander) that certain people were feeding to Luther to upset him. Melanchthon would give anything to bind tightly together all who teach in the Church rather than to divide them. Whether or not Melanchthon accurately guessed Luther's measured response to Osiander (the older man did, after all, tolerate Jonas),³³ his letter does evince a level of toleration, based upon a desire for Christian unity, of a variety of Christian views toward the Jews. He would not reject Osiander because of his openness to Jews. On 3 March 1552, Melanchthon discussed this exchange with Osiander's supporter, Johannes Vetter, in Nuremberg, simply as a way of proving that he had not mistreated Osiander in the past.³⁴

Using Stereotypes to Label Jews as Enemies of the Church

If Melanchthon's toleration arose from certain notions of fairness and his striving for unity among Christian theologians, much of Melanchthon's antipathy toward Jews derived from his ecclesiology.³⁵ The Church was a poor, persecuted, God-taught assembly, always beset from within and without by enemies who championed works, power, and glory, instead of the consolation of the Gospel. For Melanchthon the Church was, using Fraenkel's description, a continuous chain of teachers and learners from Abel to the present,

³² MBW 3870 (CR 5:728–29). Note, too, a reference to this affair in MBW 3871 (CR 5:727–28), to Veit Dietrich dated the same day. Dietrich and Osiander, both pastors in Nuremberg, were often at each other's throats over Christian theology and practice. I am indebted to Nicole Kuropka for this reference.

³³ Oberman, *Roots of Anti-Semitism*, 49.

³⁴ Georg Theodor Strobel, *Nachricht von dem Leben und den Schriften Veit Dietrichs* (Altdorf and Nuremberg: L. Schüpffel, 1772), 111f, cited in Detmers, *Reformation und Judentum*, 142 n. 81. Caspar Cruciger, Sr., helped Melanchthon translate the original Hebrew letter written by Osiander and forwarded to Melanchthon by Dietrich.

³⁵ This is a relatively unexamined aspect of his theology. See Peter Fraenkel, *Testimonia Patrum: The Function of the Patristic Argument in the Theology of Philip Melanchthon* (Geneva, 1961).

gathered by God around the proclamation of Christ. This principal plank in Wittenberg's ecclesiology emerged most clearly after 1530 and owed its impetus to the developing split between the Roman Church and the evangelicals.³⁶ Very often, under even some of the most abusive language Melanchthon employed for Jews, lurks this view of the Church under attack.

Melanchthon's correspondence contains relatively little mention of Jews and Judaism. Yet, there we do find three truly deprecating references to Jews. On one occasion, in a preface to Zachariah Orth's *De arte poetica* addressed to Duke Johann Friedrich of Pomerania, Melanchthon described the enemies of the true Church as those who reject the Scriptures and the creeds, including pagans, Mohammedans, and "feces Iudaices" (Jewish excrement).³⁷ A year later, in a preface to his commentary on Colossians, he again included among the enemies of the Church "impii Iudaei et alii athei" (impious Jews and other atheists).³⁸ In another example, his opening address at the 1557 Worms colloquy, he lumped together pagan, Mohammedan, and Judaic dregs (*colluvies*).³⁹ Of the dozens of references to Jews in Melanchthon's letters, only these three contain pejorative language, something of a contrast to the rabid expressions of Martin Luther or Johannes Eck. Nevertheless, even these few examples serve to demonstrate that such language and attitudes also seeped into Melanchthon's notions about Jews.

Until Aurogallus became professor of Hebrew at Wittenberg in 1521, a series of teachers briefly held the position. We will examine below Melanchthon's theological condemnation of one of those teachers, Matthaëus Adrianus. Even more scathing were Melanchthon's comments about another professor of Hebrew, Johannes Böschenstein. He was the first to hold the position at Wittenberg. Although Melanchthon had high hopes for publishing a trilingual version of Proverbs with him, the man remained in Wittenberg scarcely three months.⁴⁰ His sudden departure upset Melanchthon, who had praised

³⁶ What might be called an ecclesiology of the Cross. See Timothy J. Wengert, "Caspar Cruciger Sr.'s 1546 'Enarratio' on John's Gospel: An Experiment in Ecclesiological Exegesis," CH 61 (1992): 60–74, especially 70.

³⁷ Or: dregs. MBW 8713 (CR 9:602–07; here: 604), dated 1 September 1558.

³⁸ MBW 8862 (CR 9:745–47) to Herluf Trolle, dated 16 February 1559.

³⁹ MBW 8337 (CR 9:265–68), dated 11 September 1557.

⁴⁰ See Scheible, "Reuchlins Einfluß," 132–33 and MBW 34 (MBW.T, 1:90–91),

him to the hilt, to such a degree that years later he often recounted the following strange and defamatory story about him.⁴¹ This Hebrew Professor, a (baptized) Jew and a priest, left Wittenberg and its professorship, funded at 100 Gulden per year, because it was too much work for too little pay. He settled in Regensburg where he could receive free meals from his fellow Jews. He would once a day walk through the cathedral and approach one or more old ladies, receive from them one or two “Batzen” (as they called the coin) and celebrate a single mass for all of them. Things did not work out as he had planned, however. All Jews were expelled from Regensburg that very year (1519).⁴² After remaining in the city for a while, the poor priest ended up living at the court of the bishop of Würzburg. As Scheible points out, although clearly told of Böschenstein, the story contains several inaccuracies. The man lived in several other places beside Regensburg, he was not a Jew but a citizen of Esslingen, and had he been a Jew he hardly could have expected a warm reception from Regensburg’s beleaguered Jewish community. The other version of the story preserved for us leaves out precisely these details. There, Melanchthon explained that the professor acted this way out of either a morose nature or boredom with academic life. In both instances, Melanchthon told this story to illustrate the practice of the Jewish priests using one sacrifice for which many people had paid. The references to Böschenstein’s Jewishness in this context seem all the more gratuitous.

Melanchthon’s anti-Jewish attitude reflected the mores of his age. In discussing the raising of Jairus’s daughter (Mark 5:21–43), Melanchthon identified Jairus as an upright pastor, giving him leave to describe such a person’s attributes. In that connection, he quoted a standard aphorism: “Happy the pastor who does not have a Nimrod, an Abraham, or a Naaman.” His explanation? Nimrod is a tyrannical ruler. Naaman is the leper, that is, those who have committed open sins. And Abraham constitutes Jews. “For, where Jews are,

a postscript to Böschenstein’s *Hebraicae grammaticae institutiones* (Wittenberg: Grunenberg, 1518), dated 24 September 1518, in which he praised the “librum . . . singularis amici et praeceptoris nostri.”

⁴¹ Scheible was only familiar with one version (Manlius, 3:38), which was probably based upon the version in CR 25:611. Melanchthon also told the same story in CR 24:9 with some decidedly different twists.

⁴² For a full account of this, see Oberman, *Roots of Anti-Semitism*, 75–79.

they draw the pastors to themselves and loan them money. They are a poisonous people. For them it is an *'opsion*, a delicacy, to speak poisonously of pastors."⁴³ Here, with little warning, out tumble all the stereotypes of the "poisonous and greedy" Jew. So powerful was this saying, that John Gerhard, the orthodox Lutheran theologian, will also use it approvingly a century later.⁴⁴

However, at least some of this name-calling reveals one of Melanchthon's gravest concerns: that enemies surround the true Church (that weak and persecuted assembly of beleaguered believers) and attack its central teachings and teachers. However, the notion of being a weak assembly of beleaguered believers, surrounded by attacking heretics, papists, Turks, Jews, and "false brethren,"⁴⁵ loses any and all integrity when the argument shifts from theological differences to stereotypes and includes the role of the state in assuring doctrinal purity in the land. Thus, when Jews were allowed back into Hesse, Melanchthon related how he had inquired of a friend there, the Frankfurt pastor and Hessian court preacher Dionysius Melander, how it happened. Melander reported his opposition but then insisted that "unction teaches everything" (cf. 1 John 2:20), in this case greasing the prince's palm with money.⁴⁶

The commandment for keeping the Sabbath provided not only fodder for theological debate (as we will see below) but also social commentary. Melanchthon knew that Jews sometimes hired Christians to perform certain tasks for them on the Sabbath.⁴⁷ He also derided the Jewish moneylender who, according to the tale, would not count out money on the Sabbath but, to prevent being cheated, was more than willing to oversee a Christian debtor counting it out.⁴⁸ Another story, about Magdeburg, has reached us in three different versions.

⁴³ CR 25:505.

⁴⁴ Johann Gerhard, *Loci theologici*, 8 vols. (Berlin, 1863–70) and vol. 9 (Leipzig, 1875), 6:381.

⁴⁵ For Luther, see Mark U. Edwards, *Luther's Last Battles: Politics and Polemics, 1531–1546* (Ithaca, 1983).

⁴⁶ For the role of Jewish finance in their acceptance and rejection into central Europe, see Oberman, *Roots of Anti-Semitism*, 14. See Manlius, 2:236–37 and *Analecta Lutherana et Melanthoniana: Tischreden Luthers und Aussprüche Melanths, hauptsächlich nach Aufzeichnungen des Johannes Mathesius*, ed. Georg Loesche (Gotha, 1892), 183 (no. 268). This reference may also explain Melanchthon's recommendation to the Landgrave of Hesse, Philip, to read Luther's tracts on the Jews.

⁴⁷ Manlius, 2:40.

⁴⁸ Manlius, 2:39.

According to one account, Melanchthon told how a Jew fell into a latrine on the Sabbath. His friends requested the magistrate order some Christian officials to pull him out so that they would not have to break the Sabbath. The magistrate refused, and the poor man remained there two days.⁴⁹ Another account, by Johannes Manlius, tells much the same story, except that it adds that the official was none other than Bishop Ernest of Magdeburg himself and that the reason the man remained two days in the latrine was to prevent breaking either the Jewish or the Christian Sabbath.⁵⁰ However, the most reliable source, Melanchthon's own lecture on Luke 14:1–6 (the healing on the Sabbath of a man with dropsy), included an even harsher condemnation of Jews from the bishop: "The Bishop, amazed by their impudence, asked, 'Why do you want us to pull him out?'"⁵¹ It is true that Melanchthon went on to explain that caring for others did not oppose the commandment. Nevertheless, he did not apply such an ethic to Christians' care for Jews.⁵²

Against Jewish Interpretations of the Bible

There is also yet another side to Melanchthon's attitude toward Jews.⁵³ It was rooted in his conviction that the Jews wrongly rejected Jesus Christ as Messiah. In the 1550s, as he lectured on 1 Timothy, a particular verse (4:1, "Some will renounce the faith") moved him to summarize Jewish theological failings. He wrote

It is easier to refute the Jews—those fighting against the Church—who confess that they assent to the Prophets. From these writings they can be convinced that the apostolic teaching conforms to the prophetic. However, the Jews dissent from us concerning the Messiah. They deny

⁴⁹ CR 20:539.

⁵⁰ Manlius, 2:40.

⁵¹ CR 25:556–57.

⁵² For other examples of Melanchthon's criticism of Jewish Sabbath-keeping, see Detmers, *Reformation und Judentum*, 133 n. 45.

⁵³ One of Detmers's main theses, that Luther and Melanchthon held to a disjunction between Old and New Testaments, is completely false. Indeed, Melanchthon himself contrasted his belief in the Bible's unity to Calvin. See Timothy J. Wengert, "We Will Feast Together in Heaven Forever: The Epistolary Friendship of John Calvin and Philip Melanchthon," in *Melanchthon in Europe: His Work and Influence beyond Wittenberg*, ed. Karin Maag (Grand Rapids, 1999), 19–44, esp. 43.

that he is the co-eternal Son of God; they deny the Passion; they deny that he gives righteousness and eternal life; they contend that they will inhabit a political kingdom, and the like. These chief errors can be refuted openly through the testimonies of the prophets.⁵⁴

In many ways, this description set the parameters for the exegetical debate between Melanchthon and Jewish commentators on Scripture. The chief issues were the traditional ones: Whether Jesus is the Messiah, the eternal Son of God; whether he bestows gifts upon humanity—received by faith alone without the works of the Law—and establishes a spiritual not a political kingdom. In his lectures on the Sunday texts, Melanchthon stated much the same thing.

Modern-day Jews plainly also condemn, persecute, and denounce the Gospel. They deny that the Messiah is the Son of God and that the Messiah is the one who suffered. They hold pertinaciously to their dream of a Messiah's political reign. They condemn this resurrected Son, and hold to many other terrible errors.⁵⁵

The struggle involving these teachings was more than a theoretical one. When he first arrived in Wittenberg, Melanchthon not only taught some courses in Hebrew, he was also actively involved in searching for a permanent professor of Hebrew at the university. For a time, from the Fall of 1519 to February 1521, a Spanish Christian Jew, Matthaëus Adrianus, taught Hebrew at Wittenberg. However, severe differences with Luther over the nature of Law and Gospel led to his departure. In a letter to Spalatin at the time of Adrianus's departure, Melanchthon described these differences by calling him "a pseudo-Christian or, rather, a Jew."⁵⁶ This is one of the earliest references to what became part of Melanchthon's standard criticism of Jewish teachers: they misunderstood the Hebrew Bible and taught salvation by Law not Gospel.⁵⁷ Thus, he called Adrianus a Jew.

Three years before his death, Melanchthon wrote a preface to the ninth volume of the Wittenberg edition of Luther's German works.⁵⁸ In a discussion of the true Church, he noted that Mohammed's fol-

⁵⁴ CR 15:1357.

⁵⁵ CR 24:895.

⁵⁶ MBW 127 (MBW.T, 1:261–62, here 62), dated 22 February 1521.

⁵⁷ For a more general discussion of Melanchthon's commitment to Hebrew, see Scheible, "Reuchlins Einfluß," 132–35.

⁵⁸ MBW 8312 (CR 9:221–24), dated 16 August 1557.

lowers were not the true Church because they rejected publicly all the writings of the prophets and apostles (i.e., the Old and New Testaments). On the other hand, “Jews reject the apostolic writings and distort the prophets.”⁵⁹

This criticism of Jewish interpretation of the Hebrew Bible first became acute in the dispute between Martin Luther and Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt. Karlstadt insisted that any reformation of the Church must base changes in ecclesiastical and societal practices upon Old Testament Law. In rejecting this position, Luther and Melanchthon argued that this spelled a return to the “Judaizing” of St. Paul’s opponents and would undermine the gospel of the free forgiveness of sins. It may be that Melanchthon had opposed Karlstadt directly on this issue. From Manlius we have this recollection.

I, sitting right here in the New College, disputed against someone who wanted to judge all legal disputes based on the Mosaic Law. He argued this way: Wherever the prophetic writings are, there is the Church. Jews retain the prophetic writings; therefore, Jews are the Church. I responded with a distinction in the minor premise. Jews indeed retain the prophetic writings according to the letter, but as far as the true reality I deny the matter. For they do not truly retain them but corrupt them and attach to them other foreign ideas. Indeed, they retain the books but add new and useless ideas.⁶⁰

Here Melanchthon added a second complaint: Jewish failure to read the Old Testament prophecies properly (in the light of Jesus Christ). This two-pronged criticism appeared throughout Melanchthon’s career. On the one hand, he criticized Martin Bucer (himself intolerant of Jews) for his insistence on destroying images. Bucer’s writings on the matter showed him giving up justification by faith alone and returning to “Judaism,” as had Karlstadt.⁶¹ On the other, when his friend Camerarius became a professor at the University of Tübingen, Melanchthon complained about the professor of Hebrew, Paul Phrygio, as overly dependent on the Jewish interpretations of the Old Testament.⁶² At nearly the same time, he complimented the neo-Latin poet, Eoban Hessus, for having avoided “Judaizing” interpretation

⁵⁹ CR 9:223. For more on the discussion of the true Church, see below.

⁶⁰ Manlius, 2:5.

⁶¹ MBW 900 (CR 2:42), addressed to Joachim Camerarius and dated 5 May 1530.

⁶² MBW 1919 (CR 3:388–90, where the criticism is lacking), dated 13 July 1537.

of the Psalms in his Latin paraphrases of them.⁶³ In a 1549 oration on learning Hebrew (“De studio linguae Ebraeae”), Melanchthon both defended the learning of Hebrew and rejected Jewish misinterpretation of the prophets. In fact, learning Hebrew helps the exegete combat the Jewish misinterpretation.⁶⁴

The concern for misreading the Hebrew Bible was not merely a scholarly problem associated with Christian exegetes. It also came up in direct contact with Jewish theologians. One gets a taste for Melanchthon’s response in his debate at the New College referred to above. In fact, Melanchthon drew a direct line from the debates of the first century, especially as reflected in Jesus’ questions to Peter in Matthew 16, to his own day:⁶⁵

Today, too, we debate with Jews the same questions debated here: That he is truly the promised Messiah and savior who was crucified and raised, concerning whom we testify. Jews demand another messiah. Likewise, it is a question between Jews and us whether he is God by nature, that is, the Son of God. The Jews imagined this. “To us has been promised someone from the seed of David who will expand the kingdom and set up a good and beautiful state. Freedom is promised us; therefore, the Messiah will free us from slavery and set up among us a political empire. This man [Jesus] is miserable, he does not have schooling, and he does nothing political. Nothing is more vile than for this vagabond to teach this way.” . . . Thus, this is a question now, too, debated by learned people and not just Jews: Whether he was the one who, wandering about in such a vile form, taught people.

We have three accounts of a face-to-face encounter between Melanchthon and “some Jew” over Isaiah 53.⁶⁶ Manlius recounted how a Jew wanted to prove that the prophet was describing Ezekiel’s suffering. When Melanchthon overturned his arguments, the man slammed the Bible shut and fled the room.⁶⁷ From a Good Friday lecture on

⁶³ MBW 1923 (CR 3:393–95), dated 1 August 1537.

⁶⁴ CR 11:874. I am indebted to Nicole Kuroпка for this reference.

⁶⁵ CR 25:124. Jesus had asked, “Who do people say that I am?” and “Who do you say that I am?” The people thought of Jesus as a prophet; Peter confessed him to be the Messiah and Son of God.

⁶⁶ From an account of this encounter by Urbanus Rhegius, we learn that the encounter took place at the Diet of Augsburg in 1530 with Rabbi Isaac Levi of Prague and involved Rhegius and Brenz as well. See Scott Hendrix, “Toleration of the Jews in the German Reformation: Urbanus Rhegius and Braunschweig (1535–1540),” ARG 81 (1990): 189–215, especially 193–94 n. 23; cited in Detmers, *Reformation und Judentum*, 138 n. 62.

⁶⁷ Manlius, 1:85.

Isaiah 53 in the 1550s, Melanchthon himself provided more details. The book was a Hebrew Bible, a copy of which Melanchthon also had before him. When the Jew realized that his assumptions about the text were not valid, he closed the book and claimed that “You cannot be God’s people because you do not keep the Law.”⁶⁸ Melanchthon then pressed him on how well he kept the Law (knowing full well that he did not), to which the Jew replied that the problem was not keeping the Law but abandoning one of its precepts, namely, keeping the Sabbath. At this point, Melanchthon paused to analyze the opponent’s argument for the students, reducing it (as was his wont) to a syllogism. The Law demands that nothing be added, taken away, or changed; we Christians have changed something, therefore we are not God’s people. Melanchthon’s solution arose out of the very text upon which he was lecturing. The Son of Man was Lord of the Sabbath. As priest after the order of Melchizedek, he was above the Levitical priesthood. God commanded in the Law (Deuteronomy 18) that we listen to the Messiah, who would come after Moses, as the one who offers a different teaching from the Law. Jeremiah 31 proclaimed the same abrogation of the Law. Therefore, Christians could break the Sabbath and remain God’s people.

On Good Friday 1560, Melanchthon was already suffering from an ailment that only a few weeks later would take him to his grave. He gave what turned out to be his last lecture in Wittenberg, basing his remarks on Isaiah 53, a text traditionally read that day. He began by noting that this text was often recited in the church, as was proven by its use in the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8. Then he again recalled his own dispute with a Jew, this time providing another aspect of the Jew’s interpretation of the text. “I also disputed with a Jew about this very text. He imagined that there were two messiahs: one who would suffer and another who would be glorified.”⁶⁹ Unlike Luther, whose last sermons in Eisleben were filled with vituperations against Jews, Melanchthon’s last comments centered on the fundamental exegetical and theological divide: the nature of the Messiah and the abrogation of the Law.

Another story Melanchthon told concerning a direct encounter

⁶⁸ CR 24:658. Cf. CR 24:653.

⁶⁹ CR 25:678.

between a Christian and a Jew indicates in a backhanded way how highly Melanchthon regarded encounters with Jews over the text of Scripture and truth. In examining the text, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, because they will be filled,” Melanchthon contrasted thirst for the truth to the following. Twenty years ago (hence, in the 1530s) a doctor of medicine said to a Jew in Worms, “You must be pleased that we are fighting among ourselves.” The Jew demurred and when pressed responded that in the end there would be war and, presumably to finance it, the Christians would go after the Jews’ money. Melanchthon concluded, “So that Jew was sorrowful not because of the truth or because of God’s glory but (only) because of his own danger.” The statement demonstrates both a sorry lack of concern for the Jewish man’s well-being and a single-minded quest for truth. Unlike that man, Melanchthon’s own Jewish interlocutors clearly focused on the Scripture and its meaning, that is, upon the truth.

Nowhere is this clearer than in a second encounter between Melanchthon and a Jew, one that took place while he was in Frankfurt am Main (a city he visited in 1539). Perhaps the Jew in question was none other than Rabbi Josel of Rosheim himself. As Manlius has preserved the story, Melanchthon told of having known some Jew in Frankfurt many years ago (Manlius likely heard this story in the late 1550s), “truly an old and wise man.” He continued,

Whenever we came together, we spoke about various things, and I said to him that many years before he wanted to condemn us. He replied, “We did not condemn you but concede what you believe, that as Paul says ‘the just will live by their faith.’” But I said, “I know you are not saying these things seriously.” Then he confessed and said that it was necessary that they speak this way to avoid being killed by us.⁷⁰

A final comment, directed originally to students in the classroom where Melanchthon told the story, makes it clear that indeed his opponent was serious but was using the language of Paul (and Habakkuk!) in a very different way from evangelical theologians. Melanchthon concluded, “So you see how Scripture is cut to shreds and how the words grace, faith, justification, and the like are cor-

⁷⁰ Manlius, 1:82–83. He could also have been the Jew who debated with him over Isaiah 53.

rupted with various sophistries.”⁷¹ In one way, this was the highest compliment Melanchthon could have paid the man. This Jew was sufficiently conversant with evangelical theology to know their language and to use it—albeit for self-protection. Melanchthon, who could scarcely understand the man across such a deep theological divide, nevertheless recognized his “sophistry,” a term he also used with his Roman Catholic opponents and all who truly engaged him theologically but with whom he disagreed.

Melanchthon on Luther's Anti-Jewish Writings

This careful engagement and level of respect did not lead to Melanchthon's rejection of Luther's writings on the Jews. In 1543, he mentioned Luther's anti-Jewish writings three times in connection with other theological issues posed by Landgrave Philip of Hesse, including communion practices and the prince's own bigamy. By this time the landgrave's bigamy and Wittenberg's allowance of it were well known and had effectively hamstrung the prince's activities with the Smalkaldic League. Prince Philip was desperate for Luther to write a public defense of his actions. In trying to determine Wittenberg's position, the landgrave must have written to Melanchthon, eliciting two responses. On 17 January 1543, Melanchthon wrote that Philip ought to refrain from asking questions about the Elevation of the Host during celebrations of the Mass (a practice recently done away with in Wittenberg). Instead he sent him Luther's latest tract, *On the Jews and Their Lies*, that, in his words, “truly contains much more useful teaching.”⁷² On 28 March 1543, Melanchthon made clear to the prince that he had never said Luther would write on the question of bigamy. This year Luther was particularly concerned with writing material against the Jews and was in the process of writing his third book on the subject.⁷³ In perhaps a connected letter to Gregory Brück (and the Elector John Frederick), Melanchthon also

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² MBW 3148 (CR 5:19–21, here: 21).

⁷³ MBW 3208 (CR 5:74–77, here: 75). That would be *On the Last Words of David* [LW 15:267–352]. The other two were *On the Jews and Their Lies* [LW 47:137–306] and *On the Ineffable Name* [Falk, *Jew*, 166–224].

reiterated that Luther had only one book in the presses, *On the Last Words of David*.⁷⁴

Did Melanchthon define what he meant by this “much more useful teaching,” which he found in Luther’s anti-Jewish tracts and contrasted to disputes over eucharistic practices? Seven years later, he added a preface to the Latin translation of *On the Last Words of David*, published at the request of Georg von Anhalt, who wanted a separate version of the Latin tract despite its presence in Luther’s collected works. (Melanchthon may also have felt some loyalty to his recently deceased colleague, the translator of the piece, Caspar Cruciger, Sr.) The preface contrasted Luther’s knowledge of God to that of Platonic and Jewish ideas. The Son of God is not simply a Platonic idea but is “the living, wise, just, beneficent guardian of his Church, to which he was always present, *even before he took on human nature*. As Irenaeus rightly says, ‘the Logos, the Son of God, was always present to the human race.’”⁷⁵ The presence of the Son of God before the incarnation was one of Melanchthon’s most important criticisms of Jewish interpretation of Scripture. Jewish exegetes could not accept this notion and thus missed not only the prophecies of Christ’s incarnation but also the comfort and guidance that God the Son brought to the patriarchs and the people of Israel. This certainly was part of what Melanchthon meant by such “useful teaching.”⁷⁶ However, as Detmers points out, Melanchthon sent these tracts at just the time when Philip of Hesse had relaxed restraints on Jews in Hesse. It would appear that Luther’s directions to authorities on how to treat Jews, their synagogues, and their books also could have influenced Philip’s tightening those restrictions at that very time.⁷⁷ Nevertheless, although Melanchthon never proposed such

⁷⁴ MBW 3185 (Nicholas Müller, “Zur Digamie des Landgrafen Philipp von Hessen,” ARG 1 (1903/04): 367–71), dated the beginning of March 1543.

⁷⁵ MBW 5787 (CR 7:581–85), to the reader, dated 1 May 1550. Emphasis added.

⁷⁶ See also the comment in MBW 3185 (dated the beginning of March 1543 and published by Müller, “Zur Digamie,” 367–71, where Melanchthon described Luther’s work this way: “darinn [in *Vom Schem Hamphoras*] viel schöner disputationes sind von christo, wie jm vorigen Buch von den Juden [*Von den Jüden und ihren Lügen*].” Again, what recommended them were arguments about Christ. I am indebted to Nicole Kuroпка for this reference. Detmers, *Reformation und Judentum*, 141 n. 77, refers to MBW 3305 (CR 5:164–65), a letter to Frederick Myconius dated 27 August 1543, which actually has less to do with the Jews and more to do with Christians’ failure to pray in faith to Christ.

⁷⁷ See Detmers, *Reformation und Judentum*, 140–41. In his concentration on

harsh actions himself, he seemed more than able to overlook them in his colleague's writings for the sake of useful theological arguments. (Justus Jonas, on the contrary, did not.)

Dreams of a Homeland

Another part of Melanchthon's exegetical attack centered on Jewish "dreams of a Messiah's political reign." About this issue Melanchthon had plenty to say. To be sure, Melanchthon rejected this "Jewish" position because he believed in a Messiah who suffered, died, and rose again for a *spiritual* kingdom (a position that he first defended against the revolutionary peasants and Thomas Müntzer). However, there were other reasons for his attention to Jewish history. For one thing, several scholars have noted that Melanchthon's interest in history per se spanned his entire lifetime. His father had already regaled him with stories about the Palatine court. Reuchlin or someone close to him had told Melanchthon about plans by humanists to write a history of that same electorate. In the 1530s, he oversaw the publishing of the *Chronicon Carionis*, a humanist chronicle of the world. Sometime thereafter and continuing until his death, Melanchthon held lectures on that same work, transforming it into a history of the world.⁷⁸ It is here among other places that Melanchthon dealt with the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE and the Bar Kokhba revolt of 132.⁷⁹

In connection to the first revolt and concomitant destruction of Jerusalem, Melanchthon considered why this occurred. He noted that it showed God's wrath against sin and especially against savagery leveled at the Church—perhaps a word of comfort for the embattled evangelicals of the 1550s. Through this destruction, God calls all people to conversion. Those who do not flee to the Mediator will receive eternal punishment. Melanchthon then referred to Paul's

Melanchthon's rejection of the Jews, Detmers seems unaware of other political factors, like Philip's bigamy, which also influenced Melanchthon's behavior.

⁷⁸ See Uwe Neddermeyer: "Kaspar Peucer (1525–1602): Melanchthons Universalgeschichtsschreibung," in *Melanchthon in seinen Schülern*, ed. Heinz Scheible (Wiesbaden, 1997), 69–101. Melanchthon only reached Charlemagne's empire. His son-in-law, Caspar Peucer, finished the work after his death.

⁷⁹ CR 12:918–20 and 926–27.

argument in Romans 11 (to which we will return below) to emphasize the admonitory point of Jewish punishment.

Let us consider, however, that if God did not spare this “stock,” which he preferred above all nations and to which he gave many testimonies about himself, from which the Patriarchs and prophets were born, how much less will he spare other realms and nations, which are guilty of similar crimes. As Paul admonishes [Rom. 11:21], “Since he did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you.”⁸⁰

On top of this primary function, God also wanted, according to Melanchthon, to signify other things. First, he wanted this destruction to be a testimony that he had sent the Messiah to teach, suffer, and rise again (as Daniel testified). Second, he wanted to demonstrate that God had not sent the Messiah to establish a political kingdom but to restore eternal blessings (as Daniel also testified). Third, this destruction showed that the ceremonial and civil laws of Moses must not be imposed upon the Church.⁸¹

Melanchthon’s correspondence also occasionally discussed the importance of knowing Jewish history. In an early letter to the Cologne printer, Gottfried Hittorp, Melanchthon emphasized the need to know the history of the Maccabees, the Herods, and the war with Rome.⁸² In 1548, Melanchthon provided a preface for Paul Eber’s *Contexta populi Iudaici historia a reditu ex Babylone usque ad ultimum excidium Hierosolymae* (Wittenberg: V. Kreutzer, 1548). This letter provides two other reasons for interest in this history: to understand the Bible and (related to the first) to decipher the End Times.⁸³ Melanchthon was very pleased with this work and mentioned it to a host of his correspondents at the time.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ CR 12:919.

⁸¹ Melanchthon used this same set of arguments in a lecture on the Gospel texts for Sunday referred to above (CR 25:287–89). He gave three causes: 1) To demonstrate God’s justice by punishing the people for persecuting the Gospel and killing Christ, the apostles, Stephen, and many others; 2) To provide an example for others how God will punish their sins, especially given the present abomination of the Mass; and 3) To show that the law and a political kingdom are not necessary for righteousness before God.

⁸² MBW 310 (MBW.T, 2:114–15), dated around January 1524 or earlier.

⁸³ MBW 5129 (CR 6:862–64), written in Altzella and dated 20/21 April 1548. “Imago est huius ultimae senectae mundi.”

⁸⁴ Between 2 December 1547 and 5 June 1548 there are comments in MBW 4978 (Anton Lauterbach), 5064 (Georg Buchholzer), 5067, 5074, and 5078 (Joachim Camerarius), 5069 (Georg von Anhalt), 5077 and 5148 (Jerome Baumgartner), 5088

As already mentioned above, Jewish history and especially the destruction of the Jewish state also served as a warning. One particularly ironic account of this position came in an epistle dedicatory, addressed again to the printer Gottfried Hittorp. Melanchthon wrote it for *De rebus a Iudaeorum principis in obsidione fortiter gestis deque excidio Hierosolymorum* (Cologne: Eucharius Cervicornus, 1525), which he thought was the Christian historian Egesippus's tract.⁸⁵ Republished in the nineteenth century by Migne as one of Ambrose's spurious works, it was in fact an excerpt from Josephus!⁸⁶ Melanchthon wrote that people should keep this story in mind to appreciate "the magnitude and power of divine wrath against the ungodly."

However, as mentioned above, there was often an eschatological edge to Melanchthon's comments. This is nowhere more evident than in his commentary on Daniel (a biblical text referred to several times in Melanchthon's lectures on the *Chronicon Carionis*, as we have seen). Although an investigation of Melanchthon's apocalypticism goes beyond the theme of this essay, there can be little doubt that Jewish desire for a homeland and Melanchthon's conviction about the world's end went hand in hand.⁸⁷ Thus, in Daniel 9 Melanchthon discovered a prophecy of the destruction of the Jewish state, "on account of contempt for the Gospel."⁸⁸ Their failure to get the land back under Hadrian confirmed the divine judgment. Yet, in a note from Augsburg to Joachim Camerarius in 1530, Melanchthon described "something most like a fable but a true and certain story about Jews who have drawn together an infinite army for the invasion of Palestine."⁸⁹ He might have been referring to the recent execution in Stuttgart of the Anabaptist Augustine Bader. This man had predicted the beginning of Christ's thousand-year reign at Easter of that year. At his trial, the authorities claimed he had received his ideas from certain Jews in Worms. This fear of such

(Marcus Cordelius), 5089 (Johann Strigel), 5132 (Paul Eber), and 5175 (Georg Fabricius). In MBW 5212, Veit Dietrich inquired of Melanchthon about the book's status.

⁸⁵ MBW 378 (MBW.T, 2:254–59), dated 25 February 1525.

⁸⁶ MPL 15:2061–2326.

⁸⁷ See Robin Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis: Apocalypticism in the Wake of the Lutheran Reformation* (Stanford, 1988) and Oberman, *Roots of Anti-Semitism*, 118–24.

⁸⁸ CR 13:894–95. For other references to a Palestinian homeland, see Detmers, *Reformation und Judentum*, 133 n. 46.

⁸⁹ MBW 933 (MSA 7/2:176–77, here 177), dated 19 June 1530.

“Jewish notions” of a physical kingdom passed into the Augsburg Confession itself. There Melanchthon wrote, “Likewise rejected are some Jewish teachings, which have also appeared in the present, that before the resurrection of the dead saints and righteous people alone will possess a secular kingdom and will annihilate all the ungodly.”⁹⁰

The related notion of Jews raising an army to conquer the Holy Land (or the entire earth) had first arisen during the Middle Ages. People often associated this rumor with the myth of the “Red Jews,” an army of the Ten (Lost) Tribes of Israel that God had shut up in a mountain in the East but that would come to scourge the earth at the End Times.⁹¹ Indeed, the September Testament of 1522, Luther’s first translation of the New Testament, included in the margin of the text on Gog and Magog (Rev. 20:8) a reference to the “Red Jews.” However, both Luther and his collaborator Melanchthon, who helped that first edition through the presses, associated the “Red Jews” not with Jews at all but with a Turkish invasion. In his lectures on the Gospel texts from the 1550s, Melanchthon twice mentioned the “Red Jews” and cited the source for his information: a set of prophecies attributed to Methodius, but actually inaccurate citations of pseudo-Methodius from the Middle Ages.⁹² According to Melanchthon, Methodius called them “Red” because they were ruthless and “Jews” because they practiced circumcision. In fact, he claimed, they were related to the Saracens of Arabia, since Islam first spread from there.⁹³ Melanchthon’s apocalypticism never included the Jewish people.⁹⁴

⁹⁰ *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, ed. Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, Augsburg Confession, trans. Eric Gritsch (Minneapolis, 2000), 50. Neither the *Bekennnisschriften* nor this recent English translation expressly make the connection to rumors about Jews in Worms and only note the obvious connection to Acts 1:6.

⁹¹ See Andrew Gow, *The Red Jews: Antisemitism in an Apocalyptic Age 1200–1600* (Leiden, 1995).

⁹² CR 24:864–65 and CR 25:80, 504.

⁹³ Here CR 25:504. In CR 24:864, Melanchthon claimed that the word “Jew” denoted any superstitious race, such as the Saracens.

⁹⁴ I am indebted to Nicole Kuroпка for this insight.

Converting Jews and Gentiles: Romans 11

Melanchthon's statements on the conversion of Jews, mentioned above in his lectures on the *Chronicon Carionis*, provide fascinating insights into his perception of Jews. Most arise from his various commentaries on Romans. However, one of the most intriguing ones comes from a lecture on Peter's Pentecost sermon in Acts 2. Melanchthon noted to his hearers that three categories of people comprised the first church: Jews, proselytes, and the religious (or God-fearers). The importance of this last category for Christianity was not lost on Melanchthon. In fact, he invested it with the highest theological import: The Diaspora was a gracious work of God for the conversion of Gentiles into such religious ones.

God therefore scattered Jews among the Gentiles so that the latter might be converted. And because there were so many Jews among the Germans, I believe that many of our greatest people were converted even before the preaching of the Gospel. Quite clear testimony comes from the fact that there were Jews in Regensburg from ancient times. Regensburg was a colony settled at the time of Tiberius. It was called Augusta Tiberia. I am of the opinion that many Jews from the ten tribes exiled in Medea went over into this region with Germans, because the German race was more accepting of them than others and was praised for its hospitality, as stated by Tacitus who lived at the time of Trajan and Domitian.⁹⁵

Besides the surprising notion of Germans converted by Jews, Melanchthon also investigated the passage in Romans 11 that challenges exegetes to this day. All told, he published five commentaries on Romans: in 1522, 1529/30, 1532, 1540 (a revised edition of the 1532 commentary), and 1556.⁹⁶ In each one he discussed the conversion of Jews to Christianity.

In 1522, Melanchthon claimed that Paul presented three arguments to commend the Jewish people, "lest they condemn [that people], namely, which may be converted besides."⁹⁷ Already here Melanchthon

⁹⁵ CR 24:925. He repeated the same assertion on 930.

⁹⁶ See Timothy J. Wengert, "The Biblical Commentaries of Philip Melanchthon," in *Philip Melanchthon (1497–1560) and the Commentary*, ed. Timothy J. Wengert and M. Patrick Graham (Sheffield, 1997), 133–39.

⁹⁷ Citing from Melanchthon's revised version, *Annotationes in Epistolam Pauli ad Romanos . . .* (Strasbourg: Herwagen, 1523), 63r–v.

noted the importance of gentile behavior for Jewish conversion to Christianity. He described the three reasons this way.

First, if the fall of the Jewish people meant salvation for the Gentiles, how much greater will be the future fullness of salvation, that is, when all the elect gathered from the nations are converted. For the Jews who were converted are like the architects of the Church gathered from the Gentiles. Second, if God was generous among the Gentiles, in that he even gave to them what he had not promised to them, how much more generous will he be among the Jews. For they are gathered in this way: as those raised from the dead. Third, . . . you see everything is attributed to divine election. There is nothing to human merits, since he says that the Gospel was given to the Gentiles not because of the Gentiles' merits but to provoke the Jews. For he calls the gathering of the Jews "life from death," he says the Gentiles are like a wild olive branch (which is, of course, sterile) inserted into the olive tree, and he states that God is able to insert the Jews.⁹⁸

These contain some of the most positive statements concerning Jews that Melanchthon ever wrote. There is no final sentence on Jews, as he seemed to imply in his comments on the destruction of Jerusalem. They are not excluded from God's final gracious will. At the same time, the Gentiles can boast of no more meritorious work than the Jews could, whom he calls the master builders of the Gentile Church.

Apparently, at least one of Melanchthon's correspondents, Johannes Hess, wanted information on this text. He wrote to Melanchthon asking about Rom. 11:26. The latter responded by admitting that he had not commented on the passage in his recently completed lectures (soon to be published at Luther's intervention as the *Annotationes*). However, he held that in the last days "many would be returning into the Way."⁹⁹ The close proximity of this text's assertion with the more favorable comments about Jewish conversion by Luther in *That Jesus Christ Was Born a Jew* was no accident.

In 1529 and 1530 Melanchthon published an outline, or "disposition" of Paul's oration in Romans.¹⁰⁰ Here, too, Melanchthon recognized Paul's openness to the Jews in Romans 11. He called this section an exhortation to the Gentiles, "lest they condemn the Jews

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ MBW 222 (MBW.T, 1:460–62), dated 25 March 1522. Whether Melanchthon added the last words to the previous quote as a result of Hess's query is unclear.

¹⁰⁰ *Dispositio Orationis in Epistola Pauli ad Romanos auctore Philippo Melanchthone* (Wittenberg: Klug, 1530), printed in CR 15, here CR 15:481.

or imagine the Gentiles were preferred because they were better than the Jews or arrogate to themselves some praise of merit.” Paul’s formal argument (*propositio*) concludes that Gentiles should fear and not be proud, since the same cutting off could happen to them. Paul also inserted a prophecy (from Isaiah), in which he proves that not all Jews have been rejected and that there are some elect among them who will come to believe *while* the Gospel is preached among the Gentiles. He summed up his argument this way. “Conclusion: The Jews are enemies as far as their present status goes, so that on this occasion the Gentiles may be called. But they are friends according to election. The reason is that the gifts and promises of God cannot be changed. For the Jews have the promises and therefore they also belong to the elect.” Once again, Melanchthon looked for a later conversion of Jews, squarely based on God’s election and immutable promises. Moreover, this conversion would occur not only at the end of time but while the Gentiles are also being converted.

Two years later, in his *Commentarii in Epistolam Pauli ad Romanos recens scripti a Philippo Melanthono, Anno 1532*,¹⁰¹ Melanchthon had radically changed his overall interpretation of Romans 9–11, by no longer associating it directly with election but with the nature of the Church. In commenting on Rom. 11:25f, Melanchthon noted the prophecy of Isaiah regarding a righteous remnant but stressed that its importance consisted in clearly stating that in the New Testament there would be preaching of forgiveness of sins. In comments on v. 28f, Melanchthon now insisted that the Jews were enemies because of their persecution of the Gospel. However, he still pointed out that Paul “rhetorically” placed the cause of God’s rejection of the Jews in the call of the Gentiles.¹⁰² He added, “Nevertheless, because they are an elect people, they are not a repudiated race but are ‘friends on account of the Patriarchs,’ on account of promises made to the Patriarchs.”¹⁰³ Again, the basis for Paul’s argument lay in the immutable divine promises to the entire Jewish people.

¹⁰¹ MSA 5.

¹⁰² He said “rhetorically” because the true cause is God’s grace not the Jews’ sin.

¹⁰³ MSA 5:280. This was a hot topic of debate in Wittenberg around this time. From a note in the *Table Talk*, dated 27–31 May 1532 (WATr 2:151 [no. 1610]), Luther said, “Plenitudo gentium. Es ist noch ein spruchin Paulo, der mich uexirt, der haist: Plenitudo gentium ex Syon etc. [Romans 11:25–26] Ich will aber dem Spiritui Sancto die her geben vnd sagen, wie ichs auch weis, das er gelerter ist den ich.” For glosses in the Luther Bible, see Brecht, *Luther*, 3:335, 340.

In comments written for the 1540 revision of the *Commentarii*,¹⁰⁴ Melanchthon made many of the same arguments. However, he now discussed openly alternative construals of the prophecy in Isaiah. Thus, he began his comments that “perhaps it ought to be understood in the following way,” namely, that until the end of the world some Jews would be converted. However, Melanchthon was uncertain, so he added a second option. “For I do not know whether he wanted this: to leave some conversion of a great multitude until around the time of the end of the world.” (This was the gist of his earlier comment to Hess.) He then concluded, “Since this is a mystery, let us commit it to God.” Clearly, some among the evangelical exegetes disagreed about this matter. Melanchthon was unwilling to pick a fight over the interpretation.¹⁰⁵

In comments that followed, as was often his habit, Melanchthon indirectly provided proof for his own preference, the argument for continuous conversion. The prophecy describes the liberation of the people through the forgiveness of sin offered in the Gospel. This is a “sweet sentence” because it clearly teaches that in the New Testament the forgiveness of sins will be preached. He added, “This liberation of the people must be understood from the beginning of the preaching of the Gospel until the end.” The nature of the Gospel itself prevented merely an eschatological construal of Isaiah’s prophecy about Jewish conversion.

Melanchthon’s final comments on Romans 11, from the *Enarratio Epistulae Pauli ad Romanos* (Wittenberg: Veit Kreutzer, 1556),¹⁰⁶ contained much less detail. However, the uncertainty about Jewish conversion remained. Melanchthon wrote that Paul adds a prophecy about the conversion of the Jews, “which I understand in this way: that it will occur so that some from the Jews will be converted continuously from the beginning until the end of the world.” Although he did not discuss the alternative, as he had sixteen years earlier,

¹⁰⁴ CR 15:700.

¹⁰⁵ Who this may have been remains unclear. Calvin, in his commentary on Romans from 1539, referred Rom. 11:26 not to the return of the Jews but to the consummation of the reign of Christ when the entire number of the “whole Israel of God,” comprised of both Jews and Gentiles, will be complete. See T. H. L. Parker, ed., *Iohannis Calvini Commentarius in Epistolam Pauli ad Romanos* (Leiden, 1981), 256 [cf. CO 49:226].

¹⁰⁶ CR 15:996.

his language (“which I understand”) indicates some ambivalence. His preference remained the same.

Given this belief in Jewish conversion, it now becomes clear why Melanchthon maintained some contact with Jews. Nothing inherent in the Jewish nation excluded them from God’s grace in Christ at any time in their history. There was every expectation that throughout history, and not just at its end, some Jews would become Christians. No wonder that among the material preserved by Manlius (though marked by him as not having stemmed from Melanchthon) was an order for the baptism of a Jewess.¹⁰⁷ Clearly some in Melanchthon’s circle anticipated or (given the explicit reference to gender) participated in such baptisms.

For Melanchthon, in any case, an early expectation of conversions did not result later in wholesale rejection of the Jews when this failed to materialize but rather in an attitude that continued to expect some conversions throughout the Church’s history. This necessitated contact and apologetic, not simply persecution and extinction. However, when such expectations became entangled in an ecclesiology that championed weakness but welcomed princely intervention, Jews became enemies and Melanchthon’s rhetoric became filled with some of the vituperation all too common for his age and ours.

¹⁰⁷ Manlius, 1:95. It began by asking her 1) to give her new (Christian) name, 2) to recite the Ten Commandments, 3) to confess that she was a sinner in need of the Messiah to save her, 4) to confess Jesus Christ is that Messiah (probably using the Apostles’ Creed), 5) to believe that “all who call on the name of the Lord Jesus will be saved” and to recite the Lord’s Prayer, and 6) not to doubt that her sins are forgiven and that she is now a daughter of God. This is probably the missing copy Detmers, *Reformation und Judentum*, 140 n. 70, mentions.

BUCER, THE JEWS, AND JUDAISM

R. Gerald Hobbs

In the complex, too often tragic story of the relationship of German Protestants and Jews in the early modern era, the role played by Martin Bucer (1491–1551) of Strasbourg makes him a case study in striking ambivalence.¹ On one hand, Bucer was deeply indebted to the contemporary renaissance of Hebrew letters, and remarkably frank in his appreciation of the high value of some medieval Jewish commentators for evangelical biblical interpretation: “I confess to the glory of God who gives all that is beneficial to us, that I have been greatly aided in commenting the Psalms by these men.”² Yet less than a decade after these lines were penned, Bucer played a prominent role in the campaign to oppress, if not banish altogether the Jewish community of evangelical Hesse. Writing to encourage the menaced population there, Rabbi Josel of Rosheim counselled: “be pious and suffer; then you will be saved from the scheming of Martin Bucer.”³ Two years later Josel associated Bucer with Luther amongst the foes of the Jewish people that he was forced to combat vigorously at the Diet of Frankfurt.⁴

¹ There is an extensive literature on Bucer. His most recent biography: Martin Greschat, *Martin Bucer: Ein Reformator und seine Zeit* (Munich, 1990) = *Martin Bucer: A Reformer and His Times*, trans. Stephen Buckwalter (Louisville, 2004). The older study by Hastings Eells, *Martin Bucer* (New Haven, 1931; repr. New York, 1971), is still useful. On the theme of this chapter, see John Kleiner, *The Attitudes of the Strasbourg Reformers Toward Jews and Judaism* (PhD diss., Temple University, 1978); the introduction by Ernst-Wilhelm Kohls, in BDS 7:319–41; Willem Nijenhuis, “A remarkable historical argumentation in Bucer’s ‘Judenratschlag,’” and “Bucer and the Jews,” in his *Ecclesia Reformata: Studies on the Reformation* (Leiden, 1972), 23–72; R. Gerald Hobbs, “Martin Bucer et les Juifs,” in *Martin Bucer and Sixteenth Century Europe*, ed. Christian Krieger and Marc Lienhard (Leiden, 1993), 681–89; and most recently Detmers, *Reformation und Judentum*, 185–215, and his bibliography. See lastly the forthcoming comprehensive bibliography, *Martin Bucer—Bibliographie*, ed. Holger Pils, Stephan Ruderer, and Petra Schaffrodt.

² Martin Bucer, *Sacrorum Psalmorum libri quinque* (Strasbourg, 1529, 1532; Basel, 1547), Sign. 7v. Unless otherwise indicated, I shall quote the 1529 edition.

³ Stern, *Josel of Rosheim*, 179.

⁴ “Journal de Joselmann,” no. 22, REJ 16 (1888): 92. See the summary of Josel’s

If historians like Baron have been careful to underline the ambivalence, it is the latter activity that has been remembered most vividly in the histories, and with good reason.⁵ The events in Hesse will receive attention toward the end of this chapter. But the former stance also represents a highly significant dimension of the career of Bucer, the biblical interpreter. Although nineteenth-century historians of Christian Hebraism like Ludwig Geiger passed over Bucer in silence,⁶ the renewed interest in the biblical scholarship of the upper Rhine reformers over the past three decades has revealed Bucer to have been a pioneer amongst those who intentionally grounded Christian translation and interpretation of Scripture in its Jewish past.⁷ It is this latter dimension that can bring new insight to the problematic of this volume. Accordingly, this essay shall examine both facets of the career of the Strasbourger, and attempt some understanding of the heritage of one who here, as in other dimensions of his career, is recognized as a complex individual.

Martin Bucer was born to an artisan family of marginal means and social standing, without citizenship, in the central Alsatian city of Schlettstadt (modern Sélestat). The precarity of the family's life may suffice to explain the migration of Martin's parents to Strasbourg about 1501, while the boy Martin was left in Sélestat with his grandfather. It seems virtually certain that his family found the scarce resources to enable the talented child to attend Sélestat's famous Latin school, and begin his humanist formation there. Thence, at age sixteen he entered the newly reformed Dominican house in

views in Hayyim Hillel Ben-Sasson, "The Reformation in Contemporary Jewish Eyes," *Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities* (1969–1970): 47–54.

⁵ Salo Wittmayer Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1969), vol. XIII, 239–42; Mordechai Ansbacher speaks of "a characteristically ambivalent approach," while Ben-Sasson speaks, in comparison with Luther, of "a similar mixture of innovation and hatred;" see EJ 4:1435; 14:19.

⁶ Ludwig Geiger, *Das Studium der Hebräischen Sprache in Deutschland vom Ende des XV. bis zur Mitte des XVI. Jahrhunderts* (Breslau, 1870). Long the acknowledged master of the field, Geiger makes no mention of Bucer. Admittedly, Geiger's interest lay more in the field of Hebrew studies, rather than in those who applied these studies to biblical interpretation. But as late as *The Cambridge History of the Bible* (Cambridge, 1963), 3:90, Bucer's contribution to biblical exegesis, particularly of the Hebrew Bible, is given scant notice.

⁷ On Bucer's place in this movement, see Guy Bedouelle and Bernard Roussel, *Le temps des Réformes et la Bible* (Paris, 1989), 215–33; R. Gerald Hobbs, "How firm a foundation: Martin Bucer's historical exegesis of the Psalms," in CH 53(1984): 477–91; Roussel and Hobbs, "Strasbourg et l'«école rhenane» d'exégèse (1525–1540)," *Bulletin de la Société de l'histoire du protestantisme français* 135 (1989): 36–53.

Sélestat, as the best route available to the further education his family could not afford him.⁸ After brief intervals in Heidelberg and Mainz, 1517 found him settled into the Dominican studium generale in the Heidelberg Observant house, and a student at the university. During his four years residence he would take two degrees, although not a doctorate. In Heidelberg he encountered others who reinforced his humanism, and his growing passion for Erasmus. There, too, occurred in 1518 his decisive encounter with Martin Luther (come to present a series of theses at the general chapter of the Augustinian order). Henceforth Bucer counted himself both Erasmian and Martinian.

Although much concerning his Heidelberg studies remains obscure, there are concrete signs that augur the biblical humanism to which he was turning. The one is a report from 1520 that he was lecturing on the Psalter, rather than, as required, on Lombard's *Sentences*.⁹ While nothing more is known of these lectures than the negative reaction they aroused in some of the students at least, in Bucer's booklist of 1518 we have a precious, if tantalizingly incomplete indicator of his intellectual direction. Here we find an impressive library of Aquinas, but also much evidence of his growing passion for Erasmus. In *Biblica*, there is a small-format Hebrew Psalter—possibly the in-16° student edition published by Conrad Pellican and Sebastian Münster in Basel in 1516¹⁰—and an unidentified Hebrew grammar. He has a copy of Erasmus' *Novum Instrumentum*, a Greek lexicon and two grammars.¹¹ He reports (1518) that he is reading Greek several times weekly with a fellow-student, the future reformer, Johannes Brenz.¹² He also exults (in 1521) at word of a new Luther commentary on the Psalms.¹³

⁸ Greschat, *Bucer*, 12–17.

⁹ So reported in a 1520 letter now lost to Otto Brunfels: see BCorr 1:114. See also his comments in his 1523 *Verantwortung*, BDS 1:161.

¹⁰ So the editors of BCorr 1:45, 60. But Bucer's booklist reads "Psalterium hebraicum cum adscripto latino ex translatione S.Hieronymi, minuto libello ac plane manuali;" yet according to Joseph Prijs, *Die Basler Hebräischen Drucke (1492–1866)* (Olten and Freiburg im Breisgau, 1964), 11–12, the text of this student manual apparently did not include Jerome's *Hebraicum*. Bucer may have had a copy with an interlinear manuscript Latin. This was certainly the method Pellican himself recommended for beginners: see Hobbs, "Conrad Pellican and the Psalms," *Reformation and Renaissance Review* 1(1999): 76.

¹¹ BCorr 1:42–58 (doc. 2).

¹² BCorr 1:75.

¹³ BCorr 1:141. This will have been Luther's *Operationes in Psalmos* (Basel, 1521), containing Pss. 1–13; Luther shortly added Pss. 14–22, but went no further.

This orientation to biblical humanism, the affection for both Erasmus and Luther, made Bucer an increasingly uncomfortable fit within the Dominican order. Despite the encouragement to humanist studies given by Bucer's Heidelberg superiors, the campaign of the Cologne inquisitor, Jacob Hoogstraten, against Jewish literature and its defender, Johannes Reuchlin, made Bucer an inviting and impending target.¹⁴ With the help of friends in high places, Bucer secured regular annulment of his monastic vows in 1521. In May 1523, after a six-month stint as evangelical preacher in Wissembourg in northern Alsace, Bucer arrived with his wife Elisabeth, a former nun, at the Strasbourg city gates, successfully obtaining refuge on the strength of his father's citizenship.

There Bucer found himself welcomed as useful ally by a band of evangelically minded clergy already in prominent pulpits, led by Wolfgang Capito, the well-known Hebraist. Bucer's talents were put at once to work in lectures on Scripture. In the light of Capito's reputation, it is hardly surprising that initially Capito took the Hebrew prophets, while Bucer began a project to cover the complete New Testament.¹⁵ Such at least was the plan; and twelve months later when Bucer published his Matthew lectures as a Synoptics commentary, it seemed still in place.¹⁶ Yet by early summer 1528, Bucer was preparing a commentary on Zephaniah for a fall printing, and one year later, there appeared the first in-quarto edition of his magisterial Psalms, to be followed in 1532 by a greatly expanded second edition, in-folio.¹⁷

This development, and in particular the Psalms commentary which

¹⁴ Bucer made no secret of his dislike of Hoogstraeten in a correspondence that was doubtless read and quoted by others than the addressee. He also possessed in his library Reuchlin's *Defensio*: BCorr 1:47, 80–81, 84, 94, 100, and 120.

¹⁵ Capito, *In Habakuk prophetam . . .* (Strasbourg, 1526), preface, f. 2v: "Bucerus quidem in Matthaeum, quia totum novum Testamentum percurrendum obiter susceperat . . ."

¹⁶ Bucer, *Enarrationum in Evangelia . . . libri duo* (Strasbourg, 1527): after noting in the dedicatory epistle to the Strasbourg magistracy that on the strength of the decision, Capito had lectured on Habakuk, Malachi, Hosea, and now Genesis, and had published Habakuk, "mihi vero libri novi instrumenti, quod vocant, enarrandi a fratribus mandati fuere" (Sign. 3r).

¹⁷ On this work in general, see Hobbs, "How firm a foundation," 477–91; and idem, "Exegetical Projects and Problems: a New Look at an Undated Letter from Bucer to Zwingli," in *Prophet, Pastor, Protestant: the Work of Huldrych Zwingli after Five Hundred Years*, ed. E. J. Furcha and H. Wayne Pipkin (Allison Park, PA, 1984), 89–107.

would move Bucer to the front rank of scholarly commentators on the Hebrew Scriptures, is of fundamental significance for our theme. I would suggest that there are at least three factors that affected this shift from the stated game plan of the Strasbourg evangelical exegetes. One was the apparent disinclination of Capito to pursue the joint project, at least to publication stage, perhaps for reasons that will become apparent later. The other two are directly germane to our theme, relating to Bucer's own interests, activities, and concerns. The first of these is Bucer's own developing Hebraism; the other, his disagreement with Capito and others on the manner in which the Hebrew Scriptures should be interpreted. To these two we now turn.

Bucer, Christian Hebraist

In the first place, throughout the 1520s Bucer was in fact developing his interest and skills as an Hebraist. In 1525 he devoted considerable effort to the production of a German-language commentary on the entire Psalter, the *Psalter wol verteuscht* (January 1526). A translation of the 1524 Latin commentary of Johannes Bugenhagen¹⁸ probably suggested by Conrad Pellican,¹⁹ the work necessitated an extensive revision of Bugenhagen, since the base text would no longer be a revised Vulgate, but Luther's new German translation of the Psalms from Hebrew. Bucer needed little encouragement, having concluded that in many places Bugenhagen had not grasped the proper sense of the original. Accordingly he made full use of this licence, as is evident from a comparison of the two.²⁰

Now within this Bucer commentary can be found occasional traces of rabbinic Jewish exegesis that were certainly not in Bugenhagen. Limited traces, to be sure, nothing on the scale of what we shall see in 1529–32; but distinct traces nonetheless, that indicate a recognition that it is useful and appropriate to consult Jewish scholarship

¹⁸ *In librum Psalmorum interpretatio* (Basel et alibi, 1524).

¹⁹ *Das Chronikon des Konrad Pellikan*, ed. Bernard Riggenbach (Basel, 1877), 78; Hobbs, "Conrad Pellican," 84–86.

²⁰ On Bucer's low opinion of Bugenhagen's exegesis, see his *Tzephaniah*. (Strasbourg, 1528), f. 10r. Bucer's translation became a *casus belli* between Wittenberg and Strasbourg when Bucer extended his freedom to rework Bugenhagen's doctrine of the Eucharist: for the general debate, see BDS 2:259–75. The editors of BDS 2 did not reproduce the Bucer additions to Bugenhagen.

for Christian interpretation of the Psalms. Three brief examples will serve as illustration. In the first place, Bucer brought new material from Jewish sources. Amongst the prefaces, he added a paragraph explaining the Psalter term *Selah*. Since Origen and Jerome, various Christian hypotheses existed for the interpretation of this Hebrew vocable; Bucer would have known Luther's extensive survey of these on Psalm 3.²¹ Yet here he proceeded, after noting that Jewish sources ("die Hebreyschen schreiber") disagree on the word, to propose an interpretation that in 1529 (although not here) he would attribute explicitly to David Kimhi. Next, he sometimes used a rabbinic source to alter Bugenhagen. On the first verse of Psalm 15, into Bugenhagen's preference for a traditional Christian interpretation—that this refers to the Church on earth and then the Church in heaven—he quoted a rabbinic interpretive dictum with approval, that "the prophet, following poetic style, often says the same thing twice, using different words."²² Thirdly, at Ps. 22:17—widely read by Christians as "they have pierced my hands and my feet" with direct application to Christ's crucifixion—Bucer cautioned that Jews mock Christian readings of the text. He argued that while Christians are certainly correct here, one could use "the Chaldean translation" (i.e. the Targum) to give an ancient Jewish authentication that apparently supports the Christian reading of the original Hebrew.²³

These examples elicit a few observations on Bucer's early Hebraism. First, Bucer was unmistakably signalling his attachment to the Hebrew original, in preference to the Septuagint-Vulgate text traditional in the Church. Secondly, Jewish sources were assumed to be normative for the understanding of the Hebrew text. But thirdly, this did not mean that the text sacrifices its Christological content. As the

²¹ In the work noted above, n. 13, which internal evidence in Bucer's 1529–32 Psalms shows to have been carefully read by him.

²² There are several versions of this rabbinic principle, which asserts what is today called synonymous parallelism in Hebrew poetry. Two of these are given in Sebastian Münster's *Perusch seu Biur Haperuschim*, published as second part of his *Chaldaica Grammatica* (Basel, 1527), 153–215, see 178.

²³ "Die juden spotten unser hie, und sagen der hebreisch hab für das wir lesen (Sy haben meyne hend und fuß durchgraben), wie ein löw meyne hend und fuß. . . Die weil wir aber wissen das diser psalm von Christo sagt, und hie sein leyden meldet . . . werden wir es also bleyben lassen . . . Die Chaldeisch verdolmetschung hat, wie löwen beyssen sy meyne hend und fuß . . . die Juden selb bekennen die red . . . had eins worts mangel, das im Chaldeischen erfüllet wird . . ." *Psalter wol ver- teuscht*, f. XXXVv–XXXVIr.

Psalm 22 quotation shows clearly, there are passages in the Psalter where for Bucer the Christ-event has fixed the meaning definitively: “we have the certain history on our side.” In such cases, Jewish resources might even be found to strengthen the correct, Christian reading! Finally, Bucer’s Christian Hebraism is a work in progress, his proficiency less than might appear to the casual reader. He was not himself reading the Targum, but was drawing his argument from the Dominican Agostino Giustiniani’s translation and notes.²⁴

From these modest beginnings, when one turns to the Latin Psalms commentaries of 1529–32, it is apparent that Bucer made a quantum advance in his skills as Hebraist and use of Jewish sources. Now a step-by-step review of Bucer’s development as Christian Hebraist is beyond the scope of this chapter. However, before examining Bucer at his full development, a few observations are in order for the period 1526–29, for the light they shed upon our theme. In the commentaries of this period, Bucer’s growing commitment to a Hebrew-grounded reading of the entire Scriptures was made further evident, surprisingly, in his 1527 commentary on the Synoptic Gospels. There he argued that the key theological principles of the Christian Testament can only be properly understood—and in the process, freed from the inaccuracies and imbecilities of so much older Christian exegesis—when the Hebraic character and the Hebrew words themselves lying behind the Greek New Testament expressions are examined.²⁵ The same zeal for restoration of Christian interpretation of Scripture, and therefore theology, to its primitive source in the language of the Holy Spirit lay behind a practice that may strike modern readers as a curious idiosyncrasy, the spelling of biblical names. The use of Moscheh to replace Moses, Iaacob for Iacob, Bathschaba for Bethsabee (save where a forgetful author or typesetter reverts to form!) was deemed to reproduce the Hebrew original more faithfully than did the familiar Latin spelling. Bucer argued that the rebirth of the knowledge of biblical languages and the profusion of new

²⁴ Found as columns 6 and 7 in the so-called *Psalterium octuplex*, actually *Psalterium Hebraeum, Graecum, Arabicum et Chaldaeum cum tribus latinis interpretationibus et glossis* (Genoa, 1516).

²⁵ See Bucer, *Evangelia*, prefatory epistle, Sign. 3v–[7]. From the opening pages of the commentary, he applies the quest for Hebrew roots: so the word *Evangelium*, “Gospel,” is traced beyond New Testament Greek to the Hebrew verb *bsr* and examples of its usage by the prophets are examined.

translations meant that the language of Christians could gradually be purified and made more appropriate to the expression of God's Spirit.²⁶

How seriously Bucer applied this restorationist principle can be seen in his discussion of hell near the end of the narrative of Christ's death. There the issue was the affirmation of the Apostles Creed that Christ "descended into hell" during the interval between Good Friday afternoon, and Easter morning. Bucer argued that contrary to what he termed the "idle dreaming" of much Christian theology on the subject, an examination of the usage of the Hebrew term שְׁאוֹל (Sheol) (including its parallelism in Ps. 16:10 with "see the pit," quoted by the Apostle Peter in Acts 2:31) makes apparent that the expression simply means that Christ was truly dead before being resurrected. As we shall see, this passage would attract criticism to its author.²⁷

The Zephaniah commentary was published in autumn 1528. Bucer had undertaken this volume as a test run for the Psalms commentary, a place of limited scope wherein to perfect his tools for interpretation of the Hebrew Bible. Here he significantly increased his use of rabbinic sources. For the most part these continued the pattern of generic attribution (e.g., "Ebraei scribunt") seen in 1526; but there are exceptions: both Rashi and Abraham Ibn Ezra are cited by name, as is the "Chaldaean interpreter."²⁸

One year later, the appearance of the first edition of the Psalms signalled the maturation of Bucer, Hebraist and reader of rabbinic exegesis. In a lengthy preface, he set forth a manifesto in defence

²⁶ Bucer writes on this at Matt. 1:16, at the conclusion of the genealogy of Jesus. He does admit some exceptions, that for a time concessions would have to be made to popular comprehension, and secondly, that when quoting the New Testament, he would follow its usage, rather than that of the Hebrew original. Bucer, *Evangelia*, 1, f. 11r-v.

²⁷ *Evangelia*, 2, f. 361r-362v. Bucer's argument reposes upon the principle of synonymous parallelism, which we saw invoked already supra in the 1526 *Psalter*. In the *Institutes*, II, 16:8, Calvin dismissed this argument as not taking seriously the spiritual suffering of Christ in death: see CO 2, 375f; On the accusation of Judaizing, see below.

²⁸ *Zephaniah*, reissued by Robert Estienne in Geneva, 1554, as *In prophetam Sophoniam explanatio*. Page references will be to the latter edition; 531, 537, 545, 549, 552, and 554. On the work as a last stage before undertaking the Psalms, see the dedicatory epistle, 527. The Zephaniah commentary has yet to receive the full study it deserves.

of an approach to the Hebrew Scriptures that distanced itself from almost all previous Christian interpreters of the book. In the first place, he dismissed the value of the Greek and Latin versions as base text, in favor of the original Hebrew. Moreover, in contrast with the parlous state of the former text traditions—including the Aldine of the Greek²⁹—the Jewish community had observed an extraordinary scrupulosity in the transmission of their text. Now the elevation of Hebrew—viewed by some as the pristine language of the universe—to the detriment of the Greco-Latin tradition, is a commonplace amongst Christian Hebraists of the period. Praise for the Masoretic and other scribes who transmitted the text is less common; Bucer’s evangelical associate, Ulrich Zwingli, likewise in 1529, argued that the insertion of vowel points had corrupted the original, which could often only be rightly reconstructed by consultation of the Greek.³⁰ Even more unexpected is Bucer’s praise of significant elements of Jewish biblical interpretation. This commendation is clearly partial, reserving strong criticism for others, as we shall note in a moment. But the frank and admiring admission by a Christian exegete of his deep indebtedness to specific rabbinic interpreters is highly unusual. Closest to Bucer in this were his colleagues Johannes Oecolampad of Basel, who in 1525 acknowledged his indebtedness to unspecified Jewish commentators, and Capito, the body of whose Hosea of 1528 contains frequent quotations from named Jewish sources.³¹

This predilection for rabbinic rather than Christian sources Bucer declares and justifies in the preface. The purpose of his work is to furnish a completely new, paraphrastic translation (*versio*) of the Psalms setting for the Hebrew truth; accompanying this will be a running commentary (*explanatio*) that justifies his new rendering:

²⁹ Venice, 1518, reprinted in Strasbourg with involvement of Capito in 1526.

³⁰ In the preface to his Isaiah commentary, the *Complanationis Isaiae Prophetæ Foetura Prima* . . . (Zurich, 1529), CR 101:97–105. See the discussion in Hobbs and Roussel, “Strasbourg et l’école rhénane,” 47–48.

³¹ Oecolampadius, *In Isaiaem Prophetam Hypomnematon* (Basel, 1525), preface: “Hoc ipse fateri cogor, me neque ex graeca neque latina translatione mentem prophetæ in multis locis potuisse deprehendere, et nisi hebraice legere valuisssem, Hebraeorumque consulissem commentario, ne ausum quidem fuisse illum attingere.” (Sign. 3v). Capito has no prefatory acknowledgement of Jewish sources, but makes regular use of them, by name.

In the latter I have given all my attention to expounding the details correctly and above all, in accord with the historical sense, so that I leave no occasion for Jewish ridicule of our material, nor for our own masters of subtlety to scorn it, let alone call it into question. Then what is interpreted of our savior Christ and the Church may rest correspondingly more firmly on the foundation of history. In commenting, I have not cited the opinions of our own [Christian] authors, both because the period of time within which the work had to be completed and the prescribed format of the book would not allow this, and because I thought it preferable that you read them in their own books.³²

In effect, Bucer considers that the rabbinic sources he employs hold the key to establishing the “foundation of the historical,” the grammatical and historical sense; it is therefore primarily upon them that his commentary reposes. He has one major exception: “excluding those passages where they [the rabbinic commentators] are beset by prophecies concerning the spiritual reign of Christ and that inward, genuine righteousness that exists by faith in the Savior.”³³ To this caveat, hardly surprising, we shall return.

Nor does the reading of Bucer’s commentary disappoint in this regard. If we exempt much of the latter half of the work—where Bucer by his own admission was hastily liquidating his obligations to the reader, having dealt with most substantive matters in the earlier psalms³⁴—we discover explicit quotations from rabbinic commentary everywhere; and a careful study of particular texts reveals considerably more unacknowledged borrowing in his exegetical choices. Two examples that could be replicated on many pages: on Ps. 4:7–9(6–8),³⁵ Bucer cites “the Hebrews,” Abraham Ibn Ezra and

³² Bucer, *Sacrorum Psalmorum*. Sign. 6v: “In hac totos ingenii nervos huc intendi, ut germane singula et ante omnia iuxta historiam enarrarem, ne scilicet Iudaeis occasio esset nostra ridendi, et argutulis quoque ex nostris ea fastidiendi, ne dicam de eis subdubitandi; tum quae de Christo servatore atque ecclesia interpretantur, fundamento historiae nixta, perstarent firmius. Non adduxi enarrandum nostrorum sententias, et quod spacium temporis intra quod opus absolvendum erat, praescriptusque libri modus id non ferret, et praestare putarem illas in suis libris legere.”

³³ Ibid. Sign. 7v: “exceptis iis locis ubi urgentur vaticiniis de spirituali regno Christi ac interna solidaque iustitia, quae fide constat Servatoris.”

³⁴ Already in the preface to the second book of the Psalter (preceding Ps. 42), he announces an increasing brevity thereafter: *Sacrorum Psalmorum libri quinque*, f [203]v. The second, much longer edition of 1532 dropped the reference to time pressure, and allowed that some Christian commentators had been cited; but the practice remains essentially the same.

³⁵ Versification of the Psalms frequently varies slightly between the Hebrew and

Rashi twice each, and David Kimhi three times. In fact, of the three and one-half pages devoted in 1529 to a complex text, two and one-half involve citation and discussion of the options raised by his rabbinic sources. On Ps. 15:3, Ibn Ezra is quoted twice, Rashi and Kimhi once each, with a further general reference to “the Hebrews.” Kimhi is, moreover, used in two further instances, and Rashi once, without being named. Note that in neither of these passages is a Christian interpreter mentioned. Nor does 1529 mark the end of the development of Bucer’s familiarity with Jewish interpretation. Three years later, the second, significantly expanded edition of the commentary shows the addition of new materials, including many more quotations from the Targum, the so-called Chaldaean interpreter, although it is unusual that these last citations significantly influence his interpretation.

When we now ask the qualitative question—the fashion in which Bucer used his Jewish sources—we discover that in general he was as good as his word. In the first place, as the quotation cited earlier indicates, Bucer’s intention was to center his entire reading of the Psalms in the historical sense, by which he understood the setting in the life of ancient Israel that had given rise to the text.³⁶ Some psalms, like Psalm 51 with its reference in the prefatory title to David’s affair with Bathsheba, gave a canonical guide to the interpreter. But most lacked such an authoritative pointer to the original context of composition. It was to determine this hermeneutical key that Bucer looked to Jewish sources, and in particular to the Hispano-Provençal exegetes of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Abraham Ibn Ezra and David Kimhi, amongst the best-known practitioners of the method of *peshat*. Now this method had long had a minority following amongst Christian interpreters, witness Andrew of St. Victor and Nicholas of Lyra, although medieval Christian exegetes did not always distinguish clearly *peshat* from the older *derash*.³⁷ Bucer is remarkable for the extent to which he was prepared to canvas his

most English (and other) vernacular translations, due to the Jewish practice of reckoning the Psalm title as the first verse. Bucer invariably follows the Hebrew; I shall do the same here, with the more common usage in parentheses.

³⁶ For a more detailed discussion of this issue, see Hobbs, “How firm a foundation,” 480–84.

³⁷ Lyra’s monumental work, the *Postilla literalis*, regularly confused the two. Many Christians, following St. Paul’s dictum in 2 Cor. 3:6 (“the letter kills, the Spirit gives life”), assumed that all Jewish exegesis was literal, according to the letter.

rabbinic sources for proposals for the *historia*, to weigh the options he read there, and even to apply their method to develop his own solution.

In the second place, Bucer valued the same exegetes for their scrupulous attention to grammar and to lexical science.

They have with great attention pursued the accurate properties of the words and the authentic structure of what has been said, proposing almost nothing without the authority of similar passages that they quote even beyond the practice of other Hebrews with great attention to proper sense.³⁸

The “accurate meaning” (*germanus sensus*) of particular words could as a rule be determined by attention to parallel uses elsewhere in the Hebrew Scriptures. Careful application of this method, rather than the allegorical, would deliver Christian reading of the Psalms from fanciful speculations that brought it into disrepute, while leaving the readers, convicted by the simple meaning of the text, equipped to develop a spiritual reading for themselves. As Bucer observed, this lexical method of citing concordant passages was characteristic of the *peshat* exegetes, and Kimhi in particular. Now we have no direct indication from Bucer himself of the tools at his disposal. But his widespread quotation of Kimhi, Ibn Ezra, and Rashi makes virtually certain that he had both first and second editions of the Bomberg so-called rabbinic Bibles at hand.³⁹ The effective use of these commentaries with their terse allusions, required the aid of the great Hebrew concordance of Kalonymos, likewise a Bomberg publication.⁴⁰ There are numerous passages where it is apparent that Bucer has used the latter to add further text comparisons, or develop new ones. There is some evidence, too, that he may have had access to Kimhi’s great dictionary, the *Sefer Michlol*.

Bucer was careful to assure his readers that he never followed his rabbinic sources blindly, but rather applied their method of the study

³⁸ Bucer, *Sacrorum Psalmorum*, Sign. 7v. The commendation supra at n. 2 follows directly.

³⁹ The 1517 edition of the *Mikraot Gedolot* was accompanied in the Psalter by the commentary of David Kimhi, the 1524–25 edition (which established the format retained to the present day) used instead Ibn Ezra and Rashi on the Psalter. There is internal evidence in Bucer’s commentary that his readings of Kimhi come from this source, and not one of the other early printings of Kimhi on the Psalms.

⁴⁰ The *Meir Natib* (Venice, 1523).

of parallel passages to reach his own conclusions. They were for Bucer, of course, unreliable in any text where the messianic hopes of ancient Israel—with for him their obvious fulfilment in Jesus the Christ—were central to the text. Yet he manifestly held these rabbis, and above all David Kimhi, of considerable authority. For example, on the invention of an *historia* for Psalm 4, he said simply: “for David Kimhi, it is beyond question that this psalm was written concerning Absalom’s conspiracy. We shall therefore expound it along these lines.”⁴¹ At Psalm 16—a text moreover with significant doctrinal connotations for Christian interpreters, thanks to its citation by the Apostles in support of resurrection of Jesus in Acts 2 and 13—he not only maintained his view of Hades noted earlier, he buttressed the argument by noting that Kimhi supported his reading of the key verse!⁴² He also showed respect for the interpretive debates within rabbinic schools, not infrequently setting before the reader differing interpretations, and attempting an appropriate adjudication.⁴³

We must not assume this respect to apply without qualification to Jewish literature in general. Bucer evaluated differently and with some critical awareness what he understood to be the three periods of Jewish literature. The first was of course the biblical, and like other Christian Hebraists he saw that period as the golden age of the language, a judgement analogous to their view of the Greek language and its evolution. The fourteen hundred-plus years following the destruction of the Temple and the completion of the Hebrew canon he divided into the eras of “talmudic and rabbinic” authors, when in his judgement, much of the purity of the older language was lost.⁴⁴ This said, in the literature of these centuries he also made significant distinctions.

⁴¹ Ibid. f. 33v.

⁴² See above, at n. 27. The crucial verse is Ps. 16:11(10). Bucer argues for Hebraisms, and parallelism in the two halves of the verse, “et Kimhi testante;” *ibid.* f. 92v–93r.

⁴³ A striking illustration is Ps. 4:7–9, where in 1529 he cited two rabbinic interpretations, and developed a lengthy exposition of David Kimhi’s second choice (also that of Rashi). In 1532, he radically rewrote the passage in order to reverse his decision, and interpret with Kimhi’s preferred reading (likewise that of Ibn Ezra). As noted already, the reader was carefully informed of the different options.

⁴⁴ At Ps. 60:10[9], f. 244r: “. . . cogitandum est in sacris Bibliis haudquaquam omnes Ebraeae linguae copias comprehendendi potuisse. Iam reliqui huius prioris monetae libri interierunt, et Thalmudica atque rabinorum scripta plurimum a puritate sermonis Bibliaci deflexerunt. Sane infinitas fuisse linguae huius divitias vel scripta prophetarum et eorum quos כְּתוּבֵיִם, id est sacros scriptores vocant, abunde testantur.”

To begin, the scrupulous accuracy of textual transmission of the Masoretes drew his admiration: “everyone who is competent to judge in these matters, admits that never has anything been preserved with more sanctity than they have kept the text of Scripture.”⁴⁵ He noted the diligent compilation of scribal variants in the Masorah, to which he had access in the 1524–25 Venice Bible edited by Jacob ben Hayyim. On this score, the 1529 preface is not without ambiguity. As it stands, Bucer states that a close reading will find that there have been miniscule changes allowed in punctuation, in the interest of defending Jewish readings against Christian. Now Jewish textual alteration of awkward readings was a standard accusation by Christian polemicists. There is internal evidence, however, within the commentary, that this was not part of Bucer’s mindset. At Ps. 2:7, he rejected a textual variant (found in the 1517 Rabbinic Bible) that would support the traditional Christian interpretation of the verse, on the grounds that none of his Jewish sources had that reading, and also that it did not make good Hebrew syntax. This is admittedly a passage added in 1532, and reflects well his expressed admiration there for the Masoretic scribal tradition. At Ps. 22:17, however, there is in 1529 no ambiguity. Whereas in 1526 he had sought Targum support for a Christian reading,⁴⁶ now he refused to adopt the arguments put forward by his contemporary, Felix Pratensis, which would “prove” Jewish corruption of the text. He rebutted Pratensis from Hebrew usage elsewhere, and from his own reading of the rabbis, warning his readers not to fall into the trap of such shabby exegesis.⁴⁷ I conclude therefore that in 1529 Bucer caught himself (not for the first time) in one of his triple negatives, and that he intended to state that, whatever his opinion of commentary in the period, the scribes had preserved the text unaltered.⁴⁸

For midrashic interpretation, on the other hand, he professed only

⁴⁵ Ibid., preface, Sign. 7v.

⁴⁶ See above at n. 23.

⁴⁷ See my discussion of this in detail in “Martin Bucer on Psalm 22: a Study in the Application of Rabbinic Exegesis by a Christian Hebraist,” in *Histoire de l'exégèse au XVI^e siècle*, ed. Olivier Fatio and Pierre Fraenkel (Geneva, 1978), 157–59.

⁴⁸ In 1529, Sign. 7r. The 1532 addition in praise of Masorah, reads: “Incredibili siquidem religione singulos etiam apiculos observarunt; et si vetera exemplaria in unico elemento, in punctulo, variare deprehenderunt, id in libro suo quem מסרה id est mesarah [!] quod in eo dictiones inter se concilientur, vocant, quam diligentissime annotarunt.” 1547 edition, Sign. [α 6]r.

limited interest. The entire period prior to the rise of *peshat* he referred to as that of “the elders,” the “talmudic authors,” or “the teachers of a more subtle exploration.”⁴⁹ He might have read their interpretations in the late *Midrash Tehillim*, the *Shocheh tob*, which had been printed in 1512 and 1515; it is however demonstrable that his various specific references are gleaned in Kimhi and Rashi. He condemned them as for the most part fanciful—“it is rare that they are not talking nonsense”—yet he would on occasion deliberately adopt a midrashic proposal, as at Ps. 91:5–6, where he was attracted by the idea that some of the hostile forces cited there might indeed be the names of particular demons.⁵⁰ His dismissal of *midrash* is of a pair with his dislike of Christian allegorizing; he was convinced that the authority of Scripture suffered whenever its exegetes, Jewish or Christian, proffered meanings not manifest in the simple sense. But here he was not always consistent: on the title of Psalm 22, he allowed himself to engage in allegorical speculations, some of which are based upon the talmudic proposal (quoted by Kimhi) that this was the name of the morning star, which Bucer not surprisingly applied to Christ!

We have seen above that by 1526 he could quote the Targum approvingly. Bucer had, however, little to say about this interpretive translation. He accepted its traditional ascription to “Rabbi Joseph, the Chaldean paraphrast” (at Pss. 1:1 and 10:5), generally using it as an older Jewish source, sometimes of value in a difficult reading. On occasion, he attempted with more or less success his own translation, but most commonly continued merely to quote from Giustiniani’s Latin rendering of 1516.

The commendation of rabbinic exegetes cited at the beginning of this chapter named explicitly Kimhi and Ibn Ezra. For Rashi,⁵¹ the third commentator he regularly consulted, Bucer had a very different characterization. He was aware that within the contemporary Jewish community Rashi held supreme place as commentator of Scripture: “they think him the only interpreter to be followed, and swear that

⁴⁹ At Ps. 91:5–6, the last, “magistri subtilioris vestigationis” renders Kimhi’s בעלי דרש.

⁵⁰ George Joye, Bucer’s English translator, with an eye on Bucer’s commentary, rendered 91:5 “Thou shalt not nede to be afrayede of nyght bugges [i.e. boogies]” thereby launching a series of English “bug” Bibles!

⁵¹ Rabbi Shlomo, or Solomon, ben Yitzhak [or Isaac] of Troyes, (1030–1105).

without his aid nothing in Holy Writ is rightly understood by anyone." This is praise beyond his merits; indeed, "he has besmirched the holy Bible with fancies that are not only impious, but utterly ridiculous!"⁵² This passage has rightly drawn the attention of Bucer's critics, who cite it as evidence of his fundamental anti-Jewish convictions.⁵³ While in no way denying the nasty tone of the comment, several things need to be set alongside it. First, it comes in the context of his denunciation of *midrash*, which is not much harsher than his judgement upon Christian allegorizing, "that four-wheeled chariot that for many years now has allowed not a few interpreters to say whatever they want, wherever they want," with grave injury to the dignity and authority of Scripture. Rashi transmits a good deal of traditional along with his historical-grammatical exegesis; Bucer's animus reflects his contempt for the former type of interpretation. It needs also to be seen in the context of Bucer's actual use of Rashi. As we have seen earlier, he is regularly read, and his judgement cited alongside Kimhi and Ibn Ezra. Ps. 4:7–9, where one of his proposals is cited at length as an alternative to that adopted by Bucer from Kimhi, may reflect more accurately Bucer's opinion: "Rabbi Solomon, the ancient [*vetus*] interpreter of Scripture, to whom the Jews nonetheless grant more than he deserves."⁵⁴

A few other authorities—Saadiah Gaon, Ibn Gikatilla, Joseph Kimhi—are cited, but these were all, like the Midrash, gleaned from the three rabbinic commentaries he was regularly consulting.

This review of Bucer's familiarity with, and attitude toward Jewish literature would be incomplete without a reference to kabbalistic scholarship. A taste for this form of Jewish mysticism would hardly surprise in one who was reading Reuchlin in 1518. And there are traces of the latter's influence in Bucer's comments on the relationship of the divine Tetragrammaton to the name of Jesus in the 1528 commentary on John.⁵⁵ But Backus has also shown (in her notes on

⁵² "Obtinuit quoque sic apud eos autoritas Rabbi Salomonis—qui non impiis solum, sed plane ridiculis nugis sacra Biblia conspuat—ut solum sequendum putent, ac iurent sine eius ope nihil a quoquam in divinis literis rite intelligi." *Sacrorum Psalmorum*, preface, Sign. 7r–v. The 1532 revision of this passage is merely cosmetic.

⁵³ Most recently, Detmers, *Reformation und Judentum*, 213.

⁵⁴ *Sacrorum Psalmorum*, f. 39r.

⁵⁵ At John 1:1, *Enarratio in Evangelion Iohannis (1528, 1530, 1536)*, ed. Irena Backus (Leiden, 1988).

this passage) that Bucer rejects a key component of Reuchlin's argument. And coming to the treatment of the revered Tetragrammaton in the Psalms, Bucer argued against the Jewish reverence (which he terms "superstition") that precluded pronunciation of the name, and by implication against any hidden meaning. On the contrary, the revelation of the name to Moses at the burning bush (Exod. 3:14) included an explanation of the name, and the intent that it be as widely known and spoken as possible.⁵⁶ We are on solid grounds in concluding that Bucer was no more interested in Jewish than in Christian mystical senses.

Let me add some observations to conclude this lengthy survey of Bucer's familiarity with and respect for Jewish exegetical resources. In the first place, his interest and use had clearly defined limits: he saw recovery of the true sense of Scripture as the heart of evangelical reform, and he valued highly the accuracy of the Hebrew text tradition, and those authors whose careful philological notes and historical concerns opened that world to him. Any Jewish literature that did not meet this test was dismissed, sometimes with contempt. Secondly, to those authors who met these criteria, he gave extraordinary place and authority. How unusual was his stance can be seen in comparison with two of his contemporaries, both of whom read extensively in the same Jewish sources. The Dominican Sanctes Pagnini of Lucca published a Latin commentary on at least part of the Psalter, in which he included extensive translations from a wide range of Jewish sources—the exegetes of *peshat*, but also Targum and Midrash. Alongside these, however, he carefully set quotations from the most reputable Patristic sources.⁵⁷ Conrad Pellican, the erstwhile Franciscan become evangelical Hebraist of Zurich, read widely in rabbinic commentaries over several decades. Yet in the preface to his multi-volume Latin commentary on the Bible (1532–38), he

⁵⁶ *Sacrorum Psalmorum*, Sign. 8 v. Bucer offered the Greek derivative "Autophyes" [the self-existent one] as his preferred rendering of the name; in 1532 he admitted his proposal was a lost cause, and moved instead to what he took to be the correct Hebrew pronunciation, "Jehovah."

⁵⁷ *The Psalterium nuper translatum ex Hebraeo, chaldaeo et graeco . . . cum commentariis Hebraeorum per eundem translatis et scoliis eiusdem cum orthodoxa atque catholica expositione*. Perhaps published in Rome, 1524 [?]. The copy I have seen from the Bibl. Casanatense in Rome halts in mid-sentence in the middle of Ps. 28. See T. M. Centi, "L'attività letteraria di Santi Pagnini," *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum* XV (1945), 13–14.

expressed his disdain for almost all this literature, comparing his labors to the arduous plucking of the occasional rose from a thorn bush. His own commentaries made very limited use of rabbinic sources. When Bucer submitted a large first installment of his Psalms commentary to Pellican for critique, the latter deprecated Bucer's method of quoting the variety of opinions:

I am pained by your labours in searching out and sifting the opinions of the rabbis, which you repeat time and again while they disagree with one another both in grammar and sense . . . You would assuredly have made your way far more quickly and easily by your own judgement into the core sense of Scripture, than propped up by their assistance . . .⁵⁸

Bucer's Hermeneutic

Pellican had no doubts of Bucer's orthodoxy; he was merely suggesting that his junior colleague and sometime protégé had allowed himself, entranced by his rabbinic learning, to indulge in an unnecessary, even unhelpful display of the detail of rabbinic commentary. A more serious charge, the ancient spectre of Judaizing the Scriptures, was raised by a Silesian evangelical, Valentine Crautwald, in a letter of 1528 that echoes strikingly the fears expressed by Erasmus to Bucer's colleague, Capito, a decade earlier.

The reader of the rabbis has need of great discrimination . . . The spirit of Christ is more pertinent for us than are the rabbis; it teaches of the truth with more certainty than does their discord. Sophistical and scholastic foolishness has been driven off; unless the Lord provide for us, rabbinic and Jewish perfidy will take its place! . . . Alas, even our Bucer, moved by esteem for the rabbis, . . . has dared to place in doubt Christ's descent into hell. I know the rabbis' fantasies about Sheol [written in Hebrew], but this cast shadows upon Christ's descent! . . . I shall admonish Bucer for this rashness.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Pellican to Bucer, 6 August 1529, in Hobbs, "Conrad Pellican and the Psalms," 72–99.

⁵⁹ In *Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer*, vol. 7: *Täuferakten Elsaß I*, ed. Manfred Krebs and Hans Georg Rott (Gütersloh, 1959), 170–71. The Erasmus reminiscence is the idea of replacing medieval Christian with Jewish error, even with a renewed Judaism. See Erasmus, 26 February 1517, Allen, *Opus Epistolarum Erasmi* (Oxford 1906–58), 2:491 = CWE 4:266–268.

True to his word, Crautwald's letter to Bucer three months later reviewed the matter, rejecting "the rabbis' and your glosses," and asking what Hebrew vowel points and discordant rabbinic treatises could contribute to the advance of pure doctrine.⁶⁰

Others drew a still different conclusion. From the day of his arrival in Strasbourg in 1523, the rumour circulated that Bucer was of Jewish descent.⁶¹ It was still alive two decades later, when Bucer felt obliged to deny it formally in a polemical exchange of treatises with Anton Engelbrecht, a one-time Strasbourg evangelical colleague now returned to the Roman Church.⁶² If true, this could account for certain elements of familiarity with Jewish life and custom in Bucer's writings.⁶³ The accusation is in itself not beyond the credible. There were Jews scattered throughout the towns and villages of Alsace in the late Middle Ages, suffering variously the tragically deteriorating situation of most German Jewish communities. The few Jewish families in Bucer's native Sélestat seem finally to have been expelled as late as 1477–79, after severe buffeting from the plague accusations.⁶⁴ One cannot exclude the possibility that in an earlier generation Bucer's family had converted, although this was not Engelbrecht's accusation: it concerned a supposed extra-marital affair by Bucer's mother. On the other hand there is no concrete evidence to support the accusation, and Bucer was vehement in his defence of his parents' integrity. In earlier periods, a similar claim was made for other Christians with skills in Hebrew. The obscurity of Bucer's family origins, the presence of Hebrew books amongst his possessions when he entered Strasbourg, could suffice to explain the charge. At most, it can be noted, and left unproven.

⁶⁰ BCorr 3:178–79.

⁶¹ Nicolas Wurmser, dean of St. Thomas chapter, reports this: Archives of St. Thomas, 192, f. 11v (Strasbourg).

⁶² See Bucer, *Der CXX. Psalm* (1546), BDS 17:61.

⁶³ The most striking is Bucer's identification, in Ps. 19:6[5] of the *chuppa*, usually rendered bridal chamber, as the spread canopy beneath which the couple are given to one another, "a Jewish custom still observed today."

⁶⁴ Freddy Raphaël suggests perhaps only one hundred families were left in Alsace by 1520, tolerated in a few cities, excluded from residence in Strasbourg and many others: see Freddy Raphaël and Robert Weyl, *Les Juifs en Alsace* (Toulouse, 1977), 133; on Sélestat, see Gerd Mentgen, "Geschichte der Juden in der mittelalterlichen Reichsstadt Schlettstadt," *Les Amis de la Bibliothèque Humaniste de Sélestat* 40 (Annuaire 1990): 51–73.

We have seen earlier that alongside fulsome praise for David Kimhi and Abraham Ibn Ezra, Bucer named a reservation: they were not satisfactory guides in any passage where the hermeneutic demanded a Christological reading. Bucer had no intention of surrendering a Christian reading of the Hebrew Scriptures to Jewish critics. On the contrary, he was convinced that his historical-grammatical approach (with the welcome aid of Jewish resources) would furnish a solid and dependable grounding for Christian readers while silencing these same critics. Nor did he require the cautions of a Crautwald to keep this central in all his work. If he was not willing to yield on his interpretation of Sheol, he was prepared to challenge other Christian Hebraists who in his judgement were soft on the essentials.

This disposition became evident in winter 1527–28, when the ideas of Martin Cellarius (or Borrhaus) brought conflict into the heart of the Strasbourg evangelical community.⁶⁵ Cellarius was a known opponent of infant baptism; more to our purposes, he won Capito to the idea that the Jewish people would, in the end time, return to the land of Israel in fulfilment of the prophetic promises of restoration to their land. In July 1527 Capito wrote an enthusiastic preface for Cellarius' *De Operibus Dei*; worse, in the eyes of Bucer, this understanding of the on-going place of the Jewish people and the land of Israel in the divine economy would be endorsed in Capito's commentary on Hosea (spring 1528). The conflict on this question brought open dissension into the Strasbourg *Prophezei*. To Capito's understanding, physical Israel foreshadowed the spiritual reign of Christ and the elect people of God, in its calling as in its captivities; and while the final reign of Christ would be purely spiritual, it would also be announced by the return of Jews to their land, and an era of great earthly prosperity and blessing.⁶⁶ Bucer was unsuccessful in convincing Capito of the supposed error of this teaching. In considerable frustration he wrote to Zwingli that Capito had replied to him "that he did not see how the prophets could be interpreted, if you didn't accept these fantasies of himself and Cellarius!"⁶⁷ The Basel and Zurich colleagues gave support to Bucer; and although

⁶⁵ On Cellarius, see Irena Backus, *Martin Borrhaus (Cellarius)* (Baden-Baden, 1981).

⁶⁶ *In Oseam*, f. 36 [=63], 66–74 and 269–70.

⁶⁷ April 15, 1528, BCorr 3:123–24.

Capito also wrote, defending his views to Zwingli, he seems in the end to have chosen public silence as the better part, in the light of unanimous opposition from his colleagues.⁶⁸

It is apparent that it was this hermeneutical question—the place of the Jewish people and the land of Israel in a Christian theology of the end of history—which brought about Bucer’s shift—noted earlier—from New Testament to Old Testament lectures and commentary, in spring-summer 1528. The commentary on Zephaniah was an obvious attempt to prove Capito wrong in his assertion. Bucer chose a small book from amongst the minor prophets (the Jewish Twelve), ostensibly to hone his exegetical method before tackling the Psalms later that winter, but as the text itself shows, also to offer his counter-interpretation of the prophets of Israel within the short time (the Frankfurt book fair was the end of the summer) at his disposal. Meanwhile, with a sense of urgent need to provide an immediate alternative to Capito’s interpretations, he also inserted a lengthy excursus, “On typological interpretations,” into the third chapter of his own commentary on John, which appeared in April 1528, simultaneously with Capito’s Hosea.⁶⁹

In his recent monograph Achim Detmers has argued that the theological heart of Bucer’s understanding of Israel and thence of the contemporary Jewish people as well, is to be situated in his leveling of the two Testaments. There is but one covenant of God for salvation, and since the foundation of the world, God’s chosen, the elect have experienced the salvation that is uniquely and solely to be situated in the Christ. Now the fullest exposition of Bucer’s understanding of the Jews in the economy of salvation is to be located in his last great commentary, the 1536 Romans, on chapters 9–11. But a perusal of Zephaniah reveals that the broad lines of Bucer’s thought were already in place in 1528, as he countered Capito’s reading of the prophets.

⁶⁸ On this conflict, see Hobbs, “Monitio amica: Pellican et Capiton sur le danger des lectures rabbiniques,” in *Horizons Européens de la Réforme en Alsace*, ed. Marijn de Kroon and Marc Lienhard (Strasbourg, 1980), 81–93.

⁶⁹ Both appeared in April from the presses of Johann Herwagen. The publishing schedule of the Strasbourg exegetica was driven by the dates of the Easter and autumn bookfairs in Frankfurt. That Bucer hurried his John to match the Hosea is clear from his indication at the end of the excursus, that he has eighteen chapters yet to complete with scarcely a month till the fair. See BOL 2:154, n. 127.

Midway through the second chapter, Bucer paused in his exposition to instruct the reader more generally “How one may come to the proper meaning of the Prophets.” It is essential, he stated, to have the Hebrew language; one must also lay aside allegorizing, “whereby certain authors, modern as well as ancient, have played their games not without detriment to the truth.” The prophetic pattern always involved a denunciation of the ungodliness that provokes God’s wrath to the destruction of the wicked and the cleansing of the elect; the proclamation of subsequent liberation from the oppressors who represent the enemies of God’s people of all ages, just as the elect saints are the image of the saints of every age; and lastly the foreshadowing in this liberation of universal salvation through Christ: “Bearing these in mind, you will easily see that there is nothing written by the prophets which does not square most perfectly in Christ and his Church.”⁷⁰

Image, foreshadowing: as this brief excursus indicates, Bucer proposed a typological model to articulate a Christian reading of the Hebrew Scriptures. *Omnia in figura contingebant illis*: this ancient hermeneutical method came to Bucer with apostolic blessing and application by venerated Christian ancients.⁷¹ In his hands, it served to validate both a serious attention to the historical reading of the Hebrew original, and the preservation of apostolic authority. To take an example (from many) in the Psalms, Bucer followed David Kimhi closely as he interpreted Psalm 2 as a coronation song for the accession of King David, ten centuries before Christ. Yet the quotation of this psalm in the New Testament as prophecy of the Passion of Christ required him to acknowledge that “none amongst the orthodox has ever doubted that this psalm sings of the salvific reign of Christ our Savior.”⁷² Bucer managed this apparent contradiction by applying every verse to the Hebrew monarch, whose experience bore the imprint, imperfect but genuine, of “our true David,” Jesus the Christ. To expound the text first in its type “in no way offends the truth,

⁷⁰ *Sophoniam*, 550–51. “Quomodo ad germanam prophetarum intelligentiam perveniatur.”

⁷¹ 1 Cor. 10:11; cf. Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, 118[119] sermo 21, CCSL 40, 1734: “in [veteris testamenti] tamen figura latebat novum.”

⁷² See the hostility of Jacques Lefèvre d’Étaples to any interpretation of this psalm “that makes David an historian rather than a prophet.” *Quincuplex Psalterium*, 1513, Sign. Aiiiv. (facsimile repr. Geneva, 1979).

and makes everything more clear,” as one then sets forth the full meaning in Christ.⁷³ David’s divine sonship (“You are my son, today I have begotten you,” 2:7) is of a piece with that of all God’s elect in Israel and today, both are grounded in the adoption of the elect effected in Christ.

One further element of Bucer’s theological arsenal needs to be noted, to complete the pieces that would define his view of the Jewish people. Commenting upon the last chapter of Zephaniah, Bucer outlined his view of human history as a growth of the spiritual state of God’s elect analogous to human development, from infancy through childhood, adolescence, and toward adulthood. With the Torah, Israel lived as children. Their limited attention span was held by a religion of numerous rites and externals, their affection held by promise of material blessings for obedience. With the earthly manifestation of the Christ and the fuller endowment of the Spirit at Pentecost, one entered the era of adolescence, where fewer external religious rites were necessary, and attention was more drawn to spiritual benefits. Full adulthood, and life completely in the Spirit, awaits the final, full noonday (another image from nature he employed) of Christ’s return. Now to this schema of a spiritually unfolding universe, Bucer added an important qualifier: the elect in every age live individually at different stages in their growth. This allowed Bucer, for example, to recognize the need to retain liturgical ceremonies in his day that the spiritually advanced no longer needed, “for the sake of the weak in faith.” It also meant that there were spiritual giants in ancient Israel, Moses, David, the prophets, whose vision and spiritual state far exceeded that of their contemporaries, and even of many of Bucer’s contemporaries. This reality is what makes the exploration of their experience through typology a useful exercise for sixteenth-century Christians.⁷⁴

With these principles in place, Bucer turned, using the promises of future blessedness that occupy the final verses of Zephaniah, to the demolition of his colleague’s arguments for the future return of the Jews to Palestine, within the divine economy. To follow his point-by-point rebuttal exceeds our purpose here. In essence, he argued,

⁷³ *Sacrorum Psalmorum*, f. 18v.

⁷⁴ This is a commonplace of Bucer’s theology: here in *Sophoniam*, 568–70, on Zeph. 3:11.

quoting Paul from Romans 11, that in the end time, when “the full number of the Gentiles” in God’s people was made up the elect amongst the Jews would also be gifted with vision to recognize in Christ God’s Messiah. But the future of God’s elect is spiritual, as prophets like Isaiah themselves show; it would be regressive to offer them material blessings in an earthly kingdom, and as God’s elect, this would not interest them. Furthermore, Jesus made clear to his disciples that life before the end would always be under the cross, facing the hostility of a reprobate world, and wrestling with the temptations of the flesh until full deliverance in God’s kingdom. The Bible knows no promise of a sinless, perfect state for God’s people in this world, contrary to some Jewish teaching, and that promoted by some contemporary Anabaptists! All the promises of this sort here and in all other prophets, were either fulfilled in some fashion after the Babylonian exile, or they relate to the purely spiritual glory of God’s eternal kingdom.⁷⁵

Bucer and Contemporary Jewish Communities

The dispute with Capito furnished Bucer with the occasion to articulate a hermeneutical stance that would remain broadly speaking consistent over the duration. There are clearly concrete implications he would draw for his understanding of the contemporary Jewish community and its religion. If in these we discern some ambivalence and unresolved tensions, these would likewise manifest themselves in the stance he adopted in 1538 with respect to the Hessian Jewish community.

The Jewish people, in rejecting Jesus of Nazareth as Messiah, had God’s kingdom taken from them, they are no longer the people of God, they have become a “sterile nation.”⁷⁶ Their religious practices, the religion of Judaism, are mere external ceremony, lacking the Spirit, “they put more trust in these petty rites than in God’s

⁷⁵ Ibid., 550 to the end; for the rebuttal of the unnamed interlocutor’s arguments, 576–78. A year later, in the Psalms, Bucer would cite this belief as an example of the way Jewish interpreters evade the true meaning of the prophets. See *Sacrorum Psalmorum*, Sign. 7v.

⁷⁶ See, for example, Bucer, *Evangelia* 1527, II, f. 356; *Iohannis*, BOL 2:510.

goodness,” they know nothing of life ordered by sincere love, and the troubles they endure today arise not because of their faithfulness to God, but from their own obstinacy.⁷⁷ If Christians benefit from their scholarship, it is no thanks to them, for “no people is so hostile to our religion.” Their teachers have a thousand tricks to help them evade the truth of the prophets, to twist and turn Scripture on its head, and devise ambushes for the truth. Chief of these is the conviction that Scripture is only understood when read through the lens of the Talmud.⁷⁸ They are argumentative, but dispute with them is generally pointless and to be avoided if at all possible; their “impious obstinacy” will find a rebuttal, whether appropriate or not. No success can attend such enterprise, unless one first undermine their overweening pride of race and excessive trust in their rituals, rather than recognizing themselves as needy sinners before God.⁷⁹

Such a people is to be shunned, Bucer stated, but hastened to add, is also to be loved, “they should be considered our enemies and our friends, to be fought against and to be cherished.”⁸⁰ For salvation is come from them to us. In the providence of God, their incredible dedication to Scripture transmission and study has given Christian readers reliable texts and splendid tools for understanding them. If they themselves do not understand rightly what they read, if they are “blind,” this is due likewise to God, who has veiled their eyes and made them for a time impervious to the truth.⁸¹ Now the

⁷⁷ *Sacrorum Psalmorum*, ad Ps. 44:1, f. 209r: “Plus nimio sane deflexit cor eorum, dum suis ceremoniolis potius quam Dei bonitate fidunt; declinarunt item a semita eius, cum vitam ex syncera dilectione institutam penitus ignorant, eoque quicquid patiuntur, non propter Deum sed impiam suam patiuntur pertinaciam.”

⁷⁸ *Ibid.* Sign. 7r-v. This passage, quoted above for its praise of the teachers of *peshat*, is worth citing at length: “Quoties siquidem consydero incredibilem istam curam et diligentiam, qua illa [exemplaria Scripturarum] per Iudaeos servata sunt, qui tamen hunc nobis thesaurum, non sibi, propter velamen quo oculi eorum obtecti sunt, haud secus quam formicae Indicae aurum, custodierunt, admirari et exoculari cogor immensam Dei in nos ingratos adeo bonitatem, qui tam illibatas nobis coelestes istas opes servarit, et per gentem, qua nulla nostrae religioni aequae infesta est . . . [I]n commentariis illi miserum in modum scripturas torqueant et invertant, quo sua propugnent. Quum, quo suos errorum compedibus fortius adstringerent, persuaserunt vulgo suo, scripturas non esse nisi iuxta traditionem maiorum suorum, id est Thalmudicorum intelligendam . . .”

⁷⁹ In *Evangelia* 1527, ff. 16–17; and *Sacrorum Psalmorum*, f. 23.

⁸⁰ *Metaphrases . . . ad Romanos*, 443, discussing Rom. 11:25–32: “Aversandi sunt nobis simul et diligendi, habendi inimici et amici, oppugnandi et fovendi.”

⁸¹ A note likewise struck in the Psalms preface quoted in the previous paragraph.

key to this paradox lies in Bucer's central concept of election, and his reading of Paul in Romans 9–11. As in ancient Israel, as in Jesus' day, so in his own: God has always an elect people mingled with the reprobate amongst the Jews. In God's own time, when the full people of God is assembled, the elect in Israel too will be given to see clearly and take their place in God's kingdom with us. Until that moment, Jews are more to be pitied and shown compassion for the condition into which they have fallen, for the sake of God's elect children concealed today amongst a host of reprobate.

This ambivalence in attitude manifested itself in two not unrelated, but distinct activities by Bucer: the quest for conversions and polemic. The early days of the evangelical reform undoubtedly stirred prospects of significant Jewish conversions to a Christianity now attractive, once inappropriate obstacles had been removed. Strasbourg, with its strong orientation to biblical humanism, was no exception. Obstacles explicitly identified by Bucer included the ignorance of Hebrew, the misspelling of Hebrew names, allegorical readings of the Old Testament, and doctrinal aberrations like transubstantiation, perhaps even an over-emphasis upon Trinitarian dogma.⁸² The fact that Rabbi Josel of Rosheim came to some of Capito's lectures could only have encouraged that hope.⁸³

The polemical side of Bucer's relationship demonstrates likewise a striking ambivalence. Polemic with Jews around the reading of the Hebrew Scriptures was an old tradition, one in which the Dominican order was particularly engaged. We have just seen that Bucer expressed on occasion frustration at the futility of such enterprise. It is therefore the more surprising to find him debating periodically with David Kimhi in the pages of the Psalms commentary. Kimhi's arguments against the Christian reading of particular Psalms were not printed in the body of his commentary in the 1517 Rabbinic Bible; but they were gathered on a single leaf, printed and included at the end of the Psalms commentary for buyers interested in having them. Bucer's copy was evidently one of these. Given the physical separation of Kimhi's arguments from the balance of his commentary, Bucer might

⁸² On the Eucharist, see BCorr 2:52 (late 1525); on proceeding gently on the Trinity, *Sacrorum Psalmorum*, ad Ps. 2:7, f. 23r; quoting Luther approvingly on the problems of trinitarian language at BDS 3:444.

⁸³ Stern, *Josel of Rosheim*, 178.

have chosen to overlook this as an unfortunate lapse in an otherwise splendid resource. Instead, he quotes and rebuts many, if not all of Radak's arguments. The language is firm, but measured, without invective, and carries at moments a personal note. At Ps. 2:7 "You are my son, today I have begotten you," for example, he writes: "David Kimhi teaches his people that when we use this text to prove that Christ is God, they must reply to us that . . . This we too would freely admit, but we confess that . . . Should the Jew press, then I would frankly admit . . ." ⁸⁴ It was on this occasion that Bucer commented that encouragement to piety, not doctrinal dispute, is what will have most likely chance of success: "encourage him in that reverence for God that is the beginning of wisdom. When this is present, it is God who will teach all things."

This passage, and others like it, raises interesting questions for our problematic. Why, one wants to ask, is Bucer re-engaging the polemical debates of twelfth-thirteenth century Spain? Even if the occasional Jew may have sat in on the Strasbourg *Prophezei* sessions where these lectures were first elaborated, rare would be any who might read his Latin text. There may here be reminiscences of older discussions with Jewish scholars, with some perhaps who helped him in his early forays into rabbinic commentary, although he never spoke of such engagement. In any event, he wrote, as he says "for Christians," and in fact the key to this revived Jewish-Christian polemic around the Psalms text lies most probably within Bucer's own community. We have seen earlier the potential for the accusation of Judaizing, and the intense debate over an eschatological Jewish future in Palestine that provoked Bucer's intervention in print. By the late 1520s, radicals within the evangelical camp were calling many traditional doctrines and practices into question; Jews and Catabaptists are identified in the Zephaniah commentary as sharing erroneous views. ⁸⁵ By 1530–31, Strasbourg attracted the sojourn of Michael Servetus, a Spanish scholar who was turning his rabbinic readings to a challenge to orthodox Christian teaching. He apparently stayed for a time with Capito, and the shock occasioned by his publication of *De erroribus trinitatis* (Hagenau, 1531) was multiplied in evangelical circles, as for a time it was feared that Capito, following

⁸⁴ *Sacrorum Psalmorum*, f. 22v–23r.

⁸⁵ *Sophoniam*, 573–74.

Servetus, might be soft on the Trinity.⁸⁶ In this instance, the risks of Judaizing in the reading of rabbinica seemed well demonstrated.

Bucer continued his exegetical labors throughout his remaining years, albeit with diminished attention, especially after 1536, as his energies were drawn into the intra-Protestant as well as Protestant-Catholic unity conversations. He was also consulted regularly by other evangelical territories around matters of Church order and liturgy. It was as a respected counsellor that he became embroiled in the events of 1538–39 in Hesse. The attempt to expel the Jewish community from evangelical Hesse, and Bucer's tragic involvement in this saga, have been frequently described and analyzed, and I shall here confine myself to a summary.⁸⁷

The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries saw German Jewish communities increasingly under threat of permanent banishment. Permission for Jews to reside in the territory of Hesse expired in 1532; the Landgrave Philip accorded them a six-year extension. As this period drew to a close, the question of expulsion of the community was raised, with the encouragement of the evangelical clergy. On the other side, a series of new statutes governing their continued residence was proposed. The landgrave requested advice from Strasbourg, and Bucer, who had some years of involvement in Hessian affairs, was charged with this task. The resulting document came down vigorously on the side of severity. On the grounds of Judaism being a false religion, Bucer argued that refusal to tolerate them further was not inappropriate for a Christian magistrate, who was accountable to God for the order of true religion in his realm. In support of this conclusion, he added the sanctions of Deuteronomy 28, for unfaithfulness to the covenant with God, as well as interdictions drawn from Canon law. If on the other hand, mercy were shown to them—bearing in mind Paul's teaching in Romans 9–11—it should be under the strictest of terms. In the religious sphere, no new synagogues should be constructed, no slander of the Christian religion permitted in existing Jewish rites, nor even disputes between Jews and

⁸⁶ See the anxious exchange of correspondence in December 1531 between Bucer and Ambrosius Blaurer of Constance: Schieß, *Blaurer*, 1, nos. 249 and 250.

⁸⁷ See especially Ernst-Wilhelm Kohls' introduction and edition of the Bucer *Judenratschlag*, in BDS 7:319–94.

Christians. Possession of the Talmud should be forbidden, “for it does not accord with the Law and the Prophets,” while preventing simple Jews from turning to Christianity. To the latter end, the Hessian Jews must be required to attend Christian missionary sermons. In the economic sphere, they should be denied participation in all regular trades, and forbidden moneylending. Instead, Bucer argued from Deut. 28:43–44 (“they shall be the head, and you shall be the tail”) that they must be put to only the most degrading occupations: charcoal-making, sewer-cleaning, and the disposal of animal carcasses. On the other hand, on the subject of the traditional protection money paid the ruler, Bucer argued that it should be made proportional to a man’s income, in the interest of protecting the poorer strata of the community.⁸⁸

In the event, Bucer’s proposals were found too harsh by the landgrave himself. A new statute was elaborated that granted continued, if more precarious residence, albeit under more stringent conditions upon which Bucer’s counsels may have had some influence.

Concluding Observations

It is time to attempt some synthesis of the attitudes and actions of this complex personage respecting Jews and Judaism. In the first place, to see Bucer’s proposals and role in Hesse as a radical disjuncture with his Hebraist past would be too simplistic. Kohls has argued that there was a moderation in the 1536 Romans commentary that is absent in the 1538 Hesse *Ratschlag*, explaining this as the difference between a theological and a juridical judgement, a position supported by Nijenhuis. However, while there is some merit to this argument, I prefer the conclusion of Greschat and Detmers, that Bucer’s role here is at least generally consistent with his theological and political stance throughout the 1530s.⁸⁹ To speak first of political coherence: in particular since his 1535 *Dialogi*, Bucer had argued for the right and responsibility of the Christian magistrate to regulate

⁸⁸ Bucer’s proposals in the *Ratschlag*, BDS 7:344–57, with justification and further arguments in a second text, 362–76.

⁸⁹ Kohls, BDS 7:328; Nijenhuis, “Bucer and the Jews,” 70–71; Greschat, *Martin Bucer*, 157; Detmers, *Reformation und Judentum*, 208.

religion in his domain.⁹⁰ The true faith, evangelical Christianity, must be favored; whereas Judaism and paganism (named together, sometimes with Islam as well) are to be treated according to the Code of Justinian. Bucer assured his interlocutor that Roman imperial law was a most Christian solution. Pagans must not be permitted to practice their faith; there is toleration, on the other hand, for the Jews, “because to some degree they serve God according to his law,” yet under restrictive conditions that resemble closely those Bucer advocated in 1538 in Hesse.⁹¹ In this respect Bucer remained consistent, too, with the stance he took regarding the proposed expulsion of the Jews from electoral Saxony in 1537; he associated himself with Capito in a letter to Luther, asking the latter to use his influence to obtain an interview with the elector for Rabbi Josel of Rosheim.

To speak next of theological coherence: the application of Bucer’s principles to the civil order is new, specifics developed as Bucer was called upon to advise evangelical magistrates. But while there may have been some shifting in Bucer’s attitudes—to this we shall return in a moment—I am convinced that it is also possible to interpret, if not excuse, his proposals for Hesse from within the theological schema he had elaborated a decade before. For Bucer, true religion is religion of the Spirit, which increasingly, progressively rids itself of material props that are merely external, in favor of the orientation of the heart. Granted he allows that individuals will be at different stages of growth; he could not have looked with benevolence upon the encouragement of a worship of God so obsessed, as he saw it, even at best with ceremony at the expense of heart-godliness. His ironic comment on contemporary synagogue worship—“what a fine liturgy they practice!”—strikes notes not unlike those used in 1529–32 to critique the recital of the psalms in the Catholic daily Office; and this comparison is made explicit: “like our stubborn papists, without spirit, without understanding and edification.”⁹² It is under this rubric, too, that we should probably situate the heart of his concern to ban possession of the Talmud by Hessian Jews.

⁹⁰ Edited in BDS 6/2; see esp. section 8, 145–146.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 149.

⁹² BDS 7:363–64. Detmers finds this description reminiscent of Anthonius Margaritha’s *Der gantz Jüdisch glaub* (1530); Detmers, 211 n. 95. Bucer’s critique of monastic use of the Psalms: *Sacrorum Psalmorum*, 1529, f. 44v–45v, 334r, and *passim*.

This does recall the campaign of Pfefferkorn twenty-five years earlier, to which Bucer at the time was known to be hostile. But in the interval, he had become acquainted with the key role of Talmud as Judaism's fence about the Torah; and the practice of a polyvalent text, whose multiple readings, to his mind, could only distract from the plain, spiritual understanding of religion. Being convinced of the truth of the latter could bring Jews to convert to Christ; Talmud was therefore to be understood as an enemy of Christ, and treated as such.⁹³ Our post-Enlightenment spirits find these repressive measures abhorrent. It is at least helpful to recall the contempt Bucer also poured upon Christian allegorizing of Scripture of every age, although one notes that he never, at his most evangelical, called for the banning of such authors.

Within Bucer's understanding of the unity of the covenant and of the Testaments, one can make sense of his extraordinary proposal to apply the curses pronounced against violators of the covenant in Deuteronomy 28 to contemporary Jews. This is nothing more nor less than the Christian magistrate administering God's wrath on an unfaithful people, action intended to purge the elect and bring them to their senses. In this context, one can understand his reply to Landgrave Philip's demurrals: one should not desire to be more merciful than God! This in turn evokes Bucer's key understanding of election and reprobation. If there are many reprobates amongst today's Jews, God has also an elect remnant. The Jewish people is to be loved for their sake; albeit not coddled, one can imagine him adding! There are distinct traces of that compassion for God's elect even in the language of 1538. Civil rulers have by their exorbitant exactions of the protection fee (the *Schutzpfennig*), treated Jews like sponges for the ruler's benefit. Under the right conditions, however, there are among them "poor, good-hearted folk" who might well convert to Christ.⁹⁴

In Christ "neither Jew nor Gentile," only everywhere God's elect, who amongst the Jews are yet concealed in unbelief in the mystery of divine providence. One is reminded of the respect shown toward Kimhi, Ibn Ezra, and other interpreters, and the gratitude for the

⁹³ *Ratschlag*, BDS 7:351; *Sacrorum Psalmorum* 1529, Sign. 7.

⁹⁴ BDS 7:351; 358–59; see similar expression in the 1536 Romans (521), cited in Nijenhuis, "Bucer and the Jews," 62, where this is linked to the practice of usury.

gifts they have brought to Christian interpreters. Yet it would be wrong to see here any significant appreciation for the religion of Judaism. Unlike Capito, Bucer sees no on-going role in the divine economy for Judaism and its practitioners. With the exception of remarkable individuals, if there is merit in the work of many Jewish scholars, such as those who preserved the sacred text with such devotion, they labored, like Indian ants, without comprehending the value of their labors, for the benefit of Christians and not themselves.⁹⁵

Underlining the continuities within Bucer's thought, however, must not be allowed to obscure what I would term a significant sea change in his thought in the 1530s. If his attitude to Jewish scholarship had always been utilitarian, a despoiling of the Egyptians, if you will, Bucer apparently moved away from his interest in rabbinica. By 1541–42, he would disparage the researches and publications of his Strasbourg colleague, Paul Fagius, in exploring this literature.⁹⁶ While the stock epithets of vilification come rarely from his pen, he began in his writings on moneylending, to name Jews as villains.⁹⁷ When he did himself cite rabbinic sources, as in the Romans commentary, they were more likely to appear no longer by individual name, but as “the Jews.”

How shall we understand this development? Bucer has been called a man of unbridled energy for successive enthusiasms. While explanations from personality should be advanced with prudence, it is possible, even likely, that his remarkable passion of several years for Hebrew exegesis gradually waned, replaced perhaps in part by his growing exploration of Roman Canon and Civil law.⁹⁸ He was manifestly irritated by the persistence of the accusation of Jewish ancestry. Did this encourage him to be less inclined to the use of rabbinic sources? It is a commonplace to argue that the failure of the evangelical reform to attract large numbers of Jewish converts engen-

⁹⁵ An uncomplimentary image borrowed from Herodotus, *Persian Wars* III, 102–05.

⁹⁶ See his negative comments to Ambrosius Blaurer: Schieß, *Blaurer*, II:82, 87, and 131.

⁹⁷ BDS 6/2:153; 7, 352–53; and *Scripta Anglicana*, 792. Note, however, that in the passage in Romans cited in n. 94, Jewish oppression of Christian borrowers was in part the responsibility of Christian authorities, who denied them access to other honorable occupations. The irony of this passage, when read in the light of the 1538 *Ratschlag*, will not escape the reader.

⁹⁸ At the height of his Hebraist enthusiasm, he suggested that one might anticipate the day when all Christians would speak Hebrew; see *Sacrorum Psalmorum*, f. 269v (fulfilling the prophecy of Isa. 19:18).

dered amongst reformers a sense of frustration with the interlocutor. Ben-Sasson has demonstrated a mirror development in attitudes within the Jewish community, and a growing preference for the protection of Catholic authorities.⁹⁹ The openness to religious debate in the Psalms commentary may well represent a high water mark, after which, before the lack of success of his best efforts, he reverted to more stereotypical attitudes to dispute with Jews.

This last observation points us, I believe, to another, related factor that should not be minimized. Within the upper Rhine evangelical *sodalitas*, there was in the 1520s a widespread confidence that communal study of Scripture would invariably lead to the truth, under the guidance of the Spirit. They were able, with some awkwardness, to manage the disagreement over the return of the Jews in the end time to Palestine. The infant baptism question proved less tractable, and provoked exile of non-conformists from the communities. Servetus' presence in Strasbourg, however the debates that will certainly have occurred during that period, the alarm over his publication of anti-Trinitarian arguments bolstered by rabbinic readings, must have underlined dramatically both the limits of conformity, and the unacceptable, and dangerous, element within even the best of rabbinic commentators, Kimhi himself.¹⁰⁰

In the end, it may be appropriate that this complex individual leaves us with a list of probable influences upon his development, and no tidy resolution. It seems clear that however we interpret the evolution of his thought, he was negatively minded toward Judaism from the beginning. We cannot, of course, judge him by the standards of our age. It is appropriate, however, to note that there were a few amongst his evangelical colleagues—like Capito, Osiander, Rhegius—who manifested an openness of spirit that was unfortunately for the most part not Bucer's. I find it sad, even tragic, that a person who in a number of significant ways blazed new paths for Christians in translation and interpretation of the Hebrew Scriptures, was in the end unable to break other bonds of traditional thought respecting Jews and Judaism. As a result, he has been remembered as one who made some contribution to the on-going Christian oppression of the Jewish people.

⁹⁹ Hayim Hillel Ben-Sasson, "Reformation in Contemporary Jewish Eyes."

¹⁰⁰ See Jerome Friedman's chapter on Servetus as example of "Unacceptable historical-literal interpretation;" *Most Ancient Testimony*, 138–47.

ULRICH ZWINGLI, THE JEWS, AND JUDAISM

Hans-Martin Kirm

The Zurich reformer Ulrich Zwingli (1484–1531) never made his relationship to Jews and Judaism the central theme of one of his publications. Nevertheless, this relationship played an important role for the foundation and distinction of his reforming work.¹ This is particularly the case with respect to linguistic-humanistic, biblical-theological, and apologetic-polemical interests. On the one hand, the possibilities of genuine encounter with Jews and Judaism improved for Zwingli, as they had for others within the context of Christian Hebraism and the biblical-theological interests in the *hebraica veritas*; on the other hand, their theological premises established clear boundaries. The theological claim to continuity with the “true” biblical Judaism (“Israel”) dictated a marked, constructive association with Old Testament covenant- and institution-history.² But this accompanied a strong anti-rabbinism that allowed post-biblical Judaism to be perceived only against the background of the “unbelieving” Judaism of the New Testament. Of great importance for Zwingli, as well as for his adversaries, therefore, was the apologetic-polemical role that Jewish-Christian interrelations played in the conflict over the reformers’ *sola scriptura*. Even the claim to represent the “true” Israel was connected with the attempt to discredit opponents as “Jewish.” In

Translated by Dean Phillip Bell

¹ Compare Edwin Künzli, “Zwinglis Stellung zu den Juden,” in *Festgabe L. v. Muralt zum 70. Geburtstag 17. Mai 1970 überreicht von Freunden und Schülern* (Zürich, 1970): 309–18; idem, “Zwingli als Ausleger des Alten Testaments,” *Z XIV* (CR 101): 869–99; Detmers, *Reformation und Judentum*, 144–60 (see also the index of names); Hans-Martin Kirm, “Israel als Gegenüber der Reformation,” in *Israel als Gegenüber: Vom Alten Orient bis in die Gegenwart—Studien zur Geschichte eines wechselvollen Zusammenlebens*, ed. Folker Siegert (Göttingen, 2000): 290–321; as an introduction to Zwingli see William P. Stephens, *The Theology of Huldrych Zwingli* (Oxford, 1986).

² For Zwingli’s terminology: next to the general expression “Jews,” which could denote all the members of the Jewish people in biblical and post-biblical time, the expression “Israel” stood for the Old Testament covenant people and the theological-ecclesiastical qualification of Jews and Israelites as “true,” or “correct,” and “false” as well as “spiritual” and “fleshly.” As such it could mean both Christians as well as Jews.

this way, Zwingli battled against Catholic and radical reforming opposition, and later also against Lutheran positions. With Zwingli this happened primarily by means of contemporizing conflict situations of the New Testament that thematized faith and disbelief and less through the adoption of contemporary anti-Jewish polemic. Radicalization, as that in the mendicant agitation of the late Middle Ages against the Jews that had brought forth the anti-Semitic standards of accusations of ritual murder and Eucharist desecration was foreign to Zwingli. This had been ensured by his strong biblical-humanistic stamp, as well as by the universalistic pneumatology characteristic of his theology and his expansive-dynamic understanding of history. In the following review of his central writings several interrelated issues will be addressed that are important for Zwingli's understanding of Jews and Judaism. Notes regarding the interpretation of the Old Testament in the Zurich *Prophezei* form the conclusion.

Religious Dialogue and Christian Hebraism

Zwingli's familiarity with rabbinic Judaism was meager and his experiences of direct contact with Jews were few, in part due to the limited possibilities for actual interaction. As elsewhere the Jews in Switzerland were expelled from their traditional urban centers in the course of the implementation of the late medieval policy of expulsion. In Zurich, the council decided in 1436 to deny admission of Jews "for all time," for the honor of God and Mary. Only occasionally and during short interludes were Jews still found in and around the city.³ On the other hand, prejudices, possible inquisitorial persecution, and the concern about one's own confessional certainty hindered social contact. So it was a noteworthy occurrence when Zwingli in 1525 led a religious discussion regarding the interpretation of the Old Testament promises with a circle of friends that included a Jewish doctor from Winterthur by the name of Mosse

³ See U. R. Kaufmann, "Die Schweiz," in *Handbuch zur Geschichte der Juden in Europa*, ed. Elke-Vera Kotowski, Julius H. Schoeps, and Hiltrud Wallenborn, vol. 1 (Darmstadt, 2001): 90–100, especially 90–91; Augusta Welder-Steinberg, *Geschichte der Juden in der Schweiz*, 2 vols. (Zurich, 1966–70); GJ III, 3:2012–17. The best known older study is by Johann Caspar Ulrich, *Sammlung jüdischer Geschichten* [...] (Basel, 1768; repr. Berlin, 1922). For Zurich, see GJ III, 2:1726–49.

(Moses/Mosche), the son of Lazarus.⁴ Mosse also participated twice as listener to the meeting of the *Prophezei*, the theological work community arranged by Zwingli, Leo Jud, and Conrad Pellican that soon achieved fame far beyond Zurich for its biblical exegesis—scholarly with attention to the original languages and yet eminently pragmatic.⁵ The contact with the Jewish doctor possibly reflected both the positive expectations for the Reformation movement on the Jewish side as well as the hope for the power of the Reformation movement for a missionizing of the Jews on the Christian side.

Characteristic of the climate of the time, of course, was the way that Zwingli played down this contact in public and denied the suspicion that in Zurich one learned from Jews. Still, in August 1524 the bishop, Hugo of Constance, was offered the assurance that nobody from Zurich learned Hebrew from Jews, since there were no Jews in the environs proficient in the language. In connection with the suspicion of impermissible “Judaizing,” Zwingli referred the bishop not only to Jerome, but also to canon law, which recommended the use of Jewish language proficiency in exegetical issues regarding the Old Testament.⁶ Christian Hebraism, which profited from Jewish grammarians such as Elijah Levita (1468/69–1549), was accordingly judged positively. Nonetheless, direct contact with Jews, particularly in matters of faith, Zwingli could defend only with difficulty.⁷

Zwingli had already started early—in the Glarner period (1507/08)—to study with interest the history of Israel and Judaism, utilizing the work of Flavius Josephus.⁸ From the beginning, Hebrew instruction

⁴ Z III:137, 28–139, 22. For the history of the Jews in Winterthur see GJ III, 2:1659–63; for the family of Moses, see *ibid.*, 1698 (article on Wülflingen).

⁵ See Künzli, in Z XIV:878, especially n. 39. Z III:138–39. For the order of the Bible reading in the original language and of the interpretation see Z IV:801–02 [Bromiley, *Zwingli*, 191–92]: first reading: Vulgata; second reading: Hebrew with commentary; third reading: Greek (LXX), then Latin commentary and in conclusion German interpretation for the congregation of the pulpit. See also Gerald Hobbs, “Zwingli and the Study of the Old Testament,” in *Huldrych Zwingli, 1484–1531: A Legacy of Radical Reform—Papers from the 1984 International Zwingli Symposium McGill University*, ed. Edward J. Furcha (Montreal, 1985), 144–78. For Zwingli and the Jews see the same, 161f.

⁶ Z III:223, 24–224, 5.

⁷ See Johannes Oecolampad to Zwingli, Basel, 16 September 1525, Z VIII:365, 14–15, (no. 384); Z XII:391–392. For Levita, see Gérard E. Weil, *Élie Lévi: humaniste et masorète (1469–1549)* (Leiden, 1963).

⁸ See Z XII:370–90.

played a great role in Zwingli's concept of theological education. Already in 1522 the young Jacob Wiesendanger, named Ceperinus (1500–25), was appointed as the Greek and Hebrew teacher at the Zurich *Stift* school. Besides Oswald Myconius (1488–1552), Zwingli himself also numbered among his students. Zwingli had apparently already begun to learn Hebrew during his time in Einsiedeln (1516–18) with the help of Johannes Reuchlin's *Rudimenta*; however, he did not advance decisively until 1522, under the guidance of Johannes Böschenstein (ca. 1472–1540) and Ceperinus. Uncertainties in Zwingli's Hebrew were still evident in 1523.⁹

In his educational writing of 1523, which appeared at the time of the preparation of the reforming reorganization of the *Grossmünster Stift* and its school, Zwingli emphasized the importance of the classical languages as gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:10) for the elaboration of a biblical-Christocentric ethics.¹⁰ In this work he stressed the central role of the Hebrew language: didactically it would, indeed, be the last of the three classical languages, but because of its importance it would be accorded the first place for Bible interpretation.¹¹

At Zwingli's suggestion Ceperinus first assumed in 1525, until his early death in December of that year, the position of a "reader," i.e., a professor, for Greek and Hebrew.¹² The edition of Rabbi Moses Kimhi's Hebrew grammar begun by Ceperinus in 1531 was completed by Sebastian Münster (1488–1552). After Ceperinus' death Zwingli advocated on behalf of a further cultivation of philological studies. For the Hebrew language could be won the renowned Hebraist Conrad Pellican (1478–1556), who stood out among other things for his translation of rabbinic texts.¹³ The attractiveness of Zurich as a place for basic Greek and Hebrew knowledge therefore grew.¹⁴

Important for Zwingli were the contacts with other linguistic-humanistic oriented reformers, especially Johannes Oecolampad in Basel and Wolfgang Capito in Strasbourg, but also Paul Fagius in

⁹ See Z II:92, 12.

¹⁰ *Quo pacto ingénué adolescents formandi sint*, Z II, (526) 536–51 = Bromiley, *Zwingli*, 102–18.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 542, 24–35, 543, 12–16 = Bromiley, *Zwingli*, 108–09.

¹² See the interest of the Zurichers for Johannes Rellicanus as language instructor, Z VIII:386–88 (no. 392) and 468–69 (no. 425).

¹³ See Z VIII:473–74 (no. 427) and 499–501 (no. 439).

¹⁴ See the letter of the Augustinian monk Aegidius a Porto from Como to Zwingli, Z VIII:461, 17–20 (no. 421).

Isny.¹⁵ In this climate, Zurich could develop, next to Basel, as an important place of early Hebrew book printing. This was due particularly to the activities of the printer and publisher Christoph Froschauer the Elder (1490–1564), who played a decisive role in the dissemination of Zwingli’s reforming thought.

*The Critical Function of the Discourse about Jews and Judaism in the
Battle against Roman Catholicism*

Already in the central reforming pamphlet *Concerning Choice and Liberty Respecting Food* [*Von Erkiesen und Freiheit der Speisen*], in the period of the dispute over fasting in early 1522, two closely connected key motifs about Jews and Judaism resonated in Zwingli’s anti-Roman motivated speech: the renewal and continuation of the Old Testament covenant history in the Reformation movement and the marking off of Judaism as a ritualized religion of law.

Classical Christian strategies of delimiting Judaism were thus adjusted to the new circumstances: as with Martin Luther the Reformation movement was celebrated as the emancipation from the slavery of the papacy and compared with the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt. Everything in the papacy that could be demonstrated to be spiritual paternalism utilizing human rules was now considered typically “Jewish.” Christian freedom correspondingly played out as freedom from the commitment to the Church’s ordinance on fasting, defining itself as freedom from the yoke of “Jewish” legality under the papacy.¹⁶ The anti-Roman positioning made the Church fast and feast regulations appear even more difficult than those of the Mosaic Law and the Pharisaic piety criticized in the New Testament (see Luke 11:46).¹⁷ In his attack on monasticism, the liturgy of the mass (church hymn), and other Catholic institutions, Zwingli preferred New Testament arguments, as well as the spiritualizing opposition of “external” and “internal,” in order to brand the externalization

¹⁵ See the correspondence with Fagius, Z IX:366–68 (no. 690); X:572–73 (no. 1022); Index of Persons in Z XI:655–56.

¹⁶ See Z I:89, 6–20 = Zwingli, *Early Writings*, 71–72; Z II:49, 13–17; Z IV:352–53, and elsewhere.

¹⁷ *Acta Tigurini* (1522), Z I:149: 5–19.

of religion in the later Middle Ages as bearing the stamp of Judaism.¹⁸

The image of Jews and Judaism also remained here primarily biblically-theologically determined and in itself ambivalent. Under the aspect of ritualized piety a substantial difference was constructed; under the aspect of history of emancipation a substantial unity. This was accorded even from an ethical perspective; the central meaning of the spiritually effected belief in Christ as the source of all virtues and the secondary meaning of human traditions were demonstrated, among other things, by the example of the exodus history and God's care for the people of Israel.¹⁹ At the same time, the Jewish-Pharisaic lifestyle at the time of the New Testament, which was categorized as structurally analogous to that of the papacy, was seen, in accordance with Matt. 23:4, as repulsive and threatened with punishment.²⁰

In Zwingli's most comprehensive reform writing, the *Auslegung der Schlußreden [Thesen]* of 1523, the anti-Roman motif is again found in heightened form.²¹ The ongoing opposition of the Catholic party, which contested the scriptural legitimacy of Zwingli's reforming message, stimulated sharp resistance. The traditionally anti-Jewish topos of the crucifixion of Christ and the unbelief of the *perfidii iudaei* was turned in a succession of Johannine statements directly against Roman Catholicism as infidelity and Christ murder.²² Zwingli interpreted inquisitorial persecution and the threat of excommunication as a form of religious intolerance that did not even exist in the Ottoman Empire under the "Turks."²³

Zwingli equated the authorities' persecution of the adherents of the Reformation with the activities of the "cursed" Jews at the time of the New Testament.²⁴ Since, according to Zwingli, these lived on

¹⁸ Z II:250, 1-4; 251, 1-2, according to Matt. 23:5-7. See Z II:506, 3-4.

¹⁹ Z II:49, 20-27.

²⁰ Z II:67, 2-15.

²¹ Z II:1-457.

²² According to John 18:30, Z II:22, 2-6; according to John 5:34, 39-41, Z II:23, 5-16.

²³ Z II:290, 22-23; cf. Z III:438, 6-7.

²⁴ Z II:320, 13-14. Compare the paralleling of the Jewish "preaching prohibition" of Acts 5:28 with the Roman Catholic opposition to the reforming preaching of the Evangelium. "Sicut enim tunc Iudaei e sinagoga nequiquam eiciebant, qui Christo credidissent . . . similiter hac nostra tempestate, si qui verso istos Christi praecones deterre, vel etiam perdere pergant, tantundem efficient" (Z I:198:13-17 = Zwingli, *Early Works*, 152). See Z II:514, 30-515:5.

in rabbinic Judaism of the post-biblical period, the argument indirectly also supported anti-Jewish resentment. The fundamental ecclesiological statements of the *Auslegung der Schlußreden [Thesen]* of 1523 confirmed Zwingli's anti-rabbinism. Rabbinic Judaism was considered, accordingly, the successor to the New Testament Pharisees and its scholars of Scripture, and as repudiated by God and disinherited.²⁵ The formal analogies between Zwingli's understanding of the Law as merciful instruction ("Evangelium") for the faithful and the Jewish understanding of the Torah changed nothing. Within the Bible, however, a certain dignity was ascribed to the Old Testament, in as much as the covenant of the Law remained encompassed by the covenant of creation and grace. This also stamped Zwingli's typological interpretation of Scripture. As John Calvin later would, Zwingli started from a substantial sacral historical continuity between the Old and New Testament "Church."²⁶

As the interpretation of Jer. 31:29 revealed, Zwingli rejected the traditional accusation of an eternal collective Jewish responsibility for the crucifixion of Jesus. The highest form of Jewish unbelief was, therefore, not in the offence of the forefathers, but in the Jews' present refusal of Christ evangelized.²⁷

The anti-Catholic use of Hebrew, like the humanistic study of language in general, recurred clearly in Zwingli's arguments for the rejection of the belief in, and exegetical justification for (Gen. 48:16 and elsewhere), the intercession of the saints.²⁸ Even with the "erring, unbelieving" Jews, the calling on Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in prayer had the sense of remembering divine promises, not the sense of invocation, as the pope's supporters ("Bäpster") thought. The high Jewish regard for the first commandment was taken, in this connection, as exemplary. Just how misunderstood such an argument was in the public debate was demonstrated by Zwingli's simultaneous dismissal of the idea of proving Christian matters of faith with Jewish

²⁵ Z II:57, 11–18; for the crucifixion of Jesus and its consequences see Z II:70, 13–18. Cf. Z VIII:230, 18–231, 12.

²⁶ "Una ergo est fides, una ecclesia dei fuit omnibus temporibus" (Z XIII:67, 22–23). See P.-F. Moreau, "Calvin, le peuple hébreu et la continuité des deux Testaments," in *Les texts judéophobes et judéophiles dans l'Europe chrétienne à l'époque moderne: Actes du colloque organisé par le Centre d'études juives à l'Université de Paris IV-Sorbonne, [23 Mai 1995]*, ed. Daniel Tollet (Paris, 2000), 85–96.

²⁷ Z XIV:612, 27–30.

²⁸ Z II:199, 3–17.

arguments.²⁹ Leading Hebraists like Johannes Reuchlin and other representatives of the Christian study of Kabbalah proved here to be less scrupulous.

The necessary recourse to the original Hebrew text was inherent in the biblical justification of the rejection of late medieval worship and forms of piety.³⁰ This remained an important weapon in the battle against the “Bäpstler,” even if the arguments were not always convincing.³¹ In this context in his *Versuch über den Messkanon* of 1523 Zwingli picked up upon, among other things, the erroneous opinion—which was also mentioned in Reuchlin’s *Rudimenta* (1506)—that the word *missa*, like *Pascha*, was a Hebrew loan word, thereby challenging the traditional meaning of the mass offering.³²

In exegetical dispute, Zwingli occasionally could call upon Nicholas of Lyra from the “papal camp,” as in the defense of the concept of remembrance in the interpretation of the Eucharist.³³ A special sympathy for its candor, however, did not exist with regard to the rabbinic tradition. Rather, critical distancing predominated: Zwingli remarked in 1525 that Paul had indeed, according to 1 Cor. 14:5, demanded the knowledge of languages, that is, the Hebrew language, but not the rabbinic or ecclesiastical commentaries.³⁴

As the colloquy with Mosse of Wintherthur already showed, even the Catholic opponents of the Reformation made use of the reproach

²⁹ Z II:200, 35–201, 9.

³⁰ See, for example, Z II:52, 26–30 (regarding Gen. 3:15; see also the comparison of the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin texts in Z III, 682, 4–30 [= ZLW 3:107–08]); 56, 6–8 (“kahal” as “Church”); 99, 11–12 (regarding Gen. 8:21); 118, 3–8 (regarding sacrifice); 205, 67–25 (against the intercession of the saints); 232, 30–32 (regarding the unity of the “Law” (Torah) and Evangelium); 312, 11–12.

³¹ Z II:135, 30–136, 14; 198, 11–13; 217, 25–26. Regarding authority of the three classical languages and their critical function, see also Z I:498, 3–9; 507, 17–18, 511, 1–7.

³² Z II:(552) 556–608; 567, 8–568, 3; cf. Z I:555, 11–557, 8.

³³ Z II:152, 16–19 (regarding Luke 22:19–20, “Hoc facite in meam commemorationem”).

³⁴ “Deßhalb alle glosen und lerer nüts sind gegen dem verstand der zungen, als wir wol an den Worten Pauli [1 Cor. 14:5] mercken mögend; dann er nit spricht: ‘Ich wölt, das ir alle die Rabinen oder glosen wol köndind,’ sunder: ‘daß ir alle der zungen bericht wärend,’ meynt doch fürderlich die hebraischen. Die kann aber in disen landen der gemeyn mensch nit erlernen. Darumb ist not, das man denoch an etlichen ortenn lerer habe, die darinn etlich underrichtind. Unnd ist das nit ein nüwer anschlag” (Z IV:418, 15–24). Compare the preface to the Zurich Bible of 1531, fol. 3b/4a, where the lack of interest in the Masoretic tradition and the rabbinic commentaries was clearly expressed.

that the Zurich theologians had learned all their “art of the godly word” from the Jews. Their argumentation with the Hebrew text was dismissed as “jüdeln.”³⁵ From this perspective, the Reformation appeared at the core as a Jewish attack on the Catholic Church. The rumor was even spread that Zwingli no longer preached Christ as the Son of God, which made him suspected of heresy and defection to Judaism.³⁶

*The Critical Function of the Discourse about Jews and Judaism in the
Battle against Anabaptism*

After the Reformation in Zurich had been accomplished against Catholic opposition, a new challenge arose in the form of the radical Reformation Anabaptist movement. Here as well, the theme of Jews and Judaism played a supporting role in polemical-apologetic distancing.

Zwingli’s deliberate initiation of a reform of the Mass canon in 1523—which among other things provided for the retention of several Latin songs and the chasubles—was not thorough enough for the radical forces around Conrad Grebel and Ludwig Hätzer. They criticized the adherence to “Jewish” ceremonies as unbiblical and demanded the abolition of everything that recalled the superseded silhouettes of the Mosaic laws (1 Cor. 5:7; Heb. 10:1).³⁷ In this way, the anti-Roman polemic fell back upon Zwingli himself. The critique of the hesitant reform of the Mass was now supplemented by the battle against the veneration of images, which led in 1523 to the storming of images.³⁸ In the disputation over the veneration of images and the Mass begun by the council in October 1523, Hätzer and Grebel based their strict position on the image question on the Mosaic prohibition of images (Deut. 27:14–15; Exod. 20:4), among other things.³⁹ Traditional image piety was deemed a renunciation

³⁵ Z III:197, 19–198, 6.

³⁶ Z III:140, 24–26.

³⁷ Zwingli defended his opinion of the sparing of the “weak” in a writing in October 1523, “De canone missae libelli apologia,” Z II:(617) 620–25.

³⁸ See Ludwig Hätzer, *Ein Urteil Gottes . . . wie man sich mit allen Götzen und Bildnißen halten sol, aus göttlicher Schrift gezogen* (Zurich, 1523).

³⁹ For the debate, see Z II:713, 16–18 (Zwingli); 714, 23–715, 2 (S. Hofmeister),

of the faith and seen as characteristic of the history of Old Testament Judaism.⁴⁰ Even if Zwingli thought less strictly in this regard and pleaded that the “weak believers” be spared, the debate was based on common anti-Jewish ideas.⁴¹

The conflict intensified and after 1524 the question of child baptism—for which, according to the Anabaptist view, there was no biblical foundation—increasingly moved to the center of the debate. Zwingli searched for child baptism in circumcision, which, like baptism was the symbol of covenant and duty.⁴² Reflections on the unity of the Old and New Testament covenant history, thereby moved to the foreground, while the differences in terms of consequences for salvation were relativized. The course of the discussion revealed quickly indeed that there was no more positive view of Jews and Judaism than the particular appreciation of the Old Testament and its institutions. The particular stress on the covenant idea did not relativize the theological claim of classical disinheritance and substitution theses for Zwingli either. Zwingli therefore defended the thesis that post-biblical Judaism was repudiated by God and had made room for the Church. This was, in principle, understood according to the New Testament model as the Church of Jews and Gentiles. It was legitimated by Rom. 9:25ff. and the olive tree parable in Rom. 11:16–24, among other passages, without the fidelity of promises to the Jewish people playing a role as emphasized there.⁴³ Other aspects of Zwingli’s interpretation of Romans 9–11 will be considered below.

Zwingli hoped that he could weaken the biblicist argumentation of the Anabaptists with the thesis of the essential unity of the Testaments. But obviously it alone was not sufficient for him. In

751, 9–13, 19–20; 752, 21–25, 780, 27–32, and elsewhere; for the image question see among others also Z III:529–33 (from the report in the Ittinger quarrel, 1524/25).

⁴⁰ “Warumb wolt ich dem Türggen sine bild umbwerffen?” (Z II:709, 26–27) See the argumentation of the Züricher in the answer to Bishop Hugo of Constance in August 1524, Z III:159, 4–9; 165, 1–8; for the question of the sacrificial mass, *ibid.*, 188, 32–189, 6, 14–16, and elsewhere; for the prohibition of images see Z IV:84–128.

⁴¹ Z II:720, 30–721, 3, see the answer of the Züricher to Bishop Hugo, Z III:155ff. See Z IV:128–30: “Der Sabbat, der in den beiden ersten Geboten gegründet sei, werde ‘ceremonisch,’ wenn wir inn nach der Juden art an dem tag wöltind haben, an demm sy inn habend . . .” (*ibid.*, 128, 33–129, 1).

⁴² See Z III:808, 13–27 = Bromiley, *Zwingli*, 238–39; Z VI:4, 49–57, and elsewhere.

⁴³ Z IV:634, 32–635, 13; 637, 7–11; and elsewhere.

addition, there was both the empirically as well as the anthropologically accentuated argument for the general human need of symbolic rituals that the Church needed to satisfy through the integration of children into the community of faith. A Church without child baptism, according to Zwingli, would lead again to the practice of circumcision, on account of the human weakness for orientation by way of rituals. Zwingli saw disturbing precedents for this not only in the biblically attested efforts of the Jewish Christians in Antioch to raise the question of circumcision to a question of salvation (Acts 15:1ff.; cf. Gal. 2:11–14), but also in the contemporary existence of the conversos (Marranos). Zwingli had not considered that they could also be devout Christians.⁴⁴ Moreover, for Zwingli circumcision and infant baptism resulted from the disposal of patriarchal power inside the family, so that he saw the unity of Christian and burgher communities endangered by the Anabaptists. At the same time, this was for him an argument against forced baptism of Jewish children as it was, contrary to the determinations of the canon law, still being affirmed by the renowned humanistic jurist Ulrich Zasius at the beginning of the sixteenth century.⁴⁵ The debate with the Anabaptists that had also been argumentatively troublesome for Zwingli had, thereby, already reached its conclusion.

In his opposition to Balthasar Hubmaier's attack on infant baptism Zwingli sneeringly alluded to Hubmaier's anti-Jewish agitation in connection with the expulsion of the Jews from Regensburg in 1519—citing in this regard the “Lied von der schönen Maria zu Regensburg.”⁴⁶ The song, which was characteristic of the late medieval association of Marian piety and anti-Judaism, reviled the Jews as enemies of Mary and Christ, usurers, and ritual murderers. Hubmaier also spoke about his own role in the expulsion of the Jews in the Anabaptist trial in Zurich in 1526. Zwingli apparently saw Hubmaier's anti-Jewish agitation and the Anabaptist “uproar” as two sides of the same coin. To Hubmaier's reproach that Zwingli was, on account

⁴⁴ Z III:411, 6–412, 13. For the relationship between circumcision and baptism see also Z II:327, 5, 12–16; Z VIII:270, 36–271, 21. Regarding the marranos as poor examples see also Z II:710, 10–13.

⁴⁵ See Guido Kisch, *Zasius und Reuchlin: Eine rechtsgeschichtlich vergleichende Studie zum Toleranzproblem im 16. Jahrhundert* (Constance, 1961).

⁴⁶ Z IV:585–642; 588, 22–25; Zwingli's positive justification for child baptism is found in the second part.

of infant baptism, a “child washer,” Zwingli responded that he would rather have suffered that reproach than enrich himself as a “Jewish goods washer.”⁴⁷

The Anti-Jewish Tendency of Theocratic, Pastoral, and Patriotic Motifs

The exemplary nature of Old Testament institutions for the reconfiguration of the Reformation was, for Zwingli, unquestionable. This held true not only for the new conceptualization of the office of the pastor but also for the new conceptions of government and the social order, as well as of the right of resistance.⁴⁸ Reforming Christians, therefore, remained the “true Jews and Israelites,” while their opponents had succumbed to stereotypical Jewish unbelief.⁴⁹ Correspondingly, Zwingli assumed in his 1522 writing on the clarity and certainty of the Word of God—arising on the occasion of the dispute with the Dominicans regarding pastoral and evangelical preaching in the Zurich Dominican cloister on the Ötenbach—that the Old Testament promises to Israel had self-evidently passed on to the Christians as the true Israelites.⁵⁰

In 1522 in his work *A Solemn Warning* [*Eine göttliche Vermahnung*], Zwingli justified his patriotic admonition and his critique of military service for France with Old Testament covenant history.⁵¹ In this portrayal, the old confederacy, committed to the common good, resembled the people of Israel led by God into freedom, while contemporaries, enslaved by self-interest, could expect God’s anger.⁵² Zwingli’s idea of state prosperity through obedience to God developed from the conviction of the exemplary character of the history

⁴⁷ See Z IV:588–89 (n. 24) and 625, 18–19.

⁴⁸ For the understanding of the pastor as “shepherd” according to the Old Testament example see the writing by the same name, Z III:(1) 5–68. For the concept of the priest as the preacher of the word of God knowledgeable in Hebrew and Greek, see Z II:441, 7–12. Z II:343, 7–346, 13.

⁴⁹ See Z II:743, 17–23 (according to 1 Cor. 10:11 und Rom. 2:28–29; the “Jews and true Israelites” are the Christ believers); 747, 23–29. For the Christians as the “true Jews” see the interpretation of Isa. 25:8, Z XIV:273, 12–14; 395, 2–7.

⁵⁰ “Wir Christen sind die rechten Israeliten, die sin erb sind” (Z I:346, 1–2).

⁵¹ Z I:155–88; 171, 4–12; 187, 7–188:13 = Zwingli, *Early Works*, 130–49, specifically, 135, 148–49.

⁵² For the topic of common good and self-interest see the “Treue und ernstliche Vermahnung an die Eidgenossen” of 1524, Z III:(97), 103–13.

of the Old Testament people of God. The history of post-biblical Judaism, on the other hand, remained, as it had traditionally, a history of divine punishments that should serve as a warning to unrepentant Christians.⁵³

Socio-Ethical Questions: The Jews and the Taking of Interest

Originally a sermon, the writing of 1523 regarding divine and human righteousness, which can be considered as a fundamental document of reformed social ethics, came, in connection with the question regarding the legality of interest and tithing, incidentally also to address traditional Jewish employment in moneyhandling.⁵⁴ The formulation of the question was not exclusively motivated by anti-Judaism, but rather was part of a fundamental reflection on civil law and justice in the economy. Even moneylending was entitled to legal security in a society with private property. Interest payments should, therefore, not be refused by reference to the “godly justice” of the prohibition of taking interest (among other places, Luke 6:35) or natural law.⁵⁵ Of course, it remained the task of the authorities to limit interest to an amicable measure (5% interest per annum). Zwingli also accorded the authorities the right to prohibit the taking of interest in general. In this case there was no duty to repay on the part of the debtor. Zwingli was strictly opposed to interest on interest: Jews or other moneylenders who took interest on interest should in no way be tolerated by the authorities, rather they should be punished together with the debtors. Zwingli argued on the whole pragmatically. In principle he remained true to the scholastic conceptions of interest-taking as being opposed to God and nature.⁵⁶ In *Wer Ursache gebe zum Aufruhr*, Zwingli’s important socio-critical writing of December 1524, the question of taking interest and of the exploitation of the “common man” was also addressed. Here Zwingli likewise

⁵³ See Z II:19, 14–21; 53, 19–24.

⁵⁴ Z II:(458) 471–525.

⁵⁵ Z II:491, 7–11; 519, 11–520, 13.

⁵⁶ Regarding the inner-Christian problem and contemporalization of the question of usury in connection with the Church ban, see Zwingli’s “Ratschlag betreffend Ausschließung vom Abendmahl für Ehebrecher, Wucherer usw” of 1525, Z IV:(25) 31–34.

advised regulation of the economic life by the authorities alone, for the limitation of interest-taking and the prohibition of monopolies.⁵⁷ A specifically anti-Jewish agitation is equally absent here.

Already in the *Auslegung der Schlußreden* of 1523 Zwingli came to speak, in connection with the question of tyrannical lordship, of the general problem of the practice of granting privileges that resulted in the exploitation of the Jews. The “Jews” or “usurers”—both concepts were interchangeable—appeared therefore at the same time as allies and as victims of arbitrary magisterial rule.⁵⁸ The demand for a prohibition of commercial speculation and for an expulsion of speculators allows one to conclude that Zwingli, under certain circumstances, held economically motivated expulsions of Jews as legitimate. The question for him was, of course, not driven by current concerns.

Jews and Judaism in the Dogmatic Context

In his main dogmatic work, the *Commentary on the True and False Religion*, (*De vera et falsa religione commentarius*) from 1525, Zwingli again turned to the most important theological motifs of the discourse about Jews and Judaism.⁵⁹ The starting point with the concept of religion is noteworthy. Of course, this did not mean a general concept encompassing both Judaism and Christianity, but rather the relationship with God according to the traditionally determined standard of Christian *pietas*. This set the tone for the specific treatment of the *religio christiana* in the reformers’ sense.⁶⁰ Judaism and Islam were not even taken into consideration as religions in the abstract sense. Only regarding ethics were comparisons made, so that Jewish and Muslim ways of life were even judged relatively favorably on occasion. This judgment remained rhetorical, however, more firmly part of the anti-Roman polemic. The papacy, therefore, was made

⁵⁷ Z III:(355) 374–469; 388–89.

⁵⁸ Z II:339, 4–8.

⁵⁹ Z III:(590) 628–911 [ZLW 3:43–343].

⁶⁰ De vocabulo religionis (art. 1), Z III:639–40 [= ZLW 3:56–58]; de religione (art. 5), Z III, 665–74 [= *ibid.*, 87–98]; de religione christiana, Z III:674–91 [= *ibid.*, 98–118]. For the concept of God in the interpretation of Exod. 3:13 see Z III:644, 27–29 [= *ibid.*, 63], similarly Z VI, no. 116. Ernst Feil, *Religio: Die Geschichte eines neuzeitlichen Grundbegriffs vom Frühchristentum bis zur Reformation* (Göttingen, 1986), 253–58.

responsible for a way of life that was worse than that of “Jews and Turks,”⁶¹ among whom there were allegedly fewer vices, such as adultery, theft, and violence. That non-Christian religions—Zwingli here favored the reproof of Islam—were treated as foolish ways of belief was not in question.⁶² Of course, there were also to be found in the interpretation of the Bible attempts at a farther-reaching comparison of religions, but these were not specified in detail.⁶³

The philological-theological debate with the anti-Jewish accentuated *hebraica veritas* and the resumption of classical typological interpretations of Old Testament events and figures maintained their basic importance.⁶⁴ In this regard, the meaning of the Paschal lamb served as a typology for Christ—as already with Justin—just as each of Jacob’s wives, Leah and Rachel, were typologies for Synagogue and Church (Gen. 29:17ff).⁶⁵

In Zwingli’s teaching of the Church, one finds anti-Roman statements—taken from his writing against Hans Emser from 1524, on the central position of the Church as represented in the individual congregations (Hebrew *kahal*) in questions of faith; such statements engaged Old and New Testament traditions.⁶⁶ In the teaching of the Eucharist Zwingli took up, among other things, the Old Testament-Jewish Passover tradition of the remembrance of the liberation from Egypt and the semantics of the Hebrew concepts in the sacramental words as the argument for his real-symbolic interpretation of the sacramental words.⁶⁷ Reference to the Hebrew linguistic form was also an important argument for Zwingli’s real-symbolic interpretation of the sacramental words in his battle with Luther.⁶⁸ In 1528

⁶¹ Z III:808, 3–9 [= ZLW 3:238–39].

⁶² For Islam, see Zwingli’s explication, directed against Martin Luther, of the pre-ordination of the spiritually effected belief before the Word in the writing “Freundliche Verglimpfung über die Predigt Luthers wider die Schwärmer” (1527), Z V:786, 2–7. See Z VI/1:451, 3–7.

⁶³ In the interpretation of Jer. 6:16 it says of God: “Sic et hic noster invitat, ut vias universas, hoc est: omnium gentium religiones, leges ac mores expendant” (Z XIV:538, 38–39).

⁶⁴ See, for example, the exegesis of Gen. 3:15 in the section regarding the religion of Christ, Z III:682:4–30 [ZLW 3:107–08]; regarding the use of the Hebrew, see Z III:829, 11–14 [= ZLW 3:261–62]; 851, 22–24 (*de oratione*) [ZLW 3:279]; 880, 38–40 [ZLW 3:309], and elsewhere.

⁶⁵ Z III:685, 14–23; 687, 5–21 [ZLW 3:111, 113]; see Z II:399, 8–400, 2.

⁶⁶ Z III:743, 16–744, 14 [ZLW 3:366]; see Z IV:69, 21–31.

⁶⁷ Z III:803–804 [ZLW 3:233–34]; Z V:480–81; Z VI/2:809, 28–810, 8.

⁶⁸ See, for example, Z VI/2:44, 23ff. Z IV:484, 10–489, 10 (1525).

Zwingli was still defending Caspar Schwenckfeld's interpretation of the sacramental words regarding the spiritual consuming of the body of Christ (*spiritualis manducatio*) in the sense of his own interpretation, with reference to Hebrew linguistic usage.⁶⁹ Of course its foundation was a misunderstanding, as Zwingli quickly noted after the meeting with Schwenckfeld in 1529. In the background stood the concern over a relapse into a "Judaism" distant from Christ that, according to Zwingli, was already manifest in the sacramental teaching of the Catholics and Lutherans.⁷⁰

The speech of Jesus in John's account (6:26ff.), central to Zwingli's interpretation of the Eucharist, at the same time provided, in the "commentary," occasion to address the unbelief and hatred of Christ by the Jews. In the context of the contrast of "flesh" and "spirit" the Jews represented, up into the present, the ungodly, "fleshly" attitude that had surrendered to sensuality and physicality.⁷¹

A further theologically interesting context for the discourse about Jews and Judaism was the instruction regarding prayer (Art. 25) and authority (Art. 27). It treated mostly Old Testament connections. So, in the teaching of prayer, Zwingli recalled the Jewish festival calendar of Exod. 23:14ff. and Deut. 16:16. He thereby expressed the suspicion that its original sense of spiritual worship had been falsified by the Old Testament-Jewish priests and had been bound to Jerusalem out of greed for profit. This interpretation of the centralization of worship stood completely in the service of anti-Roman polemic: Priests of the Roman Antichrist who allowed payment for prayers and masses act similarly, while "true worship" would be tied to no location.⁷² In the article regarding authority (Art. 27), Zwingli used the exemplary function of the history of Old Testament institutions and the godly pedagogy tied to it to argue against the Anabaptist ideals of perfection and their distancing from worldly lordship.⁷³

In the later Zwingli the soteriological perspectives were broadened

⁶⁹ Z VI/2:258, 25–259, 4.

⁷⁰ Z VI/2:805, 23–26.

⁷¹ Z III:780, 9–10 (*incredulitas, contumax odium*); 788, 4–7; 791, 15–18; 778, 20–21 ("Remurmurat ergo caro, hoc est: Iudaei; et dicit [. . .]" [it follows John 6:42–43]) [ZLW 3:205, 215, 219, and 203]. See Zwingli to J. Oecolampad, 28 October 1525, Z VIII:409, 10–19: therefore the Jews are "adhuc" adhering to their error.

⁷² Z III:851, 22–852, 24 = ZLW 3:279–80.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 875, 22–33 = *ibid.*, 304.

through the universalistic salvation accents following from 1 Cor. 15:22 and the emphasis on free divine election by grace (*electio dei libera*). Zwingli's criticism of the thesis of the eternal damnation of un-baptized children of Christian or non-Christian parents, as he saw them represented both in the Roman-Catholic as well as in the Anabaptist camps, broke through the prevailing pattern of thought. Accordingly, even for Jews and their children there was the possibility of eternal salvation, since faith was the consequence of election and not the reverse.⁷⁴ Zwingli thereby relativized lump-sum judgment of damnation, though there was hope only for an elected remnant, not recognizable externally.⁷⁵ This did not directly influence a more positive view of contemporary Judaism.

New Testament Exegesis: Romans 9–11

The writing about providence from 1530 and the interpretation of the Letter to the Romans made clear how Zwingli interpreted Romans 9–11 entirely from the teaching of predestination and justification. The thesis of the free grace election of God according to Rom. 9:11, which referred to Gentiles ("blessed Gentiles" such as Socrates or Seneca) as well as Jews, was decisive for his interpretation.⁷⁶ Thereby, according to the intention of the Apostle Paul, every form of triumphalism would be removed from the religious opposition of Judaism and Christianity.

As much as Zwingli emphasized the universal objective of the salvation acts of God, God's faithfulness to His promises, and the unity of the "Church" of both Testaments, he nonetheless avoided the idea of an overcoming of the eschatological divide between the

⁷⁴ Z VI/2:799–800. See Z II:455, 18–456, 3.

⁷⁵ In the interpretation of Matt. 22:1–2, Zwingli referred to the parable of the royal wedding meal, noting that generalizing statements, like the Jews were God's people or that the Jews had been rejected, could be understood synecdochically by the correspondingly larger part. Room thereby remained for the idea of the elected remnant (according to 1 Kings 19:18 and Rom. 11:4–5). ZO 6/1:364.

⁷⁶ Z VI/3:(1) 64–230; 187–88; ZO 6/2:107–20. Regarding the Romans interpretation see also Zwingli's margin gloss, Z XII:12–43 (for Rom. 9–11, *ibid.*, 28–34); besides Erasmus, Ambrosius and Origen were used most (Zwingli was occupied with the latter in the Paris edition of 1512), but also (Pseudo-)Jerome and Augustine (Zwingli used the edition of 1506–07).

“elected” and the “rejected.” The majority of the Jews were guilty of unbelief and rejected. Only a “remnant” could hope to be saved. Therefore, even the Pauline discourse about the eschatological salvation of “all Israel” in Rom. 11:26 was interpreted on the basis of the idea of the remnant.⁷⁷ The fate of the rejected majority was reflected for Zwingli and the Zurich exegetes completely traditionally in the miserable existence of Judaism in exile.⁷⁸ This demanded from the Christian side, as a result of Rom. 11:13–14, a “brotherly,” that is missionary, solicitous attitude towards Judaism as towards all unbelievers.⁷⁹ Hostility of and contempt for Jews should, according to the olive tree comparison, be excluded, so that a behavior analogous to that for “weak believers” in the Christian community was recommended.⁸⁰

Even the concluding chapter of the writing on providence took up the olive tree comparison, but with another accent: the slow abdication of the Jewish people as the people of God, since the political and religious division at the time of King Jerobeam (1 Kings 12) corresponded to God’s free resolution in the election of the Gentiles. The biblical text, therefore, supported in subtle ways the classical disinheritance and substitution theses.⁸¹

At the same time, statements that allow thinking about an eschatological salvation of “all” of Israel are found again and again in Zwingli’s writings. This expression was grounded in God’s faithfulness to his promises, as expressed in Rom. 11:29, but also in Old Testament promises that remained unfulfilled. In this sense it seems above all that the hope for a general conversion of the Jews at the End of Time might have been meant.⁸² The discourse of an end-

⁷⁷ “Id est, reliquiae salvae fiant, quidquid reliquum est ex Israelitica gente. Nam utcumque iam longe abesse a Christo videantur, tamen iterum erunt populus dei. Probat haec ex prophetis eorum” (ZO 6/2:119). See Z XIV:153, 5–11, and the interpretation of Isa. 4:2–3, Z XIV:147, 1–17.

⁷⁸ “A passione domini, Iudaei ita sunt incurvati, ut spes erigenda nulla sit. Servi sunt, calamitosi, contempti, et subiugati” (ZO 6/2:116).

⁷⁹ “Affectu ergo suavi et fraterno simus nos Gentes erga reprobos Iudaeos, et omnes incredulos, nihilque intermittamus, si quo modo et illos lucrifacere possimus, tametsi quodammodo desperati videantur” (ZO 6/2:117) (regarding Rom. 11:13–14).

⁸⁰ ZO 6/2, 117–18.

⁸¹ Z VI/3:212–13, see Z XIII:176, 6–177, 12.

⁸² Several prophetic promises that the Jews understood “fleshly” had been fulfilled at the time of Christ and the Apostles, others would be in good time “fulfilled in pardoning of the remaining Jewish people.” Z VI/2:307, 33–34 explained by the example of Hag. 2:7–9, in the preface to the *Prophetenbibel*.

of-time renewal and elevation of the Jewish people “in Christus,” was in this context included in the Isaiah interpretation that appeared in 1529.⁸³ Genesis 38:29–30 was interpreted explicitly with regard to Rom. 11:25–26 and the salvation of “all Israel,” without the *totus*—controversial for ages—being more closely specified.⁸⁴ Later authors, including the Zurich reformer Theodore Bibliander, but also the Tübingen jurist and universal scholar Christian Besold (1577–1638), would name Zwingli as an explicit advocate of the thesis of the en masse Jewish conversion at the End of Time.⁸⁵

In all, Zwingli’s conception of election and rejection remained full of tension. On the one hand, the impression was developed that divine judgment over the “obstinate” Jews (*Iudaei indurate animi*) allowed no hope, at least for the majority. Penance and conversion, therefore, represented no real possibilities.⁸⁶ On the other hand, the pedagogical purpose of all “rejections” in the history of Israel, the consciousness of God’s fidelity to His promises, and the prospect of the Jews’ distress at the End of Time—which would bring about their beseeching of the Christ-Messiah—placed this impression into doubt.⁸⁷ Zwingli rejected a speculative disintegration of the tension between election and rejection, as offered by the *Apokatastasis* teaching.⁸⁸ Correspondingly, the absolute necessity of penance and conversion was emphasized in the question of eternal salvation; its realization through the divine “pull” in the inside of men, however, was at the same time made dependent.⁸⁹ Despite all the tensions in the theological view of Jews and Judaism, one must keep in mind that few clues are to be found, in this connection, for a polemical moralizing or indeed demonization of the Jewish faith.

⁸³ See Z XIV:129, 24–31.

⁸⁴ Z XIII:236, 22–38.

⁸⁵ See Theodore Bibliander, *De legitima vindicatione christianismi veri et sempiterni* [. . .] (Basel, 1553), 66–67, 200–11; Christian Besold, “De Hebraeorum ad Christum salvatorem nostrum conversione, Conjectanea,” in *Pentae Dissertationum Philologicarum* (Tübingen, 1620), 3rd part, 3.

⁸⁶ See, for example, Z I:281, 33–35 (= Zwingli, *Early Writings*, 233–34) in the dispute regarding the interpretation of Eze. 5:11 (*Apologeticus Archeteles*, 1522).

⁸⁷ For Rom. 11:26 see ZO 6/2:119.

⁸⁸ Zwingli warned of the error of Origen, namely imagining a salvation of the demons and goddess, Z XIV:270, 19–271, 2, see Z VI/2:814, 8–815, 16; Z VIII:737, 2–3; Z XIV:376, 24–26 (for Isa. 54:8).

⁸⁹ Z VI/2:306, 22–24.

Old Testament Exegesis and Bible Translation

The exegetical works of Zwingli emerged in the context of the *Prophezei* and, regardless of their independent character, are not to be separated from the common work with the colleagues. The philological exegesis of the Hebrew Bible text, in particular, benefited from Zwingli's acquaintance with Leo Jud and Conrad Pellican.⁹⁰ Fundamentally, the original text of the Old Testament, concordant with the Jewish canon, was considered—as far as the consonants were concerned—a true Jewish tradition and the basis for the reforming-humanistic guiding principle of the *hebraica veritas*.⁹¹ Zwingli viewed the Masoretic tradition, which he considered the late work of rabbinic *curiositas*, however, with deep mistrust.⁹² This strong anti-rabbinism promoted the constant reference to the Vulgate of Jerome, but primarily textual comparison with the Septuagint, as the oldest translation of the Hebrew text.⁹³ Zwingli referred to the interpretation tradition of the rabbis (*rabini*) in his exegesis many a time, mostly for purposes of contrasting.⁹⁴ Since this was not directly accessible to him, and he also did not name Nicholas of Lyra as a source, it seems possible to assume here the influence of his colleagues in the *Prophezei*.⁹⁵

The Christological interpretation of Old Testament texts also played an important role for Zwingli, but it was employed with comparative reservation, in deference to the literal sense (*sensus litteralis historicus*).

⁹⁰ See Künzli, in Z XIV:376.

⁹¹ For the Jewish canon and for criticism of the Apocrypha, for example, of the Book Baruch and the Books of the Maccabees, see Z II:203, 3–204, 5; 419, 22–23, and elsewhere with reference to Flavius Josephus, Z II:420, 7–11.

⁹² “Puncta rabinorum libere dissimulamus, quum certum sit aetate LXX nondum orta fuisse, et quidam ipsorum non tantum vocalium, verum etiam accentuum et distinctionum auctoritatem elevent” ((to Isa. 2:7) Z XIV:132, 29–31); see Z XIV:100, 17–20; 103, 1–7. “Nam divina scrutari sine fide, curiositas est, non pietas” (Z XIV:101, 23). See for Isa. 63:5 Z XIV:399, 9–10; for Isa. 66:12 Z XIV:408, 2ff. (“manifesta hallucinatio rabinorum, ne dicam malignatio”). Possibly the mistrust of the Masoretic tradition was influenced by the lectures of Pico della Mirandola, in which Zwingli had already early on taken an interest. See Rudolf Staehelin, *Huldreich Zwingli: Sein Leben und Wirken nach den Quellen dargestellt*, 2 vols. (Basel, 1895–97), 1:73–75; Z VII:4, 6–7.

⁹³ For the meaning of the Hebrew see in general Z XIV:98, 14–103; for Zwingli's beginning with the biblical text comparison of 1524, as it would be practiced in the *Prophezei*, see Z II:6–7.

⁹⁴ See, for example, Z XIV:360, 12–13.

⁹⁵ See Z XIV:744, 40–745, 2; XIV:853, 35–37, and elsewhere.

In the interest, therefore, of a convincing argument in the debate with Jews and other non-Christians, the Christological textual evidence should be restricted to those passages that contained the so-called “pure” evidence of prophecy (*mera vel pura vaticinia*)—the supposedly self-evident core passages like Gen. 49:10, Isa. 7:14, or Isa. 53.⁹⁶ In that way, as with Martin Luther, a double *sensus litteralis*, namely a *sensus litteralis historicus* and a *sensus litteralis propheticus*, was actually argued.⁹⁷ Messianic promises were, as a rule, considered as the original occurrence of the Church, i.e., the universalization of the Old Testament-Jewish faith in the faith of Christ.⁹⁸ Even the Old Testament covenant theology was received by Zwingli, in the first place, ecclesiological.⁹⁹ The covenant with the “fleshly” Israel was thereby temporally delimited, that with the “spiritual” Israel, the Church, was eternal. Next to the dualizing opposition of the theological concepts of “flesh” and “spirit,” that of particularity and universality also played a role for Judaism and Christianity.¹⁰⁰ Thus, one saw the promise of Isa. 60:22 regarding the miraculous increase of the people at odds with the Jewish existence in exile, but in accordance with the universal proclamation of the Gospel, as it would come to full effect with the Reformation.¹⁰¹

Occasionally Zwingli polemicized directly against the interpretation of the rabbis, partly in connection with Catholic authorities: they were blinded by obstinacy (*pervicax*), if they maintained that no

⁹⁶ Z XIV:94, 16–95, 8; 95, 3–10; see *ibid.*, 893–94 for Gen. 49:10; see Z XIII:279, 27–280, 7.

⁹⁷ See Ulrich Köpf, “Die Hermeneutik Martin Luthers,” in *Theorie der Interpretation vom Humanismus bis zur Romantik—Rechtswissenschaft, Philosophie, Theologie: Beiträge zu einem interdisziplinären Symposium in Tübingen, 29. September bis 1. Oktober 1999*, ed. Jan. Schröder (Stuttgart, 2001), 15–29.

⁹⁸ See Z XIV:583, 32–584, 28. Z XIV:698, 21–30; 710, 3–5; 714, 18; and 739, 23–38.

⁹⁹ Compare the meaning of the “eternal covenant” of Jer. 20:40 to the “true” Israelites, the sons of the ecclesia Christi according to John 1:47, Z XIV:616, 1–5.

¹⁰⁰ See the interpretation of Gen. 16:12b und Isa. 49:20–21. from the juxtaposition of fruitful and unfruitful. “Hodie sterilis est Judaeorum synagoga, quum Christum felle et aceto potando foecunditatem suam constrinxit. Sed ecclesiae dei quotidie nascuntur filii, quamvis superne, non ex voluptate carnis etc” (Z XIV:362, 14–17). “Deinde ut Agar fecunda fuit, Sara sterilis: ita Iudaica gens primum fecunda fuit, sed deinde quae sterilis fuerat multo plures generavit filios, ecclesiam nimirum ex gentibus, quam post senescentem et sterilem synagogam sibi despondit Christus” (Z XIII:97, 8–10).

¹⁰¹ Z XIV:393, 35–42. See for Jer. 30:19 Z XIV:605, 12–13. Correspondingly for Jer. 31:1, Z XIV:606, 8–12. See also Z XIV:616, 15–21.

clear prophecies of Jesus Christ were left for the Christians, even if several passages were undoubtedly to be interpreted messianically.¹⁰² So Isa. 52:13–14, the fourth song of God's servant, was interpreted Christologically against Jewish objections (*pervicacia Judaeorum*). Of course in this case Zwingli maintained that it concerned a typology of salvation through Christ and thereby a matter of shadowy reference.¹⁰³ The wide area of typology following the traditional *sensus analogicus*, which played a central role in the Zurich exegesis, was not, therefore, suited for religious discussion.¹⁰⁴ This was true all the more for allegory, which should be used, even in the Christian context, at most as a spice (*sapor*) for soup.¹⁰⁵

Naturally, reflection on Catholic interpretation played an important role for the Zurichers. Direct references are found occasionally to Jerome, Tertullian's *Adversus Iudaeos*, and Augustine.¹⁰⁶

In his epilogue to Zwingli's Isaiah exposition (1527/28) Conrad Pellican expressed the hope that Jews would, through Zwingli's Bible commentary, see through the empty messianic hopes the rabbis circulated and come to the conviction that the kingdom of God, the fame of the synagogue, and the prophetic spirit had passed to the Church of the Gentiles (translation thesis). Apparently there was still the hope that reforming scriptural interpretation would have a missionary effect on the Jews, as the early Luther had also held.¹⁰⁷ Wolfgang Capito's initial criticism of Zwingli's Isaiah interpretation showed, on the other hand, the positive anticipatory stance regarding the still unexhausted possibilities associated with the study of rabbinic commentaries of the Bible. He advised Zwingli to make more use of them, since they corresponded to his ideal of simplicity (*simplicitas*) in interpretation. While Capito a little later withdrew his criticism—it was allegedly based on the opinion of other people—it nonetheless remained an indication of his much greater openness

¹⁰² Z XIV:177, 27–35 (to Isa. 6:13).

¹⁰³ Z XIV:370, 10–28.

¹⁰⁴ Further evidence was Jer. 23:5–6, Jer. 33:14–16, Eze. 34:23–25, Eze. 37:24 and Ps. 110:1–7; Z III:205, 18–24 (“... welche ort so heiter uff Christum reichend, das sy [die Juden] darwider nit könnend”). For the anti-Roman argumentation with the Hebrew and Greek Bible text, see the debate with Hans Emsler, Z III:253, 1–16 = ZLW 3:366.

¹⁰⁵ Z II:398, 20–400, 2, with Gal. 4:22–31 as an example.

¹⁰⁶ To Mal. 1:14, Z XIV:863, 24–27.

¹⁰⁷ Z XIV:410, 24–32, with reference to 2 Cor. 3:14–15.

with regard to the frequently neglected and reviled Jewish tradition literature.¹⁰⁸

For Zwingli, the interpretation of the Old Testament remained a linguistic-humanistic task in the comprehensive sense. His thesis of the importance of Greek authors for Old Testament exegesis attested to this. Above all, Zwingli held the great lyricist Pindar as indispensable. He was concerned especially, in this case, with the explication of difficult passages in the Psalms and the Book of Job.¹⁰⁹ This was true in linguistic and material, but also in ethical respects. Zwingli even believed that one could discover Hebrew language forms in Pindar. The conviction of the high rhetorical qualities of Hebrew as *lingua sacra*, as it was expressed in the foreword to the Isaiah interpretation, remained fundamental.¹¹⁰

In the preface to the 1529 *Prophetenbibel* Zwingli spoke about the principles of the Zurich Bible translation, which included the maintenance of the effort, strength, and beauty of the Hebrew language and the union of fidelity to the text and meaning.¹¹¹ The Masoretic punctuation was, furthermore, accounted as secondary and problematic.¹¹² It is true that Zwingli clearly differentiated himself from the translation of the *Prophets* edited by Ludwig Hätzer and Hans Denck in 1527, since he considered them within the context of the Anabaptist revolt. Yet, differently than Martin Luther, no polemic was to be found against the alleged assistance of Jews in this translation from the original text.¹¹³

There was a far-reaching consensus in the rejection of the literal

¹⁰⁸ See Wolfgang Capito to Zwingli, 15 March 1529, Z X:72, 6–8 (no. 821), Capito to Zwingli, 29 March 1529, *ibid.*, 86, 4–8 (no. 827).

¹⁰⁹ Zwingli's *Praefatio* and *Epistola* to a Pindar edition, 1526, Z IV:(863) 867–79; 871, 1–5, 9–19; 872, 19–873, 19; 875, 25–26, 877, 5–19. See Z VI/5: 336 (no. 188, 18).

¹¹⁰ Z XIV:89, 5–90, 5. “Quin hoc dicere audeo: sive gravitatem sive iucunditatem consyderes, nulla lingua paucioribus et pontentioribus tum verbis tum sententiis tantum perficit, nulla crebrioribus et civilioribus tum loquutionibus tum tropis pollet. Nulla enim oratio sic humanam mentem iuvat ac reficit, ut quae figuram ac troporum flosculus variegata est” (Z XIV:89, 14–21 (with reference to the statement made in the forward to the Pindar edition)).

¹¹¹ Z VI/2:294–95, with numerous examples.

¹¹² Z VI/2:305, 2–5.

¹¹³ Ludwig Hätzer and Hans Denck (translators), *Alle propheten nach Hebraischer sprach verteütschet* [...] (Augsburg, 1527). The *Additiones* of Paul of Burgos to the Postille of Nicholas of Lyra were known to Zwingli. See Z VI/2:289–312 (Preface to the *Prophetenbibel*, 1529), 292, n. 4.

interpretation of messianic promises like the hope of a return to the Land of Israel and the reconstruction of Jerusalem in the Jewish tradition.¹¹⁴ Such assumptions were considered “fleshly.” In contrast to Wolfgang Capito, there were no attempts at real historical-eschatological interpretations of the messianic prophecies. Instead—as seen in the interpretation of Isa. 2:2ff. and Mic. 4:1ff.—these were read in ecclesiastical, salvation historical perspective as pre-announcements of the acceptance of the Gentiles in place of the Jews.¹¹⁵ Similarly, the removal of God’s glory (*kavod*) from the Temple was interpreted as God’s leaving Judaism for the Gentiles. Of course, even here Zwingli maintained the idea of the remnant, from which God never completely removed his mercy.¹¹⁶ In the same way, more comprehensive statements are found, like that of the eschatological hope for the time in which the Jews would stand under the spiritual rule of the Word of God.¹¹⁷ The reservations of divine salvation pedagogy here also worked against the rhetoric of a lump-sum rejection.¹¹⁸

In summary, let us state: Zwingli’s interest in Jews and Judaism was primarily theologically determined. In his world Jews played no, or only a marginal, role. Old Testament Judaism, whose belief history continued in Christianity and whose institutional history remained attractive for the Reformation’s new order, remained the most important point of reference. A strong anti-rabbinism prevented the independent awareness of post-biblical Judaism. The “unbelieving” Judaism of all periods became an important point of reference for the identification and de-legitimization of Catholic and Anabaptist positions. Zwingli hereby carried anti-Jewish stereotypes further, as in the current rejection and substitution theses. At the same time, in several passages, he broke through the rhetoric of lump-sum substitution and rejection by means of a closer reflection on the unity of both Testaments, the divine pedagogy in the covenant history, and

¹¹⁴ Z VI/2:305, 28–306, 12; 308, 4–14; see Z XIV:527, 4–17.

¹¹⁵ Z VI/2:306, 32–307, 4; 307, 14–17, and elsewhere; see Z XIV:130, 26–131, 12.

¹¹⁶ Z XIV:696, 3–4, 16–17, and 26–32; for the remnant of the saved from Israel, see Z XIV:698, 16.

¹¹⁷ Z XIV:813, 27–28 (to Mic. 4:5b), see for Mic. 5:13: “[. . .] post ultimam captivitatem, dum dominabitur gentibus. Sed spiritualiter, dum vis et imperium verbi dei sibi omnia subiungat. Est ergo sermo allegoricus” (Z XIV:814, 2–4).

¹¹⁸ See Z XIV:363, 2–4.

God's eternal fidelity to His promises. The demand that Christians must conduct themselves in a friendly manner towards Jews was motivated primarily by missionary concerns. In sociological respects, Zwingli appears to have favored the medieval model of a peaceful coexistence of marginalized Judaism and dominant Christianity. This apparently included the right of the authorities to expel the Jews in case of conflict and the acceptance of the historical expulsions of the Jews. Concrete decisions were not to be made within the context of the Zurich Reformation. Neither the constructive proposals that Martin Luther made in 1523 for the betterment of the possibilities of Jewish existence, nor the anti-Semitic political radicalization and demonization of the later Luther found a correspondence in Zwingli and his colleagues. Above all, his salvation universalistic and covenantal theological approaches blazed the path for the future (Heinrich Bullinger, Theodore Bibliander, Theodore Beza, and others).

CALVIN, THE JEWS, AND JUDAISM

Achim Detmers

The name of the Genevan reformer Calvin arouses rather negative associations among most people today: Calvin—the stern monitor of morals from Geneva; Calvin—the ascetic; Calvin—the man with the strict teaching on predestination, etc. Even among the adherents of the Reformed confession there are only a few who have an untroubled image of the Genevan reformer. Many know that Calvin was involved in the condemnation and burning of the anti-Trinitarian Michael Servetus. And this detail has led to Calvin having the worst image of the great reformers. Even Luther, who in his writings on the Jews promoted, as is well known, a massive campaign against the Jews, is still celebrated as the founder of religious freedom, while Calvin will never entirely be freed from the blemish of intolerance.¹

A reason for the generally negative image of Calvin lies in the after-effects of anti-Calvinist polemics reflected in the widely read book of Stefan Zweig, among others. Zweig wrote the book *Castellio gegen Calvin oder ein Gewissen gegen die Gewalt* in exile in 1936 and in it he compared the Genevan reformer with Adolf Hitler and other blood-thirsty figures of history. He writes:

Balzac rightly considered Calvin's religious terror to be more horrible than all the blood orgies of the French Revolution. 'Calvin's mad religious intolerance was more morally closed and merciless than the political intolerance of Robespierre, and were he to have had influence much beyond Geneva Calvin would have spilled much more blood.'²

In a peculiar way, there is to be found in Stefan Zweig's book—which is hardly surpassed in historical insufficiency—no word regarding Calvin's relationship with Judaism. This is all the more astonishing since Stefan Zweig was a writer of Jewish descent who was without

Translated by Dean Phillip Bell

¹ See Thomas J. Davis, "Images of Intolerance: John Calvin in Nineteenth-Century History Textbooks," CH 65 (1996): 234–48.

² Stefan Zweig, *Castellio gegen Calvin oder ein Gewissen gegen die Gewalt* (Frankfurt am Main, 1994), 64–65.

doubt interested in this question. Nonetheless, there is in other anti-Calvinist writings from the sixteenth century the reproach that Calvin was an “intercessor of the Jews.” The Hessian Lutheran Georg Nigrinus reproached Calvin in 1595 in his *Anti-Calvinism* by charging that Calvin interpreted

many important passages in the Old Testament, just as the rabbis interpret them . . . as if he would follow them rather than the established holy teachers of the Church and he rejects all correct interpretation as if he were the intercessor of the Jews, as if he would rather align himself with Jewish rabbis than Christian teachers.³

Similar statements are found in the polemical work *Calvinus Iudaizans* by Aegidius Hunnius from 1595.⁴

But which view is correct: Was Calvin’s attitude toward other faiths generally determined by religious intolerance? Or was he someone who was truly open to Jewish interpretations? Astonishingly, the numerous researchers who have been occupied with this question in the twentieth century have come to no clear conclusion.⁵ One school sees in Calvin’s covenant theology especially a means of initiating Christian-Jewish dialogue.⁶ Others believe that the relationship to Judaism was no great theme for Calvin. This is substantiated with the argument either that Calvin’s anti-Judaism falls within the bounds

³ Cited in Friedrich Müller, “Georg Nigrinus in seinen Streitschriften: ‘Jüdenfeind, Papistische Inquisition und Anticalvinismus.’ Ein Beitrag zur Charakteristik des Luthertums am Ende des 16. Jahrhunderts,” in *Wilhelm-Diehl-Festschrift* (Darmstadt, 1941), 105–52, here at 115.

⁴ Aegidius Hunnius, *Calvinus Iudaizans, Das ist: Jüdische Glossen und Verkehrungen / mit welchen Johannes Calvinus die allertrefflichste Spruch und Zeugnuß der heyligen Schrift von der heyligen Dreyfaltigkeit / von der Gottheit Christi / und deß H. Geistes / Insonderheit aber die Weissagungen der Propheten / von der Zukunfft deß Messij / seiner Geburt / Leiden / Auferstehung / Himmelfahrt / Sitzen zur Rechten Gottes / jämmerlicher Weiß zu verfälschen sich nicht gescheuet hat. Sampt angeheffter solcher Verkehrungen Widerlegung* (Frankfurt am Main, 1595), 59: “daß Calvinus in Erklärung der Propheten diese Ordnung halte / daß er derselbigen Weissagung zuerst mit Jüdischen Glossen wol beschmiere / ihnen die Krafft nemme / unnd den besten Kern / so man wider die Ungläubigen gebrauchen kan.”

⁵ A detailed discussion of the state of the research is found in Detmers, *Reformation und Judentum*, 7–20.

⁶ See Horst Krüger, *Erben des Evangeliums: Calvin und die Juden* (Kampen, 1985); Phillip Sigal, *The Emergence of Contemporary Judaism*, vol. 3: *From Medievalism to Proto-Modernity in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Allison Park, PA, 1986), 56–71; Hans Joachim Kraus, “‘Israel’ in der Theologie Calvins: Anstöße zu einer neuen Begegnung mit dem Alten Testament und dem Judentum,” *Reformierte Kirchenzeitung* 130 (1989): 254–58; Jack Hughes Robinson, *John Calvin and the Jews* (New York, 1992).

typical of the sixteenth century⁷ or that his anti-Jewish polemics were aimed in the first instance at his Christian opponents.⁸ Still other researchers see in the late Calvin in particular a determined opponent of Judaism. Only the fact that there were no Jews in Geneva prevented him—unlike Luther—from overtly persecuting the Jews.⁹

The diverging results of the research make it clear that the theme has still not run its course. A major reason is that Calvin's theological statements regarding biblical Judaism and his statements about contemporary Judaism have not been clearly enough distinguished.¹⁰ While scholars have neglected the intention or function of Calvin's statements, they have speculated about the history of Calvin's impact on Christian-Jewish dialogue.¹¹ Most problematic, however, is that the historical background—in particular Calvin's contact with Jews and Judaism—remains largely unexamined.

In the following only a few of these aspects can be treated. First, it will be asked if and when Calvin met with Jews and what familiarity he had with Judaism. Then, several of Calvin's statements will illuminate how he behaved toward Judaism. Before these questions

⁷ See Jacques Courvoisier, "Calvin und die Juden: Zu einem Streitgespräch," in *Christen und Juden: Ihr Gegenüber vom Apostelkonzil bis heute*, ed. Wolf Dieter and Karl Thieme (Mainz, 1961), 141–46; Anne Jippe Visser, *Calvijn en de Joden*, Miniaturen 2 (s'Gravenhage, 1963).

⁸ See M. Sweetland Laver, "Calvin, Jews, and Intra-Christian Polemics" (PhD diss., Philadelphia, 1987). M. Potter Engel, "Calvin and the Jews, a Textual Puzzle," *Princeton Seminary Bulletin, Supplementary Issue 1* (1990): 106–23, comes to a similar conclusion, and recently also J. M. J. Lange van Ravenswaay, "Die Juden in Calvins Predigten," in *Bundeseinheit und Gottesvolk: Reformierter Protestantismus und Judentum im Europa des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Achim Detmers and J. M. J. Lange van Ravenswaay (Wuppertal, forthcoming).

⁹ See Salo W. Baron, "John Calvin and the Jews," in *Harry Austyn Wolfson Jubilee Volume on the Occasion of his 75th Birthday*, vol. 1 (English section), ed. Leo W. Schwarz et al. (Jerusalem, 1965), 141–63, and idem, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews: Late Middle Ages and Era of European Expansion, 1200–1650*, vol. XIII, *Inquisition, Renaissance, and Reformation*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1969), 279–96; Wilhelm Maurer, "Die Zeit der Reformation," in *Kirche und Synagoge: Handbuch zur Geschichte von Christen und Juden—Darstellung mit Quellen*, vol. I, ed. Karl Heinrich Rengstorf and Siegfried von Kortzfleisch (Stuttgart, 1968), 363–452, here at 443–45; Johannes Wallmann, "Luthers Stellung zu Judentum und Islam," *Luther* 57 (1986): 52.

¹⁰ The latter is particularly serious if Calvin's statements on the common fate of persecuted Protestants and the exiled Old Testament Israel are misunderstood as a statement regarding contemporary Jewry, such as with Oberman, *Roots of Anti-Semitism*, 140–41.

¹¹ The question of the function of Calvin's statements was first treated by Sweetland Laver, "Calvin, Jews, and Intra-Christian Polemics."

are addressed, it is important to offer a few preliminary remarks regarding the relationship of the Reformation and Judaism.

Preliminary Remarks

Intensive contact with Jews in the sixteenth century was possible in only a few individual cases due to the far-reaching expulsions from Western Europe. This had the consequence that only the smallest number of sixteenth-century Protestants could draw on personal experiences with Jewish life and Jewish piety. The conceptions and images of Jews were themselves nourished largely from anti-Jewish stereotypes.¹² This was also the case for the reformers of the sixteenth century. Their image of Judaism was likewise shaped by then current anti-Jewish stereotypes. Personal contact with Jews remained the exception and was really tolerated only with the aim of the conversion of the Jews.¹³ The few known contacts of individual reformers with Jews resulted either from disputations¹⁴ or efforts to learn the Hebrew language,¹⁵ or were limited to converted Jews.¹⁶

In the same way, theological anti-Judaism, which was supplied from the traditions of the *Adversus-Judaeos* literature, was predominant among the reformers of the sixteenth century. The presupposition of the divine rejection of the Jews as well as the inferiority of Jewish textual interpretation and religious practice remained largely unquestioned and determined the thought of the reformers. Only two things were disputed by the reformers: whether Jewish textual

¹² Among these are the following reproaches: usury, corruption of judges, hypocrisy, impurity, host desecration, desecration of images, obstinacy, the murder of Christ, blasphemy and complicity with anti-Christian forces. See Detmers, *Reformation und Judentum*, 42–63.

¹³ For the attacks against Zwingli, for example because of his contact with the Jewish doctor Mosche von Winterthur, see *ibid.*, 70–71.

¹⁴ See the Augsburg disputation of Melanchthon, Johannes Brenz, and Urbanus Rhegius with the Prague Rabbi Isaac Levi. Scott H. Hendrix, “Toleration of the Jews in the German Reformation: Urbanus Rhegius and Braunschweig (1535–1540),” *ARG* 81 (1990): 193–94, as well as Bucer’s argument with Josel of Rosheim at the Frankfurt princes’ assembly. Detmers, *Reformation und Judentum*, 90–94.

¹⁵ Worth mention here would be, among others, Andreas Osiander’s contact with his Aramaic teacher Wölfflein von Schnaittach and the contact of Sebastian Münster and Paul Fagius with Elijah Levita.

¹⁶ For example, Johannes Böschenstein, Bernhardus Hebraeus, Matthaeus Adrianus, Paul Staffelsteiner, and Immanuel Tremellius.

interpretation could be of value and whether all Jews were rejected, or if under certain conditions some Jews could still have hope of salvation. Accordingly, depending on how the last question was answered and how the “Jewish threat” to Christian society was generally assessed, there were consequences for the toleration or non-toleration of the Jews.

Only within this context can Calvin’s statements about Jews and Judaism be considered. It helps little to compare these statements with the late anti-Jewish writings of Martin Luther or the presuppositions regarding the fictive history of Calvin’s impact on Christian-Jewish dialogue. On the one hand, Calvin’s statements did not at all come close to Luther’s anti-Jewish outbursts. Rather, Luther’s Jewish writings represented already in their time an extreme that would be equaled perhaps only by Johannes Eck.¹⁷ On the other hand, reference to Luther’s Jewish writings is hardly appropriate as a means for exonerating Calvin’s anti-Jewish remarks by pointing to the supposedly positive impact of his covenant theology. First, the development of the thesis of the unity of the covenant is in no way to be credited to Calvin, but rather to Zwingli, Bucer, and Bullinger. Second, it is easy to demonstrate that the Upper German-Swiss covenant theology presupposed an almost complete substitution of the Jewish people by the Christian Church.¹⁸

Calvin’s Contacts with Jews and Judaism

Scholars generally assume that Calvin had no contact with Jews during his life.¹⁹ This is based on the fact that there were no Jews in

¹⁷ See Johannes Eck, *Ains Judenbüechlins verlegung: darin ain Christ / gantzer Christenhait zu schmach / will es geschehe den Juden unrecht in bezichtigung der Christen kinder mordt* (Ingolstadt, 1541).

¹⁸ See Detmers, *Reformation und Judentum*, 236–38. Achim Detmers, “‘Sie nennen unseren Retter Christus einen Hurensohn und die göttliche Jungfrau eine Dirne’—Heinrich Bullingers Gutachten zur Duldung von Juden 1572,” in *Die Zürcher Reformation: Ausstrahlungen und Rückwirkungen. Wissenschaftliche Tagung zum hundertjährigen Bestehen des Zwinglivereins 1997*, ed. Alfred Schindler and Hans Stückelberger, et al. (Bern, 2001), 241.

¹⁹ Only Baron assumes a real encounter between Calvin and Josel at the Frankfurt princes’ assembly of 1539 (“Calvin and the Jews,” 155–56). This speculation, however, can be regarded as refuted. See Detmers, *Reformation und Judentum*, 293. Sigal even assumes that Calvin had discussions with the Jewish scholar Abraham Farissol

his native France or in Geneva. This assumption, however, stands in contrast to a statement that Calvin himself made in 1561 in his commentary on Daniel. There he writes:

I have often spoken with many Jews, [but] have never noticed a drop of piety, a kernel of truth, or strength of spirit. Indeed, I have even discovered nothing of a healthy understanding of humanity ever among any Jews.²⁰

This statement is the only one Calvin uttered about his contact with Jews. When, where, and with whom he came into contact, remains unfortunately obscure. It is possible, however, to reconstruct with some certainty whether Calvin could have met Jews in the various places he lived.

We begin with Calvin's French homeland. Already in 1394 the Jews there were finally expelled by order of Charles VI. Except in Alsace and in Lorraine there were still Jewish communities only in the papal possessions of Avignon and the Comtat Venaissin. In addition, several conversos had settled in the French coastal cities (Bayonne, Bourdeaux, La Rochelle, Nantes, Rouen, etc.) and in Paris after the expulsions from Spain and Portugal (1492/97). These refugees were, however, only tolerated because, and in so far as they—at least officially—confessed the Christian faith.²¹ The Picard Calvin also grew up in a socio-cultural environment in which the Jews were as good as no longer present as a social reality. This did not mean, however, that the Jews had disappeared from the public consciousness. The Parisian theological faculty was thoroughly occupied in 1514, for example, with the Reuchlin-Pfefferkorn controversy.²² And the philosopher and theologian Charles de Bouelles (Bovillus), who

in Ferrara in 1536. (Sigal, *Emergence of Contemporary Judaism*, 3:61). Since Farissol was already dead ten years at that time, a meeting with Calvin was completely impossible.

²⁰ "Ego saepe loquutus sum cum multis Iudaeis: nunquam vidi guttam pietatis, nunquam micam veritatis vel ingenuae naturae, imo nihil communis sensus in ullo Iudaeo unquam deprehendi" (CR 68 CO XL:605, 43–46 (Dan. 2:44–45)). For Sweetland Laver, this passage is not evidence of Calvin's contact with Jews; it is much more that Calvin here merely alluded to medieval Jewish commentaries ("Calvin, Jews, and Intra-Christian Polemics," 36, n. 1).

²¹ See Hermann Greive, *Die Juden: Grundzüge ihrer Geschichte im mittelalterlichen und neuzeitlichen Europa*, 3rd ed. (Darmstadt, 1989), 95–96; Leon Poliakov, *Geschichte des Antisemitismus*. vol. 2, *Das Zeitalter der Verteufelung und des Ghettos: Mit einem Anhang zur Anthropologie der Juden* (Frankfurt, 1989), 76–77.

²² See James K. Farge, *Orthodoxy and Reform in Early Reformation France: The Faculty of Theology of Paris, 1500–1543* (Leiden, 1985), 117–18.

lived since 1512 in Calvin's home city Noyon, reported in 1515 in his *Dialogi de trinitate* about a disputation with two Jews he had met in Rome in 1507. Arguments with Jews are also found in the writings of Lefevre d'Étaples.²³ Moreover, Calvin's early writings reveal that several anti-Jewish stereotypes were familiar to him,²⁴ which would have been handed down in his French homeland even without the presence of Jews. The discussions about Judaism were not, however, of a direct relevance for the young Frenchman.

It was only after his flight from France in 1535 that Jews would have garnered Calvin's attention at all. Already in Basel, the first station of his exile, he could occasionally have become aware of Jews. Indeed, already since 1397 Jews no longer lived there; traveling Jews and Jewish traders from the surrounding area were, however, permitted to enter the city under certain conditions.²⁵ Moreover, it is known that the Basel Hebraist Sebastian Münster was in contact with foreign Jews (e.g., Elijah Levita). Whether, however, Calvin was familiar with Münster or knew of his contacts cannot be determined with certainty.²⁶

In any case, Calvin was in early 1536, during his short stay in Ferrara, confronted with the existence of Jewish life and Jewish culture in a way unknown till then. For Ferrara was one of the strongholds of north Italian Jewry. At the beginning of the sixteenth century approximately 3,000 Jews, who were organized into numerous synagogue communities, lived there. Two years before Calvin's stay in Ferrara, Duke Ercole II d'Este had even allowed more marrano-Jewish refugees from Spain and Portugal to settle in Ferrara and to return to their original faith.²⁷

²³ See Jacob Guttman, "Aus der Zeit der Renaissance: Nicolaus von Cusa, Jacobus Faber Stapulensis, Bonet de Lattes, Carolus Bovillus," in *MGWJ* 43 (1899): 250–66, here at 257–66. For Calvin's acquaintance with Bouelles there is indeed no evidence; this acquaintance is, however, in no way out of the question.

²⁴ OS I:48, 29–32; 207, 10–208, 5; CR 37 CO IX:788, 3.

²⁵ See Achilles Nordmann, "Geschichte der Juden in Basel seit dem Ende der zweiten Gemeinde bis zur Einführung der Glaubens- und Gewissensfreiheit. 1397–1875," *BZGA* 13 (1914): 1–190, here at 9–20.

²⁶ See Karl Heinz Burmeister, *Sebastian Münster: Versuch eines biographischen Gesamtbildes*, 2nd ed. (Basel, 1969), 72–76. It is uncertain as well whether Calvin studied Hebrew with Sebastian Münster. See Detmers, *Reformation und Judentum*, 263, n. 89.

²⁷ See C. Jenkins Blaisdell, "Renée de France between Reform and Counter-Reform," *ARG* 63 (1972): 196–226, here at 84–86; Renata Segre, "La formazione di una comunità marrana: i portoghesi a Ferrara," *Storia d'Italia, Annali 11 Gli ebrei*

Unfortunately, in this early phase Calvin nowhere mentioned that he met any Jews. And even the discussion of Judaism in his early writings is of merely subordinate interest. Therefore, the question remains unresolved what these encounters with Judaism possibly meant for Calvin. In any case, however, he should—in opposition to the silent consensus of the research—already have become aware of Jewish life and Jewish culture soon after his flight from France.

At the time of the first stay in Geneva (1536–38) there was for Calvin little occasion to engage intensively with Judaism. First, Calvin was completely concerned with pushing through reforms. Second, there were no longer any Jews in Geneva and the surrounding area already since the expulsion of 1491.²⁸ In addition, at this early phase Calvin still had at his disposal no sufficient familiarity with Hebrew. Hebrew training with someone like Sebastian Münster or Wolfgang Capito, would have certainly also provided him some familiarity with the Jewish religion.²⁹ This familiarity, however, Calvin would probably have obtained at the earliest during his Strasbourg period (1538–41), for he then had occasions in many regions to deal with the existence of Jewish life and Jewish culture. At that time he not only lived in Strasbourg, but he also traveled to Frankfurt am Main, Hagenau, Worms, and Regensburg. Calvin remained in Frankfurt some six weeks in early 1539 on the occasion of the princes' assembly. In Frankfurt there existed one of the last of the great Jewish communities in the Empire; according to conservative estimates around 400 Jews lived in the Frankfurt ghetto at the time.³⁰ That on the borders of the city center was a large Jewish ghetto could not have remained concealed to foreigners who remained in the city for any extended period. Outside the ghetto the Jews were recognized because they wore a “yellow ring” on their clothing—even though this obligatory sign of demarcation was apparently not always

in Italia, I. Dall'alto Medioevo all'età dei ghetti, ed. Corrado Vivante (Turin, 1996), 784–96.

²⁸ First the appropriate transit fees had to be determined in 1547, when two Jews wanted to pass through the city on their way from Flanders to Venice. Apparently Jews had no longer entered the city for some time. See Achilles Nordmann, “Histoire des Juifs a Genève. De 1281 à 1780,” *REJ* 80 (1925): 1–41, here at 17, 27–28, and 38–39.

²⁹ See Detmers, *Reformation und Judentum*, 263, n. 89.

³⁰ See Isadore Kracauer, *Geschichte der Juden in Frankfurt a. M. (1150–1824)*, vol. 1 (Frankfurt am Main, 1925), 311.

consistently observed. Nonetheless, Calvin during his Frankfurt stay—as in Ferrara—could have at least obtained a visual impression of Jewish life in Frankfurt.

Calvin probably also came into contact with the question of the toleration of Jews, for this question was debated at the Frankfurt princes' assembly. At the public disputation, it should be recalled, the anti-Jewish reproaches of Luther and Bucer were rejected by Josel of Rosheim. Calvin could even have been present at this disputation. Moreover, in Frankfurt Melanchthon revealed the Brandenburg host desecration scandal (1510) and discussed the toleration of Jews with the Hessian court preacher Melander.³¹ Calvin had intensive exchange both with Bucer and Melanchthon at the Frankfurt princes' assembly, so that these issues will have hardly remained hidden from him.

At the colloquies in Hagenau and Worms (1540/41) Calvin moreover became acquainted with Osiander, whose opinions regarding the ritual murder accusation had been published anonymously a few months before.³² Osiander appears, however, to have left no positive impression on Calvin.³³ Whether the two had discussed the relationship to Judaism is uncertain. In any case, in Hagenau and Worms Calvin should have been aware of the Jewish life there, for in both cities there were large Jewish communities. At the subsequent colloquy at the Regensburg Imperial Diet (1541) there was not this possibility, however, since the Jews had already been expelled from there in 1519. At the same time, however, the toleration of Jews was discussed at the Regensburg Imperial Diet, for Josel of Rosheim was present in Regensburg as the representative of the German Jews. The emperor confirmed for him the privileges, which the Jews had been granted in 1530. Moreover, the emperor had forbidden the Estates to force their Jewish subjects to wear the Jewish badge outside of their areas of residence.³⁴ Whether Calvin, who remained in Regensburg for several months (March until June 1541), had become

³¹ See Detmers, *Reformation und Judentum*, 93–96, 136–37, and 140–41.

³² Andreas Osiander, *Ob es war und glaublich sey, daß die Juden der christen kinder heymlich erwürgen und ir blut gebrauchen. Ein treffenliche schrift, auff eines yeden urteyl gestellt. Wer menschenblut vergeußt, des blut sol ouch vergossen werden* (1529/39), prepared by K. Keyser, in Osiander, GA 7:223–48.

³³ See CR 42 CO XIV:416, 36–417, 7 (no. 1676).

³⁴ Stern, *Josel of Rosheim*, 184.

aware of these developments can only be conjectured. It is just as uncertain whether Johannes Eck already had railed in Worms or Regensburg against the writing of Osiander, in which Osiander rejected as groundless the ritual murder accusations against the Jews. A few months after the Regensburg Imperial Diet Eck released an extensive work in which he reproached the Lutherans—completely as a consequence of their erroneous teaching—for playing down Jewish slanders and crimes.³⁵ At the latest during the Regensburg colloquy Eck would have begun to confront the Protestants with this reproach so that Calvin also could have become aware of the problem.

Even in Strasbourg itself the discussion of toleration of Jews would not have remained concealed from Calvin. There were, indeed, no Jews tolerated there, but Jews from the surrounding area (especially Alsace) were for a fee allowed to enter the city for business.³⁶ Moreover, Calvin's Strasbourg colleague Capito was in contact with Josel of Rosheim, whom he had supplied with a letter of recommendation to Luther in 1537 for his mission to the Saxon prince. And Josel himself had occasionally attended Capito's lectures.³⁷ Even Calvin's important teacher, Martin Bucer, was acquainted with Josel of Rosheim. They clashed at the Frankfurt princes' assembly in 1539 over the Hessian *Judenratschlag*. Whether Calvin also knew Josel of Rosheim, whether he eventually visited Capito's lectures together with him, or was in Frankfurt a witness to the dispute between Bucer and Josel, we cannot say, since there is no corresponding evidence. At the same time, however, it cannot be ruled out that Calvin and Josel met (in Frankfurt, Regensburg, or Strasbourg). And since Josel knew Latin,³⁸ they could even have spoken with one another. In the same way there exists the possibility that Calvin met the Jew Michael Adam, who had converted to Christianity in 1537/38 and stayed in Strasbourg in the latter part of 1538. There Michael Adam visited Capito, who, because of Michael Adam's familiarity with Hebrew,

³⁵ Eck, *Ains Judenbüechlins verlegung*.

³⁶ See Alfred Glaser, *Geschichte der Juden in Strassburg: Von der Zeit Karls d. Gr. bis auf die Gegenwart* (Strasbourg, 1894), 23–28.

³⁷ See Josel von Rosheim, "Trostschrift ahn seine Brüder wider Bucer's Büchlein [1540]," in Joseph of Rosheim, *Historical Writings*, 335, 18–21; WABr 8:77–78 (no. 3152).

³⁸ See Stern, *Josel of Rosheim*, 16.

further recommended him to Zurich. Unlike Josel, Michael Adam was not in command of Latin.³⁹

These possible meetings with individual Jews remain speculation, for lack of concrete evidence. Nevertheless, Calvin would have at least known of Bucer's discussion with Josel regarding the Hessian Jewish ordinance, for the dispute was inflamed in November 1538, when Calvin had been in Strasbourg just a few months. And immediately in connection with the Frankfurt princes' assembly Bucer wrote his own polemical text so that the conflict extended until around the middle of 1540. Since Bucer and Calvin had not only worked together intensively in Strasbourg, but had also been direct neighbors, they would certainly have had conversations regarding the matter. Unfortunately, for this reason there are also no corresponding written sources. At the same time there is later, indirect evidence that Calvin at least knew of Bucer's *Judenratschlag*, for Ambrosius Blaurer asked Calvin for an opinion regarding the toleration of the Jews in May 1561. Calvin's answer is unfortunately no longer extant. A little later Blaurer addressed a request to Konrad Hubert, Bucer's former secretary, to send him Bucer's *Judenratschlag*.⁴⁰ It seems likely that Blaurer was made aware of Bucer's opinion by Calvin.

When Calvin returned to Geneva in September 1541, he probably had contact with individual converted Jews, for example a certain Paulus Italus, whom Bullinger sent to Calvin as a messenger in 1553.⁴¹ Moreover, Calvin returned for two months in the summer of 1543 to Strasbourg, where he could have had contact with Jews. There is, however, no evidence of this. It is very possible, however, that Calvin met there for the first time the Hebraist Immanuel Tremellius. Tremellius came from Ferrara, where in 1540 he converted from Judaism to Christianity, and he taught Hebrew in Strasbourg at the *Hohe Schule* since 1542. Calvin supported Tremellius in 1547 in his attempt to obtain a position in Bern; the attempt failed because in Bern Jews and Italians were spoken ill of. A second attempt by Calvin to bring Tremellius to the Lausanne Academy

³⁹ See Christoph Zürcher, *Konrad Pellikans Wirken in Zürich 1526–1556* (Zurich, 1975), 169–71.

⁴⁰ Schiess, *Blaurer*, III, no. 2384; CO 18:421, 34–422, 21 (no. 3371); 537, 49–538, 1 (no. 3430).

⁴¹ See CO XIV:597, 34–598, 10 (no. 1778).

also failed since the Bern council took offence at Tremellius' Jewish descent. Tremellius corresponded with Calvin, he translated the Geneva catechism of 1551 into Hebrew, and he visited Calvin in 1554 in Geneva. In 1558 Calvin even tried to secure Tremellius for the newly founded Geneva Academy.⁴² Tremellius and Calvin had intensive contact with one another and would have also spoken about Judaism. Whether this happened already in Strasbourg is not possible to say. However, they discussed this subject at the latest in 1551, on the occasion of the translation of the Geneva catechism into Hebrew.⁴³ Moreover, there was still in 1554 a special opportunity, for Tremellius had furnished a second edition of the Geneva catechism with a Latin dedicatory speech, in which he addressed the subject of Judaism. Moreover, he had added a Jewish missionizing introduction to the catechism.⁴⁴ Since the edition was published in Geneva by Robert Estienne, this would have been done with Calvin's agreement; we also know that a little later Tremellius visited Calvin in Geneva.

Calvin's Strasbourg visit of 1543 was meaningful in another respect, however. In the meantime Luther's late Jewish writings appeared, and the city council, at the instigation of Josel of Rosheim, had to come to terms with the problematic effect of these writings. The council decided at the end of May, approximately a month before Calvin's arrival in Strasbourg, to prohibit the reprint of Luther's Jewish writings and forbade the preachers to agitate against the Jews. Moreover, the council was again, two weeks after Calvin's arrival, involved anew with a petition from Josel and confirmed the printing prohibition on Luther's Jewish writings.⁴⁵ This makes it very probable that Calvin, who had at his disposal important contacts in Strasbourg, was at least familiar with the controversial discussion around Luther's Jewish writings and was probably informed about

⁴² See CO XII, no. 969. See Wilhelm Becker, *Immanuel Tremellius: Ein Proselytenleben im Zeitalter der Reformation*, 2nd ed. (Leipzig, 1890), 6, 11–15, 18, 21–26, and 29. For Baron the rejection of Tremellius by Bern is an indication of the intolerance of the pastorate in west Switzerland and even of Calvin. He does not recognize that it was Calvin who supported Tremellius' application (*History of the Jews*, 280 and 455, n. 85).

⁴³ See CR 42 CO XIV:53, 37–41 (no. 1452).

⁴⁴ *Sefer Chinnuch bechire Jah [i.e. Initatio electorum Domini; est versio Hebraica catechismi Jo. Calvini]* (Geneva, 1554). See Becker, *Immanuel Tremellius*, 21–23.

⁴⁵ See Detmers, *Reformation und Judentum*, 111–12.

their content. He could not, however, have studied Luther's late Jewish writings, since a Latin translation of Luther's *On the Jews and Their Lies* first appeared in the following year. Furthermore, no statement by Calvin is preserved which would give information about how he assessed Luther's views. In any case, he was acquainted with them; this emerges from a letter, which Ambrosius Blaurer directed to him in 1561. In it Blaurer asked the Genevan reformer to comment on the toleration of the Jews and remarked:

I know you are not unfamiliar with what Luther wrote in 1543 in a thoroughly sharp way against the Jews, where he demanded with numerous arguments that they in no way be tolerated among Christians, unless they would be exposed to an extremely severe degradation.⁴⁶

Further along in the letter Blaurer sketched Luther's interpretation.⁴⁷ In the process he realized that Luther's Jewish writings had appeared in German, and, he added on the margin of the letter:

I no longer remembered that all this was written in German by Luther, and I do not recall that it was translated into Latin by anyone, so that you have possibly never read it yourself.⁴⁸

Blaurer was, therefore, unclear about from where Calvin knew of Luther's opinions and how exactly he understood them. Unfortunately, Calvin's response to this letter is no longer preserved, so that it cannot be said whether Calvin ever read a Latin translation of Luther's Jewish writings or gained familiarity with Luther's views in some other way. At the same time, Blaurer's letter demonstrates that Calvin was informed about Luther's views by Blaurer at the latest and learned of them very probably already before (probably 1543 in Strasbourg). It is particularly unfortunate that Calvin's opinion on

⁴⁶ "Non ignoras, scio, quid Lutherus anno 1543 acerbissime in Iudaeos scripsit, ubi nulla ratione inter Christianos tolerandos esse, nisi in extremam forte servitutum redactos, multis argumentis contendit" (CR 46 CO XVIII:421, 41–45 (no. 3371)).

⁴⁷ "praecipue quod, praeterquam quod Christianorum omnium apud quos vivunt facultates irretiunt, in Christum nostrum quotidie sint in suis precationibus blasphemii nosque Edomitarum loco habeant, qui nostris sudoribus ipsos in pingui suo otio indulgenter ac molliter alere cogamur, quum contra durissime tractari deberent, quo se non benedictum semen et Christianorum dominos, sed divinae exsequationi obnoxios et omnium mortalium infelicissimos esse intelligerent" (CR 46 CO XVIII:421,45–422, 10 (no. 3371)).

⁴⁸ "[Marg.] Iam non succurrit omnia ista germanice a Luthero esse scripta, nec memini me a quoquam latinitate donata ea videre, ut forte nunquam ipseque legeris" (CR 46 CO XVIII:422, 45–48 (no. 3371)).

the toleration of Jews is not preserved. Nevertheless, it can be learned from Blaurer's subsequent letter that Calvin had answered the question of the toleration of the Jews with nuance. Blaurer thanked Calvin for his "opinion on the toleration or non-toleration of Jews."⁴⁹

As the above makes clear, we can learn about Calvin's contacts with Jews and Judaism only indirectly. At the same time numerous points of contact emerged that would have influenced Calvin's position regarding Judaism. In what follows, several of Calvin's remarks should now help clarify how he reacted toward Judaism. Naturally, not all of Calvin's remarks can be investigated adequately in the scope of this essay. Since many have been treated in the above-mentioned studies, it is enough here to trace several lines.

*Calvin's Remarks Regarding Contemporary Judaism*⁵⁰

In his Latin writings Calvin designated biblical Israel as well as post-biblical and contemporary Judaism as *Iudaei*. The shared term indicates that he saw a connection between the three. At the same time, however, he clearly differentiated between an *Israel Dei* and an *Israel carnis*. Among "God's Israel" Calvin numbered the Old Testament Israel (and the Church of Jews and Gentiles); the "Israel of the Flesh," on the other hand, he saw represented by the Judaism persisting after Christianity. This differentiation was also clear in the concepts that were reserved by him exclusively for biblical Israel: *Israelitae*, *Hebraei*, *fili Abrahae*, *populus Iudaicus*, *gens Iudaica*, *Synagoga vetus*, *Ecclesia ex filiis Abrahae*, or *Iudaeorum Ecclesia*. In other places he supplemented a *vetus*, *olim*, or *tum* for more precise understanding. On the other hand, his theological remarks about post-biblical Judaism were marked with additions of a mostly negative valence (*vanitas*, *superstitio*, *incredulitas*, *impietas*, *hostes veritatis*, *secundum carnem*, etc.) With

⁴⁹ "Pro tua ad me scripta de Iudaeis ferendis aut non ferendis sententia gratiam tibi maximam habeo" (CR 46 CO XVIII:537–538 (no. 3430)).

⁵⁰ In the following section it is assumed that the Jewish missionary preface to the Olivetan Bible (1535) originated not from Calvin but from Wolfgang Capito. For evidence see Detmers, *Reformation und Judentum*, 268–76. However, since Calvin himself participated in the complete project of the Olivetan Bible and read it for a further corrected edition, he would have been familiar with Capito's preface; this, however, is not early evidence of his confrontation with Judaism.

these negative expressions Calvin could, however, also disparage his Christian opponents (e.g., *Iudaica vanitas*). The concept of *Iudaismus* in particular symbolized for him the persistence in a condition of Judaism that was overcome through Christ, but to which even the Christian Church was again and again threatened to revert. His general position regarding contemporary Judaism came to expression primarily in the same passages in which he supplemented with the term *hodie* (today), named the Jews in the same breath with Turks and heathens, or fell back on particular power expressions, such as *pervicacia*, *impuri canes*, *foedum delirium*, *impurus Rabbini*, etc.⁵¹

It is always necessary to be aware of Calvin's terminological differentiation in order not to confuse Calvin's remarks about biblical Israel with those about contemporary Judaism, as happens often in the research. To give an example, Calvin wrote the following in 1539 in his *Institutio Christianae religionis*:

For they [the Anabaptists] depict the Jews [*Iudaeos*] to us as so carnal that they are more like beasts than men. A covenant with them would not go beyond the temporal life, and the promises given them would rest in present and physical benefits. If this doctrine should obtain, what would remain save that the Jewish nation was satiated for a time with God's benefits (as men fatten a herd of swine in a sty), only to perish in eternal destruction?⁵²

At first sight it would appear as if Calvin here commented on the Anabaptists' disparaging judgment of (contemporary) Judaism. Actually, however, Calvin referred to the covenant with Old Testament Israel.⁵³ Zwingli and Bucer had already sought to defend child baptism against the Anabaptists, through the evidence of Old Testament child circumcision; they therefore developed the teaching of the unity of the Old and New Covenants.⁵⁴ Calvin seized upon this teaching and in 1539 formulated the principle:

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 5–7.

⁵² "Iudaeos enim adeo carnales nobis depingunt, ut pecudum similiores sint quam hominum. Quibuscum scilicet percussum foedus ultra temporariam vitam non procedat, quibus datae promissiones, in bonis praesentibus ac corporeis subsident. Quod dogma si obtineat, quid restat nisi ut gentem Iudaicam fuisse ad tempus Dei beneficio saturatum (non secus ac porcorum gregem in hara saginant) ut aeterno demum exitio periret?" (OS V:314:6–13). Translation from John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia, 1973), 1333.

⁵³ In addition, see OS III:403, 19–24 (Inst. II, 10:1), where Calvin, in the same connection, speaks clearly of "israelitico populo" instead of "iudaeos."

⁵⁴ See Detmers, *Reformation und Judentum*, 153 and 198–200.

The covenant made with all the patriarchs is so much like ours in substance and reality that the two are actually one and the same. Yet they differ in the mode of dispensation.⁵⁵

Calvin in no way proceeded to defend Judaism, but in order to argue with Anabaptist groups, which devalued the Old Testament covenant. In this connection Calvin even saw himself forced—in order to maintain the continuity of the covenant—to hold on to the permanent “natural” privilege of the Jews:

Since the covenant, which was made with Abraham, refers to his seed, Christ came for the salvation of the Jewish people, in order to fulfil and redeem the promise once given by the Father. Is it not therefore to be gathered that the promise of the covenant must be fulfilled according to the judgment of Paul as well as the resurrection of Christ, not only symbolically but also literally in the fleshly seed of Abraham?⁵⁶

Only in so far as Calvin emphasized God’s fidelity to the Jewish people in the covenant could he theologically maintain the unity of the covenant.⁵⁷ And this was also the primary purpose of his explanations. Calvin did not have in mind a “rehabilitation” of Judaism. The unity of the covenant in no way meant for him that all Jewry was in the future considered as elect. For example, in a letter to the anti-Trinitarian Michael Servetus⁵⁸ he wrote:

⁵⁵ “Patrum omnium foedus adeo substantia et re ipsa nihil a nostro differt, ut unum prorsus atque idem sit; administratio tamen variat” (CO I:80, 40–41; *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 429).

⁵⁶ “Quandoquidem foedus cum Abrahamo percussum ad semen eius respicit, Christum, ut fidem a patre semel datam praestaret ac solveret, in salutem advenisse genti Iudaicae. Videsne ut, post Christi resurrectionem quoque, promissionem foederis non allegorice tantum, sed, ut verba sonant, carnali Abrahae semini implendam censeat?” (OS V:318, 24–29) (Inst. IV, 16:15).

⁵⁷ Especially clearly in the revision of the Romans commentary of 1556: “Nam foedere suo Deus ita ipsos in sublime extulerat, ut ipsis [scil. Iudaeis] cadentibus, labasceret in mundo fides ipsius Dei et veritas. Fuisset enim irritum foedus” (*Johannis Calvini Commentarius in epistolam Pauli ad Romanos*, ed. T. H. L. Parker (Leiden, 1981), 194:96–98 (ad Rom 9:3). See *ibid.*, 198, 35–45 (ad Rom 9:6). See John Calvin, *The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Romans and the Thessalonians*, trans. Ross Mackenzie (Grand Rapids), 192, 196–98.

⁵⁸ It can be shown that Servetus was executed in Geneva (1553) not because of Judaizing, but rather because of his attacks against the doctrine of the Trinity and infant baptism (on the first position, see Louis I. Newman, *Jewish Influence on Christian Reform Movements* (New York, 1925), 587; Friedman, *Most Ancient Testimony*, 121. Servetus’ teachings on Israel did not show any “extraordinary interest in Judaica” (Friedman, *Most Ancient Testimony*, 121). On the contrary, his theology was deeply colored by anti-Judaic patterns of thought. At a very early point Calvin criticized

You reproach me that I judge in fleshly and in Jewish ways regarding the corporeal race of Abraham. [But Paul . . .] discusses in the ninth and eleventh chapters of Romans the covenant of grace, in which he asserts that that covenant endures in the actual and natural race of Abraham. I am not so dull, however, that I would ever want to reckon the flesh descending from Abraham with the sons of Abraham. The free election of God exists, which distinguishes the legitimate from the illegitimate sons, that is, the spiritual from the fleshly.⁵⁹

In this connection it was important for Calvin to distinguish between the Jewish people as a whole (*tota Iudaeorum natione*) and individual Jews (*singulis hominibus*).⁶⁰ This made it possible for him to bring into agreement the contradictory Pauline statements regarding the rejection and the election of the remnant of the Jews:

That Paul's statements are to be understood in this way is seen clearly in the fact that Paul first connected the certain decline [of the Jewish people] with their blindness but then hoped for their revival—both of which would be in no way compatible with one another. In any case, those who thrust obstinately at Christ came and were thrown into ruin. Yet the people itself did not perish, so that one who is a Jew would not be necessarily lost or estranged from God.⁶¹

The permanent election of the entire people Calvin saw grounded in the fact that God's grace always left a chosen remnant among the people.⁶² Because there were some Jews who held fast to the

Servetus' devaluing of the Old Testament faith. Finally, it was not Calvin who accused Servetus of "Judaizing," but rather Servetus who raised this accusation against the Genevan Reformer. The execution of Servetus in Geneva therefore reveals no indication of an anti-Jewish attitude on the part of Calvin. See Detmers, *Reformation und Judentum*, 231–35.

⁵⁹ "Exprobras quod de carnali Abrahae semine carnaliter et iudaice sentiam. [. . .] de foedere gratiae disputat nono et undecimo ad Romanos, ut illud residere asserat in vero et naturali semine Abrahae. Ego certe non sum tam crassus, ut quicumque ex Abraham geniti sunt secundum carnem, censi velim inter filios Abrahae. Regnat enim libera Dei electio, quae legitimos filios discernit ab adulterinis, hoc est, spirituales a carnalibus" (CR 36 CO VIII:491).

⁶⁰ Cited in Parker, *Iohannis Calvini Commentarius*, 247, 75–76 and Calvin, *Romans*, 245.

⁶¹ "Sic intelligendum facile ex eo constat, quod prius excaecationi coniunxit [scil. Paulus] certam ruinam, nunc spem resurgendi facit: quae duo in unum minime convenirent. Lapsi ergo sunt et corruerunt in exitium, qui in Christum obstinate impegerunt: natio tamen ipsa non concidit, ut necesse sit perditum esse, vel a Deo alienum qui Iudaeus est" (Ibid., 247 (ad Rom 11:11)). See Calvin, *Romans*, 246.

⁶² See *ibid.*, 217, 91–93 (ad Rom 9:28); 218, 16–18 (ad Rom 9:29); 243, 30–36 (ad Rom 11:5). See Calvin, *Romans*, 215–16, 241–42.

belief in the promise, the grace of the covenant remained among the Jewish people:

Even if the greatest part [of the Jews] offended the covenant of God and trampled upon it, it nevertheless retained its efficacy and showed its strength—if not in all [Jews], then in the people itself. This strength, however, consists in the fact that the grace of the Lord and the blessings concerning the eternal grace remain valid among them. This only happens where the promise is accepted in belief and the covenant is confirmed in this way. Consequently, Paul gave to understand that there will always remain in the [Jewish] people, those who have not lost privilege through the steadfast belief in the promise.⁶³

Calvin, therefore, left no doubt that the grace of the covenant was effective only for a few chosen Jews—and this would also be only insofar as they turned to Christ, through whom the covenant had been renewed and strengthened.⁶⁴ For this reason he also rejected the idea that there was still a special salvation for the Jewish people in God's divine plan. Paul's corresponding statements, which Capito and Bucer understood in this sense (i.e., that the Jewish people did have a special place in God's plan for salvation), Calvin interpreted as a promise for the *church composed of Jews and Gentiles*.⁶⁵

Many refer [Rom. 11:26] to the Jewish people, as if Paul would say that the religion must still be restored in this people as before. I, however, expand the concept "Israel" to the entire people of God; and indeed in the following sense: If the Gentiles are come in, the Jews also would turn from their unfaithfulness to obedience to the faith. And so the grace of the entire Israel of God, that must stem from both [peoples] would be perfect. Then it will be that the Jews, as the first born of the family of God, take the first place.⁶⁶

⁶³ "Proinde utcunque maior pars, Dei foedus fefellerit ac proculcarit, ipsum nihilominus efficaciam suam retinere, ac vim suam exercere: si non in omnibus, salutem in ipsa gente. Vis autem est, ut Domini gratia, et in aeternam salutem benedictio inter eos vigeat. Id autem esse non potest nisi ubi fide promissio recipitur, atque ita confirmatur foedus. Ergo significat [scil. Paulus], semper mansisse in gente quosdam, qui in promissionis fide persistentes, ab illa praerogativa non exciderint" (Ibid., 56–57. (ad Rom 3:3); see Calvin, *Romans*, 59–60).

⁶⁴ "nulla salutis spes superest, nisi ad Christum se convertant: per quem foedus gratiae instauratur ac confirmatur" (Ibid., 215 (ad Rom 9:25); see Calvin, *Romans*, 213).

⁶⁵ See Detmers, *Reformation und Judentum*, 203 and 272–74.

⁶⁶ "Multi accipiunt de populo Iudaico, acsi Paulus diceret instaurandam adhuc in eo religionem ut prius: sed ego Israelis nomen ad totum Dei populum extendo, hoc sensu, Quum Gentes ingressae fuerint, simul et Iudaei ex defectione se ad fidei

These examples of Calvin's theological considerations are from his commentary on Paul's Letter to the Romans. They come predominantly from the Strasbourg period (1538–41) and changed little in the following years.⁶⁷ For one thing, this shows that Calvin was stimulated by the discussions in and around Strasbourg to take a stand on the relationship to Judaism. Second, it shows that the Strasbourg years left an enduring stamp on his theological view of Judaism. With regard to his opinion on the toleration of Jews, however, Calvin remained reserved. The few statements he made in the Strasbourg period in which he expressed himself regarding the relationship with Judaism are for this reason informed by biblical passages and they cautioned against Christian arrogance. Compared with the views of Bucer at the same time in the *Judenratschlag*⁶⁸ it becomes clear that Calvin remained far removed from the anti-Jewish position of Bucer. This does not mean, however, that Calvin rejected the anti-Jewish measures of the *Judenratschlag* or that he welcomed the toleration of Jews like Capito did.⁶⁹ For him, however, not forced measures⁷⁰ but theological considerations unequivocally stood in the foreground. Among these belonged the view that God struck the Jews with blindness and therefore that there could be hope that only a few Jews would convert. The greatest hindrance to this conversion Calvin saw

obedientiam recipient: atque ita complebitur salus totius Israelis Dei, quem ex utrisque colligi oportet: sic tamen ut priorem locum Iudaei obtineant, ceu in familia Dei primogeniti” (Parker, *Iohannis Calvini Commentarius*, 256 (ad Rom 11:26). See Calvin, *Romans*, 255).

⁶⁷ The corresponding passages in the *Institutio* of 1539 and the commentary to Romans of 1540 remained unchanged in the later editions.

⁶⁸ Bucer tried to isolate the Jews from the Christian community as unbelievers, and was prepared to tolerate them only under harsh conditions. See Martin Bucer, “Ratschlag, ob Christlicher Oberkait gebüren müge, das sye die Juden undter den Christen zu wonen gedulden, und wa sye zu gedulden, wölcher gstat und maß (1538),” prepared by Ernst Wilhelm Kohls, in BDS 7:343–61; Martin Bucer, “Brief an einen ‘guten Freund’ (1539),” ed. Ernst Wilhelm Kohls, in *ibid.*, 362–76. See Willem Nijenhuis, “Bucer and the Jews,” in *idem*, *Ecclesia Reformata: Studies on the Reformation* (Leiden, 1972), 38–72.

⁶⁹ See Detmers, *Reformation und Judentum*, 95 n. 169; 268–76.

⁷⁰ In the context of his own experiences with the persecution of heretics in France, Calvin in the *Institutio* of 1536 even explicitly turned against the forced measures of an inhuman missionary practice (see OS I:91, 4–19; 281, 36–37). He justified this with the teaching of the hidden election of God; it marked for Calvin a critical reservation towards the thesis of a definitive rejection of “non-believers” and the practice of repression traditionally derived from it. These remarks of Calvin, however, were dropped in the editions of the *Institutio* from 1539 on.

in Jewish scriptural interpretation through which the Christological understanding of the Old Testament was repressed:

Nor would the obtuseness of the whole Jewish nation today in awaiting the Messiah's earthly kingdom be less monstrous, had the Scriptures not foretold long before that they would receive this punishment for having rejected the Gospel. For it so pleased God in righteous judgment to strike blind the minds of those who by refusing the offered light of heaven voluntarily brought darkness upon themselves. Therefore, they read Moses and continually ponder his writings, but they are hampered by a veil from seeing the light shining in his face. Thus, Moses' face will remain covered and hidden from them until he [i.e., Moses] turns to Christ [see 2 Cor. 3:14–16], from whom they [i.e., the Jews] now strive to separate and withdraw as much as they can.⁷¹

The question of Jewish scriptural interpretation remained for Calvin a critical issue throughout his life. Especially in later years, Calvin's tone sharpened; this is particularly true for his preaching and his Old Testament commentary. In this regard much evidence has already been assembled in the above-mentioned research, so that we do not need to review it here. Instead, in conclusion the sole preserved essay of Calvin in which he explicitly engaged with Judaism should be examined. This writing went by the title *Ad quaestiones et obiecta Iudaei cuiusdam* and probably originated in the last years of Calvin's life.⁷²

⁷¹ "Nec minus prodigiosa hodie foret totius nationis stoliditas, in expectando terrestri Christi regno, nisi hanc repudiati evangelii poenam daturus scripturae multo ante praedixissent. Sic enim iusto Dei iudicio conveniebat, mentes caecitate percutere, quae oblatum Dei lumen respuendo tenebras ultro sibi accersivissent. Mosem ergo legunt et assidue revolvunt; sed opposito velamine impediuntur (2 Cor. 3:14), ne cernant lucem in eius vultu refulgentem, atque ita manebit illis obtectus ac involutus, donec ad Christum convertatur [not: convertantur!], a quo illum nunc, quantum possunt, abducere ac distrahere student" (CR 29 CO I:817, 43–818, 2). Slightly modified translation from *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 449. It is noteworthy that Calvin here diverged from the traditional meaning of 2. Cor. 3:16. He interpreted this verse namely not on the necessary conversion of the Jews to Christ, but understood it within the context of Exod. 34:34–35, by which the verse preserved the peculiar sense that the blindness of the Jews would continue until Moses (!) would turn to Christ. What Calvin understood thereby, however, remains unclear. Either he had in mind an end-time event that would be preceded by the salvation of all Israel (see Rom. 11:26), or he meant the necessity of a Christological understanding of the Old Testament.

⁷² CR 37 CO IX:657–74. For the cause, aim, and dating of the writing, see Achim Detmers, "Zu den Fragen und Einwürfen irgendeines Juden (ca. 1563)—Einleitung und Übersetzung zu Calvins 'Ad quaestiones et obiecta Iudaei cuiusdam,'" in *Calvin-Studienausgabe*, vol. 4 *Reformatorsche Klärungen*, ed. Eberhard Busch et al. (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 2002), 357–405, here at 357–64. Sweetland Laver printed

In it Calvin was occupied with Jewish disputation arguments composed by Shem Tov ben Isaac ibn Shaprut around 1385, in order to furnish his Christian readers with the necessary arguments for a disputation with Jews. To this end, the answers are so constructed that Calvin first formulated several counter questions to the Jewish objections. Then he attempted to present a solution to the Jewish questions and, thereby, extrapolated on the theological and exegetical facts of the case. It is noteworthy that Calvin here argued predominantly from the Old Testament; he was concerned to meet the Jewish arguments on the basis of their own presuppositions. At the same time, Calvin demonstrated altogether little understanding of the Jewish objections. He utilized an abundance of concepts in order to designate the Jews and their "dull stupidity": *impuri/improbi canes, profani/perditi homines, porci, bestiae, pecudes, beluae, nebulones, gens ingrata, cavilla, calumnia, rabiosi/puerilis/crassa obiectio, frivola quaestio, perdita obstinatio, putidae nugae, stuporis portentum, putida subsannatio, brutus stupor, pervicacia, petulantia, superbia, protervia.*

This survey might be sufficient to characterize Calvin's relationship to Judaism. It is clear that Calvin very probably had had contacts with Jewry and also was provoked by it theologically. Above all, the experiences of the Strasbourg period would have played a relatively key role. At that time Calvin did not only adopt the Upper German-Swiss covenant theology, but he also formulated enduring thoughts about the election of the Jewish people. However, neither from this period or later ones have clear statements by Calvin regarding the question of the toleration of the Jews been preserved. Several things, however, indicate that he expressed himself in a nuanced way in the letter to Blaurer. Altogether, however, the late Calvin confronted Judaism and its scriptural interpretation exceedingly negatively. The previously-cited passage in the Daniel commentary of 1561, where Calvin summarized his engagement with Jews and Judaism, is a fitting place to end:

I have often spoken with many Jews, [but] have never noticed a drop of piety, a kernel of truth or strength of spirit. Indeed, I have even discovered nothing of a healthy understanding of humanity ever among any Jews.⁷³

R. Susan Franks's contemporary English translation of *Response to questions and objections of a certain Jew* in "Calvin, Jews, and Intra-Christian Polemics," 229–61.

⁷³ See note 20.

ANDREAS OSIANDER, THE JEWS, AND JUDAISM

Joy Kammerling

In 1534, the Reformation pastor Andreas Osiander, having decided that he deserved yet another salary increase, assured Nuremberg's city council that "[O]ne could not find ten men in all of Germany who would match me."¹ Osiander's exalted perception of his accomplishments would certainly prove true, if somewhat ironic, for much of his career was wrought with highly publicized conflicts and scandals. Andreas Osiander's life (1498–1552) and his career as an evangelical reformer and a pastor in Nuremberg (1522–49) spanned the crucial years of the Reformation in Germany. He had an influential role in Nuremberg, as can be seen in city council records. As advisor to the city council, Osiander maintained a firm, guiding hand in the formation and implementation of religious and social policy. In his capacity as Nuremberg's foremost pastor, Osiander instructed and indoctrinated his parishioners in the evangelical faith. He also had influence in the broader reform movement in Germany. He attended the Colloquy at Marburg in 1529 and participated actively in the debates between Swiss and German representatives, arguing on the side of the Wittenberg contingent. The following year he helped to formulate the confessional articles setting out the reformed position at the Diet of Augsburg. Yet for many theologians and Church historians, Osiander is remembered for his part in a theological controversy concerning justification by faith, which spanned the last three years of his life (1549–52), when he lived in Königsberg, Prussia. During these years Osiander faced criticism from Lutheran leaders, including Philip Melancthon, and his understanding of justification was soon deemed heretical by Melancthon and other orthodox leaders of the evangelical Church.²

¹ Osiander, GA 5:524, 14–16 (no. 197).

² Outside of theological circles, and especially among historians of science, Osiander is perhaps best known as the editor of Copernicus' *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium* and the anonymous author of its unauthorized preface. In this preface, Osiander presented Copernicus' ideas as hypotheses, which resulted in some readers believing

With a headstrong personality that thrived in conflict, Osiander had a reputation for flamboyance and combativeness among his peers. More uniquely for a first generation of reformers, he also was regarded as a defender of the Jews against the unjust charge of ritual murder. In a pamphlet entitled *Whether it is True and Credible that the Jews Secretly Kill Children and Make Use of their Blood*, Osiander reasoned away the traditional, time-honored Christian misconception of Jews as blood-thirsty fiends. His conclusion in that text, that “[E]ither the Jews are slaughtering Christian children most cruelly, or the Christians are slaughtering Jews most shamefully,” led to ridicule from the Catholic theologian Johannes Eck: “All of Nuremberg knows that [Osiander] defended the Jews from the pulpit,” Eck declared, “[saying] that they have been unjustly accused of child murders, [and] that merciless evil has befallen them.”³

Osiander indeed did argue against the irrationality of the blood libel; however, to what extent does this defense signify religious toleration towards Judaism and the Jews of his day? Can he rightly be called a defender of the Jews? Although Osiander’s pamphlet offered a powerful defense of the Jews against the charge of blood libel, a broader look at his career and analysis of the text itself suggests that Osiander’s perception of Judaism was fundamentally formed by a Pauline understanding of Scripture. Further, while Osiander’s life and writings exhibit some personal sympathy toward the plight of the Jews of his day, his primary consideration was the conversion of Jews to Christianity and access to Jewish languages necessary for a correct understanding of Scripture.

Jews and the Christian Community

When Andreas Osiander moved to Nuremberg in 1519, no Jews had lived legally in that city for twenty years.⁴ Nevertheless, during

that it was Copernicus himself that presented his work as hypothetical. See Bruce Wrightsman, “Andreas Osiander’s Contribution to the Copernican Achievement,” in *The Copernican Achievement*, ed. R. S. Westman (Los Angeles, 1975).

³ Birgitte Hägler, *Die Christen und die ‘Judenfrage’: Am Beispiel der Schriften Osiander und Ecks zum Ritualmordvorwurf* (Erlangen, 1992), 32.

⁴ In the summer of 1498, Maximilian I issued a mandate calling for the expulsion of the city’s Jews. By the following year many of Nuremberg’s Jews had settled in nearby villages and continued to do business with the Christian citizenry of Nuremberg.

his thirty-year tenure in Nuremberg, Osiander boasted of his intimate knowledge of the Jewish people. For example, in his blood libel pamphlet he asserted that he had “lived for a long time with the Jews, learning their language, law, and customs.”⁵ Osiander was apparently quite familiar with the Jewish communities outside of Nuremberg, and he appears to have had contact with them, corresponding with individual Jews periodically and making mention of certain Jews in his correspondence and other writings. Because of his receptivity and apparent sympathy for the plight of his Jewish contemporaries, he quickly earned the label “friend of the Jews.” Osiander had a strong interest in the Jewish communities throughout Germany. His knowledge of certain Jews is illustrated in a letter to the Hebraist Bernhard Ziegler. Osiander advised Ziegler to study Aramaic with the Jew Jacob Mendel, whom he recommends by name. Osiander explained that he had written in German so that Ziegler might circulate Osiander’s letter to the Jewish community.⁶

Osiander apparently was approached by Jews from throughout Germany with requests that he intercede for them with Christian authorities. One of Osiander’s earliest recorded encounters with a Jew occurred in 1534, when a Jew from Frankfurt asked Osiander for safe conduct and financial assistance so that he might receive Christian instruction in Nuremberg. In his request to Heironymus Baumgartner, the guardian of the city charities, Osiander wrote that the Jew “has asked me to instruct him and likewise to write you a letter requesting a sum of money so that he may have support until he is baptized.” He concluded with the defense that “. . . [the Jew] appears pious and honest, and [he] is not learned in his Scriptures.”⁷ Osiander beseeches Baumgartner to “show good will . . . so that if God gives grace, [the Jew] will perceive the truth.”⁸ Nuremberg’s city council must have been persuaded by Osiander, for an entry on 5 September 1534 states, “The Jew, Rabbi Mair’s son from

⁵ “Gutachten zur Blutbeschuldigung,” (before 1540), GA 7:223, 13–14 (no. 257).

⁶ Osiander to Bernhard Ziegler, (1534), GA 5:508–10 (no. 192). There is evidence in this same letter that Osiander corresponded with the renowned Jewish Hebraist Elijah Levita.

⁷ Osiander to the Nürnberger Almosenpfleger, (1534), GA 5:517, 3–7 (no. 195). Osiander does not elaborate on his statement that “the Jew is not learned in his Scriptures.” His statement is curious and one can only speculate that Osiander sees the Jew’s ignorance of Judaism as a point in his favor.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 517, 7–9 (no. 195).

Frankfurt, called Abraham, should be allowed Christian instruction from Andreas Osiander, so that he will convert and hold to the Christian faith, be baptized and made a Christian.”⁹

Some time later, probably in 1535 or 1536, Osiander wrote to Hektor Pömer, the provost of St. Lorenz, on behalf of a young Hessian Jew desiring baptism. In this letter Osiander petitioned for permission to counsel and perhaps baptize “the Jew of about twenty years old.”¹⁰ Osiander also wrote a letter to Nuremberg’s burgo-master on behalf of a Jew named Jacob Tirck. In his letter, Osiander explained that “Jacob Tirck, born a Jew, is firmly determined to take on the Christian faith and be baptized.” Osiander described the vulnerable status of the Jew, who without safe-conduct was sure to be denounced and attacked, and he explains how Tirck “asked me to petition to you to bear witness of what he desires.”¹¹ The letter is undated but is likely connected with an order from the city council dated 12 June 1536, which shows the council’s positive response to Osiander’s request: “The foreign Jew who Osiander desires to instruct in the faith, to him [Osiander] it is commanded to instruct him with all possible instruction.”¹²

The story of Paul Staffelsteiner is perhaps the most telling of any personal encounter between Osiander and a Jewish contemporary. We know from Osiander’s letter to Hieronymous Baumgartner in 1537 that Staffelsteiner had been “born a Jew, but converted through God’s grace to Christ and was baptized many years ago in Bamberg.” He now lived in Leutersshausen, in the territory of Margrave George of Brandenburg-Ansbach.¹³ Staffelsteiner had been “mistreated . . . as a Jew” and imprisoned when he had refused to pay a Jewish tax. Describing the convert’s sincerity with an almost paternal pride, Osiander explained that he has “seen with [his] own eyes and holds without doubt that [Staffelsteiner] confesses our Lord Jesus Christ

⁹ *Ibid.*, 517, n. 1 (no. 195).

¹⁰ Osiander to Hektor Pömer, (1535?), GA 6:133–34, and 133, 2; 134, 2–3. (no. 216).

¹¹ Osiander to a Nurnberg Burgosmaster, (1536), GA 6:158, 5–7 (no. 211).

¹² *Ibid.*, 158, n. 1.

¹³ Osiander extolled the virtue of Staffelsteiner who “with decency came out of papistry in Bamberg,” and now embraced the evangelical faith. Osiander to Hieronymus Baumgartner, (1537), GA 6:225, 12 (no. 231). Staffelsteiner was apparently married, with children, for Osiander describes how he “carries worry in his heart for his children” who were being withheld baptism by his Jewish wife.

with [his] mind and heart.”¹⁴ Staffelsteiner’s greatest defense, according to Osiander, is that he was the author of two pamphlets published in Nuremberg in 1536 in which he proselytized to the Jewish community. “He [Staffelsteiner] has shown his Christian belief by writing more than one book against the Jews, which have been published in this city,” Osiander reminded the council, asking that it intercede for the “speedy liberation of Staffelsteiner, so that as a weak Christian he will not be treated in an unbrotherly or unfriendly manner.”¹⁵ An entry in the marriage book at St. Lorenz on 27 February 1537 shows that Staffelsteiner married one Margarete Grüner of Nuremberg, thus firmly establishing him in the Christian community. In 1551 Staffelsteiner was called by the Elector Frederick II as Hebrew teacher at the University of Heidelberg. That same year he published an essay disdaining Jewish rejection of Jesus as Messiah.¹⁶

We know of only several encounters between Osiander and Jews remaining within the Jewish community. City council records report that in 1537 Osiander asked that the council show mercy toward a Jew seduced by an inhabitant of Nuremberg and convicted of thievery. His request, that the Jew be beheaded rather than hanged, was rejected by the authorities.¹⁷ Such a tolerant attitude was not evidenced in another encounter, when in 1530/31 Osiander was embroiled in a lawsuit with a Jew named Johann Nickel. Given the brevity of council notes, little of the case can be reconstructed; however, it is known that despite being cautioned by the city council, Osiander refused to return the clothing of the Jew, which he had in his possession.¹⁸

It is apparent from these examples that Osiander supported Jews desiring baptism and conversion to Christianity; however, Osiander’s personal treatment of Jews who were not receptive to Christianity is ambiguous, and his perception of the place of Jews within Christendom is less clear. At a personal level, Osiander was receptive

¹⁴ Ibid., 6:225, 7–10 (no. 231). He tells how he and Nuremberg’s Dr. Magenbuch have known the man for a long time, and that they have “certain knowledge of his baptism and Christian faith” (225, 1–2).

¹⁵ Ibid., 225, 2–25 and 226, 4–7.

¹⁶ Ibid., 224, n. 3.

¹⁷ Gottfried Seebass, *Das reformatorische Werk des Andreas Osiander* (Nuremberg, 1967), 84 and n. 102.

¹⁸ Ibid., 84 and n. 108.

to the plight of his contemporary Jews, calling for the Jews to be treated in a tolerant manner by Christian authorities. His willingness to intercede for these Jews stemmed from their willingness to embrace Christianity, and most of Osiander's energies were channeled toward the instruction and conversion of these Jews.

Osiander did not write any treatise or letter of advice dealing explicitly with the status of Jews within Nuremberg or the German lands. Many of Osiander's insights about the Jews' place within Christendom are discovered when sifting through council advice that has little or nothing to do with Jews. Like so many other Christian leaders in positions of authority, Osiander believed that the Jews, while at one level a part of European society, were essentially different from Christians, and many laws were established for Christians alone. In his 1531 advice concerning Christian excommunication and banishment, Osiander expressed his conviction that a Jew's position in Christendom was not the same as a Christian's. Osiander asserted that "the Christian ban is not to be used for Jews [or] Turks [because they] are not a part of the Christian community" and are thus not held to the same requirements as their Christian neighbors.¹⁹ Two years later in 1533, Osiander reiterated his view that the Jews are outside of the Christian community when he declared that "the Jews [are not subject to] the ban, nor must they be absolved."²⁰

Most pastors and theologians, at one time or another, attempted to persuade Jews by the written or spoken word to convert to Christianity. The idea of the Jewish mission had at its root the conviction that the Jews held to a false conception of Scripture which caused them to reject Jesus Christ as the Messiah. Several Christian Hebraists were well known for their missionary treatises ostensibly written to convince obdurate Jews of the errors of their ways and persuade them to convert.²¹ Unlike many Christian Hebraists during this period, Osiander did not write any texts intended primarily to convince Europe's Jews that Jesus was the Messiah, although he apparently took great pride when Jewish converts did so.

The question of forced conversion of the Jews was one issue that Osiander considered, explicitly and obliquely, in a number of his

¹⁹ "Gutachten über den Bann," (1531), GA 4:369, 14–15 (no. 167).

²⁰ "Gutachten über den Gebrauch der Absolution," (1533), GA 5:473 (no. 186).

²¹ See Friedman, *Most Ancient Testimony*, 212–54.

writings. Throughout the Middle Ages and into the early modern period, scholars and officials debated the issue of whether or not Jewish children might be forcibly baptized. During Osiander's lifetime, a major theological discussion considered whether Jewish children might be wrenched from their parents and baptized or whether they should be required to hear Christian sermons. In a letter of advice concerning the forced baptism of Anabaptist children, Osiander considered the question of whether Jewish children might be baptized by Christian authorities. Osiander harkened to the long tradition within Christendom that protected Jews from having their children baptized against their will:

When both parents are outside of the Christian faith . . . it is forbidden by Church law that one can baptize their children against their will, so long as they are under age; moreover, authorities may not baptize Jewish children against their parents' will.²²

Osiander was certain that the Jews of his day would ultimately convert to Christianity, and this conviction pervaded his writings, yet he was adamant that Jews not be coerced into baptism. Acknowledging that the Jews were a perfect example of people who, because they were not baptized, were "enemies of true belief" and therefore damned, he nevertheless asserted his conviction that the Jews would convert if given the chance. Baptism, according to Osiander, was to be offered along with confession, just as Peter preached to the Jews to "confess and be baptized."²³ It was acceptable—even desirable—to preach to everyone, including Jews, Turks, or heathens; however, no one could be saved without faith in Christ and baptism: "Jews . . . cannot become Christians without baptism through the general public preaching alone . . . they must believe and know that Christ is the savior."²⁴ All "unbelieving" and "unrepentant" people, like the Jews, "will certainly be damned, because they have not received forgiveness of sins through baptism in Jesus Christ."²⁵ Naturally, it is difficult to ascertain what entails a "forced" baptism or conversion. In Osiander's mind, it is God's grace that leads to salvation: "If our parents were not Christians . . . we would not be baptized, as the

²² "Gutachten über Zwangstaufe," (1529) GA 3:328, 1–11 (no. 109).

²³ "Gutachten über den Gebrauch der Absolution," (1533), GA 5:433, 6–7 (no. 186).

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 473, 23–30 (no. 186).

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 454, 33–455, 2 (no. 186).

Jews do not baptize their children.”²⁶ Elsewhere, Osiander reiterates that the Jews are in an especially pitiable situation. They are “hardened” to the truth, and without baptism “can not understand God’s Word and be pious.”²⁷ Nevertheless, Osiander is convinced that believers should continue to proselytize those without faith:

People must preach the forgiveness of sins to all creatures whether or not they are repentant or [whether they] believe or not. So must all people be baptized whether they are repentant or believe; in baptism only is forgiveness of sins. Therefore, we must seek to baptize the Jews, Turks, and heathen against their error in the same way we want to preach against the error of the anti-Christ.²⁸

This certainty that the Jews of his day would and should be saved led Osiander to write in the general church prayer, repeated each week by the members of Nuremberg’s evangelical churches: “[We pray for the] Jews, Turks, heathen, and evil Christians who hear the name of Jesus Christ and are turned from Christian truth by their unbelief and repulsiveness.”²⁹

Jewish unbelief is a prevalent theme in Osiander’s preaching, and in his catechism sermons he alerts his listeners that “it is impossible for [the Jews] to understand God’s Word and be pious.”³⁰ Osiander does not shy away from depicting the Jews as Christ-killers; instead of recognizing Christ as Messiah, they blasphemed and scorned him while he suffered on the Cross.³¹ The Jews’ sinful nature not only obfuscates the fact that Christ is Messiah, but also propels the Jews to “desire evil.”³² Such words could not fail to worry Nuremberg’s Christian population.

²⁶ “Die Pfalz-Neuburger Kirchenordnung,” (1534), GA 7:768, 22–26 (no. 293).

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 7:860 (no. 293).

²⁸ “Gutachten über den Gebrauch der Absolution,” (1533), GA 5:440, 20–26 (no. 186).

²⁹ “Die brandenburgisch-nürnbergische Visitationsordnung,” (1528), GA 3:247, 9–10 (no. 98). For more on Osiander’s use of the Jews in his preaching, see my article, “Andreas Osiander’s Sermons on the Jews,” *Lutheran Quarterly* XV (2001): 59–84.

³⁰ “Katechismuspredigten,” (1533), GA 5:316, 7–8 (no. 177).

³¹ “Wie und wohin ein Christ fliehen soll,” (1533), GA 5:400 (no. 185).

³² “Predigt über die allgemeine absolution,” (1536), GA 6:117, 31–33 (no. 224).

*Pursuing the “Holy Hebrew Language,” in Order to Preserve the
“Noble Pearls of the Christian Faith:” Osiander’s Commitment to Hebraica*

Protestant Reformers such as Osiander took seriously the need to translate Scripture accurately, for they were aware that biblical translations exerted tremendous influence in the formation—and defense—of doctrinal teachings. “There is no language more useful to the Holy Scripture than Hebrew,” he proudly announced to Nuremberg’s city council.³³ In his now infamous defense of the Jews against the charge of blood libel, Osiander defended his devotion to the study of Hebrew, suggesting that: “God [did not allow the Hebrew Scriptures to be destroyed] . . . in order to benefit all Christendom, so that through the Hebrew language Christians might come to a true understanding of their faith.”³⁴ Osiander’s interest in Hebraica was prompted by more than a Protestant drive to uncover scriptural truths obfuscated by clerical ignorance or papal wiles. Osiander was convinced that the Jews of his day relished Christian ignorance of Jewish languages and texts and intentionally sought to prevent Christians from learning Hebrew or Aramaic.

Having acquired a solid knowledge of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew while at university, and thus earning the label of “tri-linguist” in his lifetime, Osiander was called to the position of Hebrew teacher at Nuremberg’s Augustinian monastery in 1519.³⁵ Osiander’s interest in the languages of antiquity and his conviction that such knowledge was necessary for Christians to truly understand both Jewish traditions and Scripture culminated in 1529 when he asked Nuremberg’s

³³ “Osiander an den Nürnberger Rat,” (1529), GA 3:336, 8–10 (no. 111).

³⁴ “Gutachten über die Blutbeschuldigung,” (before 1540), GA 7:233, 13–15 (no. 257).

³⁵ Three years later he accepted the position of preacher at the parish church of St. Lorenz, where he served until 1549, when his scandalous refusal to submit to the Augsburg Interim imposed by Emperor Charles V led to his fleeing to Prussia. When it became apparent that Nuremberg’s city council would not tolerate his insubordination, he wrote his old friend Duke Albrecht and offered “to teach Hebrew, Greek, or Latin language in [a] school in Prussia.” Osiander to Herzog Albrecht, (1548), GA 8:675, 7–9 (no. 358). Osiander’s expertise as an Hebraist was spoken of by his peers. Martin Luther praised Osiander for his skill as a scholar of the ancient languages (“Osiander is known as a fine scholar of Hebrew and Greek”), and in 1543 Osiander was named third on a list of prominent Hebraists published by the University of Wittenberg. See Seebass, *Das reformatorische Werk des Andreas Osiander*, 72.

city council to grant entrance to a rabbi so that he might teach Osiander Aramaic.³⁶ He began his letter with a defense of the study of the Jewish languages:

... a good understanding of the three languages of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew are not alone [enough] to achieve a better understanding of the Holy, Godly Scripture... [for] since the time of the Babylonian captivity the Jews no longer use the Hebrew language, but use the Aramaic language which one sees in the Gospel [of Mark]. It follows then, that in order to have a broad understanding of the Holy Scripture, one must have a command of Aramaic.³⁷

As is apparent from this passage, Osiander's love of the Jewish languages stemmed, in part, from his conviction that both Hebrew and Aramaic were necessary tools to grasp Scripture's meaning, along with his certainty that such knowledge would shortly become inaccessible for Christians.

Meanwhile it is undeniable that the Jews understand the Law and the Prophets better than Christians, except that they do not hold Christ to be the person we understand him to be... [for] the Jews no longer occupy themselves with their great understanding and the study of secrets, but rather seek after usury and other evil things.³⁸

Osiander's belief that the Jews of his day would soon lose their ability to expound on Hebrew or Aramaic texts underscores the urgency of his request. After presenting his desire in the most orthodox light possible, Osiander concluded by prayerfully asking, "With God's grace, may it be possible that Christians will no longer need to seek out Jews," in order to learn the Jewish languages that are necessary for an accurate translation of Scripture.³⁹ It is Osiander's hope that Christian expertise in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Jewish learning for the

³⁶ Osiander does not question the ordinance prohibiting Jews entrance to Nuremberg. The City Council did grant admittance to the rabbi; however, he was prohibited from visiting any house other than Osiander's or engaging in any kind of trade. "An den Nürnberger Rat," (1529), GA 3:339, n. 44 (no. 111).

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 336, 1–13 (no. 111). Osiander maintained the conviction that Christians should learn both Hebrew and Aramaic to his final years. For example, in a series of sermons on Daniel, Osiander emphasized the spiritual potential of the Jewish texts and the positive consequences of language study: "By faith and steadfastness," Osiander instructed his readers, "God gives wisdom in Aramaic and in Jewish works." "Sieben Predigten über Daniel 1–2," (1542), GA 7:544, 3–5 (no. 291).

³⁸ "An den Nürnberger Rat," (1529), GA 3:337, 14–19 (no. 111).

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 338, 10–13 (no. 111).

good of the Reformation will make Christian reliance on Jews unnecessary. Osiander's mention of usury in the passage above is interesting because this is the only passage in his extensive extant writings that associates Jews with the practice of usury. In other writings, Osiander did not espouse the commonly held belief that the Jews were usurious. In a text devoted solely to interest payments in money-lending, Osiander does not even refer to the Jews.⁴⁰

Five years later, in a letter to the Hebraist Bernhard Ziegler, Professor of Hebrew in Ansbach, Osiander urged the scholar to study Aramaic with the Jew Jacob Mendel, "who now wants to convert to the Christian faith."⁴¹ Osiander hoped that Ziegler would undertake a study of "the Chaldean and talmudic language" so that he might have access to the ideas found in both Scripture and the Jewish Talmud and Kabbalah. Osiander declared his belief that the talmudic and kabbalistic books give rich testimony to Christ, but that these truths are secretly hidden by Jews. He lamented that the Aramaic language has "been unknown and closed to all of Christendom—apart from Pico della Mirandola—for more than one thousand years." And he suspected that the Jews had written much of their Scripture in Aramaic and not in Hebrew in order to obscure Christ to both Christians and "common, simple Jews."⁴² Consequently, Osiander urged Ziegler to study Aramaic. "You should do this quickly," Osiander admonishes Ziegler, "... [so that] such noble pearls of the Christian faith, which lie hidden under Jewish error, will not be lost."⁴³

Osiander's letter to the city council requesting that a Jew be admitted to the city in order to teach him Aramaic provides insight into Osiander's opinions of the place of Jews within Christendom and Nuremberg's expulsion of the Jews. In the letter, Osiander clearly states that he neither expects nor desires that the city's ordinance banning Jews be lifted. For Osiander, the expulsion of Nuremberg's Jewry is fully justified: "It is for good reason that no Jews are allowed into our city . . . and I do not ask that such an order be abolished."⁴⁴ The extent to which Osiander's words express his opinion about the

⁴⁰ "Ratschlag zur Entrichtung von Zinsen," (1525), GA 2:205–14 (no. 62).

⁴¹ Osiander to Bernhard Ziegler, (1534), GA 5:508, 6 (no. 192).

⁴² *Ibid.*, 508, 8–509, 1 (no. 192).

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 509, 17–18 (no. 192).

⁴⁴ "An den Nürnberger Rat," (1529), GA 3:338, 19–25 (no. 111).

Jewish plight of expulsion remains ambiguous. In this case, Osiander may simply be declaring his accordance with city policy in order to convince the council of his loyalties. Elsewhere, however, Osiander does suggest that the Jews' role as outsiders or wanderers is fully justified. In a treatise written to the city council concerning the Visitation, Osiander explains the consequences of tolerating unrest and false belief. The Jews of history, Osiander asserts, serve as a frightful example of what happens when false belief is tolerated in a godly society;

The [Old Testament] Jews did not believe that the true prophets spoke God's Word, but rather they believed in the false and condemned [prophets], [because of this all of the Jews] suffered under the Babylonian captivity and their land was laid waste for seventy years. They [the New Testament Jews] did not believe that Christ was God's son and that the apostles were the true teachers . . . because of this the Jews hunted them [the apostles] down and slaughtered them, [because of this, the Jews] must be destroyed, slaughtered, and hunted to the ends of the earth, never again to be united.⁴⁵

In order to convince the city council of the importance of doctrinal purity (and to persuade them that any false teaching should be dealt with harshly by authorities), Osiander upheld the example of the biblical Jews and justified the many "expulsions" of the Jews throughout history. Jews, as anything other than potential converts to Christianity, have little place in Osiander's worldview. While he did not write any tracts dedicated solely to the quest of Jewish conversion, it is evident that he desired Jewish conversion and that he held to the Pauline interpretation of the place of Jews within Christendom. Osiander declares that "the Jews will some day be converted to the truth," affirming his conviction that the Jews will be converted to Christianity.

Other letters of advice to the city council seem to exhibit Osiander's contempt for Jews as "weak" and "godless."⁴⁶ Osiander understood the Jews as existing outside of Christendom, and the fact that he often depicted the Jews as "godless" and no longer God's chosen people illustrates that he was of the opinion that Jews should not be

⁴⁵ "Gutachten zur Verteidigung der Visitation," (1528), GA 3:280, 19–25 (no. 101).

⁴⁶ See for example, "Konzilgutachten," (1533), GA 5:373, 2–6 (no. 182), and "Wider Kaspar Schatzgeyer," (1525), GA 1:498, 28 (no. 41).

protected or condemned as Christians by Christian government. This conviction was underscored in a doctrinal treatise of 1533 in which Osiander explained that “the key that binds and looses [does so] alone for Christians and not for heathens or Jews . . . people neither ban nor absolve Jews or heathens.”⁴⁷

Nuremberg’s theologians, humanists, and members of the city council, many of whom knew him from his days as Hebrew instructor, sought out Osiander as an expert on Jewish matters, the Hebrew Bible and talmudic texts, and Jewish culture. He was approached by the city council a number of times to comment on questions concerning Jews. In 1533 when a group of Jews asked the city council for permission to be baptized, the council members called on the city preachers, under the direction of Osiander, to establish whether or not the Jews’ request should be honored.⁴⁸ Four years later in 1537, the council asked that Osiander evaluate documents in Hebrew and comment on whether a Hebrew testament of a Jew condemned to death agreed with the German translation.⁴⁹ In 1544, the city council again approached the pastor of St. Lorenz, this time for advice concerning a request from a baptized Jew. The baptized Jew, Hans Peypus, had asked the council for permission to give language instruction in Nuremberg. Before any decision could be made, the council asked Osiander to ascertain whether or not Peypus could be trusted. Osiander apparently gave a favorable assessment of Peypus, for the council records that Peypus was permitted to hold language instruction for six months.⁵⁰

*Uncovering the “Manifest Lie” of Ritual Murder: Issues of Orthodoxy,
Authority, and the Jewish Question*

In his study of Erasmus, Shimon Markish states that at the time of the Reformation it is “premature to speak not only of friendliness toward the Jews, but even of the rudiments of toleration.”⁵¹ Instead

⁴⁷ “Gutachten über den Gebrauch der Absolution,” (1533), GA 5:438, 16–19 (no. 186).

⁴⁸ Seebass, *Das reformatorische Werk des Andreas Osiander*, 84 and n. 105.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 84 and n. 102.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 84 n. 104.

⁵¹ Shimon Markish, *Erasmus and the Jews* (Chicago, 1986), 5.

Markish sees only universal contempt for sixteenth-century Jews from their Christian neighbors, coupled with an intolerance that manifested itself in relentless proselytizing zeal. Expressions of the anti-Jewish heritage, entrenched at every level of society, stemmed in part from the conviction that Jews, as enemies of Christ, were diabolical foes seeking to wreak havoc in Christendom. In the decades preceding the Reformation, many Christians believed that their Jewish neighbors took evil delight in kidnapping the consecrated host of the Eucharist and piercing it until it bled. Additionally, it was rumored that Jews periodically tortured and killed innocent children, usually small boys, driven in part by the need for Christian blood to heal Jewish physical ailments (hemorrhages, hemorrhoids, and the sickly sweet Jewish stench (*foetor judaicus*), to name a few), for the baking of matzah, and for other magical purposes. Fearful depictions of Jewish depravity, found in the many chapbooks, song sheets, broadsheets, and printed woodcuts of the day, described the Jews' purported atrocities against Christians, helping to shape attitudes and adding to the cultural dissemination of ideas concerning the Jews.⁵² Such anti-Jewish works, many of them medieval in origin, were published throughout the sixteenth century, and these texts, coupled with itinerant preaching against the Jews, accelerated Jewish persecution and expulsions throughout the German-speaking lands during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

According to R. Po-chia Hsia, Christian belief in ritual murder served the greater function of reinforcing the Christian belief of sacrifice, and the survival of this myth depended on the collective understanding of the charges and its acceptance within society. Ritual murder trials became symbols of the murderous magic of the Jews and furnished the historical context for the expression and consolidation of the discourse on ritual murder. Hsia argues that the ritual murder belief and subsequent trials provided a recurring backdrop for the theme of Christian sacrifice. Little children, tortured and pierced many times over as Christ had been abused on the Cross, became popular symbols of the power of the blood of Christ's crucifixion. The "bleeding little martyrs," and the similarly abused Eucharist, became for Christians the symbols of the "sacred drama

⁵² On the consolidation of the discourse of ritual murder, see Hsia, *Myth of Ritual*.

of human redemption.”⁵³ Hsia has shown that the theme of sacrifice was repeated in a multitude of cultural artifacts: carnival farces, passion plays, ballads, popular tales, woodcuts, chronicles, and sermons that told and retold this story of salvation.

Out of this morass of printed texts appeared a pamphlet entitled *Whether it is True and Credible that the Jews Secretly Kill Christian Children and Use their Blood*.⁵⁴ Written anonymously in 1529 by Osiander (and published in 1540, apparently without his permission), the pamphlet was a surprising text. Osiander argued, as we saw earlier, “[E]ither Jews are slaughtering Christian children most cruelly, or Christians are slaughtering innocent Jews most shamefully”—an argument that disturbed many within the theological community of the sixteenth century. The notion that the Jews, living a tenuous existence within Christendom, might be guiltless victims of their powerful Christian neighbors, instead of demonic foes, undermined the accepted framework of Christendom, and Osiander’s published text initiated a plethora of responses. Despite this publication and Osiander’s subsequent reputation among his contemporaries as a defender, an ally, even a friend of the Jews, Markish discounts the ultimate impact of the blood libel treatise, asserting that it disappeared “without a trace, meaning nothing for the future.”⁵⁵

Certainly few in sixteenth-century Germany embraced Osiander’s call for a reasoned and tolerant treatment of the Jews; however, Osiander’s blood libel text initiated significant scholarly discussion concerning the question of the Jews’ place in Christendom. During Osiander’s lifetime, dozens of Jews throughout Europe were put to death for allegedly engaging in ritual murder and host desecration. These were highly publicized events, with the secular and religious polemicists playing on popular fears with gruesome depictions of evil-doing. According to Hsia, the trials themselves became symbols of the murderous magic of the Jews and furnished the historical context for the expression and consolidation of the discourse on ritual murder.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 226–27.

⁵⁴ The text, *Ob es war und glaublich sey, dass die Juden der christen kinder heimlich erwürgen und ir blut gebrauchen. Ein treffenliche schrift, auff eines yeden urteyl gestellt. Wer menschenblut vergeusst, des blut sol ouch vergosen werden.* [Whether it is true and credible that the Jews secretly kill Christian children and make use of their blood. A splendid text presented for everyone’s judgment. Whoever sheds blood will have his blood shed also.] “Gutachtung über die Blutbeschuldigung,” (before 1540), GA 7, no. 257.

⁵⁵ Markish, *Erasmus and the Jews* (Chicago, 1986), 157.

Belief in ritual murder, along with the ensuing trials of accused Jews, underpinned the larger concepts of Christendom and the Jews' place within society. The Christian belief in sacrifice as represented in Christ's crucifixion and the salvific power of blood and of the Eucharist—essential tenets of faith in Christianity—underlay the discourse on ritual murder and host desecration. These intellectual debates about Jews had social and political ramifications, for by the height of the Reformation, many of Europe's Jews had been expelled from England, France, the Iberian Peninsula, and the Holy Roman Empire.⁵⁶

Osiander's Treatise on the Blood Libel

Osiander's defense of the Jews against the charge of blood libel is a "brilliant *tour de force*," as Hsia asserted.⁵⁷ It is apparent that Osiander's overriding goal in his treatise is to prove that the Jews are completely innocent of the charge of ritual murder. The reformer employs his vast biblical and historical knowledge to show that Jews do not, nor have they ever, practiced the crime of ritual murder. Osiander's treatise is, on the whole, a reasoned attempt to persuade people of the irrational, unfounded, and unjust condemnation of Jews for a crime they do not commit. Instead of blindly accepting the ridiculous charges leveled against the Jews, Osiander's advice is that Christians should carefully examine all the available information about the blood libel charge. The necessity of proof is essential to Osiander—to base beliefs on anything less is to be ruled by superstition.

The title of Osiander's text is telling, for the final sentence is clearly a warning to the reader:

Whether it is true and believable that the Jews secretly kill Christian children and use their blood. A Splendid text presented for everyone's judgment. Whoever sheds blood, will have his blood also shed.

Osiander's defense of the Jews against the charge of ritual murder offered the first published, rational Christian refutation of the time-

⁵⁶ See also, Jeremy Cohen, "The Jews as the Killers of Christ in the Latin Tradition, From Augustine to the Friars," *Tradition* 39 (1983): 1–27.

⁵⁷ Hsia, *Myth of Ritual Murder*, 142.

honored belief that Jews killed Christian children for their blood. We will never know definitively why Osiander chose to write the treatise when he did. Most scholars accept the speculation that it was probably written in 1529/30 soon after the Pösing ritual murder case. The text was published either without Osiander's knowledge or with his silent approval, (probably) in 1540 by the Nuremberg publisher Johann Petreius. It appears that an unnamed nobleman presented Osiander with a copy of a pamphlet telling of the 1529 Pösing ritual murder case, and asked his opinion of the charge of ritual murder in general and the case of Pösing, specifically. For this reason, apparently, Osiander's treatise took the form of a letter.⁵⁸

Osiander begins his treatise explaining that he has written not "publicly for everyone, but rather in secret for you alone," in the hopes that his arguments will persuade his reader.⁵⁹ Proudly describing how he has "lived for a long time with the Jews, learning their language, law, and customs," Osiander explains that he does not wish to conceal any truth, but rather hopes to disprove the prevalent false belief that "the Jews must have innocent Christian blood, for without it they cannot live."⁶⁰ Appealing to the honor of his unnamed nobleman, Osiander decries the danger of such a false conception of the Jews and warns of the abuse of authorities who wrongly blame the Jews for murdered or missing children. He sees a moral dilemma in condemning the "poor, wretched Jews" for such crimes, without proper evidence.⁶¹ Evidence, then, guides Osiander as he drafts his response to the nobleman's queries. Osiander reminds his reader that God has forbidden the shedding of innocent blood and that he gave that law to Jews and Christians. He repeats God's warning that "whoever sheds human blood, will have his blood shed

⁵⁸ The unknown nobleman remains just that: unknown. Early biographers of Osiander speculated as to his identity. Moritz Stern, the first editor of Osiander's text, republished in 1893, believed the recipient of the letter to be the Pfalzgraf Ottheinrich; Emanuel Hirsch posited that Osiander was writing to a lawyer because the text addressed many legal specifics. See "Gutachten über die Blutbeschuldigung," n. 12. It is equally plausible that the letter addressed to a nobleman was simply a rhetorical ploy or literary convention used by Osiander to justify his writing of the treatise. Note, for example, the title of this text, which is "presented for everyone's judgment."

⁵⁹ "Gutachten über die Blutbeschuldigung," (before 1540), GA 7:224, 15–16 (no. 257).

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 223, 13–14.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 224, 1–11.

by men;" the punishment for murder is the same for Jew or Christian, and both are condemned by God.⁶² Osiander then poses the ugly ultimate dilemma surrounding the ritual murder charge: "Either the Jews are slaughtering Christian children most cruelly, or the Christians are slaughtering innocent Jews most shamefully."⁶³

By way of introduction, Osiander ruminates over the charge of ritual murder. "I have thought long and earnestly about these things," he tells the reader, "[and] I have found nothing, nor discovered or heard of anything which persuades me to believe such suspicion and accusation."⁶⁴ Instead, Osiander discloses his conviction that the ritual murder charge against the Jews is false and that he intends to research the charge and to show that "there is no evidence for this charge."⁶⁵ Osiander is an impassioned defender for the cause of justice: not only does he proceed to undermine the very convictions that underpin the blood libel, but he charges his readers to speak up if they witness injustice. Osiander advises that a believer should not only refrain from making a charge of blood libel, but also "if he sees others doing it, he must not keep silent or agree to it."⁶⁶ He declares himself incapable of silence and announces his intention to "uncover and prevent" the false charge of blood libel.⁶⁷

Much of Osiander's evidence or proof is based on his knowledge of the Mosaic law and on his appropriation of historical events, information from Scripture, the Talmud, and other cultural sources about the Jews of antiquity and those living in his day. Osiander's knowledge that the Jews "read all day, study and practice their law with diligence" motivates him to turn to Scripture to understand the Jewish mind.⁶⁸ It is not surprising then that many of Osiander's arguments against the charge of ritual murder stem from the Hebrew Scriptures themselves. Several of his arguments refute the common belief that Jews intentionally set out to slaughter Christian children for their blood. Osiander cites a series of injunctions in the Hebrew Bible that warn that "those who shed blood shall have their blood shed

⁶² *Ibid.*, 224, 26–34.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 225, 1–3.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 225, 13–20.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 225, 29.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 225, 1–5.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 225, 9–10.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 226, 19–21.

[Gen. 9:6],” and “Thou shall not kill [Deut. 5:17].”⁶⁹ He reminds his reader that the Jews work earnestly to know and follow God’s ordinances; therefore, it is not feasible that given the Jews knowledge and commitment to God’s commandments, they would endanger their very souls by murdering innocent children.⁷⁰ Osiander reflects on the fact that Jews believe in eternal life and know of no other way to achieve salvation than through the assiduous holding of their law:

Jews believe in the promise of eternal life . . . through holding firm to their law . . . just as Christians, who, not through works, but through faith seek salvation, find the killing of children shocking and cruel, how much worse it is to the Jews, for it is not only against their law, but would stand in the way of salvation.⁷¹

Jewish dietary restrictions also point to the absurdity of the charge of ritual murder. Osiander points out that the dietary laws of the Jews, which they observe to this day, forbid the drinking of blood and the eating of unclean flesh. Osiander asks how much more unlikely is it that the Jews would intentionally partake of the blood of innocent Christian children.⁷² Osiander reasons, “it is far more cruel to kill an innocent child than an old man.” Even during war, Osiander notes, children and women are usually spared. Citing the story of Romulus and Remus, who were nurtured in the wild by wolves, Osiander explains that even wild animals spare the lives of innocent children. How much more unlikely is it then that the Jews

⁶⁹ For example, Ps. 24 and Isa. 1:25; “Blutbeschuldigung,” 226.

⁷⁰ “Blutbeschuldigung,” 226, 19–24.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 227, 31–228, 3. Elsewhere in the treatise, Osiander relays that the Talmud prohibits the anointing of a Jewish priest with innocent blood (229, 25–230, 5).

⁷² *Ibid.*, 226, 25–227, 2. “Not only is human blood not to be shed, but also all of [the Jews’] special laws and ceremonies . . . make clear that they should eat no blood of any kind, as it is written in the first book of Moses [Gen. 9:4] ‘You should not eat flesh with blood.’ . . . Jews find such a thing shocking and are appalled by it . . . [for the] Jews still hold to this law and will not even eat meat prepared by Christians . . . how much more unbelievable is it that [the Jews] would contaminate themselves with the blood of innocent children and sin against God.” The aversion to shedding and consuming blood is not only a matter of Jewish law, but it is “written in the hearts of all people that the shedding of blood is wrong and is forbidden.” *Ibid.*, 227, 8–9. Osiander is convinced that there is “no people on earth so blind that they would kill [in order to partake of the human flesh or blood], but if it is true that people in some lands eat human flesh,” Osiander believes that it is with the consent of the [usually elderly] person sacrificed. *Ibid.*, 227, 9–12.

should commit this unnatural and cruel murder? Osiander wonders about the likelihood that the Jews commit the heinous slaughter of innocent children when they are not known to even commit murder.⁷³

Several of Osiander's arguments challenge misconceptions concerning the Jews of his day. He examines the plight of sixteenth-century Jews by pointing to history to argue that "one can find no evidence that [the Jews] bear hatred against Christians." In Osiander's mind, the Jews of his day are little different from their forebears whose experiences are relayed in the Hebrew Scriptures. Looking to the Jewish exile in Egypt and Babylon as examples, Osiander tells the stories of Moses and Daniel who urged the Jewish people to obey the authorities and to behave in a friendly manner toward their captors. Jewish friendliness to their captors is proof of present-day Jewish friendliness. Osiander finds it equally reasonable to suppose that the Jews of his day feel friendly toward their Christian neighbors, who, still today, hold them in "mild captivity."⁷⁴ The Jews live in a world that persecutes them. Osiander knows that there are "no people on earth more meek or frightened than the Jews." Who can believe that the Jews, a people uncertain about their lives from hour to hour, would murder innocent children and provoke even more wrath from their Christian neighbors.⁷⁵ Osiander declares that he has never heard of any baptized Jew reporting ritual murders occurring in the Jewish community, and he harkens to the celebrated Reuchlin-Pfefferkorn controversy: "Had he [Pfefferkorn] known something about these child murders, he and his preaching monks . . . surely would have spread it throughout the world."⁷⁶

Osiander's intimate knowledge of present-day Jewish practices and his own encounters with Jews convinces him of Jewish innocence.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 227, 20–30. "Now it is greater and more detestable to murder a young innocent child than to kill an older person, and this abhorrence is practiced not only by people, but it has been demonstrated that even wild animals [spare children], even in times of war, women and children are usually spared . . . and so do wild animals spare children as is shown at the time of Romulus and Remus, when wolves nurtured them, rather than devouring them . . . it is even more unlikely that the Jews would commit this unnatural and inordinately cruel murder."

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 228, 6–22.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 228, 23–33.

⁷⁶ As further proof, Osiander also points to the renowned Hebrew scholar Paul Riccius, a convert from Judaism, who fails to say that the Jews have ever practiced ritual murder. *Ibid.*, 232, 5–24.

He dispels the myth that the Jews are driven to murder because “they must have children’s blood, for without it they will die.”⁷⁷ In the recent Pösiing trial the Jews were accused of requiring Christian blood to anoint their priests. Osiander calls this a “manifest lie,” for the Jews no longer have priests and both scriptural and talmudic sources condemn such a notion: “How could the Jews be so stupid,” he asks, “that they would anoint their priests with innocent children’s blood [and think that] they would not anger God?”⁷⁸ Equally absurd is the contention that Jews require Christian blood to stop their natural state of hemorrhaging—a notion that he finds preposterous. That the Jews might use Christian blood to heal diseases inflicted upon them by God is, for Osiander, “against nature and human reason, for when God wants to punish people with a special illness, he punishes them with illnesses they cannot heal.”⁷⁹ Why, he wonders, would the blood of Christian children have such special properties? And why would the blood have to come from a child? Furthermore, Osiander points out that blood can be acquired from a child by simple blood-letting: there would be no need to kill the child. What do the Jews do in lands where there are no Christians and therefore no access to Christian blood? What about those “poor, simple Jews” living in Turkey and thus with no access to Christian blood—do they suffer from ill health . . . or are [they] not real Jews?⁸⁰ He ridicules the allegation that Jews living in Christian territories send the needed blood to their brethren in faraway lands. And how did the Jews survive for one thousand years under Roman rule without Christian blood? It is absurd that the Jews would resort to murder when blood could be obtained by other means. “Why would [the Jews] sin so horribly against God, against their law, against their consciences, against the authorities, against all of Christendom, against their very lives?” Osiander ponders. It is a “devilish fantasy” that defies “God’s Word, nature, and all reason.”⁸¹

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 229, 2–3.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 230, 9–11.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 230, 22–24.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 231, 22–28.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 231, 9–17.

Explaining the Blood Libel

Throughout his treatise, Osiander reflects on those individuals in secular and spiritual authority and the role that they have played in the chronic persecution of the Jews. Looking to the history of the blood libel, Osiander presents evidence that the ritual murder charge is not only false, but that it has been discouraged in the past by those in authority. He knows that “more than one pope and more than one emperor” have condemned the blood libel charge and have forbidden the persecution of the Jews.⁸² He even provides the complete text of Emperor Frederick III’s condemnation of the ritual murder charge and of Margrave Karl of Baden for his part in the 1470 Endingen ritual murder trial.⁸³ Osiander informs his reader that even years later, the Emperor Frederick III’s intervention in the Regensburg ritual murder trial led to justice; the trial was halted and the Jews spared. If emperors and popes condemn belief in ritual murder, why then do so many Jews confess to the crime during blood libel trials? Osiander notes that despite the fact that people know that the Jews are innocent, the Jews are pursued with great violence and wickedness, and he thinks it likely that the Jews confess due to the heavy torture they suffer at the hands of their Christian captors. Osiander demonstrates the sad truth that “the Jews have no hope that they will be released, but think only on the easiest way they can get from life to death.” Osiander states:

I have often asked the Jews why they confess to something, which threatens their lives and taints them with dangerous suspicion. They have answered me that when a Jew is being tortured it does not matter whether he tells what is true or not, for the torturer will not stop until he has heard what he wants to hear.⁸⁴

Osiander examines more closely the pamphlet concerning the recent 1529 Pösing trial in Hungary and sets out to discredit the charge of ritual murder made against Pösing’s Jews. Throughout this sec-

⁸² Osiander may be referring to the Papal Bull of Martin V issued 20 February 1422, which suggests that during the times of death and other calamities, some Christians are tempted to make ritual murder accusations against their Jewish neighbors in order to rob the Jews of their property. See Moritz Stern, *Die päpstlichen Bullen über die Blutbeschuldigung* (Berlin, 1893).

⁸³ “Blutbeschuldigung,” 236, 34–239, 24.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 234, 21–27.

tion, Osiander expresses his shock at the unjust treatment of the Jews, and he sets out to show that the judicial procedures and circumstances surrounding the trial were suspect. Osiander argues, quite effectively, that it was political corruption and the misuse of torture that led to the confessions of the accused Jews. People should first check whether the lord of the region is “a miserable, ambitious tyrant or a drunken, gambling womanizer.” Perhaps the ruler encouraged the false accusation of the Jews for ulterior motives.⁸⁵ He finds it suspicious that “whenever people inform on [the Jews], they seize the Jews’ possessions.”⁸⁶ Osiander questions the judicial procedure of a trial, which took place within eight days: “[The Jews] were taken captive, questioned, judged, and burned, all in eight days.”⁸⁷ The first time that the Jews were interrogated (without torture) they denied any wrong-doing. Later, under physical duress, the Jews renounced their innocence. In his final comments on the Pösing trial, Osiander states that while only six Jews confessed to the crime, over thirty were burned: “Why was it necessary to kill innocent Jewish women and children? Is that not against godly, natural, and imperial law?”⁸⁸ Since it is “godly, natural, and imperial law that only evil-doers and not the innocent may be executed,” Osiander concludes that “the case in Pösing is clearly unjust.”⁸⁹ His conclusion, that “many pious and Christian rulers, lords, and authorities—especially those in Nuremberg, do not build a case when they have no proof,” makes clear that he is not suggesting that the authorities of his region would resort to torture in order to obtain a confession.⁹⁰ Osiander points out that in all of the places where the Jews have been accused of ritual murder, people could only testify that they saw a dead, pierced, child; however, they had no real evidence against the Jews. Osiander chides those investigators who “have such good noses that when a body is produced, they can tell who the murderer is, without any evidence.”⁹¹

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 246, 32–33.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 241, 15–16.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 242, 8.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 245, 13–15.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 245, 20–21.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 235, 15–18.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 242, 4–5.

Osiander's Attack on Catholicism

Osiander's evangelical convictions are evident throughout the pamphlet, and though this is not a doctrinal treatise, Osiander does not miss a chance to elevate Lutheran teaching while attacking Catholic dogma. Some attacks are subtle, such as when Osiander describes Jewish commitment to the Law in order to gain salvation:

Just as Christians, who, not through works, but through faith are saved, find the killing of children shocking and cruel, how much worse is this to the Jews for it is not only against the Law, but would stand in the way of their salvation.⁹²

Implicit in this text is Osiander's assumption that Christians are saved by faith alone and not through works, as the Jews—and his Catholic enemies—believe. Catholic emphasis on works is subtly denigrated, for it is associated with the works of Judaism that have been replaced by evangelical reliance on faith alone.

Osiander's blanket condemnation of people's willingness to treat the Jews so unjustly is a sharp attack on Catholic Christendom, which so willingly condemned the Jews for crimes they do not commit.

Either Christians are a foolhardy people that they would believe such things, or [the charge of blood libel] is not true. Or perhaps Christians know that the charge is false, but nevertheless murder these innocent people under false pretenses. Is it any wonder that Christianity is hated and found disreputable by the unbelieving?⁹³

Christians are either fools who are easily duped into persecuting the Jews, or they are themselves evil perpetrators of cruelty toward the Jews. Either way, Catholicism is condemned, for it either encourages ignorance or sinfully calls for the Jews' destruction. In many ways, Osiander's conclusion ("Is it any wonder that Christianity is hated and found disreputable by the unbelieving") is similar to Luther's early chastisement of Christian treatment of the Jews in *That Jesus Christ was Born a Jew*, published in 1523. "Were I a Jew," Luther declares, "and saw what blockheads and wind-bags rule and guide Christendom, I would rather become a sow than a Christian."⁹⁴ In both cases, the reformers sought to uphold evangelical tenets in oppo-

⁹² Ibid., 227, 31–228, 4.

⁹³ Ibid., 246, 9–13.

⁹⁴ Martin Luther, *That Jesus Christ was Born a Jew*, LW 45:200.

sition to Catholic doctrine, by suggesting that the persecution of the Jews—or in the case of Luther, the obduracy of the Jews to convert—was caused by Catholic depravity and false doctrine.

If the premise that ritual murder is false can be accepted, Osiander wonders who is responsible for the pervasive, widely held belief that the Jews are child-murderers? He assesses the situation as follows:

Since the birth of Christ, at no time has there been mention of this charge of child murder [leveled against the Jews] in any place. However, it all began in the last two or three hundred years, when the monks and priests instituted all sorts of roguery and deceit, with pilgrimages and other false miracles, openly fooling and blinding Christians.⁹⁵

What is at the root of this antipathy of the Catholic clergy toward the innocent Jews? Osiander knows that “no people are more cruelly persecuted than the Jews,” and he suggests a reason for that persecution:

[B]ecause the Jews better understand the Scriptures than [the Catholic clergy] do, they have treated them disparagingly with hatred and persecution, going so far as to call for the burning of their books.⁹⁶

However, God would not allow this, choosing instead to preserve the Jews “for the good of Christianity, so that through the Hebrew language Christians might come to a correct understanding of their faith.”⁹⁷ Fearing the negative power of the Catholic clergy, Osiander lashes out:

⁹⁵ “Blutbeschuldigung,” 233, 3–5. Earlier in his treatise Osiander looks to history, citing Tertullian as proof that during the early days of the Church, “Christians were falsely accused by the pagans of murdering children,” prompted by “the Devil, who is the father of lies, to make this false charge against the Christians.” In like manner the same charge is leveled against Jews today. *Ibid.*, 233–34.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 233, 10–13. Like many reformers, Osiander sided with Reuchlin in his controversy with the Dominicans of Cologne about whether Jewish books should be burned. In his foreword to a letter to the bishop of Bamberg, Osiander bluntly declared his disgust at those who would destroy the Hebrew texts. Not only do the papists “forbid the common man access to the Bible,” he lamented, but they also “publicly request that the emperor burn the Hebrew books.” In his letter to the bishop, Osiander condemned Catholic suppression of Scripture and the role that they played in corrupting Scripture, so that due to “lazy copying . . . the translations from the Hebrew language are no longer . . . pure.” He condemns Catholic desire to burn the Hebrew texts, “which they judge to be evil . . . [for] if the Hebrew books are burned . . . we will no longer have the Hebrew language, nor will we be able to use the Hebrew Bible any longer.” “Vorrede zum Brief J. von Schwartzberg,” (1524), GA 1:292–93 (no. 24).

⁹⁷ “Blutbeschuldigung,” 233, 13–15.

All of this is to be feared, for [the monks] have such hatred for the Jews that they not only spread these falsehoods about the Jews, but they also treat Christians, or those whom they call Lutherans, in the same manner.⁹⁸

Osiander's attack on the clergy, who have "instituted all sorts of roguery and deceit," pronounces Catholic culpability for crimes against the Jews, while at the same time broadly equating the lies circulating about the Jews with the false teachings of Catholicism. The lie of ritual murder was fed to a gullible public at the same time as other Catholic lies, and all were naively embraced. Osiander finds it likely that the "priests and monks . . . whip up great miracles and create new pilgrimages in order to gain the appearance of greater sanctity."⁹⁹ These sanctimonious acts, and the blood libel charge, are part and parcel of Catholic determination to trick and corrupt the populace so that they will remain blind under papal domination. What is to be gained by perpetuating these lies? The idea of blood libel serves for the Catholic clergy as one of the many "proofs" of the salvific power of the blood and as a way of affirming, through the "whip[ping] up [of] great miracles," the truth and power of Catholic doctrine.

For too long Christians have blindly accepted the warped and prejudiced superstitions fed to them by the monks and priests. Osiander rejects the charge of blood libel—so central to Catholicism—and seeks to turn the tables on those in religious authority. Those guilty are not the Jews, but rather are those who falsely and maliciously accuse the Jews of wrong-doing. In antithesis to the Catholic clergy who are upheld as a godless and superstitious influence on society, the Jews are presented as people committed to the pursuit of godly living.

Osiander's attack on mendicant suspicion of Jewish learning illustrates not only how deeply he reveres the study of Scripture but also makes clear his doubts concerning Catholic integrity. He suggests that the Catholic clergy are so fearful of superior Jewish knowledge that they ultimately want to "exterminate the Jews."¹⁰⁰ Aligning himself on the side of truth, Osiander concludes, "God has not allowed

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 233, 15–19.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 247, 5–6.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 247, 6.

[the destruction of the Jews and their texts] for the good of Christianity, and moreover that Christians might come to a correct understanding of their faith through the Hebrew language.”¹⁰¹ By setting the desire of the Catholic clergy for the destruction of Jewish texts in opposition to the will of God that the Jews’ books be preserved, Osiander subtly declares the Catholics to be enemies of God. Moreover, Lutherans, as defenders of the Jews against the ritual murder charge and of Jewish texts, are placed in accord with the will of God. Implicit in this is the idea that the Catholics have sought to eradicate Jewish scholarship in order to maintain popular ignorance about Scripture and, hence, maintain their devilish spiritual control over society.

According to Osiander, the fact that most people believe that the Jews are murderers shows the perverse power of the false teaching of Catholicism. The blood libel charge appeals to the avarice within many; the desire for Jewish goods no doubt motivates some common people to accuse the Jews. Popular prejudices against the Jews, kindled by Catholic teaching, propels people to readily accuse the Jews of ritual murder, for “what we want to see and desire, we also believe willingly.”¹⁰² Cruel hatred for the Jews leads some Christians to unjustly accuse and kill innocent Jewish women and men. It is easy to see why all of Germany has been deceived, for the Devil is behind the ritual murder charge. Osiander’s statement that in the early Church pagans were “prompted by the Devil, who is the father of lies, to make this charge against the Christians” provokes the not too subtle idea that it is the Devil working through the Catholics, who now spread the lie about Jews.¹⁰³

The Catholics have not only led the common people into a trusting acceptance of false teaching, but they are also responsible for those in authority who have condemned the Jews. Here Osiander treads a thin line between criticizing Catholic influence over political authorities and criticizing those authorities outright. Throughout his treatise, Osiander makes clear his utmost respect for godly secular authorities and his determination to exonerate them of any wrong-doing. Despite the fact that occasionally rulers do succumb to the temptation to persecute the Jews, Osiander excuses them,

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 233, 13–15.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 241, 7–8.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 233, 25.

“because it is quite possible that they were misled into believing that the Jews were guilty.”¹⁰⁴ Who misled secular rulers and to what extent are those authorities responsible for their behavior?

... I cannot really suspect anyone, but would rather excuse everyone, particularly the authorities. I do not hold [them] accountable ... , except for believing too easily the enemies of the Jews, and for putting too much trust in false counsel.¹⁰⁵

In Osiander's opinion, secular authorities are guilty only of gullibility. He does not miss a chance, when elevating the importance of evidence in ascertaining the truth, to declare his abiding loyalty to the city of Nuremberg. “Many pious and Christian rulers, lords, and authorities, especially those in Nuremberg,” he informs his reader, “do not build a case when they have no proof.”¹⁰⁶

Lest the reader take offence at Osiander's apparent pride in his rational approach to the ritual murder charge, he asserts, “I thank God that He has protected and preserved me, so that I do not believe that the Jews murder children.”¹⁰⁷ In his treatise, Osiander demarcates clearly between those under the “false counsel” of the wicked, and those who through rational thought and the truth of the evangelical faith, behave with proper Christian decorum. It is not enough, according to Osiander, for a Christian to simply refrain from improper behavior, but “if he sees others doing it, he must not keep silent or agree to it.”¹⁰⁸ Only then will the Catholic stranglehold on society be broken. The rational thought of the Lutheran movement, based upon the evidence of Scripture, is presented in contrast to the superstitious and destructive teachings of the Catholics.

Conclusion

The publication of Osiander's blood libel treatise provoked responses from secular leaders and churchmen, including the Catholic theo-

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 225, 22–23.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 246, 23–27. Osiander lists several signs that would suggest the abuse of Jews by those in power, including a ruler who is a tyrant or a drunk, a ruler who is misled by wicked councilors, or a prince who is heavily indebted to Jews in his territory.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 235, 15–18.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 246, 26–27.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 225, 1–5.

gian Johannes Eck and Martin Luther. Eck attacked Osiander's so-called defense of the Jews by accusing its author of inappropriate philo-Semitism. However, Osiander's life and work belie any such interpretation. Osiander's view of Judaism was clearly Christological, and he considered the religion obsolete, for Scripture spoke of the fulfillment of the Old Testament with the New. Contemporary Jews who continued to reject Christ as Messiah were "unbelieving" and "unrepentant," and most of Osiander's efforts were directed toward those Jews willing to be baptized. Osiander's "sympathetic" treatment of Jews resulted from his urgent hope that Jews be brought to faith in Christ and his conviction that Jewish languages be preserved.

Rather than a man tolerant of Jews and Judaism, Osiander was a man obsessed with proving the orthodoxy of the evangelical movement—proof that could be better substantiated with a thorough and accurate knowledge of the Jewish languages and texts. And he was equally obsessed with undermining popular allegiance to Rome. Throughout his blood libel text, Osiander's antipathy toward the Roman Catholic Church undergirds his defense of the Jews, and it was his hatred of the former rather than his support of the latter that served as the ultimate point of his treatise. Osiander had hope for the Jews, for it was his conviction that God would work through the evangelicals to bring contemporary Jews to Christ. That hope, however, was underpinned by an equally emphatic belief that it was the corruption and false teaching of the Roman Catholic Church that had prevented Jewish conversion. Through his life and work, Osiander's vision remained firmly fixed on the true threat to Christendom: Roman Catholicism.

THE CATHOLIC REFORM, JEWS, AND JUDAISM IN SIXTEENTH-CENTURY GERMANY

Robert Bireley

Johannes Eck published his *Refutation of a Jewish Booklet* in 1541, and a second edition appeared the following year.¹ The 189-page work revealed the thought of a major if not necessarily representative Catholic figure. At the time the fifty-five-year-old Eck, professor of theology at the University of Ingolstadt in Bavaria, stood out as the most prominent Catholic theologian in Germany. Having come to the fore as the opponent of Martin Luther at the Leipzig Debate of 1519, he soon sought Luther's excommunication. At the Diet of Augsburg in 1530 he played a major role as a champion of Catholic orthodoxy. His hate-filled *Refutation* must be placed in the context of the struggle with the Reformation as must most Catholic writing on the Jews in the sixteenth century, in which heretics generally came off worse than Jews. The *Refutation* compiled and consolidated most of the charges and allegations against the Jews stemming from the late Middle Ages, and it has been called "the most massive and systematic formulation of the blood libel" or charge of ritual murder.² My essay looks first at Eck's volume, then sketches briefly the policy of Catholic rulers toward the Jews, and finally and most importantly, investigates the extent to which thirteen leading Catholic preachers in Germany during the century shared the views of Eck. They all published catechisms and/or cycles of sermons for the whole church year called "postils," which circulated widely especially among clergy for use in their own sermons and can be considered representative of Catholic thought. To my knowledge these catechisms and sermons, in contrast to polemical works, have never been systematically studied from this or any other perspective. Indeed, apart

¹ *Ains Judenbüechlins verlegung: darin ein Christ/ gantzer Christenheit zu schmach/ will es geschehe den Juden unrecht in bezichtigung der Christen kinder mordt* (Ingolstadt, 1541). Max Ziegelbauer, *Johannes Eck: Mann der Kirche im Zeitalter der Glaubensspaltung* (Sankt Ottilien, 1987), 190; see Schreckenberg, *Adversus-Judaeos-Texte*, vol. 3.

² Hsia, *Myth of Ritual Murder*, 126.

from treatments of Eck, very little has been published on the Catholic attitude toward Jews in the sixteenth century in Germany. This contrasts sharply with the considerable literature on Luther and the Protestants. Hence this essay constitutes a first effort.

Johannes Eck and the Jews

Eck's volume was provoked by the anonymous publication of a treatise that persuasively defended Jews generally against charges of ritual murder and more specifically against such accusations in Pösing in Hungary in 1529 and Sappenfeld in the diocese of Eichstätt in 1540. Eck correctly surmised Andreas Osiander, Lutheran reformer of Nuremberg, to be the author of the anonymous volume.³ He pointedly dedicated his *Refutation* to the Bishop of Trent, Christopher von Madruzzo, because of the diocese's association with Simon of Trent, a two-and-one-half-year-old boy allegedly murdered by Jews for ritual purposes in 1475 and subsequently canonized after a highly controversial trial of the putative criminals.⁴ In his preface Eck stated his purpose to be not only to defend the authorities in their prosecution of Jews but to show, more generally, the mischief and murders for which the Jews were responsible as well as the irreparable harm they inflicted on Christendom.⁵ The virulence of Eck's invective may have been prompted by his desire to tar Osiander and his fellow reformers with the brush of association with the Jews or, as Ronnie Hsia suggests, by his own personal viewing, as a teenager, of the child victim of an alleged ritual murder.⁶ Luther's still more venomous *On the Jews and Their Lies* did not appear until 1543.⁷ Throughout Eck addressed his opponent as the *Judenwater*.

³ *Ob es war und glaublich sey/ dass die Juden der Christen Kinder heimlich erwürgen/ und jr blut gebrauchen/ein treffenliche Schrift/ auff eines yeden urteyl gestelt;* Hsia, *Myth of Ritual Murder*, 136–37. Hsia nicely summarizes this pamphlet on 136–43.

⁴ See Hsia, *Trent*.

⁵ Preface. The microfilm text of Eck's work that I have used does not have any page or folio markings, so that I will cite by chapter.

⁶ David Bagchi, "Catholic Anti-Judaism in Reformation Germany: the Case of Johann Eck," in *Christianity and Judaism*, ed. Diana Wood (Oxford, 1992), 257; Hsia, *Myth of Ritual Murder*, 128–31.

⁷ LW 47:137–306 = WA 53:412–552.

Eck emphasized the bloodthirstiness of the Jews in order directly to counter Osiander's defense of them against the blood libel, and he took up in order the points made by Osiander. One could find many murders committed by Jews in the Old and the New Testaments, despite the prohibition in the Ten Commandments that Osiander had cited in their defense. (cc. 2–3) Eck charged the Jews with the murder of Jesus as well as the prophets before and the early Christians after him, but he did not belabor the accusation of deicide or "Christ-killer." (c. 4) Jews in fact saw themselves not only as justified but encouraged to take Christian lives as a deed pleasing to God, he affirmed, implicitly justifying extreme defensive measures on the part of Christians.⁸ He reiterated the frequent accusations of poisoning of wells and employing magic to undo Christians. (c. 7) The Jews desecrated of images of Mary and Jesus and profaned the Blessed Sacrament. (cc. 20–21) Aiming at Osiander's main defense against the blood libel, Eck elaborated a long list of putative child murders culled from chronicles and histories from all over Europe and featuring the case of Simon of Trent. (cc. 12–13) Jews needed Christian blood to heal them of a blood disease that came over them as a result of the curse that resulted from their words at the trial of Jesus, "His blood be upon us and upon our children." Many Jews were not aware at all of the child murders, nor did all Jews suffer from the mysterious blood illness because they did not all join in the clamor for the death of Christ. Yet they all hated Christians, and if they could not kill Christ, they sought to kill Christians. (c. 11) They both hated and envied the Gentiles, all of whom they considered to be dogs (c. 5); indeed, contrary to Osiander's assertion, they prayed daily for the destruction of the Roman Empire. (c. 10) If the Jews were ever to acquire power, they would make the Christian persecution of Diocletian look like child's play. (c. 25)

What then was to be done with the Jews? How were they to be treated? Here the text took on a slightly more moderate tone. To be sure, the Talmud and other Jewish writings that were considered to be obstacles to their conversion were to be destroyed. (c. 16) Just as there existed a long list of common Christian accusations against the Jews, so there also had developed a tradition regarding the

⁸ Brigitte Hägler, *Die Christen und die 'Judenfrage': Am Beispiel der Schriften Osianders und Ecks zum Ritualmordvorwurf* (Erlangen, 1992), 81.

Christian treatment of Jews on which the author could draw. For Christians the Jews constituted a special case. They were not pagans over whom the Church claimed no jurisdiction and for whom it generally disavowed a tactic of forced conversion. Nor were they heretics who had gone back on their baptismal commitment over whom the Church claimed jurisdiction as well as the right to apply force and to punish.⁹ Accordingly, Eck's theological position on Christian-Jewish relations made concessions to the Jews well beyond what heretics might expect. Despite their hatred of Christians, the latter ought to show patience with the Jews, for a number of reasons. First, the Church rested on the foundation of the apostles and disciples, all of whom were Jews; for this reason Christians ought to be grateful to the Jews and thank God for them. Christ himself was a Jew. Christians also received from the Jews the Old Testament and the Prophets, which gave witness to Christ and to the Gospels. The Jews served as reminders of the historical fact of Christ's life and of the Crucifixion; without them it would prove difficult to establish the historicity of these events. God's justice was revealed in the punishment for their part in the Passion and death of Jesus. They were compelled to wander the earth in insecurity, without any temple, and so to give witness on behalf of their enemies. Finally, according to the prophecies, they would eventually be converted. (c. 22)

Provided the Jews lived in peace and did not blaspheme Christ, Christians ought to allow them to live according to their own customs, even help them to preserve their synagogues but not to permit the construction of new ones. Jews should not be summoned to court on the Sabbath, nor should they be subjected to any violence nor compelled to perform any unusual services. Nor should they be pressured into baptism or faith, though they might be enticed to them. (c. 22) Later in the text, Eck suggested they might be compelled to hear Christian sermons, but essentially they should be permitted to practice their faith until God bestowed on them the grace of baptism. (c. 23)

Eck went on to list a number of commands and prohibitions for Jews that aimed chiefly at preventing socialization between Jews and Christians and the consequent danger of intermarriage or conver-

⁹ See, for example, Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* 2-2, question 10, articles 5-6, 11, and question 11.

sion to Judaism, and at keeping Jews in a secondary status in what was understood to be a Christian society. Many of these measures dated from the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, when a Christian society or Christendom had been in the process of consolidation, and they had been incorporated into canon law.¹⁰ Jews should wear a distinctive sign, a measure it should be noted that was also intended for Muslims by Lateran IV.¹¹ Jews were not to hold any public office nor to participate in crafts where they were likely to oppress Christians or cause them to complain. They might not have Christian servants—here the danger of conversion worried Eck—but Christians might work for them as carpenters or in similar functions. Several restrictions were placed on access to the courts, but Jews were to be permitted to sue in the courts over violence done to them as well as debts unpaid to them. (c. 23)

Only in the penultimate chapter did Eck arrive at a complaint against Jews that Osiander had not taken up, usury. The term usury itself was undergoing a transformation in the course of the sixteenth century. Originally it had designated the taking of any interest on a loan, but was now starting to take on its modern meaning of excessive interest. The Church following Aristotle's theory of money had long prohibited interest of any kind on a loan but was now beginning to soften its stand. Eck himself participated actively in the theological discussion of interest and had come out in support of the legitimacy of the so-called "triple contract" which nearly amounted to interest of five per cent.¹² The *Reichspolizeiordnungen* of 1548 and 1577 permitted this rate generally.¹³

Eck inveighed as much against princes and lords who allowed the Jews to charge interest as he did against the Jews themselves. An element of popular resentment against the wealthy and powerful colored his remarks. Usury offended against the natural law as well as against both the Old and the New Testaments. Not only the Jews themselves but those who allowed them to charge interest owed

¹⁰ *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, ed. Norman Tanner et al. (Washington, 1990) 1:265–67; for their incorporation into canon law, see Bagchi, "Catholic Anti-Judaism in Reformation Germany," 261, n. 41.

¹¹ Muslim authorities also required Jews to wear an identifying badge; see Paul Johnson, *A History of the Jews* (New York, 1987), 204.

¹² John T. Noonan, *The Scholastic Analysis of Usury* (Cambridge, MA, 1957), 208–11.

¹³ Imke Koch, *Judeneuerordnungen im Hochstift Würzburg (15.–18. Jh.)* (Frankfurt am Main, 1999), 92, n. 28.

restitution to the community at least in the form of social welfare projects for the poor. In what was clearly a distortion, Eck asserted that the Jewish elite lived in comfort and luxury while ordinary Christians struggled to survive. A poor Christian waited at the door of an official while a wealthy Jew walked right in. Rulers and the Christian elite permitted this because of the taxes they collected and the loans they themselves received from the Jews. Why would wealthy Jews want to share the poverty of most Christians? So they were dissuaded from conversion. Jews should be tolerated, he continued referring to the former chapter, but they should work with their hands in the sweat of their brow mindful that they were to serve the Christians. Nor should they be allowed to sell drugs or medicines, spices, or clothing. If they were treated with contempt, as they were by the Turks, they would be more likely to convert. (c. 24)

Jewish Policies of German Catholic Princes

The Jewish policy of the Catholic states in Germany varied considerably both with respect to toleration as well as to the role of religion in determining it, and the complexity of the Empire's political organization enabled the Jews to find niches of tolerance. No uniform policy of the German Catholic states toward Jews existed. Generally speaking throughout the sixteenth century the emperors showed themselves to be sympathetic to Jewish concerns. At the Reichstag of Speyer in 1544 Charles V granted the Jews a wide-ranging *Schutzbrief*, regularly renewed by subsequent emperors, that protected them against the closure of synagogues and schools and charges of ritual murder, assured them of free passage and protection on the roads, and empowered them to bring their complaints before the *Reichshofrat*.¹⁴

But the territorial states continued to increase their reach at the expense of the central imperial authority and had for the most part secured de facto jurisdiction over the Jews or the *Judenregal* as well as over the head taxes collected from the Jews, the *Judenschutz*. With the Confession of Augsburg of 1530 first the Protestant and then the

¹⁴ J. Friedrich Battenberg, *Die Juden in Deutschland von 16. bis zum Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Munich, 2001), 15.

Catholic churches initiated the process of confessionalization that would consolidate their identity and bind them to particular territorial states, thus rendering the Jews more than ever “outsiders.” Yet Jews enjoyed a position superior to heretics, especially the Anabaptists, in many states. With both government and church increasingly intent upon creating order and disciplining their populations, for example, through church orders (*Kirchenordnungen*), Jews found themselves in the states where they remained increasingly subject to *Judenordnungen*. Christian bankers had by now seized control of the major money business as the economy expanded rapidly at the start of the sixteenth century, and the Church seemed to recognize in practice the maximum rate of five per cent interest and the titles by which Christian bankers had long circumvented the laws on usury.

The number of Jews in Germany at the start of the century seems to have amounted to roughly 7,000 families or 25,000 to 30,000 individuals.¹⁵ Since the Black Death of 1348–49 and its subsequent visitations, the formerly largely urban Jews had been expelled from most of the major German imperial cities, with Frankfurt and Worms being notable exceptions. In Nuremberg, where the expulsion took place in 1499, competition for the small banking business, the desire of the city to confiscate the Jewish quarter, and a growing sense of community common to many of the German imperial cities at the time, which militated also against clerical outsiders, seem to have been deciding factors rather than directly religious motives.¹⁶ In some cases Jews succeeded in establishing themselves in nearby suburbs as in Fürth outside Nuremberg, but for the most part Jews were compelled to reside increasingly in small towns and villages unevenly spread across the Empire, often in the smaller and less organized jurisdictions. Generally prohibited from owning and cultivating land, they engaged in petty commerce as in the horse or cattle trade and dealt in mortgages and small-scale moneylending where they were exempt from the Church’s laws on usury. As a group, the Jews were

¹⁵ Yacov Guggenheim, “Meeting on the Road: Encounters between German Jews and Christians on the Margins of Society,” in *In and Out of the Ghetto: Jewish-Gentile Relations in Late Medieval and Early Modern Germany*, ed. R. Po-chia Hsia and Hartmut Lehmann (Cambridge, 1995), 125; Arno Herzig, *Jüdische Geschichte in Deutschland* (Munich, 1997), 97–98, gives the much lower number of 8,000 to 10,000 for the end of the century.

¹⁶ Herzig, *Jüdische Geschichte in Deutschland*, 66–67.

not wealthy. Their contact with villagers and peasants as well as with tradesmen, however, often enough led to friction and charges of exploitation through high interest rates and unfair competition. Legal interest rates for Jews could be high. In the mid-fifteenth century they reached 46% in Würzburg. At Esslingen they stood at 23 or 30% depending upon the amount of the loan but had come down to 15% by 1529.¹⁷ As Arno Herzig writes, "It is difficult correctly to evaluate the property relations and the opportunities for credit of Jewish traders in the sixteenth century." In Worms, a city to be sure, the citizens owed a total of 15,649 Gulden to roughly three hundred Jews.¹⁸

Nearly all Protestant territories expelled the Jews in the course of the sixteenth century, encouraged often enough by the strong anti-Jewish turn of Luther at the end of his life. Yet Catholic Bavaria showed itself as inhospitable as any Protestant state. It had turned them out as early as 1442/1450, and Duke Maximilian, probably the leading German Counter-Reformation prince, denied them even passage through his territory in 1616.¹⁹ In the Habsburg lands of Austria and Bohemia to the east, the fate of the Jews seems to have fluctuated widely. But as Robert Evans writes, "Despite the occasional threats of banishment, the Habsburgs proved broadly accommodating towards the Jews, and their own chronicler is loud in praise of the sovereigns."²⁰ They were forced to leave Bohemia briefly in 1541, but by 1600 Prague housed the largest Jewish population of any city of the Empire and had become a center of Jewish life. In 1627 Ferdinand II's new constitution for Bohemia, the *Verneuerte Landesordnung*, prohibited all non-Catholic religions except the Jewish.²¹ In Austria the situation does not seem to have been as favorable. In 1572 Emperor Maximilian II expelled the Jews from Vienna but this was only gradually implemented, and by 1582 a small colony

¹⁷ Koch, *Judenverordnungen im Hochstift Würzburg*, 93, n. 33.

¹⁸ Herzig, *Jüdische Geschichte in Deutschland*, 107 and 109.

¹⁹ Josef Kirmeier, "Aufnahme, Verfolgung und Vertreibung: Zur Judenpolitik bayerischen Herzöge im Mittelalter," in *Geschichte und Kultur der Juden in Bayern*, ed. Manfred Treml and Josef Kirmeier (Munich, 1988), 1:95 and 101–03.

²⁰ R.J.W. Evans, *Rudolf II and his World: A Study in Intellectual History, 1576–1612* (Oxford, 1973), 240.

²¹ R.J.W. Evans, *The Making of the Habsburg Monarchy, 1550–1700* (Oxford, 1979), 198 and 415; Herzig, *Jüdische Geschichte in Deutschland*, 93.

had returned under direct jurisdiction of the court.²² Frequently, banishments were not rigorously enforced and permissions to reside were granted for only limited periods, thus contributing to the insecurity of life for many Jews. It should be noted, however, that no pogroms or mass actions against the Jews took place in sixteenth-century Germany.

More hospitable to the Jews in Germany were some ecclesiastical princes including the archbishops of Mainz and Cologne in the Rhineland.²³ Yet the number of Jews was small; the *Gemeinde* book of the community in Mainz listed only 24 names at the end of the century.²⁴ Ernest of Bavaria, Archbishop of Cologne from 1583–1612, remarked that “the Jews had been tolerated for some hundred years now in his principality,” with the implication that he was not about to change this.²⁵ Often in order to maintain the presence of the Jews, the bishops had to fight with their estates, chapters, and towns, all of which represented popular opposition to toleration. In Hildesheim the people of the heavily Protestant town in the ecclesiastical state went so far as to identify the Jews and the Jesuits as undesirable elements.²⁶ *Judenordnungen* regulated the life of the Jews and their relations with Christians. Cologne’s of 1599, for example, prohibited Jews from living near Christian churches or routes of procession, from blaspheming Christ, and from living under one roof with Christians, and it directed them to remain in their homes on the major Christian feasts.²⁷ To what extent the *Judenordnungen* were influenced by the theological reasons for the toleration of Jews as found in Eck is difficult to determine. J. Friedrich Battenberg thinks that at least a hope for an eventual conversion of the Jews was a factor.²⁸ Certainly the taxes that they collected from the Jews strongly

²² Ignaz Schwarz, in *Geschichte der Stadt Wien*, ed. Anton Mayer, vol. 5 (Vienna, 1911): 46–53.

²³ Jonathan Israel, *European Jewry in the Age of Mercantilism, 1550–1750*, 3rd ed. (London, 1998), 34–35; see J. Friedrich Battenberg, “Jews in Ecclesiastical Territories of the Holy Roman Empire,” in *In and out of the Ghetto*, 247–74.

²⁴ E. L. Ehrlich, “Geschichte und Kultur der Juden in den rheinischen Territorialstaaten: Vom Beginn der Neuzeit bis zum Absolutismus,” in *Monumenta Judaica: 2000 Jahre Geschichte und Kultur der Juden am Rhein. Handbuch*, ed. Konrad Schilling (Cologne, 1963) 1:260.

²⁵ Cited by Herzig, *Jüdische Geschichte in Deutschland*, 86.

²⁶ Peter Aufgebauer, *Die Geschichte der Juden in der Stadt Hildesheim im Mittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit* (Hildesheim, 1984), 93.

²⁷ Herzig, *Jüdische Geschichte in Deutschland*, 86.

²⁸ Battenberg, “Jews in Ecclesiastical Territories,” 251 and 266.

inclined these ecclesiastical princes in the direction of toleration, and for the most part, they did not seek to control the lives of their subjects to the extent that other princes did.

But some militant prince-bishops opposed toleration. The prince-bishop of Augsburg, expelled the Jews in 1574.²⁹ The Jews of Würzburg had long lived under the threat of banishment but were generally tolerated until the mid-sixteenth century. By that time *Freibriefe* for individual households had replaced the single *Freibrief* for the Jewish community. Each year the head of the household was required to pay a fee, usually ten Gulden, which permitted him to engage in moneylending and in commerce but not in trade or agriculture. Rabbis and other servants of the Jewish community were not required to pay a fee to reside but they were restricted to their activities for the community. At the death of the prince-bishop, all agreements lapsed, and a special community contribution had to be paid at the accession of the new ruler.³⁰ Bishop Melchior Zobel von Giebelstadt (1544–58) took the Jews under his protection, if for financial reasons. In 1547, 29 Jews lived in the city of Würzburg, in 1556, 60. Bishop Melchior in 1544 introduced the gold ring to be worn by the Jews as a sign of identification but apparently for social rather than either religious or economic reasons, to distinguish them as a social group.³¹ But anti-Jewish feeling built up in the chapter and in the city council, and his successor, Friedrich von Wirsberg (1558–73), issued an order of banishment on 23 September 1560. The order combined an economic and a religious justification complaining of the Jews' stubborn rejection of conversion as well as their usurious exploitation.³² Yet overlapping and multiple jurisdictions in the prince-bishopric along with the interspersed holdings of knights in Franconia made it possible for Jews to do business there.³³

Julius Echter von Mespelbrunn greatly consolidated the prince-bishopric of Würzburg as a state and aggressively advanced the Counter-Reformation during his long reign from 1573 to 1617. Immediately upon his succession he took measures to carry out the

²⁹ A. Layer, in *Handbuch der bayerischen Geschichte*, 3 vols., ed. Max Spindler and Andreas Kraus, 2nd ed. (Munich, 1979), 2:1056.

³⁰ Koch, *Judenverordnungen im Hochstift Würzburg*, 39–41.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 164–65.

³² *Ibid.*, 27, 34, and 109–10.

³³ *Ibid.*, 3 and 39.

expulsion of the Jews decreed by his predecessor and even to prohibit all business contact between Christians and Jews. He confiscated the Jewish cemetery in 1576 for the construction of the *Juliuspital* which would subsequently be of importance for the mission to the Jews.³⁴ He only banished Protestants in 1586 in his effort to create a Catholic state, perhaps waiting until their political resistance weakened. Yet financial more than religious reasons seem to have motivated Julius. Instead of profiting from taxes collected from the Jews and possibly credit, as did many other prince-bishops, he professedly sought to protect his subjects from economic exploitation. Christian creditors also found themselves the object of his measures, for charging interest on loans up to 50%.³⁵ Towards the end of his reign Julius seems to have softened his stand, and his successors did not manifest the same strictness with the Jews.³⁶

Catholic Preachers on the Jews

The thirteen preachers whose catechisms and sermon cycles have been surveyed include two Jesuits, Peter Canisius (1521–97), whose *Large Catechism* was published in more than 130 editions and from its first appearance in 1554 exercised an enormous influence in Germany where it appeared in both Latin and German,³⁷ and Georg Scherer (1540–1605); two Franciscans, Johannes Wild (1495–1554) and Johannes Nas (1534–90), who became auxiliary bishop in Brixen; one Dominican, Johannes Dietenberger (1475–1537); three diocesan priests who later became bishops, Johannes Feucht (1540–80), auxiliary of Bamberg, Michael Helling (1506–61), last Catholic bishop of Merseburg, and Friedrich Nausea (1496–1552), bishop of Vienna; four other diocesan priests, Georg Witzel (1501–73), who converted to Protestantism in the 1520s, to return to Catholicism in 1533, Martin Eisengrein (1535–78), Michael Buchinger (1520–71), and

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 35 and 147–48; M. Agethen, “Bekehrungsversuche an Juden und Judentaufen in der frühen Neuzeit,” *Aschkenas* 1 (1991): 90–91.

³⁵ Koch, *Judenverordnungen im Hochstift Würzburg*, 146.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 36.

³⁷ *Catechismi Latini et Germanici*, ed. Friedrich Streicher, 2 vols. (Rome, 1933–36); “Canisius, St. Peter,” *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 3rd ed. (Oxford, 1997), 276.

Bartholomaeus Wagner (1561–1604); and one layman, Georg Eder (1523–87), a convert and imperial official in Vienna. Most of them saw their works go through several if not numerous editions, and together they represented all the areas of Germany that remained Catholic.

As one makes one's way through these catechisms and sermons, one fact immediately jumps out: neither the blood libel or ritual killings nor desecrations of the host or Catholic symbols are mentioned, and the association of Jews with usury has become extremely tenuous. Eck's own cycle of sermons stands out as an exception: he did accuse the Jews of ritual murder mentioning specifically the case of Simon of Trent and he highlighted the cry of the Jews, "His blood be upon us and upon our children."³⁸ Nor do we find any polemical sermons directed against Jews. Indeed, Jews figure little in the catechisms and sermons except that, of course, the writings are filled with the stories, personalities, and prayers from the Hebrew Scriptures. The writers usually pursued a pastoral purpose in their sermons when they mentioned the Jews; they wanted to warn Christians that unless their conduct surpassed that of the Jews, they would suffer the same fate as that unfortunate people. God expected more from them than from the Jews.

To the question in his *Catechism* who is my neighbor, Scherer responded "every man, whether he be Jew or heathen, Christian or heretic, known or unknown, friend or enemy."³⁹ Generally speaking, the medieval sense still found in Eck that the Jews in their relationship to Christians constituted a special category, neither pagans nor heretics, became greatly attenuated in these writings. Canisius in his *Catechism* did distinguish between schismatics, who violated the unity of the Church, heretics who first received the faith but then abandoned or distorted it, and Jews and pagans who never accepted the faith but without designating the Jews as "witnesses to Christ."⁴⁰ In a Christmas sermon he recognized Jewish law and ceremony as a type of the Christian dispensation, and he contrasted the Jews

³⁸ *Homiliarum sive sermonum . . . adversum quoscumque nostri temporis haereticos, super Evangelia de tempore* (n.p. [Ingolstadt?], 1537) 1:547 and 551.

³⁹ *Catechismus* (Paderborn, 1609), 117. In some cases I have used editions of works that appeared after the death of the author but surely represent his thinking in the course of the sixteenth century.

⁴⁰ *Catechismi Latini et Germanici* 1:89.

favorably with the Protestants in their sense of ritual; they celebrated feast days, used lights, vestments, songs, tithes, and fasts, all abandoned by the heretics.⁴¹ Only Nausea and Eder joined him in this, both seeing many Church ceremonies prefigured in the synagogue. Jewish forms of piety or devotion, Nausea wrote, were deservedly continued or suitably adapted by the Church, whereas moral laws that admit of no change were received in full.⁴² But overall the unique status of the Jews tended to disappear. Buchinger, for example, lumped them together with the Turks and Tartars, and others added the heretics,⁴³ and Eder in his *Catechismus* did not include them explicitly in his list of those outside the Church: pagans and infidels; heretics and schismatics; and the excommunicated.⁴⁴ Nor were the Jews seen now as constituting an intellectual threat to the faith of Christians as they were at times during the Middle Ages.

None of the preachers took up directly the toleration or expulsion of Jews nor did they agitate for measures to be taken against them as did Eck. This does not surprise us since Jews had already been expelled from many Catholic states and those who remained in others numbered few. In some ecclesiastical states, for example, Würzburg and Hildesheim, pressure from below developed for expulsion largely for socioeconomic reasons. But the preachers did not take a position on these conflicts. Nausea insisted on the obligation of rulers to protect Christians from heretics and infidels and especially from the Turks, without naming the Jews.⁴⁵ Canisius in one sermon summoned magistrates to carry out their obligation to resist evil persons and expel enemies of the faith “while preserving the state and the good people from harm.”⁴⁶ But he too failed to mention the Jews.

Adjectives regularly applied to the Jews were “blind,” “stubborn,” and “godless.” Scherer, who was one of the few preachers with

⁴¹ Sermon, 22 August 1563, Augsburg, *Beati Petri Canisii, Societatis Jesu, Epistula et Acta*, ed. Otto Braunsberger, vol. 4 (Freiburg, 1905), 826.

⁴² Nausea, *Catholicus Catechismus* (Cologne, 1543), bk. 1, ff. 195–96r, bk. 4, f. 111r; Eder, *Catechismus Catholicus* (Cologne, 1569), 193.

⁴³ *Postilla oder Auslegung der Sonntäglichen Evangelien und den Festtagen* (Mainz, 1581), f. 8r.

⁴⁴ *Catechismus*, 75.

⁴⁵ *Catholicarum in totius anni, tam de tempore quam de Sanctis evangelia postillarum et homiliarum Epitome* (Cologne, 1543), bk. 1, f. 185.

⁴⁶ *S. Petri Canisii Meditationes seu Notae in evangelicas lectiones*, ed. Friedrich Streicher, 2nd ed. (Munich, 1957) 1:165.

apparent personal contact with Jews, remarked that at the conclusion of their lengthy conversation in which he thought that he had proved that the Messiah had come, an elderly Jew asserted “Whether the Messiah has come or not, I will not become a Christian.”⁴⁷ Indeed, for Scherer, Muslims did not show the degree of hostility that Jews did; the Turks revered Christ and his mother, whereas the Jews called Jesus the son of a whore.⁴⁸ But it was envy that had principally motivated the Jews to put Christ to death, according to the preachers. In asserting this they took the same position as Luther but did not carry it to the extremes that he did.⁴⁹ For the reformer envy continued to be the characteristic feature of the Jews who resented the loss of their privileged position in God’s plan of salvation and so hated Christians. As Canisius wrote, interpreting the Gospel parable of the employer who paid the same wage to all his workers whether they labored the whole day or only a couple hours (Matthew 20), the Jews murmured against the master of the vineyard “envious of the salvation of the Gentiles.”⁵⁰ The preachers do not normally elaborate on the sources of the envy.

In their catechisms the authors had relatively little to say about the Jewish role in the death of Christ, perhaps because they were usually explaining the formulation in the Nicene Creed, “suffered under Pontius Pilate,” which obviously does not speak of the Jews. Canisius’ *Catechism* failed to mention the Jews and asserted that Jesus died at the hands “of the impious judge Pilate.”⁵¹ Later, too, under the title of complicity in sin he used Pilate to illustrate the guilt of one who ordered a sinful act but did not execute it. Just as David bore the guilt for the death of Uriah, so did Pilate for the death of Christ. Although perhaps unwillingly, the Roman governor judged Christ by his authority and handed him over to the Jews to be crucified. But certainly “the citizens of Jerusalem” sinned by demanding the death of Christ.⁵² Dietenberger in his *Catechism* discussed the suffering and death for nine pages without a word about the Jews.⁵³

⁴⁷ *Postill oder Auslegung der sonntäglichen Evangelien*, 4th ed. (Munich, 1610), 80.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 66 and 78.

⁴⁹ Luther, *On the Jews and their Lies*, LW 47:216–17 = WA 53:481–82.

⁵⁰ *Meditationes seu Notae in evangelicas Lectiones* 1:173

⁵¹ *Catechismi Latini et Germanici* 1:86.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 128 and 157–58.

⁵³ *Catechismus* (Mainz, 1537), no pagination.

Eder's *Catechism* affirmed that apart from the Original Sin, "the vices and sins" of humankind from the origin of the world to its end bore the responsibility for the death of Christ.⁵⁴ Yet Nausea's *Catechism* laid the blame for Christ's death on the Jews at one point but at another passed it over completely.⁵⁵

In their sermons, especially in those for the Christian Holy Week, the preachers discussed more in detail the responsibility for Christ's death. More stressed the role of the Jews, and nearly all at least mentioned the sinful deeds of humankind. For Georg Witzel in his sermons on the Passion the greater guilt for Christ's death fell on the Jews, who acted out of envy, than on Pilate, who acted out of fear.⁵⁶ Eisengrein reminded his audience that Christ died for their sins. The "godless Jews" insulted and vilified Christ, "but we their fellows have given cause for his suffering, his cross, and his death."⁵⁷ Michael Helling presented Pilate sympathetically and saw him yielding to the Jews under great pressure.⁵⁸ In Scherer's extremely long sermon on the Passion where he dramatically described the sufferings of Christ in detail, the Jews clearly bore the brunt of the responsibility for the suffering and death of Christ. Yet, "just as the Jews bodily mistreated Christ in the ways we have indicated, we daily do the same spiritually" whenever we condemn or strike our neighbor.⁵⁹ So the authors dealt with the death of Christ in a variety of ways, and to an extent differently whether they were writing catechisms or sermons.

Nearly all the preachers saw the Jews as undergoing divine punishment for their failure to recognize the Messiah and for their part in the death of Christ. This issue was frequently addressed on the tenth Sunday after Trinity, or the eleventh after Pentecost, where the Gospel recounting the tears of Jesus over Jerusalem was read (Luke 19). The punishment that stands out in nearly all the sermons is the destruction of Jerusalem that Jesus predicted. For Canisius the

⁵⁴ *Catholicus Catechismus*, 41.

⁵⁵ *Catechismus Catholicus*, bk. 2, ff. 9r-10; bk. 4, f. 104r.

⁵⁶ *Postilla oder Auslegung der H. Sonntäglichen Evangelien . . . sampt dem Trostreichen Passional* (Mainz, 1571), 83.

⁵⁷ *Postill oder Christliche wahre Evangelische Predigen und Auslegungen aller Sonn- und Feyertäglichen Evangelien durch das ganze Jar* (Mainz, 1601), 566-67.

⁵⁸ *Postilla: Das ist Predige und Auslegung nach catholischer Lehre aller Sonntäglichen Evangelien mit furnembsten Festen*. (Mainz, 1574), clxix and cxxii.

⁵⁹ *Postill oder Auslegung der Fest- und Feyertäglichen Evangelien* (Munich, 1610), 231.

fate of the city represented in one sermon the most prominent example of a phenomenon repeated again and again in history, the rejection of God and consequent downfall as divine retribution, and he cited as other instances the fate of the Assyrians, the Persians, the Greeks, and the Romans.⁶⁰ Scherer and Witzel gave detailed accounts of the brutal Roman suppression of the Jewish rebellion drawn chiefly from the Jewish historian Josephus. Scherer, who also took material from Eusebius, remarked that Jewish suffering at the time of the Babylonian Captivity or under Antiochus Epiphanius was child's play compared to the Roman Conquest at the hands of Vespasian and Titus. Titus himself, according to Scherer, did not want the Temple to be destroyed. But a Roman soldier ignited the fire that swept it away and so God's plan was carried out.⁶¹ Buchinger noted that God's patience with the Jews, allowing them forty-two years to repent before the destruction of Jerusalem, remained until the end of the world "an example to protect ourselves from God's anger."⁶² Frequently the authors pointed out that Christians must learn from this lest they too fail to recognize God's visitation, and sometimes they interpreted the advance of the Turks as God's vengeance.

Apart from this main point, the writers found the Jews to be punished in a variety of other ways. Canisius considered the current occupation of Palestine by the Muslims and its transformation into a desert to be a divine punishment and more so their current status as "the most despised and afflicted people in the world," a view repeated often by other preachers at times with pity. He prayed, as Paul did, that God would have mercy on them and bring about their conversion.⁶³ For Scherer they were often deluded by false claims to be the Messiah, and he elaborated a number of instances of this. The expectation of the Messiah made them look like fools. Moses of Crete, for example, in the fifth century, according to a story from the Church historian Socrates, convinced a large number of Jews to leap from a high mountain into the sea in the belief that they would so enter the Promised Land. Many more would

⁶⁰ *Meditationes seu Notae in evangelicas Lectiones* 2:2 and 184–86.

⁶¹ Scherer, *Postill oder Ausslegung der Sonntäglichen Evangelien*, 4th ed. (Munich, 1610), 722–32; Witzel, *Postilla oder Ausslegung der H. Sonntäglichen Evangelien, Sommertheil* (Mainz, 1571), 277–83.

⁶² *Postilla*, 120r.

⁶³ *Meditationes seu notae in evangelicas Lectiones* 2:185 and 3:50.

have perished than did if Christian fishermen had not hauled them out of the water and Christian merchants persuaded others not to jump. Nor had any prophets appeared for centuries. But we should not take pleasure in their misfortune but rather weep for them as Jesus did.⁶⁴ According to the Franciscan Johannes Nas too, the Jews, cast out from their land and bereft of the kingdom and priesthood and scattered over all the earth, were “the most wretched people under the sun,” but they did enjoy a promise not given to the Muslims or heretics, that they would all be converted at the End of Time. So he alluded to their particular status.⁶⁵ Holding forcefully warned Christians that “we are no better than the Jews” with regard to faith and fear of God. The Lord was patient, but eventually he would let them feel the rod too.⁶⁶

Surprisingly, the preachers had little to say about the practice of usury by the Jews, even though they all took a hard line on it and many preached against it. Often they discussed it in the context of the seventh commandment, “Thou shalt not steal.” Dietenberger at one point associated the Jews with usury in passing but in a more complete treatment of the subject not a word was said about them.⁶⁷ Neither Buchinger nor Holding mention them in their brief treatments of usury.⁶⁸ The failure to mention the Jews reflects the fact, it would seem, that by the sixteenth century Christians had taken over the business of usury at least for the wealthy. Indeed Witzel talks of the “new Jews” in his *Catechism*.⁶⁹ But if Jews still did control moneylending among the peasants and craftsmen—and this was the reason that Bishop Julius Echter gave for their expulsion from Würzburg—one would have expected more on Jewish usury in the sermons. Only Scherer in Vienna showed resentment at one point toward wealthy Jews who allegedly enjoyed special privileges.⁷⁰ Both Nausea and Scherer did note that according to the Book of Leviticus

⁶⁴ *Postill oder Auslegung der Sonntäglichen Evangelien*, 61–62, 83, and 722–32.

⁶⁵ *Postilla Minorum, das ist, die kleiner Postill und kurzeste Auslegung der heiligen Evangelien so auff die Sonntag und furnembste Fest vom Advent biss auff Ostern* (Ingolstadt, 1573), 49.

⁶⁶ *Postilla . . . Sommerteil* (Mainz, 1574), xclvir.

⁶⁷ *Postill . . . auf alle Sontag und etliche Feiertag* (Cologne, 1555), 187–87r; *Catechismus* (Mainz, 1537), no pagination (treatment of the seventh commandment).

⁶⁸ Buchinger, *Auslegung der 10 Gebete [sic] unsers Gottes* (Dillingen, 1567); Holding, *Catechismus*, 139–39r.

⁶⁹ *Catechismus major* (Cologne, 1554), unpaginated, under seventh commandment.

⁷⁰ *Postill oder Auslegung der sonntäglichen Evangelien*, 66.

(25:36–37), God permitted the Jews to practice usury toward foreigners but not toward fellow Jews.⁷¹ According to Nausea, one could not conclude from this that Christians might now practice it. God allowed it to the Jews, as he did divorce, because of the hardness of their hearts. Christian usurers, however, now outdid the Jews in their evil ways, according to Scherer, in that they practiced usury toward their fellow Christians.

Conclusion

So we see that leading anti-Jewish themes found in Eck did not appear at all or were greatly attenuated in the catechisms and sermons of the leading German Catholic preachers of the sixteenth century: the blood libel along with the charge of ritual murder, accusations of desecration of the host, and association with usury. Economic exploitation by Jews though not passed over completely was not a main theme of the writings we have examined. To be sure, Jews were not seen in a favorable light. They remained blind and stubborn, bore varying degrees of responsibility for the death of Christ, and hence stood under God's punishment principally in the form of the total destruction of Jerusalem, the dispersal of the people, and their miserable status. The preachers issued no calls for measures to be taken against Jews even though expulsions of Jews did take place during the period. As we have seen, these expulsions usually resulted from popular pressures from below to which the preachers do not seem to have contributed in any significant way.

After the turn of the century, medieval themes appear to have come to the surface once again. The Jesuits produced a play at Augsburg in 1605 dealing with Simon of Trent, "A Boy of Trent Killed by the Jews," and it was repeated at Freiburg in 1619. Four other plays with similar themes were staged in various German towns in the next half century.⁷² In his highly influential *Ten Books on Politics* published in 1620, the Jesuit Adam Contzen, professor in Mainz and

⁷¹ Nausea, *Catholicorum . . . Epitome*, bk. 4, ff. 135r–36; Scherer, *Postill oder Ausslegung der sonntäglichen Evangelien*, 799–800. See also, Deut. 23:20–21.

⁷² Johannes Müller, *Das Jesuitendrama in den Ländern deutscher Zunge vom Anfang (1555) bis zum Hochbarock (1665)*, vol. 2 (Augsburg, 1930), nos. 56, 63, 68, 70, and 81.

later confessor of Duke Maximilian of Bavaria, urged the expulsion of the Jews. Interestingly, he took up the subject of the Jews in book eight which dealt with the economy. There he progressed from a denunciation of both Jewish and Christian usurers, though at one point he did grudgingly approve one form of usury, to the assertion of a nearly natural enmity between Jews and Christians that grew out of Jewish hatred of Christians and the Jews' desire to harm Christians illustrated also in ritual murders.⁷³ Neither of these sources of course were catechisms or sermons; they belonged to different genres. This was not the case with the well-known, popular preacher of Vienna, Abraham a Santa Clara (1644–1709) who regaled the city with his sermons for the last forty years of his life. He both reflected and encouraged popular contempt and hatred for Jews at a time when Samuel Oppenheimer and other Jews had won favor at court through their financial services. Many of the old charges against the Jews including ritual murders were warmed over and served up to the people once again by Abraham. After Satan, Christians had no greater enemy than the Jews, the beasts, who continually blasphemed God and pursued the destruction of Christians. Jews even had a particular odor about them that grew stronger during Lent and Holy Week.⁷⁴

Did anti-Jewish sentiment decline in Catholic Germany in the last two-thirds of the sixteenth century, only to revive after 1600? The catechisms and sermons would seem to point in this direction, at least on the part of the authors themselves and they were significant molders of public opinion. If anti-Jewish feeling did not decline, it did change in character if we take Eck as typical of an earlier mentality. Yet expulsions of Jews continued to take place during this period, notably in the prince-bishoprics of Würzburg and Augsburg and periodically in Vienna, usually under pressure from below. Certainly the preachers that we have examined did not encourage sentiment for banishment. Why did the preachers depart from the medieval tradition as represented by Eck? One might surmise that the critical spirit of humanism led them to reject many traditional charges against the Jews, especially the accusation of ritual murder.

⁷³ Adam Contzen, *Politicorum Libri Decem* (Mainz, 1620), bk. 8, c. 17 (pp. 594–601).

⁷⁴ Franz Loidl, *Menschen im Barock: Abraham a Sancta Clara über das religiös-sittliche Leben in Osterreich in der Zeit von 1670 bis 1710* (Vienna, 1938), 290–93.

Humanism has been put forward as a reason for the decline in prosecutions for witchcraft during the middle years of the sixteenth century,⁷⁵ and it may have been at work here too. Most of the preachers had undergone a humanist education. Perhaps more importantly, the number of Jews in Germany was small, even negligible in areas where they were prohibited. Above all, the Reformation posed a much more threatening danger; it was clearly in the forefront of the preachers' thinking even though the writings that we have surveyed were pastoral not polemical in character. Some of our writers, as we have seen, contrasted the Jews favorably with the heretics. Moreover, the mid-sixteenth century constituted a transitional period between Jewish predominance in moneylending in the later Middle Ages and the rise of the court Jew in the seventeenth century, and so a low point in Jewish financial activity. Even though this was not perceived as such by the ordinary people and popular resentment against Jewish economic activity remained high, the preachers seem to have taken note of it. Many questions remain about the relationship of the Catholic Reform to the Jews in sixteenth-century Germany. Perhaps this essay will stimulate further research.

⁷⁵ Brian P. Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1995), 60–64, 187, and 225.

THE INTENSIFICATION OF RELIGIOUS COMMITMENT:
JEWS, ANABAPTISTS, RADICAL REFORM, AND
CONFESSIONALIZATION*

Michael Driedger

Much like the Jews, Christian nonconformists of all stripes were forced to the margins of European political and social life. This essay looks most closely at German and Dutch Anabaptists, the forbears of today's Mennonites, Hutterites, and Amish. Anabaptism began as a complex branch of early Protestantism with roots in biblically and spiritually motivated protests against social injustice, as well as against institutionally entrenched forms of Catholicism, Lutheranism, and Zwinglianism. Several things distinguished Anabaptists from their early sixteenth-century Christian contemporaries. In terms of ritual and ethics, they rejected child baptism in favor of baptism of ethically upright believers, and by the 1540s the great majority of Anabaptist groups made the refusal to bear arms or commit violence a core standard. Furthermore, compared with the situation for nonconformists from other Christian confessions, there were no territories in Europe controlled by a ruling party of coreligionists (Münster in the 1530s is a brief and tragic exception) where Anabaptists could find refuge. In the Holy Roman Empire they shared a fate with the Jews, for throughout the early modern period members of both groups had to be ready to accept exile if the provisional protection of territorial overlords was suddenly withdrawn.

In a 1973 essay Haim Hillel Ben-Sasson reported examples of later sixteenth-century Polish Jews and antitrinitarians, radical Protestant relatives of German Anabaptists, who wrote and spoke with each other about these kinds of existential links.¹ German Anabaptists may

* I would like to thank Dean Bell, Anselm Schubert, James Stayer, Victor Thiessen, and participants in a faculty seminar at the University of British Columbia for useful comments and James Stayer and Sabine Todt for helping me obtain copies of source material.

¹ See Haim Hillel Ben-Sasson, "Jews and Christian Sectarians: Existential Similarity and Dialectical Tensions in Sixteenth-Century Moravia and Poland-Lithuania," *Viator* 4 (1973): 369–85.

also have acknowledged these kinds of links in discussions with contemporary Jews,² but I am not now aware of sources that would give us a window into their exchanges. Nonetheless, parallels in the experiences of early modern Jews and Anabaptists are a key subject of the present essay. Rather than focusing on cases of historical encounters, I will discuss the rise of Hutian and Melchiorite Anabaptism, two of its key variants, and in each case focus on the range of Anabaptist attitudes toward Jews and Judaism. It is clear that the relationship between Judaism and Christianity was important enough for radical reformers like the Anabaptists that attention to it reveals much about them. I will pay particular attention to Menno Simons and the Melchiorite tradition out of which he emerged. Despite Menno's largely negative attitudes toward Judaism, his career and the emergence of a Mennonite brand of Anabaptism share important parallels with the development of early modern Jewish identity.

Historiography

In 1969 Salo Baron wrote in *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*: "Not surprisingly, if regrettably, the intellectual and sociopolitical contacts of these men [the Anabaptists] with, and their attitudes to, Jews and Judaism still await the necessary detailed exploration."³ About a decade later Klaus Deppermann remarked in an essay on Protestant attitudes toward Judaism that "In my view there is still no account of the attitudes of 'the left wing of the Reformation' to the Jews."⁴ Even today there is no single study devoted to the subject. There are, however, signs of change. For example, in 1992 sociologist Daphne Winland wrote an essay in which she pointed to similar patterns in twentieth-century Jewish and Mennonite historiography

² See, for example, the brief note in J. F. Gerhard Goeters, *Ludwig Hätzer (ca. 1500 bis 1529): Spiritualist und Antitrinitarier—Eine Randfigur der frühen Täuferbewegung* (Gütersloh, 1957), 96–97, that Hans Denck participated in a disputation with Jews in Bergzabern in 1527.

³ Salo W. Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, vol. XIII: *Inquisition, Renaissance, and Reformation*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1969), 439, n. 45.

⁴ Klaus Deppermann, "Judenhaß und Judenfreundschaft im frühen Protestantismus," in *Die Juden als Minderheit in der Geschichte*, ed. Bernd Martin and Ernst Schulin (Munich, 1981), 342.

about collective identity.⁵ Furthermore, particularly in the last few years sixteenth-century radical Protestant attitudes toward Jews and Judaism have received greater attention from scholars.⁶

The historiographical situation began to change in the wake of a renaissance in Anabaptist studies in the 1960s and 1970s. George Williams, a Harvard Church historian, was especially instrumental in reviving interest in connections between Jews and radical Protestants. When it was first published in 1962, Williams' book *The Radical Reformation*⁷ played a key role in making older Mennonite and Free Church historiography accessible to a wider scholarly audience. One theme he highlighted in all three editions of his book was the fascination many radical Protestants had with Jews. Examples include spiritualist interest in the connections between Old and New Testaments, Anabaptist apocalypticism and messianism, and eastern European Protestant Sabbatarianism. A further example of his coverage is Anabaptism in the Republic of Venice in the 1540s and early 1550s. Williams wrote that "It would appear to have arisen from the confluence of Germanic Anabaptism via the Grigioni and the South Tyrol, of popularized and radicalized Valdesianism, and of Judaism or philo-Hebraism from whatever source, possibly Marranos."⁸

The Radical Reformation was not Williams' last statement on the subject. To help make sense of the tremendous diversity among these radicals, in 1962 he first distinguished between three main groupings of radicals: Anabaptists, Spiritualists, and Evangelical Rationalists. In a 1996 article in the *Encyclopedia of the Reformation*, published shortly before his death, Williams proposed the addition of a new branch to his sub-typologies of the Radical Reformation. He argued that

There were enough Christian Hebraists who became in effect ethnically gentile Jews in a primitive Christian modality to constitute almost a fourth subtype of sixteenth-century radicalism. Vestigially they were

⁵ Daphne Winland, "Native Scholarship: The Enigma of Self-Definition among Jewish and Mennonite Scholars," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 5 (1992): 431–61.

⁶ For two recent examples, see: Achim Detmers, *Reformation und Judentum: Israel-Lehren und Einstellungen zum Judentum von Luther bis zum frühen Calvin* (Stuttgart, 2001); and James Samuel Beck, "The Anabaptists and the Jews: The Example of Hätzer, Denck and the 'Worms Prophets'" (MA thesis, Toronto School of Theology and the University of St. Michael's College, 2000).

⁷ George H. Williams, *The Radical Reformation*, 3rd ed. (Kirksville, 1992).

⁸ See *ibid.*, chapter 22.2, especially 851. Also see John Martin, *Venice's Hidden Enemies: Italian Heretics in a Renaissance City* (Berkeley, 1993).

Christian in awaiting the return of the human Jesus as messiah and celebrating in his memory a simple supper.⁹

Williams' chief examples in the encyclopedia article included the humanist Matthias Vehe-Glirius (d. 1590) who moved between the Rhineland, Poland, and Transylvania, as well as the Transylvanian Reformed superintendent Ferencz David (1520–79).¹⁰

Dean Bell has recently addressed the connection between the Radical Reformation and attitudes toward Judaism from another perspective. In his 2001 monograph *Sacred Communities: Jewish and Christian Identities in Fifteenth-Century Germany*, he highlighted the role of radical Protestants such as the Anabaptists in the gradual sacralization of collective life in early Reformation Christian culture.¹¹ According to Bell, radical Protestants took the widespread late medieval conviction that the urban commune was a sacral community farther than most contemporaries dared. By emphasizing believers' baptism as a prerequisite for community membership, Anabaptists fused late medieval ideals of community and belief. As was the case with views in the increasingly sacralized urban communes of late medieval Germany, the Anabaptists' ideals of community had implications for their attitudes towards Jews and Judaism. While Bell examined only a small number of Anabaptists (Balthasar Hubmaier and Hans Hut), his arguments reinforce Williams' emphasis on the subject.

While they both worked with the category "Radical Reformation," Williams and Bell did not use the term in exactly the same sense.¹² There are, in fact, at least two views of how to understand it. Whereas Williams preferred to speak of the Radical Reformation, a competing view championed by Hans-Jürgen Goertz and James Stayer¹³

⁹ George H. Williams, "The Radical Reformation," in *Encyclopedia of the Reformation*, ed. Hans J. Hillerbrand (New York, 1996), vol. 3, 383.

¹⁰ See Robert Dán, *Matthias Vehe-Glirius: Life and Work of a Radical Antitrinitarian* (Budapest, 1982); Jerome Friedman, "Unitarians and New Christians in Sixteenth-Century Europe," ARG 81 (1990): 216–38; and Daniel Liechty, *Sabbatarianism in the Sixteenth Century* (Berrien Springs, MI, 1993).

¹¹ Dean Phillip Bell, *Sacred Communities: Jewish and Christian Identities in Fifteenth-Century Germany* (Boston, 2001).

¹² Bell used Michael Baylor's definition in the introduction to Michael Baylor, ed., *The Radical Reformation* (Cambridge, 1991). Baylor's portrayal of the Radical Reformation shares most in common with the definitions of Goertz and Stayer.

¹³ For recent statements by both authors, see James M. Stayer, "The Radical Reformation," in *Handbook of European History, 1400–1600*, ed. Thomas A. Brady,

puts the emphasis on Reformation radicalism. This competing definition of radicalism has held the upper hand among scholars specializing in German Anabaptism, and it is also the view that I prefer. Williams portrayed the Radical Reformation as a tradition of Christianity that was distinct from, competed with, and should be given as much attention as the Magisterial Reformation of mainstream Protestant reformers and the Catholic Counter Reformation. The competing view deemphasizes Williams' typological distinction between the Radical and Magisterial Reformations. Instead it defines radicalism not in doctrinal terms but rather as any public rejection of the status quo. From this point of view the Reformation as a whole was a radical phenomenon (the rejection of both papal authority and a traditional view of the sacraments) right from the outset. Only with time, argue Stayer and Goertz, did supporters of evangelical reform divide into camps approximating Williams' Radical and Magisterial Reformations.

There are both advantages and disadvantages of this revised definition for the study of Anabaptists and Jews. A disadvantage is that, in contrast to Williams' view of the Radical Reformation, historians of Reformation radicalism have paid little attention to eastern Europe and Italy where Jewish-Anabaptist relations seem to have been especially complex and rich. The reason is that they have been most concerned to integrate the study of religious radicalism into the mainstream of German Reformation studies. While this limited geographical focus may be an impediment, the easier access to archives in former Eastern Bloc countries offers the possibility of new discoveries and renewed historiographical interest in Judaism and Reformation radicalism.

An advantage of Goertz's and Stayer's view is that it allows historians to think of radical reform not as a fixed tradition founded in the sixteenth century but rather as a complex, dynamic, and changing set of relationships.¹⁴ This has two important implications. First, it does not detract from but rather encourages a comparative

Jr., Heiko A. Oberman, and James D. Tracy (Leiden, 1995), 249–82; and Hans-Jürgen Goertz, “Die Radikalität reformatorischer Bewegungen: Plädoyer für ein kulturgeschichtliches Konzept,” in *Radikalität und Dissent im 16. Jahrhundert*, ed. Hans-Jürgen Goertz and James M. Stayer (Berlin, 2002), 29–41.

¹⁴ See James M. Stayer, “The Passing of the Radical Moment in the Radical Reformation,” *MQR* 71 (1997): 147–52.

examination of other radical groups. Second, it provides a framework within which to think about the processes of de-radicalization.

Radicalism of course did not disappear as a factor in European political and religious life when the generation of radicals from the 1520s and 1530s died or become tame. If we think of radicalism as an oppositional orientation toward the established order (Goertz's view) rather than a separate tradition of reform (Williams' view), we can recognize more easily that it was not a social phenomenon unique to the early sixteenth century, or even to Anabaptists and spiritualists. For this reason, a focus on the dynamics of Reformation radicalism has the (as-of-yet not fully realized) potential to connect with the growing historiography of seventeenth-century radicalism.¹⁵ An aspect of this long-term history of radicalism is the relationship between radical Protestants and Jews.¹⁶ In the framework of the relational definition, we can acknowledge that Jews as well as Christians could be radical.

A focus on the dynamics of radicalism can also serve as the starting point for discussions of de-radicalization. Over the long term, radical groups tended either to disappear into obscurity or establish new institutional traditions. There are currently active debates among historians about the institutionalization of religious differences in the early modern period. These debates have been focused since the 1980s on the concept of "confessionalization."¹⁷ Like radicalism, confessionalization is subject to competing definitions, and its application to religious minorities like Jews and Anabaptists is still relatively new.

¹⁵ Two examples of works that move in this direction are Hans-Jürgen Goertz, *Religiöse Bewegungen in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Munich, 1993); and Michael Mullett, *Radical Religious Movements in Early Modern Europe* (London, 1980).

¹⁶ The literature in this field is vast. A classic is Leszek Kolakowski, *Chrétiens sans église: la conscience religieuse et le lien confessionnel au XVII^e siècle*, trans. Anna Posner (Paris, 1969); also see Leszek Kolakowski, "Dutch Seventeenth-Century Anticonfessional Ideas and Rational Religion: The Mennonite, Collegiant and Spinozan Connections," ed. and trans. James Satterwhite, *MQR* 64 (1990): 259–97 and 385–416. Recent major contributors include Andrew C. Fix, Jonathan Israel, David S. Katz, and Richard H. Popkin.

¹⁷ For a good articulation of the older and now controversial definition of confessionalization, see R. Po-chia Hsia, *Social Discipline in the Reformation: Central Europe, 1550–1750* (London, 1989), 5: "'Confessionalization' refers to the interrelated processes by which the consolidation of the early modern state, the imposition of social discipline, and the formation of confessional churches transformed society." Two excellent surveys of the literature are Heinrich Richard Schmidt, *Konfessionalisierung im 16. Jahrhundert* (Munich, 1992); and Stefan Ehrenpreis and Ute Lotz-Heumann, *Reformation und konfessionelles Zeitalter* (Darmstadt, 2002).

The starting point for definitions of the concept has usually been Ernst Walter Zeeden's description of "the intellectual and organizational entrenchment" of Catholic, Lutheran, and Reformed communities after the sixteenth-century Reformations.¹⁸ However, according to the conventional understanding, the typology of confessionalization does not apply to the development of religious communities that were not allied with Europe's slowly centralizing territorial states. Ronnie Po-chia Hsia articulates the implications of the conventional definition: "Not everyone was included in the process of confessionalization. But the outsiders—Jews, Anabaptists, freethinkers, and spiritualists—were nonetheless affected by the confessionalization of early modern Europe."¹⁹ The important actors or protagonists in conventional confessionalization research belong to the three most legally and politically established of Europe's Christian confessional traditions.

Confessionalization defined conventionally does have its strengths. A key one is that it has provided a framework for comparative studies of established religious institutions and cultures. This framework has come under question in recent years because of the excessive power it seems to ascribe to the territorial state.²⁰ A further problem is that few historians know what to do with groups like Jews and Anabaptists except to assume that, because they were the historical "other" of the established churches, we can treat them as the historiographical "other," the groups that do not *seem* to fit into a

¹⁸ Ernst Walter Zeeden, *Die Entstehung der Konfessionen: Grundlagen und Formen der Konfessionsbildung im Zeitalter der Glaubenskämpfe* (Munich and Vienna, 1965), 9–10: "Unter Konfessionsbildung sei also verstanden: die geistige und organisatorische Verfestigung der seit der Glaubenspaltung auseinanderstrebenden christlichen Bekenntnisse zu einem halbwegs stabilen Kirchentum nach Dogma, Verfassung und religiös-sittlicher Lebensform."

¹⁹ Hsia, *Social Discipline in the Reformation*, 168.

²⁰ Wolfgang Reinhard, one of the chief proponents of the conventional view, summarized these concerns well in "Sozialdisziplinierung – Konfessionalisierung – Modernisierung: Ein historiographischer Diskurs," in *Die frühe Neuzeit in der Geschichtswissenschaft: Forschungstendenzen und Forschungserträge*, ed. Nada Boskowska Leimgruber (Paderborn, 1997), 55: "So scheint unter anderem auch in der Geschichte der 'Sozialdisziplinierung' die Vorstellung eines einheitlichen und allein von der Obrigkeit betriebenen Prozesses mehr und mehr verloren zu gehen . . . Möglicherweise hatte Michel Foucault recht, als er die Disziplinierung der frühneuzeitlichen Gesellschaft keiner Zentralinstanz mehr zuschrieb, sondern dezentralen Vorgängen an verschiedenen Punkten der Gesellschaft, die keineswegs nur mehr durch Normen und den Einsatz von Macht zu deren Beachtung gesteuert werden, sondern durch neuartige kognitive Prozesse, die Lernfähigkeit einschließen."

model of institutional and dogmatic consolidation.²¹ However, I would argue that, while it purports to be a model encouraging comparative analysis, the confessionalization paradigm in its conventional form tends to encourage unnecessary, artificially clear distinctions between those groups it includes and excludes.

Of course, Catholic, Lutheran, and Reformed communities were not the only ones to experience “intellectual and organizational entrenchment” (Zeeden) in the generations after the Reformation. For example, Jonathan Israel’s synthesis of existing scholarship in *European Jewry in an Age of Mercantilism* does provide examples of the institutional reestablishment of Jewish life after the expulsions of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.²² In a 1999 essay I argued that Israel’s schema for understanding early modern Jewish developments provides a framework for also better understanding the development of Anabaptist history. Both religious cultures went through a period of exclusion and migration in the early sixteenth century followed by one of reintegration in which they were not only occasional victims of state repression but were also protagonists in a process of establishing enduring, largely self-regulated, politically obedient communities. The Mennonites in northern continental Europe provide the best examples of these developments among Anabaptists.²³ Since the late 1990s studies of institutionalized Anabaptism of the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries have burgeoned. As a result, it is easier now to think about the transition from radical to established Anabaptism in terms similar to those proposed in the paradigm of confessionalization.²⁴

²¹ For a partial reconsideration of this view, see Heinz Schilling, “Die Konfessionalisierung von Kirche, Staat und Gesellschaft,” *Die katholische Konfessionalisierung*, ed. Wolfgang Reinhard und Heinz Schilling (Münster, 1995), 1–49, particularly 21. Here Schilling proposes analyzing the Jewish and Anabaptist pasts with reference to the paradigm of confessionalization. However, in addition to his state-centred view of confessionalization, he seems to assume a static “sectarian” view of Anabaptist history. Both ideas are conceptual stumbling blocks.

²² Jonathan Israel, *European Jewry in an Age of Mercantilism, 1550–1750*, 3rd ed. (Oxford, 1998).

²³ Michael Driedger, “Crossing Max Weber’s Great Divide: Comparing Early Modern European Jewish and Anabaptist Histories,” in *Radical Reformation Studies*, ed. Geoffrey Dipple and Werner Packull (Aldershot, 1999), 157–74.

²⁴ I outline this historiography more fully elsewhere; see Michael Driedger, “Anabaptists and the State: A Long-Term View,” in *Handbook of Anabaptism and Spiritualism, 1521–1700*, ed. John D. Roth and James M. Stayer (Leiden, forthcoming).

While Israel did not address the place of Jewish history in the scholarship on confessionalization explicitly, a recent essay by Gerhard Lauer does. In fact, in 2003 Lauer refocused the definition of confessionalization based on an interpretation of early modern Jewish history.²⁵ He concentrated specifically on a dialectical process involving “orthodox”²⁶ definitions of Jewish tradition and the heterodox responses that they provoked. According to Lauer, what early modern Jews of both orthodox and heterodox orientations shared in common was an intensified sense of religious commitment,²⁷ and this intensification, he argued, is what we should understand to be at the heart of the process of confessionalization. He dates the initial break with medieval Jewish tradition around the middle of the sixteenth century, about the same time that historians argue Christian confessionalization began in earnest. Thereafter, the dialectical processes of orthodox-heterodox tension lasted throughout the early modern period. The Jews’ deeply religious concerns resulted in an unintended way in the pluralization of group identity. As new factions strove to outdo already established expressions of holiness, this in turn sparked new orthodox reactions (and then more heterodox responses, and so on). Lauer looked particularly at the emergence of and reaction to messianic leaders like Solomon Molkho and David Reubeni in the early sixteenth century, and Sabbetai Zevi in the mid seventeenth century. The interrelationship of tradition, orthodoxy, and heterodoxy forced ahead Judaism’s transformation into a complex and differentiated modern religion, Lauer argued. In other words, Jewish confessionalization resulted largely from pressures internal to Judaism. The Christian state was not a necessary protagonist in the process.

While Lauer drew all his examples from the early modern Jewish past, he argued that a process similar to the one he described for

²⁵ Gerhard Lauer, “Die Konfessionalisierung des Judentums: Zum Prozeß der religiösen Ausdifferenzierung im Judentum am Übergang zur Neuzeit,” in *Interkonfessionalität – Transkonfessionalität – binnenkonfessionelle Pluralität: Neue Forschungen zur Konfessionalisierungsthese*, ed. Kaspar von Greyerz et al. (Gütersloh, 2003), 250–83.

²⁶ By “orthodoxy” Lauer means something very similar to Ernst Zeeden’s concept of a formal “intellectual and organizational entrenchment” of a religious way of life. In other words, it should not be confused with the modern usage, that is, Orthodoxy as a branch of Judaism.

²⁷ See Lauer, “Die Konfessionalisierung des Judentums,” 279: “Behauptet wird nur, daß die Konfessionalisierung als eine Ausdifferenzierung der Religion zu fassen ist, genauer eine Selbstüberbietung der Religion in dem Anspruch, ‘religiöser’ werden zu wollen als es die Tradition, dann aber auch selbst die Orthodoxie ist.”

Jewish confessionalization—intensified religious commitment resulting from tensions between established and dissenting groups—also accounts for the confessionalization of Christian communities.²⁸ Evidence for this process working among Protestant groups can be found in other recent scholarship. One example is an essay in the same collection as Lauer's. In it Thomas Kaufmann showed how orthodox Lutheran attempts to silence and eradicate dissenters in the Lutheran fold were important in the development of a unique Lutheran confessional culture in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.²⁹ Furthermore, in the mid 1990s Hans-Jürgen Goertz gave an account of the early modern Mennonites' culture of peer discipline and pre-emptive obedience to the state. Goertz argued that the source of this discipline and obedience lay in the Mennonites' inward-turning reaction against their early Anabaptist forbears' outwardly oriented radical anticlericalism.³⁰ Taken together Goertz, Kaufmann, and Lauer support the view that radical reform of a religious inheritance was not peripheral to but was rather an integral part of the emergence of post-Reformation religious life. Christian as well as Jewish identities thrived and multiplied amid conflicts between radical and established groups.

The rest of the present essay provides further details not only about radical Protestant attitudes toward Jews, but also about the processes of change in Melchiorite communities, the branch of Anabaptism out of which the Mennonites emerged. I argue that Menno Simons and the early Mennonites are good examples of confessionalization understood as the intensification of religious commitment amid in-group tensions. However, I will begin with an examination of mainstream Protestant and Catholic portrayals of religious nonconformists to highlight briefly the role of polemics between competing religious groups.

²⁸ See *ibid.*, 283: "Die Konfessionalisierung verbindet die Religionen mehr als es den immer noch konfessionell geprägten Kirchen- und Synagogengeschichtsschreibungen bewußt ist."

²⁹ See Thomas Kaufmann, "Nahe Fremde—Aspekte der Wahrnehmung der 'Schwärmer' im frühneuzeitlichen Luthertum," in *Interkonfessionalität—Transkonfessionalität—binnenkonfessionelle Pluralität*, 179–241.

³⁰ Hans-Jürgen Goertz, "Kleruskritik, Kirchenzucht und Sozialdisziplinierung in den täuferischen Bewegungen der Frühen Neuzeit," in *Kirchenzucht und Sozialdisziplinierung im frühneuzeitlichen Europa*, ed. Heinz Schilling (Berlin, 1994), 183–98; and "Zucht und Ordnung in nonkonformistischer Manier," in *Antiklerikalismus und Reformation: Sozialgeschichtliche Untersuchungen* (Göttingen, 1995), 103–14.

Polemics against Jews and Radical Christians

As the medievalists Brian Stock and R. I. Moore have shown, the habit of classifying all nonconformists as “enemies of Christ” had been strong in Western Christendom ever since the eleventh century.³¹ Established clergymen continued to make this kind of imaginative link between Jews and nonconforming Christians during the Reformation. At least until the eighteenth century it was not uncommon for Protestants and Catholics to interpret individual manifestations of religious dissent as expressions of a larger, coordinated, and ancient campaign against God, the Church, and its servants.

We can find important examples in the work of Martin Luther. Klaus Deppermann has argued that Luther’s attitudes toward Jews and radical Protestants developed in tandem. Summarizing the position in Luther’s later writings, he wrote that “An inaccurate picture of Luther results if one examines the change in his attitude toward the Jews in isolation from his overall development. We find a similar change in his views of the Christian Anabaptists.”³² Furthermore, “Luther drew numerous parallels between Jews, Anabaptists and Catholics, for they all rejected central elements of his theology, namely justification by faith and the teaching on the two kingdoms.”³³ While Luther had written about both Jews and radical Protestants like Karlstadt, Müntzer, and the Anabaptists in the 1520s, his attitudes took on a strongly negative character in the late 1530s and early 1540s. One occasion for this change was information he had learned about suspected connections between Jews and Sabbatarian Anabaptists in Moravia. These alleged connections were a subject of four of Luther’s anti-Jewish pamphlets: *Wider die Sabbater an einen guten Freund* [Against the Sabbatarians to a Good Friend] (1538), *Von den Juden und ihren Lügen* [On the Jews and Their Lies] (1543), *Vom Schem Hamphoras und vom Geschlecht Christi* [On the Schem Hamphoras and on the Lineage of Christ] (1543), and *Von den letzten Worten Davids* [On the Last Words of David] (1543).³⁴

³¹ See Brian Stock, *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Princeton, 1983), especially 88–240; and Robert Ian Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Power and Deviance in Western Europe, 950–1250* (Oxford, 1987).

³² Klaus Deppermann, “Judenhaß und Judenfreundschaft,” 125.

³³ *Ibid.*, 126.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 122.

Luther's ideas continued to shape the official Lutheran view of deviance and nonconformity into the seventeenth century. In his recent analysis of a 1664 University of Wittenberg collection of expert opinions on theological questions, Thomas Kaufmann points to parallels in the Lutheran discourses against Jews and "enthusiasts" (*Schwärmer*).³⁵ A further and explicit statement of these parallels is found in a prayer from the title page of *Erschröckliche Brüderschaft* (The Frightening Brotherhood), a pamphlet included in a German Lutheran compendium of polemical texts entitled *Anabaptisticum et Enthusiasticum Pantheon* (1702). The prayer reads: "Keep us by your Word, oh Lord, and deflect the murderous intentions of the Quakers, Jews, and Turks, who desire to dethrone your Son, Jesus Christ. Also defend us against all gangs, sects, and scandals. Hear our prayers, dear Lord God!"³⁶ Early modern Lutheran polemicists in Germany saw Quakers, together with Anabaptists (*Wiedertäufer*) and other dissenters, as quintessential examples of the category of enthusiast.

The equation of Jews and Anabaptists was not unique to Lutherans. A 1519 entry from the minutes of the Viennese Theological Faculty recorded that during a meeting "Mention was made of the alliance of Jews, Hussites, and Waldenses . . ."³⁷ During a late sixteenth-century disputation, a Catholic participant said: "the Arians and Anabaptists are in one guild with Jews, with Tartars, Turks."³⁸ And about a century later the Prussian Jesuit priest Johannes Schröter wrote: "Oh dear people, you hate the Jews as enemies of Christ and so should you hate their offspring, the Mennonites."³⁹

While there were certainly other factors involved in the formation of mainstream Christian identities and institutions, the reaction against groups like Jews and Anabaptists was an important component of Lutheran and Catholic confessionalization.⁴⁰

³⁵ See Kaufmann, "Nahe Fremde," 193, n. 46. Also see Thomas Kaufmann, "Das Judentum in der frühreformatorischen Flugschriftenpublizistik," *ZTK* 95 (1998): 429–61; and Thomas Kaufmann, "Die theologische Bewertung des Judentums im Protestantismus des späteren 16. Jahrhunderts (1530–1600)," *ARG* 91 (2000): 191–237.

³⁶ *Erschröckliche Brüderschaft der Alten und Neuen Wiedertäufer / Quäcker / Schwärmer und Frey-Geister / mit Denen Heil- und Gottlosen Juden*, a pamphlet anthologized in *Anabaptisticum et Enthusiasticum Pantheon* (1702).

³⁷ Quoted from Baron, *A Social and Religious History*, vol. XIII, 215–16.

³⁸ Quoted from Ben-Sasson, "Jews and Christian Sectarians," 370, where the author also records other examples of Catholic and Lutheran polemics of this sort.

³⁹ Joannes Schröter, *Stammbuch Der Mennistischen Ketzerey Sambt dero Gespanschaften Lehr und Sitten* (Neyß, 1691), 24.

⁴⁰ Kaufmann, "Nahe Fremde," presents a strong version of this kind of argument as it concerns orthodox Lutheran reactions against Lutheran dissenters.

The Diversity of Early Southern German Anabaptism

The reality of Jewish and Anabaptist relations was of course much more complex than any polemicist ever dared admit. One of the main results of recent scholarship on Anabaptists and other Protestant radicals has been to highlight the diversity of their beliefs, goals, and networks, while at the same time recognizing historical interconnections. For example, the boundary dividing Anabaptists from spiritualists, once asserted by early twentieth-century Mennonite historians to be clear and absolute, is now understood to have been very fluid. Diversity and interconnectedness are especially evident when looking at the earliest years of Anabaptist history in southern Germany.

Through most of the 1520s there was, as Achim Detmers points out in *Reformation und Judentum*, a strong fascination among reformers and humanists with Jewish learning as a source for knowledge about divine will.⁴¹ This is also true for Anabaptists. While some Anabaptist groups like the Swiss Brethren shaped their collective lives based on a literalist reading of the New Testament, many other early southern German Anabaptists preferred a spiritualized understanding of the Bible which blurred the line between the Old and New Testaments. A chief example are those individuals and groups associated with Hans Hut. It is in these circles that one finds the best examples of intense interest in biblical Judaism and contemporary Jews. However, it is difficult to make too many generalizations about even the most positive of orientations in these spiritualist circles. They ranged from philo-Hebraism to messianism to Sabbatarianism.

In southern German and Austrian spiritualist Anabaptist circles the influence of Thomas Müntzer was especially strong. The first baptisms of adults took place in southern German-speaking territories in 1525, around the same time as Müntzer's execution for activism during the Peasants' War. While Müntzer, a former associate and early radical adversary of Martin Luther, was an opponent of child baptism, he did not take the further step of accepting or administering adult baptisms. In contrast to Luther, he developed a spiritualist understanding of the Bible which did not draw a sharp distinction between Old and New Testaments. After his execution, others continued his approach to religious life. For example, several

⁴¹ See Detmers, *Reformation und Judentum*, 64–76.

key Anabaptist leaders such as Hans Hut and Hans Denck emphasized the inner, living Word of God, although they also saw little contradiction between divine inspiration and written revelation.⁴²

Besides questions of biblical hermeneutics, Jesus' divinity was also an issue of debate among spiritualist radicals. It had been raised for discussion, for example, at the Nicosburg Disputation of the late 1520s, a forum for Anabaptists from around the southern German region.⁴³ Some of Denck's associates such as Ludwig Hätzer were among those who doubted the traditional understanding of the Trinity.⁴⁴

Denck and Hätzer collaborated on a famous biblical translation, popularly known as the *Worms Prophets* (1527) after the city in which the two worked on the translation. James Beck has argued that Denck and Hätzer relied on Jewish traditions of biblical interpretation, traditions to which they were probably exposed in Worms itself. Although there is no direct evidence that the two Anabaptists did in fact have contacts with rabbis in Worms, Beck infers from evidence of earlier contacts between Christians and Jews in Worms that local rabbis would have been open to such dialogue. However, the majority of his argument that Anabaptist-Jewish dialogue did occur in Worms is based on evidence internal to the text, including the accuracy of the translation and its lack of emphasis on Christological themes.⁴⁵

Müntzer's influence among Anabaptists is also evident in their widely held apocalyptic concerns.⁴⁶ Hans Hut had continued Müntzer's apocalyptic preaching after the defeats of the Peasants' War, styling himself as a prophet of Christ's Second Coming. Just as Müntzer's execution in 1525 did not diminish the apocalyptic ardor of some of his followers, neither did Hut's death in 1527. One of Hut's followers in Augsburg had been Augustin Bader, who soon took on a leading position among the Anabaptist remnant there. Although he initially recanted his Anabaptism in 1527 when arrested by author-

⁴² See Werner O. Packull, *Mysticism and the Early South German-Austrian Anabaptist Movement, 1525-1531* (Scottsdale, PA, 1977).

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 99-106.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 49-50.

⁴⁵ James Beck, "The Anabaptists and the Jews: The Case of Hätzer, Denck and the *Worms Prophets*," *MQR* 75 (2001): 407-27.

⁴⁶ See Walter Klaassen, *Living at the End of the Ages: Apocalyptic Expectation in the Radical Reformation* (Lanham, MD, 1992).

ities, Bader's convictions strengthened when the community of believers faced further intense persecution. In 1528 he met Oswald Leber, an Anabaptist who had in fact had contact with Jews in Worms and who had been intrigued by their prophecies of tribulation.⁴⁷ Together the two men began to expect the imminent advent of the Messiah. Bader even sought support from Jewish communities. However, before his expected Day of Judgment (1530), he was arrested. His execution followed soon thereafter.⁴⁸

Equally unconventional were the views of Andreas Fischer and Oswald Glaidt.⁴⁹ Both men were resolutely Christian, for they believed in the centrality of Jesus and rejected what they understood as the priestly, ritual laws of ancient Judaism. However, both men placed a great deal of emphasis on the historical ties linking Jews and Christians, and by the late 1520s they became proponents of Christian Sabbatarianism, the belief that the Jewish Sabbath should be celebrated as God's holy day in conformity with God's eternal, moral law expressed in the Ten Commandments. These laws were, they felt, unchanged by Jesus' ministry. They may also have held proto-antitrinitarian views of the divinity of Jesus. It was their activities that helped spark literary controversies about Judaism in which Luther and other reformers participated in the late 1530s and early 1540s. While other Sabbatarian movements sprung up later in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Eastern Europe and England,⁵⁰ the influence of Fischer and Glaidt in German Anabaptist circles faded toward the end of the 1530s.

⁴⁷ It is possible that Leber had learned of the messianic claims of Solomon Molcho and David Reubeni. On these, see Gershom G. Scholem, "Messianic Movements after the Expulsion from Spain," in *The Jewish People, Past and Present*, vol. 1 (New York, 1955), 335–47; and David B. Ruderman, "Hope against Hope: Jewish and Christian Messianic Expectations in the Later Middle Ages," in *Essential Papers on Jewish Culture in Renaissance and Baroque Italy*, ed. David B. Ruderman (New York, 1992), 299–323.

⁴⁸ The principle account in English is found in Packull, *Mysticism*, 130–38. Packull follows Gustav Bossert, "Augustin Bader von Augsburg, der Prophet und König, und seine Genossen, nach den Prozeßakten von 1530," ARG 10 and 11 (1912/13 and 1914); see Bossert (1912/13), 213–17, on Bader's attempts to convince Jews of his prophetic authority. Anselm Schubert is currently conducting further research on Bader's case.

⁴⁹ For a summary of historical developments and discussion of the relevant historiography on these exchanges, see Williams, *The Radical Reformation*, 624–28 and 630–32.

⁵⁰ David S. Katz, *Sabbath and Sectarianism in Seventeenth-Century England* (Leiden, 1988); and Liechty, *Sabbatarianism in the Sixteenth Century*, part 2.

Not all early Anabaptists shared an at least partly positive orientation toward Jews and Judaism. Balthasar Hubmaier is the most famous example. In 1519, several years before he became an advocate of the Anabaptist cause, he was noted for his activities as an anti-Jewish preacher in Regensburg. There he helped mobilize public anger against the local Jews, which resulted in their expulsion from the city and the construction of a Marian chapel in the former Jewish district.⁵¹

Hubmaier only became an active supporter of adult baptism in 1525, several years after the episode in Regensburg. Unlike the other Anabaptists discussed so far, he did not belong to the Müntzerite-Hutian branch of early southern German Anabaptism. While he did have contacts with Denck and Glaidt, his beliefs on eschatology, the Trinity, and government authority were much more mainstream. It is possible that Hubmaier's conversion to Anabaptism followed a change of heart on other issues, too, for in 1524 he wrote a defense of religious toleration entitled "On Heretics and Those Who Burn Them." In it he argued for persuasion rather than persecution when dealing with heterodox views: "But a Turk or a heretic cannot be overcome by our doing, neither by sword nor by fire, but alone with patience and supplication, whereby we patiently await divine judgment."⁵²

Nonetheless, while an Anabaptist, Hubmaier did not reject his earlier anti-Jewish rhetoric in any explicit way.⁵³ It may be significant in the quotation above that he mentioned explicitly only Turks and heretics but not Jews. Compared with a similar statement by Hans Denck, Hubmaier's does not seem as strong. In his 1527 "Commentary on Micah" Denck commented that "no one shall deprive another—whether heathen or Jew or Christian—but rather allow everyone to move in all territories in the name of his God. So may we benefit

⁵¹ See Torsten Bergsten, *Balthasar Hubmaier: Seine Stellung zu Reformation und Täuferturn 1521–1528* (Kassel, 1961), 70–93; Wilhelm Grau, *Antisemitismus in späten Mittelalter: Das Ende der Regensburger Judengemeinde 1450–1519* (Berlin, 1939), 99–141; and "How the New Chapel of the Virgin in Regensburg Was Built in the Year A.D. 1519," in *Manifestations of Discontent in Germany on the Eve of the Reformation*, ed. and trans. Gerald Strauss (Bloomington, 1971), 127.

⁵² *Balthasar Hubmaier: Theologian of Anabaptism*, ed. and trans. H. Wayne Pipkin and John H. Yoder (Scottsdale, PA, 1989), 62.

⁵³ For Hubmaier's 1526 reflections on the 1519 episode, see Baron, *A Social and Religious History*, vol. XIII, 243.

in the peace which God gives.”⁵⁴ While Hubmaier stressed the ultimate goal of conversion, Denck stressed coexistence. However, both men expected that ultimate salvation was through Jesus; Denck, too, remained a staunch Christian, despite his tolerant words, unconventional beliefs, and fascination with Hebrew literature. A key difference between the two men lay in part in Hubmaier’s influence in civic affairs, which gave him an opportunity to achieve broader political goals. In *Sacred Communities* Dean Bell argued that because Hubmaier’s evangelical activism of the 1520s (campaigning for adult baptism from 1525 to his death in 1528) was concerned with the preservation of cohesive urban communities of like-minded believers there is an important degree of intellectual continuity between his Regensburg and Anabaptist phases.⁵⁵

Strasbourg during the Early 1530s

The issues of persecution and toleration were existential ones for early radicals. Of those reformers named in the section above, all died prematurely (Denck and Hut in 1527, the first of plague and the second in prison), most at the hands of executioners (Müntzer, 1525; Hubmaier, 1528; Hätzer, 1529; Bader, 1530; Leber, probably 1530; Fischer, ca. 1540; Glaidt, 1545). The legal situation was worsened in 1528 and 1529 with the release of two imperial decrees. In them the emperor made the baptism of adults a capital crime. There were, however, (sometimes only temporary) pockets of refuge throughout Europe where nonconformists could thrive.

One of these was Strasbourg in the Rhine valley. While Strasbourg’s magistrates did not allow Jews to become citizens, its clergymen and city councilors advocated a moderate form of evangelical reform, and Protestant dissenters in the city did not develop the reputation for violent excesses. As a result Strasbourg had one of the richest, most pluralistic Protestant milieus of the early sixteenth century.

Most radicals in southern Germany had at least some contact with the city. The freethinking Sebastian Franck lived there between 1529

⁵⁴ Quoted from *Anabaptism in Outline: Selected Primary Sources*, ed. Walter Klaassen (Waterloo, ON, and Scottdale, PA, 1981), 292.

⁵⁵ See Bell, *Sacred Communities*, 230–34.

and 1531.⁵⁶ Hubmaier had visited briefly, as was likely the case with Bader, too. After his execution Bader's wife found refuge there in the house of the Strasbourg preacher Wolfgang Capito. Capito was a friend and point of connection between official and nonconformist circles in the city. For example, although he did not share their ecclesiastical views, he associated with Denck and Hätzer, who were able to establish a group of supporters in Strasbourg that survived their deaths. Capito also hosted in his home such non-Anabaptist radical figures as Michael Servetus, Martin Cellarius-Borrhaus, and Caspar Schwenckfeld.⁵⁷

The unusually tolerant mood began to change in the early 1530s, largely because of political and ecclesiastical pressures placed on Strasbourg's clergy from several sides. In his recent study of dissenters in Strasbourg, John Derksen argued that the years 1533 to 1535 marked a crucial turning point. "After growing to perhaps one fifth of the city's adults . . ., suddenly, decimated and dispersed, they [the radicals] had to reconstitute themselves in new environments and with new leadership."⁵⁸ The official occasion of this turning point was a series of synods in the middle of 1533 during which the city's Protestant clergymen set the groundwork for closer regulation of ecclesiastical life. In the process, many of the city's leading nonconformists faced legal hearings. A small number were executed or imprisoned, while others were expelled or forced underground.

In the years and months leading up to the synods, theological debates between official clergymen and radicals had become more heated. Amid these exchanges, attitudes toward Jews became an important subject. Capito's role was especially important, for in December 1531 he wrote a refutation of Oswald Glaidt's defense of the Saturday Sabbath, a copy of which he had been sent by a colleague. This act is an indication of Capito's souring relations with

⁵⁶ On Franck and Judaism, see *ibid.*, 235–37.

⁵⁷ On Capito's contacts with dissenters, see Klaus Deppermann, *Melchior Hoffman: Social Unrest and Apocalyptic Visions in the Age of Reformation*, trans. Malcolm Wren and ed. Benjamin Drewery (Edinburgh, 1987), 192–97. On Servetus's attitudes toward Judaism, see Detmers, *Reformation und Judentum*, 216–35. On Cellarius-Borrhaus, see Arno Seifert, "Reformation und Chiliasmus: Die Rolle des Martin Cellarius-Borrhaus," *ARG* 77 (1986): 226–64.

⁵⁸ John D. Derksen, *From Radicals to Survivors: Strasbourg's Religious Nonconformists over Two Generations, 1525–1570* (t Goy-Houten, 2002), 255.

radicals. In his text he mentioned that he planned to raise his concerns with local rabbis, meaning probably the great Jewish leader Josel of Rosheim, with whom he was acquainted.⁵⁹ Shortly thereafter, in January 1532, Martin Bucer engaged in a lengthy textual exchange with Pilgram Marpeck, a rising figure among moderate Anabaptists who had been based in Strasbourg for several years. One of the main themes in the exchange between Bucer and Marpeck was God's covenants with Jews and Christians.⁶⁰ According to George Williams, "Marpeck thought of Bucer's territorial reformation as the replacement of Catholic legalism by Jewish legalism."⁶¹ Late in 1532 Clement Ziegler, a lay leader of considerable influence among dissenters in the city but not himself an Anabaptist, expressed a very different position in a manuscript entitled "Von der seligkeit aller menschen seelen" (On the Blessedness of All Human Souls). While he believed in the conversion of the Jews before the Day of Judgment, he wrote in the pamphlet: "I believe that no one, neither the Anabaptists, Lutherans, Romanists or Papists, Jews, Turks, heathens or any other descendant of Adam, has a greater or lesser amount of holiness."⁶² In Strasbourg just prior to the synods of 1533, radical discourse concerning Judaism ranged from a belief in equality before God to charges of Judaizing aimed at opponents.

The diversity of positions was evident during and in the aftermath of the June 1533 synod proceedings. The centerpiece of plans to establish Strasbourg's reformation was a series of sixteen articles, most of which were devoted to a denunciation of positions promoted by Ziegler, Servetus, Schwenckfeld, Denck, and Melchior Hoffman,

⁵⁹ *Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer: Elsaß*, ed. Manfred Krebs and Georg Rott, (Gütersloh, 1959–60), vol. 1, document 290a, 367.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, document 303, 416–528 (January 1532).

⁶¹ Williams, *Radical Reformation*, 407. For more thoughts on Marpeck and Judaism, see Daniel Liechty, *Andreas Fischer and the Sabbatarian Anabaptists* (Scottsdale, PA, and Kitchener, ON, 1988), 103.

⁶² *Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer: Elsaß*, vol. 1, document 346, 570, lines 37–41 (24 November 1532). In his MA thesis ("The Anabaptists and the Jews," 37–38) James Beck quotes from an unidentified pamphlet by Ziegler: "How do we want to give account before God, since we clearly know that the Jews are supposed to be converted before the Day of Judgement? Mal. 4[:f.]. Now they still don't want to join us: because we have not put away images, thus we are a cause of their stumbling and a hindrance before God."

an Anabaptist missionary motivated by apocalyptic beliefs.⁶³ The synod's board of examiners, including Martin Bucer but also Wolfgang Capito, interviewed a series of men of suspect credentials, among them the leading spiritualist Caspar Schwenckfeld. Although he had earlier been friendly with Strasbourg's Protestant leaders, his experiences during the synod turned him against them, and, to quote Klaus Deppmann, he "felt that a new 'Judaism' was emerging in Strasbourg; the secular sword was being used to enforce uniformity of belief within their [the reformers'] territory."⁶⁴ For his unconventional views on a range of subjects and his opposition to the codification of Strasbourg's reformation, Schwenckfeld was asked to leave the city. His spiritualism (as opposed to the more suspect practice of Anabaptism) and his status as a nobleman were probably key reasons for his mild treatment. Two Anabaptists examined at the synods, Melchior Hoffman and Nicholas Frey, did not fare so well. The Anabaptist and unrepentant bigamist Frey was executed, while Hoffman was imprisoned for the remainder of his life (d. 1543). Furthermore, in April 1534, as one of the consequences of the synods, the city council adopted the sixteen articles of June 1533 and decreed that all Anabaptists be expelled from the city. In response, the Anabaptist activist Kilian Auerbacher wrote that "It is never right to compel one in matters of faith, whatever he may believe, be he Jew or Turk."⁶⁵ In Auerbacher's view, true Christians could not be forced to believe in Christ, and any forced faith was a false faith. While such a view did not indicate an acceptance of other faiths on their own terms, it was unconventional in its day.

While Strasbourg quickly lost its prominence as a meeting place for Protestant free thinkers, the city and its environs remained a center of Anabaptist activity throughout the rest of the sixteenth century. Anabaptists who remained or traveled there simply adapted to life in the shadows, pushed to the margins of urban life, much like the region's Jews.

⁶³ For a summary of the articles, see Deppermann, *Melchior Hoffman*, 285–87.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 296. Also see *Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer: Elsaß*, vol. 2, document 384, 86 (10–14 June 1533). The charge that Strasbourg's clerical authorities were extending their power excessively in an unchristian manner was also a charge which the Strasbourg clergyman Anton Engelbrecht made against his colleagues; see *ibid.*, vol. 2, document 374, 57 (3–6 June 1533).

⁶⁵ Quoted from *Anabaptism in Outline: Selected Primary Sources*, ed. Walter Klaassen (Waterloo, ON, and Scottdale, PA, 1981), 293.

Melchiorites and Menno Simons

Early Anabaptism quickly became a faith of refugees. This is hardly surprising given the general climate of repression in most southern German, Swiss, and Austrian territories. By the 1530s Moravia was a key destination, for in this region the nobility had a reputation for political and ecclesiastical independence, and significant numbers offered protection to Anabaptists. In the colorful world of Anabaptist refugees there, the Hutterites were the most successful and they managed to establish lasting communities.

In northern continental Europe, however, the development of Anabaptism was shaped by very different factors. In 1530 the Strasbourg-based Anabaptist missionary Melchior Hoffman was the first to bring the practice of adult baptism to Dutch- and Low German-speaking territories. Although he quickly returned to Strasbourg, which he believed would be the New Jerusalem during the imminent End Time, he left his mark on early northern German and Dutch Anabaptism. Today, scholars identify it as the Melchiorite branch of Anabaptism.

Around the time of Hoffman's imprisonment in 1533, Jews and Judaism played a central role in his theology, as they did for other reformers based in Strasbourg. What made him in part unique was that he saw human history through profoundly apocalyptic and allegorical lenses. As a consequence, the prophecies and symbols of the Old Testament seemed to him to hold the key to mysteries facing God's people in the present. Paraphrasing Hoffman's commentary on Romans, Klaus Deppermann reported that the apocalyptic preacher believed

that the entire Jewish people would convert to Christ and would take on a special leadership role in the future "New Jerusalem." While their hope for the rebuilding of the Temple and the reestablishment of the Holy Government would not be fulfilled, they would nonetheless live in privileged places in the renewed world. Hoffman felt they deserved this, "for dear Jacob (that is, the Jewish people) has lain long enough in a prison cell [*Marterkasten*]." ⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Deppermann, "Judenhaß und Judenfreundschaft," 128. Also see Melchior Hoffman, *Die eedele hoghe ende troosteliche sendebrief, den die heylige Apostel Paulus to den Romeren gescreuen heft* (1533).

Deppermann further reports that Strasbourg Melchiorites and some Alsatian Jews planned to join together in one community of believers.⁶⁷

Evidence is sketchy, but we can presume that beliefs about the End Time and the appearance of the Messiah may have formed the common ground that attracted some Jews to Hoffman's circle. There was, of course, a major stumbling block to such a Christian-Jewish union. Hoffman emphasized that Jesus was untainted by fleshly imperfection; he was wholly divine and only passed through Mary into this world rather than taking on her humanity. This brand of monophysite orientation in Christology was popular among some radicals in Strasbourg before the crackdown of the mid 1530s. As was the case with its opposite, the antitrinitarian emphasis on Jesus' humanity, the monophysite emphasis on Christ's divinity did not predetermine the contours of a Christian's other beliefs. Hoffman, Schwenckfeld, and later also Menno Simons all held varieties of monophysite views, but all three would have disagreed on many substantial points. Nonetheless, monophysitism more than antitrinitarianism was antithetical to Jewish thinking. Despite Hoffman's tolerant attitudes toward contemporary Jews, one cannot help thinking that his Christology stood in the way of a serious Melchiorite-Jewish dialogue. There is little evidence that the contacts between Melchiorites and Jews amounted to much.

While Hoffman awaited the Apocalypse in a Strasbourg prison, a stunning event took place in Westphalia. An Anabaptist faction of citizens won regularly scheduled civic elections in the city of Münster in February 1534. The city was catapulted instantly to notoriety, for it was now governed by a group outlawed by imperial mandates of the late 1520s. After a long siege the city fell in June 1535.

Following the Anabaptist victory in 1534, hundreds of Melchiorites streamed to Münster from the Westphalian countryside and the Netherlands. While the imprisoned Melchior Hoffman remained convinced that Strasbourg would be the New Jerusalem, most Anabaptists in 1534 identified Münster as the city of End Time refuge. A consequence of the siege was that for a short time it encouraged the besieged Anabaptists to become increasingly militant as they confronted what they understood were the forces of evil arrayed against

⁶⁷ Deppermann, "Judenhaß und Judenfreundschaft," 129. Also see Deppermann, *Melchior Hoffman*, 253.

them. As conditions deteriorated during the siege, the city's rulers became stricter and modeled many of their actions and institutions on theocratic and apostolic precedents from the Bible. Among these practices were polygamy, which, although based on Old Testament examples, was instituted to insure that the greater number of women in the city had husbands; and community of goods, which, although based on the Acts of the Apostles, was a form of war communism to help adapt to the siege.⁶⁸

The episode changed the history of Anabaptism in dramatic ways. Least surprising was the response of polemicists, who frequently charged the Münsterites with Judaizing and argued that Anabaptist rule at Münster was proof of the seditious, destructive, sinful nature of Anabaptism in all its manifestations. Less predictable was the further development of Dutch and northern German Anabaptism. The defeat of the Anabaptist government did not destroy the Melchiorites, but those that remained faithful to the Anabaptist cause splintered into several factions.⁶⁹ The most militant and shortest lived was led by Jan van Batenburg, and its members became known for their violent reprisals against opponents.⁷⁰ Another more influential group, led by David Joris, held a spiritualized interpretation of Anabaptism that deemphasized the importance of ceremonies to such an extent that its members did not require believers to be baptized and even allowed outward conformity to territorial churches, so long as believers remained inwardly faithful.⁷¹ A third group of Melchiorites in Hesse was led by Peter Tasch. In the late 1530s they negotiated a reunification with the territorial church under Martin Bucer's direction.⁷²

⁶⁸ See James Stayer, *The German Peasants' War and Anabaptist Community of Goods* (Montreal, 1991), ch. 6.

⁶⁹ See Deppermann, *Melchior Hoffman*, 358–77.

⁷⁰ On the Batenburgers, see Gary Waite, "From Apocalyptic Crusaders to Anabaptist Terrorists: Anabaptist Radicalism after Münster, 1535–1545," *ARG* 80 (1989): 173–93. In Thuringia between 1532 and 1536 there was apparently also a similar group of Anabaptist terrorists led by a "beggar king." Historian Paul Wappler reported that, according to inquisition records, there were "many Jews" among the more than 400 members of the leader's fold. See Wappler, *Die Täuferbewegung in Thüringen von 1526–1584* (Jena, 1913), 156.

⁷¹ See Gary Waite, *David Joris and Dutch Anabaptism, 1524–1543* (Waterloo, ON, 1990).

⁷² See Werner O. Packull, "The Melchiorites and the Ziegenhain Order of Discipline, 1538–39," in *Anabaptism Revisited*, ed. Walter Klaassen (Scottsdale, PA, and Waterloo, ON, 1992), 11–23.

The negotiations took place at the same time that Bucer was engaged in debates about the status of the Jews in Hesse, and a comparison of the responses of Jews and Anabaptists to ecclesiastical and governmental pressures in Hesse would be good subject for further research.⁷³

A fourth group of Melchiorites led by Menno Simons had the greatest success establishing lasting institutions. Although Menno was a Catholic priest in Frisia during the episode of Anabaptist rule at Münster, he was attracted to an Anabaptist brand of Protestantism. But he was also repelled by the excesses of Münster. In early 1536, soon after the fall of the city to the besieging armies, he converted to Anabaptism and quickly rose to become a formidable leader among the scattered nonviolent remnant of the Melchiorite faithful and among new converts he made to the Anabaptist cause. The Mennonites, the dominant group of northern German and Dutch Anabaptists by the middle of the sixteenth century, were named after him.

While Menno's theology had aspects in common with other Melchiorites, he also put his own unique stamp on Anabaptism after the Münster debacle. While he downplayed the apocalyptic urgency shared by many of his contemporaries, he shared Hoffman's belief in the celestial flesh of Christ. He combined this strong view of Christ's divinity with a view that true Christians should gather in communities of the regenerate; they should form a church "without spot or wrinkle" (Eph. 5:27). Much more than spiritualists like David Joris, Menno stressed the centrality of the Bible in believers' collective lives. And unlike the Münsterites, he stressed that the faithful should eschew violence and revolution. In his *Foundation of Christian Doctrine* (1539–40) he wrote: "we teach and exhort to obedience to the emperor, king, lords, magistrates, yea, to all in authority in all temporal affairs, and civil regulations in so far as they are not contrary to the Word of God."⁷⁴ He also counseled that believers avoid the Münsterite practice of polygamy in favor of conventional marital arrangements among members of the community of faith, and practice economic mutual aid rather than community of goods. Until

⁷³ On this topic, see Wolfgang Breul, "Integration und Ausgrenzung—Landgraf Philipps Politik gegenüber Täufern und Juden," presentation made at a meeting of the Verein für Hessische Geschichte und Landeskunde and the Hessische Kirchengeschichtliche Vereinigung, Kassel, Germany, September 2004.

⁷⁴ *The Complete Writings of Menno Simons, c. 1496–1561*, trans. Leonard Verduin, ed. J. C. Wenger (Scottsdale, PA, and Waterloo, ON, 1984), 200.

his death in 1561 he traveled across the North Sea and Baltic Sea coasts spreading his biblicist, pacifist, politically conformist brand of Anabaptism.

Although I have found no evidence that Menno had any direct experience with Jews before or during his career as an Anabaptist, he did address the subject of Jews and Judaism many times in his writings. The first occasion dates from early 1535, or in other words shortly before his conversion and the June 1535 victory of the besieging armies at Münster. In the text, as in much of his later work, Menno understood the Old Testament as a prefiguring of future Christian revelation. This shaped his view of the Jews' role in humanity's salvation. Citing the prophet Hosea, he wrote: "For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king and without a prince . . .; afterward shall the children of Israel return and seek the Lord their God, and David their king, and shall fear their Lord, and his goodness in the latter days."⁷⁵ Menno continued: "It is incontrovertible that this King David can be none other than Christ Jesus, whom all must seek who want to be saved."⁷⁶ Furthermore, "The Jews despised this King Christ and therefore they were blinded. Yet they shall return and come to Christ, their King David . . ."⁷⁷ This reference to the conversion of the Jews may have been a nod to Melchior Hoffman's hopes for the Jews during the End Times; apocalyptic expectations were still very strong among Melchiorites in early 1535. However, his discussion was not directed simply to the theme of conversion of the Jews. His purpose was polemical, and his main audience was not the Jews but rather the Melchiorites at Münster. For Menno "Every righteous person will understand in what terrible error those are caught who do not allow that this David is Christ but another man."⁷⁸ Here Menno was pointing to what he thought was the false leadership of Jan van Leiden, the self-proclaimed and at that time still reigning king of Anabaptist Münster.

In his later Anabaptist writings Menno did not repeat the apocalyptically colored references to the conversion of the Jews which he had once made in 1535. After the fall of Münster, Melchiorites of

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

all stripes were trying to come to terms with the unfulfilled dreams of Christ's return. In this context Menno preferred to soften his earlier already moderate eschatological views, while also describing his contemporaries' apocalyptic hopes as false prophecies. In the *Foundation of Christian Doctrine* he addressed the Münsterites: "The prophets you read according to the Jewish understanding."⁷⁹ And in the 1552 *Reply to False Accusations* he said that those who "prophesy according to the Word of Moses are not of God."⁸⁰ Jews misunderstood God's plan set forth in the Bible, as did the Münsterites.

Menno returned frequently during his Anabaptist phase to the charge that Jan van Leiden and the Münsterites had distorted their Christianity in a literalist, Old Testament fashion. For example, in the *Foundation of Christian Doctrine* he addressed the "corrupt sects" of Münsterites, Davidjorists, and Batenburgers:

If you want to appeal to the literal understanding and transactions of Moses and the prophets, then you must also become Jews, accept circumcision, possess the land of Canaan literally, erect the Jewish kingdom again, build the city and temple, and offer sacrifices and perform the ritual as required in the law.⁸¹

A short time later in *A Kind Admonition on Church Discipline* (1541) he described the important post-Münster practice of the ban: "We say, avoid him [a sinner] if he rejects the admonition of his brethren, . . . and if he nevertheless continues in his Jewish doctrine of sword, kingdom, polygamy, and similar deceptions . . ."⁸² A list of other sins worthy of excommunication followed, but Menno began his list with a reference to the sects' Judaizing excesses.

Repeatedly Menno the "true" Christian used the charge of Judaizing tendencies against his "false" Melchiorite brethren. In other words, the charge that Anabaptists (*wederdooper*) were Judaizers did not only come from outside the Melchiorite fold. Together with critics of the Anabaptists, Menno agreed that "Anabaptism"—in the early modern sense of anti-Christian re-baptism (as opposed to the term's largely neutral modern scholarly sense)—was associated with a perversion

⁷⁹ Ibid., 219.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 554.

⁸¹ Ibid., 217.

⁸² Ibid., 412; also see "Sharp Reply to David Joris" from 1542 in *ibid.*, 1020, where Menno referred to "Jewish polygamy."

of Christian social order. He and his followers, however, felt they practiced not re-baptism but rather believers' baptism that was sanctioned in the Gospels.

As was the case for other Protestant theologians, "Israel" took on a figurative meaning for Menno. True Christians were members of the kingdom of Christ, "an eternal, spiritual, and abiding kingdom . . .," "the spiritual Israel of God."⁸³ This of course he contrasted with the historical, "fleshly" Israel of the Old Testament. The distinction shaded his discussion of the ban. In his 1558 *Instruction on Excommunication* he argued:

But in the kingdom and government of Christ . . . a still more dreadful ban obtains, for it is not now a physical extermination or the death of our flesh, as Moses' ban, nor an exclusion from a stone temple or synagogues as was the excommunication of the Jews and is to this day, but it is a valid declaration of the eternal death of our soul, announced by the faithful servants of Christ on the basis of Scripture against all offensive, carnal sinners and confirmed schismatics.⁸⁴

Exclusion from a Jewish community, while devastating for the victim, was not as dangerous as separation from the true Church. However, in another text on excommunication from 1550, Menno wrote that "Since Christ points us to the Jewish ban, namely, that as they shunned Gentiles and sinners, so we should shun an apostate Christian . . ."⁸⁵ Here we find one of Menno's few positive acknowledgements of the Jewish roots of Mennonite practice.

The shunning of stubborn sinners was an important part of collective life in the young network of Mennonite congregations across northern Europe. For the community of the regenerate itself, the ban acted as a mechanism to maintain ethical and spiritual purity. It also helped establish a unified front against the world of non-believers and opponents, in Menno's words the "Pharisees and scribes"⁸⁶ who wished the regenerate ill.

Although they were given protection in some territories and managed to establish successful underground communities elsewhere, Menno and his coreligionists remained the objects of government-sponsored

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 217 (1539). Also see the "Hymn of Discipleship" from around 1540 in *ibid.*, 1063–65.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 966–67.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 481.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 572.

persecution until at least the end of the sixteenth century. In many jurisdictions, Menno was a hunted man, and regional officials in the Netherlands occasionally issued anti-Anabaptist decrees that named him specifically. In these difficult circumstances hymns sung to popular melodies became a common means of expression for Menno's scattered followers. Menno wrote one around 1540 that emphasized the theme of patient suffering:

I'd rather choose the sorrow sore,
 And suffer as of God the child,
 Than have from Pharaoh all his store,
 To revel in for one brief while;
 The realm of Pharaoh cannot last,
 Christ keeps His kingdom sure and fast;
 Around His child His arm He casts.
 In this world, ye saints, you'll be defamed,
 Let this be cause for pious glee;
 Christ Jesus too was much disdained;
 Whereby he wrought to set us free;
 He took away of sin the bill
 Held by the foe. Now if you will
 You too may enter heaven still!⁸⁷

To console his followers he reminded them of their favored place before God. While he had opportunities to recognize positive existential parallels between contemporary Jews and Anabaptists, such as the difficulties of maintaining faith in the face of persecution, Menno did not touch on such themes. He remained satisfied to compare Old Testament Israel with the Anabaptists of his day.

Of course, it would have been unusual for any sixteenth-century Christians, radicals like the Anabaptists included, to embrace their Jewish contemporaries as equals with whom they had much in common. Among early radicals and Anabaptists, the Sabbatarians came closest to claiming a deep connection with Jews and Judaism, although this too had its limits. On the other extreme was Balthasar Hubmaier, the one-time and probably unrepentant preacher of anti-Jewish sentiment. In between there was a wide range of attitudes: appeals for tolerance (Auerbacher, Hoffman, and Ziegler), fascination with the salvation of the Jews and with Jewish messianism (Bader and Hoffman),

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 1063–65, verses 5 and 6.

interest in Hebrew culture and language (Denck and Hätzer), and concern about the negative effects of Judaizing tendencies (Marpeck and Schwenckfeld).

Menno Simons shared most in common with this last group. Overall his attitudes toward contemporary Jews were negative, for he was concerned about their “obstinacy and blindness”⁸⁸ at not accepting Jesus as the Messiah. In this regard his views were no doubt typical of many sixteenth-century Christian theologians. His conventional attitudes toward Judaism were combined with a strong concern for the maintenance of a pure, disciplined Christian community. However, unlike Balthasar Hubmaier, Menno’s concern for the creation of sacralized communities did not result in calls for action against Jews or in the extreme anti-Jewish rhetoric that was all too common in the sixteenth century. One reason may have been fear. Were Anabaptists to campaign for the persecution of Jews, they would have had to expect, especially after the anti-Anabaptist imperial edicts of 1528 and 1529, that their arguments would have been turned against them by opponents.⁸⁹ Another reason for differences between Hubmaier and Menno may have been that Menno worked among congregations of voluntarily gathered believers, while Hubmaier both before and during his Anabaptist career was more concerned about the salvation of urban communes that were religiously diverse. In other words, Menno did not have to confront populations of Jews unwilling to convert to Christianity. What is especially unique and noteworthy about Menno’s attitudes toward Judaism is his connection between the Jews and the Münsterites, whom he rejected.

The dialectical tension between Münster and Menno Simons fits well into the patterns of confessionalization as redefined by Gerhard Lauer. To a large extent, the entrenchment of a new and separate Mennonite identity was driven forward in a reaction against Menno’s Münsterite predecessors. The Mennonite desire to form a Christian community “without spot or wrinkle” was in many regards a desire to be better Christians than the Münsterites. Examples include the Mennonite insistence on nonviolence and separation from the world of non-believers rather than militant confrontation with it. Among the results of the dialectical tension was the rise of the ban, which

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 214.

⁸⁹ See Liechty, *Andreas Fischer*, 103; and Ben-Sasson, “Jews and Christian Sectarians.”

became a key mechanism for maintaining Mennonite in-group cohesion and which also encouraged believers to become more rigorous in their unique Christian lifestyle. Mennonites combined a rejection of the Münsterites with an intensification of their own religious way of life.

Conclusion

The processes of institutionalizing and codifying a separate and unique Mennonite identity continued throughout the early modern period. An important political change that helped these processes was the success of the Protestant United Provinces. After the end of the sixteenth century, the nominally Calvinist rulers of the United Provinces allowed nonconformists like the Mennonites to worship and participate in public life in relative peace. Nonetheless, Calvinist clergymen continued into the eighteenth century to attack Mennonites as the offspring of the seditious Anabaptists at Münster. In response partly to these polemics, as well as in response to new disputes and splinter groups in their own ranks, Mennonites developed a strong confessional tradition. Until at least the end of the seventeenth century, confessions of faith were important products of and points of reference in the Mennonites' often contested discussions about their collective identity.⁹⁰

In dialectical tensions like these that encouraged the codification of collective identities and the establishment of new institutions we find a key socio-historical parallel between Jews and Mennonites. It would be worthwhile to further examine the extent of parallels between these two communities of religious minorities who were partially excluded from early modern European society. There are numerous topics for investigation. These include closer attention to the dynamics that resulted both from diversity within the communities' ranks and polemical attention paid by hostile clergymen; treatment

⁹⁰ For more on Mennonite confessionalism and confessionalization in the seventeenth century, see Michael Driedger, *Obedient Heretics: Mennonite Identities in Lutheran Hamburg and Altona during the Confessional Age* (Aldershot, 2002); and Karl Koop, *Anabaptist-Mennonite Confessions of Faith: The Development of a Tradition* (Scottsdale, PA, and Waterloo, ON, 2003).

by and attitudes toward territorial rulers, including rulers in the seventeenth century motivated by mercantilist strategies to grant privileges to minority groups; the disciplinary practices of the Mennonite ban and Jewish *herem*; the organization and function of collective institutions of self-regulation like the Mennonite Zonist and Lamist Societies, and the German *Landjudenschaften*; reactions to the Enlightenment; the relationship between democratic revolution and emancipation of religious minorities after the French Revolution; and the influence of nationalism in the nineteenth century. This list suggests that there is a great deal of material for future comparative socio-historical examination.

PART III

REPRESENTATIONS OF JEWS AND JUDAISM

ANTHONIUS MARGARITHA ON THE “WHOLE
JEWISH FAITH:” A SIXTEENTH-CENTURY CONVERT
FROM JUDAISM AND HIS DEPICTION OF
THE JEWISH RELIGION

Maria Diemling

Introduction

It is hardly surprising that Anthonius Margaritha is often portrayed as one of the “villains” in Jewish historiography.¹ Not only did the descendant of a scholarly and well-respected family betray his Jewish faith by opting for Christianity, he also set out to criticize Judaism publicly in what proved to become a very popular book. He alarmed German-Jewish communities by translating the Jewish prayerbook into German and publishing a detailed account of Jewish life and customs. In a dramatic climax, Emperor Charles V summoned him to discuss Judaism publicly, but in the aftermath Margaritha found himself banned from Augsburg. He was soon struggling for a living and a position that would enable him to support his family by teaching Hebrew. He died impoverished in Vienna in 1542.

In the following I shall aim at a more balanced reading of Margaritha’s account. I will argue that Margaritha’s life and academic career are representative of the options available to early modern converts in German lands. In a brief description of Margaritha’s literary output, I reconstruct the way he changed from “Jewish scholar” to “Christian polemicist.” Discussing some ideas in *Der ganz Jüdisch glaub*, his most influential work, I will argue that Margaritha, although firmly established in medieval polemical anti-Jewish discourse, introduced “ethnography” as a new tool to inform Christians on Jews and Judaism and thus established a new literary genre. In addition, I will discuss Margaritha’s pioneering translation of the

¹ Examples abound. A recent one is Nathan Peter Levinson, *“Ketzer” und Abtrünnige im Judentum: Historische Porträts* (Hanover, 2001), who follows the traditional characterization of Margaritha.

Jewish prayerbook and show how he stressed anti-Christian expressions in Jewish prayers. Concluding with a brief outline of Margaritha's reception, I shall argue that he became not only the most influential early modern convert to write on Judaism, but also that his contention that numerous Jewish prayers and rituals have an inherent anti-Christian meaning proved most popular.²

Biographical Remarks

The Jewish community of Regensburg, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the largest Jewish community in the Holy Roman Empire, experienced a steady decline when Anthonius³ Margaritha, who was probably born between 1492 and 1498⁴ as the son of the distinguished Rabbi Samuel Margoles,⁵ grew up there. Persecuted over decades by violent anti-Jewish agitation that included the accusation of ritual murder, torture, imprisonment, and persecution, the Jewish community suffered eventually its complete destruction when some 800 Jewish men, women, and children were expelled from Regensburg after the death of Emperor Maximilian I in 1519.⁶ Nothing is known about Margaritha's childhood, but he must have been affected to some degree by the fate of his community, although we can only speculate how it influenced his decision to convert to Christianity. We also do not know if Margaritha was exposed to Franciscan and Dominican preachers condemning Judaism and usury who appeared regularly in Regensburg since the late fifteenth century or to Balthasar

² This article is based on my forthcoming book, "*Describing the Whole Jewish Faith: Victor of Carben and Anthonius Margaritha and the Beginnings of Ethnographical Writings on Jews and Judaism in the Early Modern Period*," a revised version of my doctoral dissertation, "*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*" (PhD diss., University of Vienna, 1999).

³ Levinson, "*Ketzer*," 75, suggested "Ahron" as his possible Jewish name, but does not back it up with sources.

⁴ For the dating, see GJ III, 2:1227, n. 483. Cf. Harry Breßlau, "Aus Straßburger Judenakten. II: Zur Geschichte Josels von Rosheim," ZGJD 5 (1892): 311, n. 1.

⁵ Margaritha gives his name as "Margolit" (מרגולית) in Hebrew (*Psalterium Hebraicum*), his father and grandfather are usually referred to as Margolis or Margoles (Ashkenazic pronunciation of Margalit).

⁶ Hsia, *Myth of Ritual Murder*, 66–85.

Hubmaier or the Minorite monk Konrad Schwarz, both of them preaching in the time before the expulsion.⁷

Antonius Margaritha himself gave proper religious reasons for his decision and stressed the convincing Christian interpretation of Isaiah 53, a classical passage in Jewish-Christian polemics, as the main reason for his conversion to Christianity.⁸ He was baptized in a Catholic ceremony in 1521 or 1522 in the Bavarian town of Wasserburg on the river Inn.⁹ His family tried to win him back and offered him money to resettle outside the Holy Roman Empire, but Margaritha was adamant and accepted his worsened economic conditions as the price to pay for the salvation of his soul.¹⁰ He earned a living by teaching Hebrew in several places in Germany, among others Augsburg. There he published in 1530 his *Der gantz Jüdisch glaub* (The Whole Jewish Faith).

Der gantz Jüdisch glaub proved to be an immediate success and it was reprinted within a month. Elisheva Carlebach has suggested that Margaritha timed the publication of the book with the preparations for the Imperial Diet held in Augsburg from 15 June to 23 November 1530.¹¹ However, Margaritha's expressed wish to discuss his suggestions of the appropriate dealing of the Jews with Christian authorities was fulfilled in a way he might not have expected. Soon after the publication of his book, Margaritha was impeached and imprisoned

⁷ GJ III, 2:1200.

⁸ Antonius Margaritha, *Erklerung/ Wie aus dem heyligen 53. Capittel des fünemigsten Propheten Esaie grüntlich außgefüert/ probiert/ das der verhaischen Moschiach (wellicher Christus ist) schon khomen/ die Juden auff khainen andern mer wartten sollen. Zu trost allen frummen Christen/ vnd wider die halstärigen Juden verstanden werden solle/ mit sambt einer verteütschung etlicher jrer aignen außlegungen vnd Commenten Auch eine khurtze vergleychung Bayder Testament* (Vienna: Singrenius 1534), A1r [= 1r].

⁹ Margaritha dates two of his treatises according to the life-changing event of his baptism: "in the ninth year of my rebirth" (*Der gantz Jüdisch glaub*, 1530) and "in the thirteenth year of my rebirth" (*Erklerung*, 1534), which I would read as referring to 1521. However, there seems to be consensus in all consulted literature that Margaritha was baptized in 1522. I wish to thank archivists Matthias Haupt (Stadarchiv Wasserburg), Dr. Roland Götz (Archiv des Erzbistums München und Freising) and Dr. Jürgen König (Landeskirchliches Archiv Nürnberg) for their replies to my inquiry. They all agree that Margaritha must have received a Catholic christening. Despite a strong evangelical movement in Wasserburg in the 1520s, the religious politics of the Bavarian dukes prevented its proper formalization and only a Catholic baptism was possible.

¹⁰ Margaritha, *Erklerung*, A4r.

¹¹ Carlebach, *Divided Souls*, 180.

during the Imperial Diet and had eventually to leave the city under the solemn affirmation not to return. What happened in between can only be partially reconstructed by two accounts of the main figures in a religious disputation held during the Diet. Both Margaritha and Josel of Rosheim, at that time the most influential Jew in the Holy Roman Empire, wrote about it later in partly contradicting terms.¹² According to Josel of Rosheim, on 25 July 1530 he had to refute Margaritha's claims in front of Emperor Charles V and all his estates or in front of a special investigation committee. The main charges were that the Jews would curse the nations under whose government they lived, blaspheme Jesus in the *Alenu* prayer, and circumcise Gentiles. It is difficult to decide from the existing sources if Margaritha was imprisoned before 25 July due to Jewish attempts to neutralize the potential danger of his claims or after Josel's successful refutation of them. Margaritha was released from prison thanks to the intervention of Johann Fabri, the bishop of Vienna, and banned from Augsburg.

Margaritha tried to break new ground at a university as a Hebrew teacher. When *Der gantz Jüdisch glaub* appeared in 1530, the title page introduced him as the "Hebrew lecturer of the distinguished city of Augsburg." He taught at academic institutions and as a private teacher in Leipzig and Meissen before gaining a teaching position at the University of Vienna. As part of a reform program, which was supposed to save the struggling university that suffered from heavy competition from other German universities, safety and health issues due to the threats of Turkish attacks and the constant danger of the plague, Hebrew was added to its curriculum.¹³ Margaritha's career choice was an option that became increasingly available to early modern converts. While medieval converts from Judaism often chose a position within the ranks of the Church,¹⁴ the growing inter-

¹² *Der gantz Jüdisch glaub*, diiv-ivr (3rd ed., 1531) and *Erklerung*, 116r–118r. For Josel see Breßlau, "Judenakten," 321–23, Beilage no. 4, 329–30. For Josel of Rosheim, see: Joseph of Rosheim, "Trostschrift," in idem, *Historical Writings*, 345 and idem, *Sefer hammiknah*, ed. Hava Fraenkel-Goldschmidt (Jerusalem, 1970), 15. See Salo W. Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews* (New York, 1969), vol. XIII, 223–24 for a useful summary.

¹³ Artur Goldmann, *Die Wiener Universität 1519–1740* (Vienna, 1917), 1ff. Rudolf Kink, *Geschichte der kaiserlichen Universität zu Wien* (Vienna, 1854), vol. 1, 254ff.

¹⁴ See Peter Browe, "Die kirchenrechtliche Stellung der getauften Juden und ihrer

est in Hebrew and in Jewish texts offered new possibilities to converts with a learned background. Even if they had to compete with scholars who were Christians by birth, they increasingly looked for positions at universities where they taught Hebrew or “rabbini-”¹⁵ Far from enjoying comfort in a prestigious academic position, Margaritha found himself struggling for a living and fighting to keep his post against cheaper competition. The university was always lagging behind in its payments and Margaritha had to write heart-wrenching petitions to the emperor in order to be able to support his wife and four children. Margaritha’s life was in many ways not atypical for Jews who opted for conversion in the early modern period.¹⁶ Contrary to popular belief, conversion to Christianity was not the way to riches and a convert from Judaism could not necessarily expect to improve his financial situation or to lead a prosperous life style after baptism. His inability to teach in Latin was used by some university representatives to try replacing him with a Minorite monk who even offered to teach Hebrew for free. Margaritha, however, successfully kept his position until his death in spring 1542.¹⁷

Texts

Anthוניus Margaritha was not the first author to write about Jewish rituals and prayers, but he was the first one who did so in a systematic and comprehensive manner and the result proved to be immensely popular. Margaritha aimed at depicting all the laws, prayers, and private and public customs of the Jews according to the cycle of the year. The book consists of two main parts: the first one covers Jewish rituals and customs and the second one provides a German translation of the daily prayers. Margaritha revised and enlarged the book, which was republished twice in 1531. While he also added some neutral facts to bolster his descriptions, Margaritha

Nachkommen,” *Archiv für katholisches Kirchenrecht* 121 (1941): 3–22, especially 7ff.—this article does have a certain racist bias.

¹⁵ Carlebach, *Divided Souls*, 129–34.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* Elisheva Carlebach’s fascinating study explores the options available to converts from Judaism in Early Modern Germany.

¹⁷ See my forthcoming book for a detailed reconstruction of Margaritha’s Viennese years.

was mainly concerned with asserting the truth of his statements discussed with Josel of Rosheim at the Augsburg Diet and he stressed his points made back then.

By 1713, *Der gantz Jüdisch glaub* was published eleven times.¹⁸ Despite the earlier works of François Tissard, Johannes Pfefferkorn, and Victor von Carben, who all included ethnographical information in their early-sixteenth-century writings on Jews and Judaism, it was *Der gantz Jüdisch glaub*, which became the first example of a new literary genre. In the following two hundred years, more than sixty treatises with observations, studies, and memories of Jewish rituals and customs would be written, many of them by converts from Judaism.¹⁹ Some motifs of *Der gantz Jüdisch glaub* will be discussed below.

In stark contrast to this successful “best-seller,” Margaritha’s other publications remained mostly obscure. While he taught Hebrew in Leipzig, he published in May 1533 *Psalterium hebraicum*,²⁰ an edition of the Psalms in Hebrew with full vocalization and with the root consonants listed in the left hand margin of the pages. The slim volume also includes part of a Hebrew translation of Mark up to chapter 3, verse 4. This text is only partly vocalized. Margaritha promised in a bilingual Hebrew and Latin address to his readers a full translation of the New Testament book should his endeavors find a favorable reception. The book is aimed at scholars and students wishing to study the Hebrew language and to gain deeper understanding of the holy tongue. Margaritha probably used it as a teaching aid for his students who learned the basic root-system of the Hebrew grammar and who could practice their own translation skills by comparing it with a well-known text.

¹⁸ For a recent reconstruction of the printing history of *Der gantz Jüdisch glaub*, see Osten-Sacken, *Martin Luther und die Juden*, 163–69. The riddle of a 1556 Frankfurt am Main edition (see von der Osten-Sacken, *Martin Luther und die Juden*, 169, n. 38), traced via the *National Union Catalog*, has been solved, as it turned out to be a cataloguing error in the University of Chicago Library and actually refers to the well-known Frankfurt am Main 1561 edition. I would like to thank Professor Paul Mendes-Flohr for kindly providing me with a photocopy of the edition in question.

¹⁹ See Yaacov Deutsch’s article in this volume on ethnographical writings on Jews and Judaism in the early modern period.

²⁰ Anthonius Margaritha, *Psalterium Hebraicum* (Leipzig: Melchior Lotter, 1533). Copies in the British Library [01902.a.12.] and Cambridge University Library [BSS.140.B33.2].

Having secured a teaching position at the University of Vienna, Margaritha published his next book, already advertised in his first one, in 1534 in Vienna. As its title explicitly states, the *Erklärung, wie aus dem [. . .] 53. Capittel des Propheten Esaie [. . .] das der verhaischen Moschiach [. . .] schon khomen* [Explanation from Isaiah 53 that the promised Messiah has already arrived]²¹ deals with one of the most highly disputed texts between Christians and Jews, the messianic interpretation of Isaiah 53 on the Suffering Servant. The unique selling point of his treatise is Margaritha’s assertion that this biblical chapter led to his first doubts in the truth of Judaism and triggered the process that eventually led to his conversion. He believes these verses to be so convincing that he hopes not only to strengthen Christians who experience religious doubts in their own faith, but also to convince some of his “brothers,” as he refers to Jews, to choose baptism.

The treatise is opened by a German translation of the chapter with linguistic and factual explanations where he deems them necessary. The main part consists of three medieval Jewish Bible commentaries by Abraham ibn Ezra, Rashi, and David Kimhi, introduced and commented upon by Margaritha. He also dedicated a few pages to the “arguments of the Talmudists” in which he tries to refute the talmudic interpretation of Sota which interprets Isaiah 53 as referring to Moses. The next chapter is a comparison between the Old and the New Testament, followed by a German translation of the “Targum Jonathan on the Prophets.”

Probably stimulated by colorful religious ceremonies Margaritha witnessed in Vienna, he published in 1541 a discussion of Zech. 9:9–10, which served as the basis of the popular custom of the “Palm Ass.” In his *Ain kurtzer Bericht vnd anzaigung wo die Christliche Ceremonien vom Balmesel in bayden Testamenten gegrundet sei*,²² Margaritha criticized the opulence of Christian pictures and statues that could easily be perceived as idolatrousness by non-Christians. The “Palm Ass” was

²¹ See footnote 8.

²² Antonius Margaritha, *Ain kurtzer Bericht vnd anzaigung, wo die Christlich Ceremonien vom Balmesel in Bayden Testamenten gegründt sei* (Vienna: Singrenius, 1541). Published a second time with a slightly different title as *Ain kurtzer Bericht und Anzaigung, wo die christlich Ceremonien vom Balmesel gegründet sei. Auch etlich falsche Comment von Fable, So die Juden von jem zukünfftigen Moschiach schreiben* (Vienna: Singrenius, 1541). Copy in the Austrian National Library [77.F.94].

a wooden figure of an ass with wheels attached to its feet with a statue of Jesus riding on its back. Donated by the Fraternity of Corpus Christi, it was pulled by four men around the St. Stephen's Cathedral in the center of Vienna at the yearly procession on Palm Sunday. Although there is—despite persistent statements in the literature to the contrary²³—no indication that Margaritha did not remain a Catholic after his christening, he appears to be taken aback by Catholic expressions of sumptuousness and pomp. Margaritha discusses the Jewish interpretations of these biblical verses and compares them with the Christian messianic interpretation, which states that Jesus has already fulfilled the prophecy that the Messiah would ride on an ass, but the Jews refused to acknowledge this.

Aesthetic concerns are discussed in another treatise, *Kurtze außlegung vber das wort Halleluia*, most probably also published in Vienna.²⁴ Margaritha was friendly with the Royal Bandmaster Arnold von Bruck with whom he discussed music. Baruch, one of Margaritha's brothers, was gifted with musical talents and served as a hazan in Verona²⁵ and Margaritha obviously shared his interest in music. In this short treatise he discusses verses from the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament to show that God takes delight in beautiful music and that song and music have their place in church.

Margaritha further uses the explanation of the meaning of the word "Hallelujah" to excoriate Jewish criticism of the Holy Trinity. He discussed this controversial topic in greater detail in a treatise that he seems to have completed but might have had problems publishing. After his death, university officers listed all his scanty pos-

²³ Josel of Rosheim made this claim in *Sefer hammiknah*, 15. It has been often repeated over the years, such as in the entry on Margaritha in the EJ 11:958, Sander L. Gilman, *Jewish Self-Hatred: Anti-Semitism and the Hidden Language of the Jews* (Baltimore, 1986), 63 and 65ff., and Levinson, "Ketzer," 75. Thomas Kaufmann described Margaritha's work as "standard-setting" for the Protestant hostility towards the Jews, but his insightful account is based on the assumption that Margaritha is a "Reformation publicist." Thomas Kaufmann, "Die theologische Bewertung des Judentums im Protestantismus des späteren 16. Jahrhunderts (1530–1600)," ARG 91 (2000): 191–237. See Hava Fraenkel-Goldschmidt, "On the Periphery of Jewish Society: Jewish Converts to Christianity in Germany during the Reformation," in *Culture and Society in Medieval Jewry: Studies Dedicated to the Memory of H.H. Ben-Sasson*, ed. Menahem Ben-Sasson et al. (Jerusalem, 1989), 647, n. 111 [Hebrew].

²⁴ Anthonius Margaritha, *Kurtze außlegung vber das wort Halleluia* (Vienna?). Copy in the Austrian National Library [79.Y.46].

²⁵ GJ III, 2:1227, n. 483.

sessions and found several unbound copies of a book, apparently titled *Lucubrationes de Trinitate*, in his estate.²⁶ I have been unable to find an extant copy of this treatise, but the choice of topic confirms Margaritha's interest in the main topics of Jewish-Christian polemical discourse.

Margaritha did not keep up with the originality and impact of his first publication, but subsequently pursued a more traditional line of interests. He did, however, make full use of his special position as intermediary between Judaism and Christianity and chose his topics accordingly. His publications mark somewhat the way, as a person and a believer, he turned from Judaism to Christianity. He positioned himself as an expert on Judaism with *Der gantz Jüdisch glaub*, written from an "insider perspective," in which he drew heavily on his personal experience and learning as a Jew. Having perhaps realized that teaching Hebrew was the only way into academia for a converted Jew, he went on to demonstrate his ability of being an academic lecturer by providing a textbook for the study of Hebrew. With the following projects, Margaritha aimed at a theologically more demanding level when he discussed key topics of Jewish-Christian polemics, being able to draw on Jewish commentaries and contrast them with Christian theology with which he would have been more familiar by then.

Describing the Jewish Faith

In the remainder of this article I shall discuss a few ideas of Margaritha's most influential work, *Der gantz Jüdisch glaub*. As mentioned above, the book consists of two main parts, one dedicated to a description and analysis of Jewish rites and customs, the second one a translation of the Jewish prayerbook with his comments. Part one is subdivided into rituals of the cycle of the day (prayer when rising in the morning, visit of the synagogue, table habits, going to bed), followed by the cycle of the week (Shabbat), the month (Rosh Hodesh) and concluded by the cycle of the year (Jewish holidays, beginning with Passover, Shavuot, Slichot before the High Holidays,

²⁶ Nachlaßverzeichnis Antonius Margaritha, Archives of the University of Vienna, Vienna.

Rosh Ha-Shanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot and Simhat Torah, and Hanukkah). Margaritha finishes the discussion of holy days with a short reference to fast days. Then he explains the Dietary Laws and gives a short overview of the laws of ritual slaughter, concluded by remarks on Jewish physicians (whom he believes to be often slaughterers and lung-checkers). Margaritha then dwells on the *rites de passages* of the life cycle, beginning with wedding and marriage, the circumcision, includes some remarks on the treatment of Holy Books, and discusses death and burial customs. Finally he deals with social and economic issues, such as usury, divorce and the *get*, begging and welfare, the offices available within the Jewish community, illnesses and diseases, and a short overview of popular Jewish literature.

The brief summary of the first part of *Der gantz Jüdisch glaub* shows how comprehensive Margaritha's depiction of contemporary Jewish life was. It included public and private ceremonies and rituals, from the outside observed rituals such as the building of and dwelling in booths at Sukkot to very private matters in the toilet. Lawrence Hoffman has compared Jewish public ritual to "a sacred drama" in which worshippers are "sacred actors." The ritual, the "play," as it were, is "very largely determined in advance by a fixed liturgical script and a standardized set of requirements that govern how the script is to be recited, regulating who says what, when and how."²⁷ In this sense, Margaritha can be read as someone who provides the "script" and "stage directions" to enable the curious spectator from the outside to follow the "play." As already (grudgingly) acknowledged by Josef Mieses,²⁸ Margaritha's book provides some valuable insights into Jewish daily life in early sixteenth-century Ashkenaz and it is a generally reliable source for established rituals as well as for folk beliefs and liturgical history.

By choosing "ethnography" as his main tool, Margaritha employed a modern and very popular device in an age that was characterized by exciting discoveries of a "new world" and unknown peoples and by tremendous changes in medicine and science. Ethnographic descrip-

²⁷ Lawrence H. Hoffman, "The Role of Women at Rituals of their Infant Children," in *Judaism in Practice: From the Middle Ages through the Early Modern Period*, ed. Lawrence Fine (Princeton, 2001), 100.

²⁸ Josef Mieses, *Die älteste gedruckte deutsche Uebersetzung des jüdischen Gebetbuches a. d. Jahre 1530 und ihr Autor Anthonius Margaritha: Eine literarhistorische Untersuchung* (Vienna, 1916), 53.

tion is no innocent and objective tool, however. Ronnie Po-chia Hsia has pointed out that it establishes a clear power structure between the active observer and the passive subject of description.²⁹ Moreover, Elisheva Carlebach has drawn attention to the fact that the attribution of "secrecy" to everyday Jewish rituals that Margaritha and others in his wake claimed to "uncover," had a powerful impact on anti-Jewish polemics. It furthered the contention that Jews had something to hide, which was basically hostile toward Christianity.³⁰ Margaritha makes full use of ethnographic means to establish himself as an expert on all matters Jewish thanks to his educated Jewish background, but despite the modern approach much of his discussion is clearly rooted in medieval polemical discourse.

The question on which model Margaritha based his book, has still not been answered in a satisfying way. Although Margaritha's reference to a *Sefer Middot* at the outset of his book has been interpreted as being the source of the first part of *Der gantz Jüdisch glaub*,³¹ it seems more likely that Margaritha based his work on a siddur, which often included detailed statements on rituals and customs. The reference to the Hundred Benedictions at the beginning of his description of the rituals and customs strengthens this assumption.³² Margaritha's translation of the daily prayers into German suggests that he used a Yiddish translation of the prayerbook. I have not been able to find a master copy of a Yiddish source that Margaritha could possibly have consulted. The earliest extant copy of a printed Yiddish translation was published in 1544 in Ichenhausen,³³ but it

²⁹ R. Po-chia Hsia, "Christian Ethnography of Jews in Early Modern Germany," in *The Expulsion of the Jews: 1492 and After*, ed. Raymond B. Waddington and Arthur H. Williamson (New York, 1994), 223–35 and 224.

³⁰ Elisheva Carlebach, *Divided Souls*, 181–82.

³¹ Recently by Peter von der Osten-Sacken, *Martin Luther und die Juden*, 180, n. 105. The mentioned *Sefer ha-Middot* is probably the medieval ethical work *Orchot Tzaddikim*, which does give clear instructions on moral behavior in the sense Margaritha states, "as one should keep himself from the moment one gets up in the morning/ until going to bed again," but is not concerned with religious rituals. For an English translation of this work, see Seymour J. Cohen, *Orchot Tzaddikim: The Ways of the Righteous* (New York, 1982).

³² See, for example, the two well-known medieval prayerbooks, *Mahzor Vitry*, *Machsor Vitry nach der Handschrift im British Museum*, ed. S. Hurwitz (Berlin, 1893), and the so-called *Siddur Rashi*, *Siddur Raschi, Ritualwerk, Salomo ben Isaak zugeschrieben—Mit Einmerkungen und Einleitung versehen von Salomon Buber: Für den Druck redigiert von J. Freimann* (Berlin, 1910–11).

³³ Chone Shmeruk, *Yiddish Literature in Poland: Historical Studies and Perspectives* (Jerusalem, 1981), 64 [Hebrew].

is possible that earlier printings existed or, more probably, that Margaritha had a hitherto unidentified manuscript at his disposal.

Theological Background

As stated in its subtitle, which promises “neat and reasoned arguments” against the Jewish faith, *Der gantz Jüdisch glaub* was no dispassionate account of the Jewish religion. Its underlying theological backbone was fully consistent with medieval anti-Jewish polemics, many motifs dating back to late antiquity or even the New Testament. The accusation that Jews were an “ignorant, blind, and obstinate people” who stubbornly refused to acknowledge the truth of Jesus Christ as the Messiah was a common one in the Middle Ages which can be traced back to Paul, and Margaritha repeats it at the very beginning of his account.³⁴

Margaritha distinguishes between biblical (“good”) and rabbinic (“bad”) Judaism, the latter being Judaism since the birth of Jesus to his time. According to Margaritha, the Jews do not obey the Law of Moses any longer, but stick to laws devised by their talmudic scholars who changed the Mosaic Laws in many aspects. Margaritha lists numerous examples of such wilful rabbinic interpretation of biblical laws.³⁵ In this regard, a major argument is his contention that the Jews honor God solely in an outwardly fashion, sticking meticulously to a set of rules and laws that is empty. All their “good deeds, praying, fasting, stooping, bowing, bending, giving the tithe, lighting candles, wearing special clothes” are to no avail, since Jews miss “the true faith, brotherly love and a pure heart.”³⁶

The Talmud in the Center of Polemics

The Talmud plays a central role in Christian anti-Jewish polemics. Since the twelfth century, rabbinic literature came under attack by Christian polemicists who claimed that the Talmud was a heretical

³⁴ *Der gantz Jüdisch glaub*, Aiiiir–v.

³⁵ Some examples in *ibid.*, Aiiiir–v, Bir–v, Liir, etc.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, Bir.

work or, in an even more sophisticated way of argumentation, that it included clear proofs for the truth of the Christian religion.³⁷ The convert from Judaism Nicholas Donin, claiming authority by referring to his Jewish background, presented in 1238 a charge with 35 arguments against the Talmud to Pope Gregory IX. He included anti-Christian statements of the Talmud, but stressed anthropomorphic depictions of God. This led to a confiscation of rabbinic literature in 1240 and a trial in Paris and eventually a large number of Jewish books was burned.³⁸ Attacks on the Talmud flared up throughout the Middle Ages and became particularly pressing during the sixteenth century. Johannes Pfefferkorn was in charge of an "examination" of Jewish books, authorized by Emperor Maximilian in 1509. Pfefferkorn aimed at the burning of the Talmud, arguing it was the reason for the conversion of only a very limited number of Jews.³⁹

Antonius Margaritha appears to be firmly rooted in the polemical discourse on rabbinic literature, which was often instigated by converts from Judaism. He distinguished between a valuable pre-Christian part of the Talmud (the "mishnayot") and the later "gemara," which includes anti-Christian statements. Central in Margaritha's argumentation is the charge that Jewish Bible exegesis is arbitrary and leads to strict and binding rules for the most profane parts of human life. Margaritha exemplifies this point with "Rabbi Jose's" talmudic stipulation that one should wash his hands before eating because eating bread with unwashed hands is like lying with a prostitute,⁴⁰ based on an incorrect understanding of Prov. 6:26.⁴¹ He concedes that washing one's hands regularly is valuable, but can certainly not be derived from Scripture.⁴²

A frequent charge in *Der gantz Jüdisch glaub* is that ridiculous Jewish ceremonies are empty of any deeper meaning and outwardly orientated

³⁷ Amos Funkenstein, "Basic Types of Christian anti-Jewish polemics in the Later Middle Ages," *Viator* 2 (1971): 373–82; Jeremy Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews: The Evolution of Medieval Anti-Judaism* (Ithaca, 1982), 51–76.

³⁸ See *Medieval Jewish Civilization: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Norman Roth (New York, 2003), 634–36 for a concise overview of the Paris Trial of 1240.

³⁹ Kim, *Bild vom Juden* is the best study on this affair and Pfefferkorn in general.

⁴⁰ TB Sota 4b. The rabbi mentioned in the actual talmudic text is R. Assi and not R. Jose.

⁴¹ Prov. 6:26: "For by means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread."

⁴² *Der gantz Jüdisch glaub*, Eiiiiiff.

with no spiritual substance. An example of this claim is the custom of smashing pots to small pieces following the engagement of a young couple, required by the Talmud and symbolizing happiness and abundance.⁴³

Many Christian polemicists focused on the aggadic part of the Talmud, claiming that it was simply a collection of foolish stories and absurd lies. Margaritha stresses that such tales blind the Jews and prevent them from finding the way of Christianity. This is clearly demonstrated by a story of God's treatment of the nations of the world on Judgement Day. When they protest that God is not treating them fairly, He commands them to obey the smallest commandment his beloved people of Israel has kept, the Law of the Booths on Sukkot. However, God will make the heat so unbearable that the nations will not be able to stay in their booths for very long. God will mock them, but cool Israel so that the unbearable heat will not do it any harm and accept it into heaven, while the Gentiles are thrown into hell.⁴⁴ Apart from some bold anthropomorphic images of God used in this story, a Christian reader of this tale may easily be outraged by the assumption that God should resort to rather unfair tricks in order to favor the Jews. The cleverly chosen story clearly conveys the message that there is only one chosen people whom God loves and that the Gentiles of the world will eventually end up in hell. While the Jews are the apple of God's eye, the Gentiles are not even considered worthy of the challenge of keeping the commandments, which they might well have, given a fair chance.

Christian polemicists also claimed that the Talmud relates directly to Christians, but Margaritha does not give many examples for this. He claims that the Talmud states that one should not welcome a Christian in the name of God and wish him peace.⁴⁵ Another claim is that the rabbis deliberately misinterpreted biblical verses referring to Christ. Margaritha suggests that the rabbinic elite who actually knew better deliberately kept their people in the dark. Zechariah 12:10,⁴⁶ which is unambiguously fulfilled in Christ, is read by the

⁴³ Ibid., Hiir. Cf. TB Ber 62a; TB Pes 111b. See Daniel Sperber, *Customs of Israel: Sources and History* (Jerusalem, 1998), vol. 6, 58ff. [Hebrew].

⁴⁴ Ibid., Fiiir–v. TB Avoda Zara, 2a–3b.

⁴⁵ *Der gantz Jüdisch glaub*, Biiir.

⁴⁶ Zech. 12:10: "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhab-

Jews as referring to their invented Messiah who is meant to be son of Joseph and will kill Gog and Magog in battle. After the Gospels attracted many Jewish followers, rabbis distorted their interpretations to keep Jews within the faith.⁴⁷ Margaritha, however, does not take up the claim first made by Pablo Christiani, that the Talmud includes clear allusions to the truth of Christianity.

Stressing the aggadic part of rabbinic literature and a deliberate misunderstanding of rabbinic tradition of exegesis, Margaritha asserted the Christian contention that Jewish "obdurateness" was a direct result of rabbinic literature. Martin Luther explicitly demanded the confiscation of rabbinic literature in his notorious *On the Jews and Their Lies*.⁴⁸ As is well known, during the sixteenth century, censorship of rabbinic literature was strongly enforced and in 1553 copies of the Talmud were burned in Rome, Barcelona, Venice, and several other Italian cities. In 1554 it was included in the Catholic *Index of Prohibited Books*. Anthonius Margaritha clearly contributed his share to this development.

The Jewish Community

While Margaritha's treatment of rabbinic literature followed traditional patterns, his description of Jewish community life, to discuss just one example of his "ethnographic" approach, rested upon his own experiences and impressions. Margaritha grew up in a distinguished family who boasted scholarly achievements and was closely involved in community affairs. His grandfather was the scholar Rabbi Jacob Margoles,⁴⁹ his father Samuel was a rabbi in Regensburg and a representative of the communities with Christian authorities and later served as the Chief Rabbi of Greater Poland and Masovia and the head of the rabbinic court in Póznan.⁵⁰ His brother was a hazan⁵¹

itants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn."

⁴⁷ *Der gantz Jüdisch glaub*, Ziiiiv.

⁴⁸ WA 53:536–37 = LW 47:285–86.

⁴⁹ Zipora Baruchson, *R. Jacob Margalith: His Life and Works* (Master's thesis, Bar Ilan University, 1978) [Hebrew].

⁵⁰ For Rabbi Samuel Margoles, see GJ III, 2:1198, n. 78 and 1227, n. 483.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 1127, n. 483.

and his uncle Rabbi Eisik Stein a former student of Israel Isserlein and the owner of the largest known private Jewish library in fifteenth-century Germany.⁵² Margaritha must have been very familiar with the structure and administration of the Jewish community, the tasks it had to face, and the problems that could arise.

He sets out with a brief overview on the offices in the community. He compares the highest rank within the community hierarchy, the *parnasim* with city councillors, the *rosh ha-kahal* with the mayor, and the *gabba'im* with the treasurers who were also responsible for the welfare of the community. A rather unpopular office was that of the *shama'im*, whose holders occasionally suffered abuse from the people whose income and belongings they had to estimate in order to assess their tax burden. Margaritha adds that in some places they are called *ba'alei hoda'ah*, "masters of avowal or confession," because community members have to reveal to them their assets to be classified for the appropriate tax bracket. Other offices include the *tovei kahal*, translated by Margaritha as the "best of the congregation" and compared to the masters of guilds. Juridical offices are filled by the *dayyanim* and the *berurim*, who administer justice in the community.⁵³ Why would Jewish communities, many of them small, need all these functions? Margaritha explains that Jews are divided into numerous *kitot* and *keshorim*, "societies, parties, and unions," competing with each other. To pacify all these small splinter groups and satisfy their cravings for power, representatives from all of them must be included within the community administration.⁵⁴

The assertion that Jews always quarrelled with each other is a frequent one in Margaritha's depiction of Jewish life. Although he does relate ethical rules, such as not to mock anybody else, to be shy of each other, or not to embarrass another person by calling him by a nickname,⁵⁵ Margaritha stresses the conflicts and tensions within the community. Despite certain possibilities of conflict resolution,

⁵² Ibid., 1192, n. 23 and 1219, n. 388.

⁵³ *Der gantz Jüdisch glaub*, Kiiv. See *ibid.*, Siiivff. for Margaritha's discussion of synagogal offices. See Eric Zimmer, *Harmony and Discord: An Analysis of the Decline of Jewish Self-Government in 15th Century Central Europe* (New York, 1970), 14–22 for the administration of late medieval German communities.

⁵⁴ *Der gantz Jüdisch glaub*, Kiiv.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, Biiv–Biir. *Orchot Tzaddikim*, 88 (Hebrew) and 89 (English translation).

such as *ikuv tefila* (hindrance of prayer),⁵⁶ conflicts were rife and sometime had catastrophic consequences as already shown by the talmudic story of the destruction of the Temple⁵⁷ and witnessed by Margaritha in his former community. Margaritha states that Jews acquire for a certain fee, the "jar gelt," paid to the Christian authorities, the right to control the number of residents in their community (the so-called *herem ha-yishuv*).⁵⁸ When Margaritha was thirteen or fourteen years old (probably sometime between 1505–10),⁵⁹ the Regensburg community was torn by internal conflicts. One group, albeit a not very wealthy one, bolstered its claims to the highest community offices by referring to their long residency in Regensburg and having the *din ironut*, the established right of residence. Their opponent was Moses from the wealthy Wolff family, who had moved only recently to Regensburg but acquired the right of settlement by "heavy money" and wanted to assert his power within the community. What followed was high drama with potential dangerous consequences for the whole community. According to Margaritha, Moses Wolff contacted the Captain of the City, a certain Rohrbach, and told him that the Jews in the Judengasse had compared him with Haman, "our enemy who was hanged" (Esther 7:10). Moses challenged the captain to investigate in this matter. Should the Jews not admit to it, he would owe the captain 1,000 fl. Rohrbach had the accused Jew arrested and interrogated. Margaritha even hints at torture. At this point Margaritha's father, Rabbi Samuel Margoles, who was at that time, according to his son, chief rabbi of Regensburg, intervened. He threatened Moses successfully with the ban and

⁵⁶ Margaritha described this way of conflict resolution within the community in some detail. He states that there is a short break between the Ma'ariv and Minhah prayer and it is the custom that somebody having an unresolved business would advance in front of the arc and close the book lying on the almemor. He would then thump the book and say "Ich kelom" as if he wanted to say, "I close the prayer." Margaritha relates that he witnessed often that the prayer was interrupted for the night and people had to leave without finishing the prayer. Sometimes two or three days passed before the person could be satisfied and the prayer could be resumed. Margaritha's etymological explanation of "klam" as "closing" (the prayer) is not correct (the word derives from "klamen," from Latin "clamare," to cry out, shout, which is related to the English "claim"). See Zimmer, *Harmony*, 70–71 and 81–82 on "ikuv tefila."

⁵⁷ TB Git 55b–56a.

⁵⁸ See Zimmer, *Harmony*, 22–26, on the *herem ha-yishuv*.

⁵⁹ GJ III, 2:1227, n. 483.

intervened with Rohrbach in favor of the captives. The captain did not lose the opportunity to take money from the Jews and he profited financially from all three parties involved—the Jewish community intervening on behalf of the prisoners, the prisoners themselves, and Moses Wolff who had to pay most of the enormous fine. However, it did not take long for Moses Wolff to gain the highest position in the community and he abused it by filling positions with people of his liking. This continued to cause bad blood in the community. His opponents distributed leaflets in the synagogue against the *nouveauriche* intruder. Margaritha thinks that the ill-feeling and discord in the community was the main reason for their expulsion from Regensburg. Had the community been united, it would have been able to prevent the expulsion decree with combined efforts.⁶⁰

Josel of Rosheim reaches the same conclusion in his account of this incident in his *Sefer Ha-miknah*. Ironically, he names Anthonius Margaritha as one of the *moserim*, the informers, who instigated the unhappy affair.⁶¹ The late Israeli historian Hava Fraenkel-Goldschmidt suggested that Josel knew about the incident from Margaritha's book. Perhaps he simply confused the source of the story with one of its main actors when writing his account or he wanted further to discredit Margaritha who became with his publication and public appearance a dangerous *moser* himself.⁶²

Both Margaritha and Josel of Rosheim were concerned with Jewish informers who betray and slander fellow Jews to the Christian authorities. The *moser*, a Jew who turns in fellow Jews, is seen as a dangerous enemy from within. Josel urges his readers to keep away from *moserim* (traitors) and *malshinim* (informers) of whom there are always some in each state and community. For him Margaritha is the worst example of such a despicable figure.

Margaritha was indeed well aware that he would be perceived as an informer and even anticipates the actions the Jewish community is going to take in order to prevent damage from his revelations. Margaritha even indulges in the prospect of being killed and thus dying for his religious convictions.⁶³ He was not the only convert to

⁶⁰ *Der gantz Jüdisch glaub*, Kiiiiir-Lir. See M. Wiener, "Der reiche Michel und der reiche Moses," *MGWJ* 16 (1867), 387–90 and *GJ* III, 2:1189.

⁶¹ Josel of Rosheim, *Sefer hammiknah*, 14–15.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Der gantz Jüdisch glaub*, biiiv. He describes in some detail the actions he antic-

imply such consequences. The efforts of the convert Johannes Pfefferkorn, whose campaign to ban Jewish literature was, among others, supported by another Jewish convert, Victor von Carben, were still in vivid memory. The latter included in his own book a contemporary Jewish story, which illustrates the general apprehension of converts. In this tale a blacksmith, carrying a large number of axes, makes his way to the market. When he passes a forest, the young trees, seeing the threatening axes, tremble in great fear. The old and experienced trees comfort them and explain that these axes are harmless as long as they are not accompanied by "our own kind," wooden handles, that would enable the axes to do their deadly job of felling trees.⁶⁴ Victor uses this story to demonstrate how unsettling the notion of converts with a learned Jewish background is for Jews. Made from the "same material" as their former co-religionists they can expertly inform Christians about the "true" Jewish religion and thus damage the Jewish community more than any Christian by birth, who lacks the knowledge of an insider, ever could. Victor also mentioned a case in which a certain Gotzman, a pious convert from Judaism, was killed by his former co-religionists.⁶⁵ This story is, in its very specific and gruesome details, constructed as an exemplum in which Gotzman dies, "baptized for the second time with his own blood," the death of a Christian martyr.

By changing his religions, Margaritha had changed his communal ties and did not feel any obligation to respect Jewish solidarity. He saw it as his duty as a good Christian to inform his fellow Christians about what is going on in the Jewish community. This point is stressed in the revised 1531 edition, when Margaritha gives an example of Jews cheating each other to gain advantage from a

ipated the Jewish community would take after learning about his book. They range from fasting, praying for the lack of success of the publication, slandering him before Christian authorities, to the plotting of murder. Cf. the medieval responsum by Rabbenu Asher ben Yehiel (Rosh) in which he approves the killing of an informer. However, this has to be seen in the Spanish context where Jewish courts, under royal patents, exercised capital punishment. See *Jewish Law and Jewish Life: Selected Rabbinical Responsa*, compiled, annotated, and arranged by Jacob Bazak; trans. and ed. Stephen M. Passamanek (New York, 1979), 213–18.

⁶⁴ Victor von Carben, *Hier inne wirt gelesen wie Her Victor von Carben, welcher eyn Rabi der Juden gewest ist, zu cristlichem glawbn komen. Weiter vindet man dar in eyn costliche disputatz eynes gelerten Cristen vnd eyns gelerten Juden, dar inne alle Irrthumb der Juden durch yr aygen schriftt aufgelost werden* (Cologne: Quentells Erben, 1508), Ciiiv.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, Divr-v.

Christian. Jews try to cheat each other by alienating customers from other Jews, thus ignoring the established right to clientele (*ma'arufya*). The Christian "client" is a valued customer because he or she sees the Jewish businessman secretly, either without the knowledge of husband or wife, or in order to sell stolen goods. Engaging in somewhat shady dealings, such customers had to accept the conditions set up by the Jew, who made a lot of profit from them.⁶⁶

Although Margaritha certainly gave a quite accurate impression of conflicts and tensions arising in the communities, he must have been aware that Christians fought no less among themselves. It seems that he wanted to rebut the Christian impression of the Jewish community as a closely-knit confraternity, in which members assist each other and the poor and needy, suffer from fewer diseases than Christians, and support each other with brotherly love in an exemplary way. Such a community would be a model for Christians to imitate. The situation described by Margaritha shows a community in distress where, after God has abandoned it, competition, envy, and hatred lead to fatal consequences.

The First Translation of the Siddur

The second part of *Der gantz Jüdisch glaub* consists of a translation of the daily Jewish prayers into German. The pioneering work of Margaritha's translation of the siddur into the vernacular is all the more remarkable when one keeps in mind that the first English translation was undertaken—also by a Jewish convert—only in 1738. It is to my knowledge the first translation into the vernacular of the Hebrew prayerbook apart from Saadiah Gaon's *Collection of All Prayers and Praises*.⁶⁷ As suggested above, I assume that Margaritha's translation is based on a Yiddish translation in manuscript form he had at his disposal.

Margaritha uses the Hundred Benedictions⁶⁸ as a structural principle of his translation, but benedictions 52 to 87 are missing in all

⁶⁶ *Der gantz Jüdisch glaub*, (1531), Liir.

⁶⁷ Saadiah Gaon, *Kitab Jami al-Salawot wa al-Tasebih* (Collection of All Prayers and Praises) was written in Arabic and is considered to be the first translation of the Hebrew prayerbook into the vernacular.

⁶⁸ Ismar Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy: A Comprehensive History*, trans. Raymond P. Scheindlin

editions of his book. The greatest part of his translation is dedicated to Shacharit, the morning prayer. Minhah and Ma'ariv, in which many of the Shacharit prayers are repeated, are treated much more briefly. Margaritha adds some explanations on how certain prayers are said, includes a digression on magical words and the prayer "Shiv'im P'sukim" שבעים פסוקים and a detailed description of the sale of religious offices in the synagogue.

The quality of Margaritha's translation was harshly criticized by Josef Mieses who wrote the first scholarly study of Margaritha's opus. Mieses objected to the Hebrew orthography and the transcription of Hebrew words into German and found more than 40 severe errors in Margaritha's translation. Margaritha was not consistent in Hebrew orthography and he often wrote Hebrew words phonetically, using a grammatically incorrect *vav* instead of the vowel *kametz*. A more serious problem was the incorrect dividing of sentences, which explains many of his erroneous translations. However, none of his grammatical errors hints at a deliberate distortion of Jewish prayers for polemical reasons. Even if Margaritha's own judgement of his abilities may appear a bit exaggerated,⁶⁹ his knowledge of Hebrew was apparently sufficient to teach at the university level.

Anti-Christian Expressions in Jewish Prayers

Following Margaritha's description of Jewish rituals and prayers, the reader easily gets the impression that anti-Christian curses and maledictions are a central part of Jewish liturgy and ritual. Anti-Christian utterances were part of the weekly havdalah ceremony, formally marking the beginning of a new week after the day of rest, in which, according to Margaritha, individual Christians and Christianity as a whole are cursed, together with an expression of hope that the Turks

(Philadelphia, 1993; German orig.: Frankfurt am Main, 1924), 7. Both Mahzor Vitry and Siddur Rashi share this structure.

⁶⁹ See Anthonius Margaritha, *Erklerung*, Q2v [= 62v] where he states that Jews know less Hebrew grammar than a Christian pupil who has studied with him or another teacher for only a year. See the remarks by Joseph Scaliger on the rather different approaches of Christian scholars and Jews to studying Hebrew and Aramaic. Anthony Grafton, *Joseph Scaliger: A Study in the History of Classical Scholarship* (Oxford, 1993) vol. 2, 496. I would like to thank Stephen Burnett for this reference.

might topple Christian authority.⁷⁰ Two prayers said during Passover celebrations, *Az rov nissim*⁷¹ and *Ometz gevurotekha*,⁷² include explicit anti-Christian expressions.⁷³ During the Yom Kippur prayers, all nations are cursed, including the Christians.⁷⁴ When the almemor is circled on the seventh day of Sukkot (Hoshana Rabba), Jews pray that Christianity may perish like Jericho fell.⁷⁵ Finally, also Hanukkah is rife with anti-Christian statements. Margaritha claims that “Israel wants to splash Christian blood on the wall (read: murder),” a disturbing allusion to Jewish hatred. Margaritha adds that Jews prayed for the destruction of Christianity, hoping to gain power themselves, and secretly delighted in the military successes of the Ottoman Empire. The “secret code” used in these prayers is “Edom,” historically referring to Rome, but used by contemporary Jews as a cue for “Christianity.”⁷⁶

Margaritha summarizes his survey of the yearly holidays by stating that the Jews do not have a single holy day, merry or sad, on which they do not ask for revenge against the Christians in their prayers, as can be shown by their Talmud, rabbinic scholars, and their prayerbooks.⁷⁷ Jews do not content themselves with anti-Christian prayers on certain holidays, but curse Christians even in their daily prayers said in the synagogue.⁷⁸ While Margaritha wants to estab-

⁷⁰ *Der gantz Jüdisch glaub*, Ciiiv–Ciiir.

⁷¹ *Az rov nissim* (עַז רַב נִסִּים) (“At the time you performed many miracles”), a piyyut by Yannai (7th century), which is recited on the first night in the Haggadah at the Passover Seder. The prayer is based on Midrash Bamidbar Rabbah 20:11 and “recounts 13 miracles God performed on various Passover nights in the course of Israel’s history and concludes with an allusion to the messianic era, which will begin on Passover.” Macy Nulman, *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Prayer* (Northvale, NJ, 1993), 78.

⁷² A poem attributed to Moses Kalonymus (11th century) and recited on the eighth day of Passover. See Nulman, *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Prayer*, 70.

⁷³ *Der gantz Jüdisch glaub*, Diiv–Diiir.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, Fiir.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, Fiiir–v.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, Giv. For a discussion on the “Esau” motif, see Gerson D. Cohen, “Esau as Symbol in Early Medieval Thought,” *Jewish Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, ed. Alexander Altmann (Cambridge, MA, 1967), 19–48.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, Giir.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, Giir. The Leipzig 1531 edition, Giir–v includes a bitter remark that Jews and their lies are more believed than those who show up and publicize the true nature of Jewish religion and who are even persecuted. For a recent discussion of motifs of revenge in Jewish prayers, see Israel Jacob Yuval, “Two Nations in Your Womb:” *Perceptions of Jews and Christians* (Tel Aviv, 2000), 135–40. [Hebrew].

lish his authority on all matters Jewish due to his special position as a "native informant,"⁷⁹ the assertion that Jews curse Christians as part of their daily liturgy is his trump card. Although this claim was not a new one in medieval Christian-Jewish polemical discourse,⁸⁰ Margaritha stresses his insider knowledge, which enables him to reveal the disguised second layer of certain liturgical texts. He not only knows the prayers intimately due to his knowledge of Hebrew, but also knows the hidden subtext, which only a former Jew, once part of the Jewish community, can know.

"Cursing the Heretics"

The two most disputed prayers in the daily synagogal service were the *Birkat Ha-Minim* (Cursing the Heretics), the twelfth benediction in the Eighteen Benedictions of the weekday *Amidah* prayer, and the *Aleynu* prayer. Although the *Birkat Ha-Minim* was already known to the Church Fathers and understood by them as an anti-Christian prayer, Nicholas Donin introduced it to medieval polemics.⁸¹ Johannes Pfefferkorn and Anthonius Margaritha rekindled the suspicions of this benediction. Margaritha states explicitly that he wants to explain this prayer in greater detail because "it concerns myself and all baptised Jews."⁸² Margaritha knows two variations of the original *minim* (heretics), "informers" and "baptized Jews." He adds that it is particularly against "all who are not of their faith" and explicitly against

⁷⁹ See Yaacov Deutsch and Maria Diemling, "'Christliche Ethnographien' von Juden und Judentum: Die Konstruktion des Jüdischen in frühneuzeitlichen Texten," in *Die Konstruktion des Jüdischen in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart*, ed. Michael Konkel et al. (Paderborn, 2002), 23–24, for some thoughts on converts as informers in the ethnographical sense.

⁸⁰ Samuel Krauss and William Horbury, *The Jewish-Christian Controversy from the Earliest Times to 1789* (Tübingen, 1996), vol. 1, 153–61.

⁸¹ William Horbury, "The Benedictions of the *Minim*," *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s. (1982), 33:1: 19–61. Samuel Krauss, "Zur Literatur der Siddurim, Antichristliche Polemik," in *Festschrift für Aron Freimann* (Berlin, 1935), 125–40.

⁸² Johannes Isaac Levita Germanus, who converted to Christianity in 1546, wrote in an Epistle to the Jews of his native Wetzlar that his mother, although she bitterly opposed his conversion, moved away from Wetzlar, because she could not stand hearing "the cursing of the baptized Jews on Shabbat." Quoted in Johann Jacob Schudt, *Jüdische Merckwürdigkeiten [. . .] sammt einer vollständigen Franckfurter Juden-Chronick* (Frankfurt-Leipzig, 1714–18), bk. 6, ch. 33, § 4, 231.

“baptized Jews, against the authorities, and against all with a particular faith opposing their religion.” It may seem that it refers only to the “godless authority,” but they perceive everybody not of their own faith as godless. This has already been acknowledged in Venice where Jews are not only forced to wear a yellow hat and reduce their interest rates, but also to change this offensive line in their prayerbooks to the general word “informers.” Having prayed it in Venice himself, he knows too well that Jews will not give it up.⁸³ Margaritha strengthens the orientation against Christian authority of the benediction in the revised edition of his book where he refers to Obadiah (as traditionally interpreted as referring to Christian authority, “malkhut zadon”) and Rashi’s commentary. Margaritha also claims that only Jews living under Christian authority say this prayer. He challenges Jewish scholars, infuriated by his publication, to refute his claims in the presence of reasonable, learned Christians.⁸⁴

The Alenu Prayer

The *Alenu* Prayer was as disputed as the *Birkat Ha-Minim*, because of the verse “for they bow down in vanity and emptiness and pray to a God that cannot save” (adapted from Isa. 30:7 and 45:20). Medieval converts from Judaism, such as Abner of Burgos and Peter of Prague, drew attention to an inherent anti-Christian message. Margaritha stresses again the censorship in Venice where Jews had to remove blasphemous and slandering references to Christians and the Christian religion from their books. Jews writing the siddur by hand still add the contentious words, but in printing they simply leave empty space of the length of roughly ten words. This serves as a reminder to everybody to utter the disputed words when reaching this space in the book. In Germany and Prague, however, Jews print the incriminating words without any hesitation. When Jews utter them, they spit out three times against Christ and his believers. The double meaning of the word *varik* (*rik*, emptiness, and *rok*, spittle or saliva) contributed to the practice of Jews spitting when

⁸³ *Der gantz Jüdisch glaub*, Qjiiir-v.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 1531, Siiir-v.

saying this phrase.⁸⁵ Since Jews living among the Christians must not curse Jesus explicitly, this blasphemy is done by a veiled allusion. Margaritha explains that "Jesus" in Hebrew is "Yeshua" with a numerical value of 386. Jews, however, replace the holy name with vanity and emptiness (*lahevel varik*). Cunningly, they reduce the numerical value by three to make the Christians believe that the Holy Trinity is included in the holy name of Jesus, but they do not refer to God, the Holy Spirit, and the Messiah in *lahevel varik*, but only to Jesus who was sentenced to death and crucified by their forefathers. They avoid calling him by his proper name, Yeshua, among themselves, but, in presence of Christians, they call him "Yeshu" which sounds similar, but has a numerical value of 316, the same as *varik* ("and emptiness"). If they talk among themselves they hasten to add *Ymach sh'mo* ("may his name be erased").

In discussing these prayers, Margaritha makes it clear that he wants to provide important insights into the true nature of Jewish liturgy to Christian authorities. He expects them to base their Jewry policy on his revelations, and follow the example of Venice where Jews experienced censorship, had to wear marks on their garments to distinguish them as Jews, reduce interest, and, not mentioned by Margaritha, were confined to the enclosed space of the ghetto.⁸⁶

Although there is hardly any doubt that Margaritha did not invent his claims,⁸⁷ contemporary Christians reacted ambiguously to converts "revealing Jewish secrets" and drawing attention to anti-Christian rituals. The scholar Johannes Reuchlin did not believe these claims brought forward by Pfefferkorn (and which are similar to those expressed by Margaritha). He writes in his *Augenspiegel*, the first treatise against Pfefferkorn, that such claims may perhaps persuade

⁸⁵ Nulman, *Encyclopedia of Jewish Prayer*, 25.

⁸⁶ *Der gantz Jüdisch glaub*, VIIIir–Xir. For a useful overview on Jewish life in Venice, see *The Jews of Early Modern Venice*, ed. Robert C. Davis and Benjamin Ravid (Baltimore, 2001).

⁸⁷ Peter von der Osten-Sacken, *Martin Luther und die Juden*, 195, n. 217, and 223, n. 88, detects apologetic tendencies in my dissertation and the book of another scholar since we did not state explicitly that these Jewish prayers did indeed include anti-Christian statements. I have never thought that apologetics are a worthy motivation of historians. To anybody familiar with medieval Jewish sources it is rather obvious that Jewish creativity found many ways to express religious antagonisms in literary texts and rituals. However, I am less interested in listing mutual "breaches of rules" (and thus judging which side was "better" or "worse"), but want to understand how Christians and Jews perceived, described, and imagined each other.

unlearned Christians, but scholars can judge for themselves and see that there is not a single word in these prayers denoting the baptized, the Apostles, or Christians. In an endearingly rational way he lists, as a Hebraist and jurist, grammatical and logical reasons why the prayer could not refer to Christians. Whatever Jews feel in their hearts, nobody knows and they are by no means punishable for such feelings.⁸⁸ For many other readers of *Der gantz Jüdisch glaub*, these claims are Margaritha's most important insights, as will be shown below.

Reception

Margaritha's *Der gantz Jüdisch glaub* was not only published repeatedly, but also widely read and quoted. Protestant theologian and Hebraist Sebastian Franck was, to my knowledge, the first author to use Margaritha's book when writing about the daily rituals and holidays of contemporary Jews in his *Chronica* (1536),⁸⁹ albeit without any acknowledgement even when quoting Margaritha verbatim.

The most influential reader and recipient of Margaritha's ideas was certainly Martin Luther.⁹⁰ *Der gantz Jüdisch glaub* proved to be a trusted source for Luther on Jewish ritual, such as circumcision or wedding customs, the use of matzot, or the kabbalistic use of the *shem ha-meforash*. Luther's main interest was in proving that Jewish prayers were full of anti-Christian expressions, uttered daily in the synagogues of the Jews. Some of Luther's demands as expressed most strongly in his notorious *On the Jews and Their Lies* (1543), were inspired by similar suggestions made by Margaritha, such as the prohibition of Jewish usury or the retraining of Jews as artisans or manual workers. However, it must be noted that Luther exceeded Margaritha by far in his demands. Margaritha never asked for the burning of

⁸⁸ Johannes Reuchlin, *Warhafftige entschuldigung gegen und wider ains getaufften iuden genant Pfefferkorn vormals getruckt vßgangen vnwarhaftigs schmachbüchlin Augenspiegel*. (Tübingen: Anshelm, 1511), B4v–C1r, repr. RSW IV, 1:33–35 = *Recommendation whether to Confiscate, Destroy and Burn all Jewish Books: A Classic Treatise against Anti-Semitism*, trans. Peter Wortsman (New York, 2000), 44.

⁸⁹ Sebastian Franck, *Chronica, Zeitbuch vnnnd Geschichtbibell von anbegyn bis in dis gegenwertig M.D.XXXvi. iar verlengt* (Ulm: Johann Varnier, 1536).

⁹⁰ See the recent study by Peter von der Osten-Sacken, *Martin Luther und die Juden* which carefully traces Luther's borrowing from Margaritha.

synagogues, the demolition of houses belonging to Jews, the abolition of the rabbinate, or the burning of all Jewish books. He neither alluded to ritual murder or well-poisoning nor demonized Jews and Judaism as Luther did. However, Luther's explicit approval of *Der gantz Jüdisch glaub* may have encouraged in due course other theologians and anti-Jewish polemicists to consult the book as well.⁹¹

Stephen Burnett has shown that *Der gantz Jüdisch glaub* served as the literary model for Johannes Buxtorf's *Synagoga Judaica*.⁹² Even the title chosen by Buxtorf, the eminent Hebraist, promising an overview of the whole Jewish faith and practice and its public and private customs, is a paraphrase of Margaritha's book. Buxtorf expressed elsewhere his suspicion of Jewish converts in general and double-checked their claims with Jewish sources.⁹³ However, Buxtorf used Margaritha extensively, even if he did not always credit him. He relied on *Der gantz Jüdisch glaub* for valuable insider information and picturesque details not easily found in the numerous Jewish sources he consulted for his book. Perhaps even more valuable for Buxtorf, whose general "scholarly" and seemingly "objective" style makes it more difficult to detect his bias, was his use of quotations from Margaritha to introduce a sarcastic tone and snide remarks into his text. Working as a censor of Hebrew books, Buxtorf was well aware of the debate over anti-Christian utterances in Jewish prayer and repeated Margaritha's claims, but sometimes he went even further than Margaritha. He suggested that the *Shema* is intrinsically anti-Christian because it stresses the "oneness" of God and thus implies that Christians pray to more than one God alone. *Synagoga Judaica* bolstered Buxtorf's reputation as an outstanding Hebraist and it remained influential for Christian perceptions of Jews and Judaism well into the eighteenth century.

Der gantz Jüdisch glaub was read and quoted by theologians and philologists, antiquarians and missionaries, physicians and jurists, converts from Judaism and anti-Jewish polemicists.⁹⁴ The first of its kind, it was by far the most popular ethnographic description of Jewish

⁹¹ See also Kaufmann, "Theologische Bewertung."

⁹² Stephen G. Burnett, "Distorted Mirrors: Antonius Margaritha, Johann Buxtorf and Christian Ethnographies of the Jews," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 25:2 (1994): 275–87, and his *From Christian Hebraism*, 54–102.

⁹³ Idem, "Distorted Mirrors," 282, n. 40.

⁹⁴ For a more detailed account see my forthcoming book.

rituals, customs, and prayers that was referred to well into the eighteenth century. It set the benchmark for books of this kind and could not be ignored by anybody interested in Jewish religion in the early modern period. The majority of its readers were Protestants who might have been influenced by Luther's explicit approval, but who also were much keener on well-organized mission efforts to the Jews than contemporary Catholics. Perceiving themselves as the "New Israel," Protestants might also have had a stronger interest in Judaism *per se*.⁹⁵

To summarize a history of reception that lasted well into the mid-eighteenth century: What were the arguments in Margaritha's work that were most widely received? Although Margaritha's descriptions of Jewish customs and rituals were mentioned by later readers, his book proved most popular when it touched upon Jewish-Christian relations and, more specifically, demonstrated Jewish hatred of everything Christian. Most prominent was the contention that Jews curse Christians and Christian authorities in their prayers: "Edom" stands as code for Christianity, the name of Jesus is uttered as a curse and Jews deem the Apostles as heretics. Especially popular was Margaritha's record of "Sched willkommen," a pun playing with the similar sound of the Hebrew *shed* (demon) and the German *seid* (be). The ritual of *kapparot* before Yom Kippur, in which poor Jews who could not afford to buy roosters and hens tricked Christians into taking over their sins for a couple of pennies, was another claim often repeated by later authors.⁹⁶ Also in the sphere of Jewish deceiving of Christians is the claim that Jews do not have to keep an oath made to a Christian. Margaritha's claim that Jews who converted to Christianity were cursed as traitors within the Jewish community, which wanted to erase their memory, was often quoted. Last but not least, his claim that Jewish physicians, lacking a proper medical training, were often no more than former ritual slaughterers and lung checkers, was also quite popular. This was again directly related to Jewish-

⁹⁵ For Protestant attitudes toward Judaism, see Friedrich, *Zwischen Abwehr und Bekehrung* and Christopher M. Clark, *The Politics of Conversion: Missionary Protestantism and the Jews in Prussia, 1728–1941* (Oxford, 1995).

⁹⁶ For a detailed discussion of this claim in ethnographic writings of this kind see Yaacov Deutsch, "Polemical Ethnographies: Descriptions of Yom Kippur in the Writings of Christian Hebraists and Jewish Converts to Christianity in Early Modern Europe," in *Hebraica Veritas*, 202–33.

Christian relations, because by saying so Margaritha dismissed Jewish physicians as mere quack-salvers who could not be trusted by Christian patients.

Antonius Margaritha is one of the few converts whose information is generally trusted by later Christian generations, even if it is double-checked by more sophisticated scholars and not always found to be correct.⁹⁷ “The old proselyte Jew”⁹⁸ is thought to have been a genuine convert whose intentions were sincere, unlike other converts from Judaism who returned to their former faith “as dogs to their vomit” (Prov. 26:11), as the derisive saying went.⁹⁹ Even a Jewish rabbi referred to him, when fighting another Jewish convert. After the publication of Samuel Friedrich Brenz’ venomous *Jüdischer Abgestreiffter Schlangenbalg* (Jewish Shed Snake Skin), Rabbi Salman Zvi of Uffhausen (Franconia) tried to refute the malicious claims put forward by Brenz in his *Jüdischer Theriack*.¹⁰⁰ Familiar with Christian anti-Jewish polemical literature and having read Pfefferkorn, Margaritha, and Buxtorf, Rabbi Salman considers *Der gantz Jüdisch glaub* to be an “evil book,” but finds it useful for the refutation of some of Brenz’ claims. Most examples concern anti-Christian statements and Rabbi Salman uses Margaritha’s more moderate statements—in comparison with Brenz, who does not even refrain from ritual murder accusations—to contradict Brenz and depict him as an ignorant liar who was not even able to copy correctly from Margaritha.¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ For example, by the prolific Oriental scholar Johann Jacob Schudt who used a vast amount of material for his voluminous *Jüdische Merckwürdigkeiten* and by the theologian Sebastian Jacob Jungendres who edited and annotated Paul Christian Kirchner’s *Jüdisches Ceremoniel*, an ethnographically orientated depiction of Jewish rituals by a former rabbi.

⁹⁸ Schudt, *Jüdische Merckwürdigkeiten*, bk. 6, ch. 17, 246 or bk. 6, ch. 15, 255.

⁹⁹ One such example was Friedrich Albert Christiani (born ca. 1647), who became a Hebraist after his conversion and published several treatises on Jewish rituals. Apparently after financial losses due to gambling, he stole 300 Thaler from a preacher and fled together with his daughter. See Sigismund Hosmann, *Das schwer zu bekehrende Juden-Hez* (Zell, 1699), 371–72. On Friedrich Albert Christiani, see Elisheva Carlebach, “Converts and their Narratives in Germany: The Case of Friedrich Albert Christiani,” *LBIYB* 40 (1995), 65–83.

¹⁰⁰ Salman Zvi Uffenhausen, *Jüdischer Theriack*, in *Theriaca Judaica, ad examen revocata, sive scripta amoihea Samuelis Friderici Brenzi, Conversi Judæi, & Salomonis Zevi*, ed. Johannes Wülfer (Nuremberg: Andreas Knorz, 1681).

¹⁰¹ Salman Zvi Uffenhausen, *Jüdischer Theriack*, 40v, 42r, 74v, 83r, etc.

Conclusion

Peter von der Osten-Sacken has quite rightly stressed that Margaritha may not have been a liar, but he certainly was an informer, a *moser* slandering Jews to Christian authorities.¹⁰² The realization that the life one has led so far is wrong and requires a fundamental change is for many converts the first step towards a new religion. Arthur Darby Nock has pointed out that this type of religious conversion is a “turning away . . . as much as a turning towards.”¹⁰³ This “turning away” was probably a painful and powerful process of self-definition and identification with which Margaritha seemed to struggle to the very end of his life. The ambiguous identity of *olim judaeus*, a former Jew, may have contributed to a feeling of having to prove his religious sincerity and his commitment to his new community by distancing himself thoroughly and very publicly from his previous faith.

While the attempt of distancing himself from his past may be psychologically understandable, it is difficult to justify Margaritha’s betrayal of his former community. Involving gentile authority in inner-Jewish matters was severely punished within the late medieval German communities.¹⁰⁴ As stated above, Margaritha was well aware that his public statements would not only anger the Jewish community, but he showed little concern for the dire consequences that Jewish communities would face as the result of his revelations. Blasphemy and treason were severe accusations that could seriously endanger the precarious position of Jewish communities in early sixteenth-century Germany. His insistence on precisely these claims in the revised edition of *Der gantz Jüdisch glaub*, which appeared after the humiliation he experienced at the Diet of Augsburg, demonstrates his determination in this matter.

It would take an alternative reading of *Der gantz Jüdisch glaub* and its author too far to suggest that Margaritha was motivated by the spirit of enlightenment and the desire to reform Judaism as could be said of eighteenth-century converts from Judaism, such as Gottfried

¹⁰² von der Osten-Sacken, *Martin Luther und die Juden*, 216–24.

¹⁰³ Arthur Darby Nock, *Conversion: The Old and the New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo* (Baltimore-London, 1998), 7.

¹⁰⁴ Zimmer, *Harmony and Discord*, 93–95.

Selig or Carl Anton.¹⁰⁵ However, he must have been aware of the tremendous changes the early Reformation years brought to Christianity, on a religious as well as on a social level, and he might have felt a similar “window of opportunity” for Judaism. While Jews of later generations who were critical of their religious tradition did get the opportunity to articulate their concerns and stay within the Jewish framework, this option did not exist for Margaritha.

Margaritha’s major contribution to Jewish-Christian relations in the time of the Reformation and beyond was his choice of ethnographic tools when writing about Judaism. With all the problems such an approach entails, Margaritha’s *Der gantz Jüdisch glaub* set a model which was copied and imitated for more than two hundred years and shaped, for better or worse, the image of Jews and Judaism that Christians acquired.

¹⁰⁵ See Carlebach, *Divided Souls*, 222–34.

VON DER IU DEN CEREMONIEN: REPRESENTATIONS OF JEWS IN SIXTEENTH-CENTURY GERMANY*

Yaacov Deutsch

Representations of Jews appeared in a variety of literary and artistic forms in sixteenth-century Germany. Jews were mentioned in literary novels and in poetry. They were depicted in engravings and pictures, were the subject of caricatures, and were mentioned in pamphlets of different sorts.¹ Many of these representations are the subject of recent scholarship, which has studied the images of the Jews in particular genres. There is one common denominator to all this scholarship: It focuses on images of the Jews in artistic and fictional works and not on descriptions that intend to reflect the lives of actual Jews. This article will focus on descriptions that claim to offer a realistic description of the Jews, and more specifically of Jewish ritual. This shift from symbolic and fictional images to what are purported to be descriptions of actual Jewish life is an important new development in Christian-Jewish relations and it is this innovation that will be the focus of this article.

The main focus of this study is a new literary genre that appeared for the first time in Germany during the sixteenth century and is crucial for understanding the Jewish image in early modern Germany. The main characteristic of this genre is the detailed description of

* Based on Paulus Staffelsteiner, *Von der Iuden Ceremonien, so sie in Vermählungen der kinder, und ihren Begräbnussen pflegen zu uben . . .* (n.p., 1583). I wish to thank Elisheva Baumgarten and Maria Diemling who read drafts and commented on this article, and HaNadiv Fellowship awarded by the Rothschild Foundation and Lamda Fellowship granted by the Posen Foundation for supporting this research.

¹ See Eric M. Zafran, "The Iconography of Antisemitism: A Study of the Representation of the Jews in the Visual Arts of Europe 1400–1600" (PhD diss., New York University, 1973); Ludwig Geiger, "Die Juden und die deutsche Literatur," *ZGJD* 2 (1888): 308–74; Oskar Frankl, *Der Jude in den deutschen Dichtungen des 15., 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig, 1905); Petra Schöner, *Judenbilder im deutschen Einblattdruck der Renaissance: Ein Beitrag zur Imagologie* (Baden-Baden, 2002); Richard I. Cohen, *Jewish Icons: Art and Society in Modern Europe* (Berkeley, 1998), 10–67; Edith Wenzel, "Do worden die Judden alle geschant:" *Rolle und Funktion der Juden in spätmittelalterlichen Spielen* (Munich, 1992).

the ritual and ceremonial life of the Jews. These descriptions focus on the different cycles in Jewish life—the holidays, life cycle events, and every day life. In addition to these books, other compositions that appeared during that period—especially polemical treatises—help characterize the ways in which the Jews were perceived and depicted by non-Jews. I will focus on the emergence of this new ethnographic genre in the writing about the Jews and argue that these descriptions, despite their accuracy, were aimed at creating a distinct image of the Jew. In addition, I will suggest a few explanations for the emergence of this new genre and point to some of its implications for the study of Christian-Jewish relations in the early modern period.

The Historical Background

The Jews as a separate and distinct group drew the attention of their neighbors already in the ancient period.² This aspect of the Jewish religion, especially in theological contexts, grew and developed after the birth of Christianity and indeed Christian references to Jews are as old as Christianity itself.³ One of the main subjects in the writings of the Church Fathers was the claim that the Jews were no longer *Verus Israel*.⁴ Many of the Church Fathers argued that since the coming of Christ the biblical precepts should not be followed according to their literal meaning, rather they should be adhered to from a spiritual point of view. The main focus of the Church Fathers, however, was the Bible and the discussion of its meaning, while references to actual Jews were very rare and scattered.⁵

² See Molly Whittaker, *Jews and Christians: Graeco-Roman Views* (Cambridge, 1984); Peter Schäfer, *Judeophobia, Attitudes toward the Jews in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, MA, 1997).

³ For the Christian-Jewish polemic in antiquity, see Alan F. Segal, *Rebecca's Children: Judaism and Christianity in the Roman World* (Cambridge, MA, 1986). In addition, see the encyclopedic overview in A. Lukyn Williams, *Adversus Judaeos: A Bird's-Eye View of Christian Apologiae until the Renaissance* (Cambridge, 1935); Bernard Blumenkranz, *Les auteurs chrétiens latins du Moyen Age sur les juifs et le judaïsme* (Paris, 1963); Schreckenberg, *Adversus-Judaeos-Texte*, vol. 1.

⁴ See Marcel Simon, *Verus Israel: A Study of the Relations between Christians and Jews in the Roman Empire (135–425)*, trans. H. McKeating (Oxford, 1986).

⁵ See Amos Funkenstein, "Basic Types of Christian Anti-Jewish Polemics in the Later Middle Ages," *Viator* 2 (1971): 373–82, here at 373–77.

The stormy relationship between Christians and Jews intensified during the twelfth century and it is in that period that a dramatic change in the perception and attitude of Christians toward Jews occurred. The discovery of rabbinic literature led Christian scholars to the conclusion that the Jews did not adhere to the biblical precepts, rather to what the Christian scholars described as talmudic religion.⁶ The consequences of this understanding marked a new phase in the relationships between Jews and Christians, since its implication was that the Augustinian reasoning for the existence of the Jews was no longer relevant.⁷ This new attitude, whose seeds appeared already during the twelfth century but culminated in the thirteenth century, resulted in an intense effort to convert the Jews, and can mainly be seen in the works of mendicant monks such as Pablo Christiani and Raymond Martini.⁸

For the Christian scholars of thirteenth-century Europe, Jews were the adherents of a new religion: rabbinic Judaism—a religion based on the Talmud. The actual knowledge that they had about the ways in which the Jews observed the laws of their religion, however, was very limited and in the writings of medieval Christian scholars there are very few factual descriptions of Jewish religious customs and ceremonies.⁹ One of the main goals in the writings of these medieval scholars was to prove Jewish hostility toward Christianity, mainly by revealing anti-Christian passages in the rabbinic literature.¹⁰

⁶ For this view see especially Jeremy Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law: Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christendom* (Berkeley, 1999), 317–63.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*, 334–58. The literature about the changing attitudes toward the Jews during the high Middle Ages is vast, and there are different opinions, especially regarding the definition of the period in which the change in attitude toward the Jews took place. A summary of this debate can be found in Daniel J. Lasker, “Jewish-Christian Polemics at the Turning Point: Jewish Evidence from the Twelfth Century,” *HTR* 89 (1996): 161–73. For a detailed bibliography on the subject, see Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law*.

⁹ For some medieval examples of Christian familiarity with Jewish ceremonies, see 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. All these examples, however, are fragmentary and relate only to one or two specific customs or ceremonies of the Jews, and they all prove that prior to the sixteenth century there was no systematic discussion of Jewish practices in Christian literature.

¹⁰ This tendency is dominant in the attacks on the Talmud during the middle of the thirteenth century and continues in later polemical works. See Chen Merhavya, *The Church versus Talmudic and Midrashic Literature (500–1248)* (Jerusalem, 1970), espe-

The Emergence of Ethnographic Literature

The period beginning at the end of the fifteenth century witnessed the flourishing of Christian Hebraism. The new interest in Judaica and Hebraica led to the publication of numerous books on different subjects related to Jews and Judaism. Among them one can discern a new genre of ethnographic writing about the Jews, that is exemplified in the writings of a number of authors such as Johannes Pfefferkorn, Victor von Carben, and others. Their writing exposes the novelty of the genre as well as the relationship of their writings to those of their predecessors.

In 1508, Johannes Pfefferkorn, a Jew of Moravian origin who converted to Christianity with his wife and children in the year 1504, published a booklet entitled: *Ich heuß ein buchlein der iuden peicht*.¹¹ In this book, Pfefferkorn provides a description of the rituals and ceremonies of the holidays of Rosh Ha-Shanah (New Year) and Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement). In his descriptions he portrays different aspects of these two holidays. He starts with the description of the special prayers [Selihot] that are said during the days before Rosh Ha-Shanah and writes that on these days the Jews blow the ram's horn in order to warn the people that they should repent and ask for the forgiveness of their sins, "in the same way as we Christians are admonished by the preachers during Fasts."¹² In addition, the Jews ask God to forgive their sins and to bring them back to Jerusalem and build the Temple, so they will be able to sacrifice in it like their ancestors.¹³

Later on Pfefferkorn describes the ritual immersion on the eve of Rosh Ha-Shanah, and then moves on and describes the prayers of the holiday. Among the different prayers, Pfefferkorn makes special mention of those that relate to the Christians, such as the prayer

cially 274–81 [Hebrew]; Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, "The Inquisition and the Jews of France in the Time of Bernard Gui," HTR 63 (1970): 354–63.

¹¹ Nuremberg, 1508 [= *The Confession of the Jews*, trans. Erica Rummel, in idem, *The Case Against Johann Reuchlin: Religious and Social Controversy in Sixteenth-Century Germany* (Toronto, 2002), 69–85 (including woodcut illustrations. See also Pfefferkorn's *The Enemy of the Jews* [Judenfeind], *ibid.*, 53–68]. On Pfefferkorn, and on his writings about the Jews, see Hans-Martin Kirn, *Das Bild vom Juden im Deutschland des frühen 16. Jahrhunderts: dargestellt an den Schriften Johannes Pfefferkorns* (Tübingen, 1989).

¹² "gleicher weyse wir christen in der fasten durch dye prediger vermant werden." See Pfefferkorn, *Ich heuß ein buchlein der iuden peicht*, A2v.

¹³ *Ibid.*, A2v.

“blessed are you God . . . that did not make me a Gentile.”¹⁴ He also mentions the prayer “that God will save the Jews from the hands of the uncircumcised,” and explains that the uncircumcised refers to the Christians.¹⁵ According to Pfefferkorn, the Jews do not see how miserable they are, being scattered and humiliated in eternal poverty among the nations, and they do not understand that they will be saved only if they convert to Christianity. He writes that altogether their prayers are meaningless and aimed only at achieving power and taking revenge upon Christians. He also adds that if the Jews claim that they do not have such prayers, he can prove from their prayerbooks that they do have these prayers as well as curses against Christians, and he concludes, therefore, with the advice that such prayerbooks should be taken from the Jews in order to prevent them from using them.¹⁶

In general, the information in Pfefferkorn’s account is reliable and verified by different Hebrew sources of the period.¹⁷ Reading through Pfefferkorn’s booklet, the tone of the description is very neutral. Pfefferkorn reports the different aspects of these two holidays, but avoids almost all critical or negative comments regarding the Jews and their ceremonies, except when outlining the anti-Christian prayers. When he remarks against the Jewish ceremonies, his remarks are very mild.¹⁸ It seems, however, that he himself felt that the image

¹⁴ Ibid., A3r. Pfefferkorn refers to the blessing *ברוך אתה ה' אלהינו מלך העולם שלא עשני נרי*. This prayer is not unique to Rosh Ha-Shanah and is part of the daily morning prayers.

¹⁵ “vor dem unbeschneyden das sein wir christen.” See Ibid., A3r. Here he probably refers to the prayer “יהי רצון . . . בן שהוא בן ברית ובין שאינו בן ברית” that is also part of the daily morning prayers.

¹⁶ “warumb wer mein getrewer rat nach meinen cleynen verstant sulch bücher der flüche von ynnen zunemen in dy nit lassen.” See Ibid., A4r.

¹⁷ Kirn’s claim that Pfefferkorn’s description includes many mistakes and inaccuracies is incorrect. Thus, for example, he writes that the description of the lashing ceremony is false and has no source in Jewish legal sources (Kirn, *Das Bild*, 41). In this case, he is unaware of descriptions of this ceremony in Jewish custom books. See, for example, Rabbi Abraham Klausner, *Sefer Minhagim* (Deva, Rumania, 1929), 12.

¹⁸ For example, after he described the *kapparat* ceremony, the custom of bestowing one’s sins on a rooster, he writes at the end of his description that the Jews believe that in this manner their sins are forgiven, and although it is clear that he does not accept this belief and scorns it, his comment is very moderate: “meinen halden und gelauben das gantzlich das in yre sunden verzyhen und vergeben sein.” See Pfefferkorn, *Ich heß ein buchlein der iuden peicht*, B1v.

of the Jews that derived from his description was too “positive,” and as a result he added a section at the end of his description in which he explained why he published his work, and how it is possible to bring the Jews back from their wickedness.¹⁹ In this section Pfefferkorn explains that the purpose of his writing is to reveal the mockery of the Jewish rituals. In addition, he writes that the Jews cause the Christians much harm, and as examples he mentions the curses of Jews against Christians and the mock names that they use when they refer to Jesus and to Mary.²⁰

Pfefferkorn’s work marks the beginning of the new literary genre of what Ronnie Hsia has called ethnographic descriptions of Judaism.²¹ His booklet is a pioneering attempt to present a detailed account of the ceremonies and customs of contemporary Jews to Christian readers. More important for our topic is the attempt to reveal the mockery of Jewish customs and ceremonies and to demonstrate that the Jewish ritual has many anti-Christian elements, which as we will see, is dominant in almost all sixteenth-century ethnographic representations of the Jews, and had a tremendous impact on the image of the Jew in sixteenth-century Germany.

In a book that probably was published during the same year as Pfefferkorn’s booklet, we find another description of the customs and ceremonies of the Jews published under the title *Hierinne wirt gelesen, wie Her Victor von Carben, Welicher eyn Rabi der Iude gewest ist zu Cristlichem glawbn komen*.²² The author, Victor von Carben, was also a Jew who converted to Christianity.²³ Von Carben’s work is a combination of

¹⁹ “Warumb ich solch weyse und gewonhait an den tag gepracht han, und wie man die juden von yrer böshait bringen müge.” See *Ibid.*, B3r.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, B3r–B4v.

²¹ See R. Po-chia Hsia, “Christian Ethnographies of Jews in Early Modern Germany,” in *The Expulsion of the Jews: 1492 and After*, ed. Raymond B. Waddington and A. H. Williamson (New York, 1994): 223–35. For a discussion of this term see below, n. 64.

²² Cologne. The publication date of von Carben’s book is not certain since the first edition does not mention the year of publication, but it is most likely that it was published in 1508. 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,” (PhD diss., University of Vienna, 1999), 14–16.

²³ On von Carben’s biography, see Hava Fraenkel-Goldschmidt, “On the Periphery of Jewish Society: Jewish Converts to Christianity in Germany during the Reformation,” in *Culture and Society in Medieval Jewry: Studies Dedicated to the Memory of Haim Hillel Ben-Sasson*, ed. Menahem Ben-Sasson, Robert Bonfil, and Joseph R. Hacker (Jerusalem, 1989), 623–54 [Hebrew]; Diemling, “‘Christliche Ethnographien,’” 10–16.

classical polemic against the Jews with the innovative contemporary approach of describing the customs and ceremonies of the Jews. The last two sections of the composition belong to the traditional polemic literature, presenting a dialogue between a Christian and a Jew that focuses on questions related to the Messiah, and to the Christian belief in Mary and the Holy Spirit. In the first section of the book, however, there are several chapters that deal—although not in a very organized manner—with the customs and ceremonies of the Jews. Thus, for example, after a few chapters in which von Carben writes, *inter alia*, about his conversion and about the origins of the Talmud, there are chapters about Jewish marriage; the laws concerning food; Ninth of Av (the fast in commemoration of the Temple's destruction); Rosh Ha-Shanah and Yom Kippur (New Year and Day of Atonement); Sabbath; grace after meals and divorce—and they appear among other chapters that deal with issues such as the holy name of God, the Messiah, and interest taken by Jews who lend money. As we can see, the breadth of von Carben's description is much greater than that found in Pfefferkorn's work; on the other hand, his descriptions are short and usually are not more than one or two pages.

To illustrate von Carben's approach, I will provide a brief description of his account of one subject, the wedding ceremony. Von Carben reports that when a Jewish couple is married the wedding is performed by the rabbi in the synagogue. The ritual is carried out in the presence of some friends, with a gold ring that the groom places on the bride's index finger.²⁴ Von Carben writes that the rabbi and the friends ensure that the groom will not put the ring on the middle finger, and this is based on what is written in the Talmud that when Mary was married the ritual was performed by putting a ring on her middle finger, and therefore, according to Jewish law, no woman can wear a ring on this finger. Then the rabbi takes a glass of wine and recites a long prayer, and gives the bride and groom wine to drink. After they drink, the groom takes the glass of wine and throws it toward the wall, and the wine spills over the

²⁴ This was indeed the custom in early modern Germany. See Jousep (Juspa) Schammes, *Wormser Minhagbuch*, 2 vols., ed. Benjamin Salomon Hamburger (Jerusalem, 1988–92), 2:37 [Hebrew].

ground so that the dead people from his family receive a share of the blessed wine.²⁵

Von Carben's description is very brief, consisting of no more than twenty-three lines. It is not surprising, therefore, that he relates only a few parts and details of the wedding ceremony—his decision to relate these elements and not others may tell us about his motivations. Thus, for example, von Carben's decision to mention the finger on which the Jews place the wedding ring is part of his motivation to show that Jewish customs have anti-Christian and anti-Marian meanings. In addition, the reference to the custom of throwing the glass is part of another agenda: proving the absurdity and stupidity and in some cases the superstitious character of Jewish customs and ceremonies. It is true that there is no direct reference to such a claim, but other instances where von Carben refers to customs and ceremonies that fit this category, as well as references of contemporary authors to such claims, support this argument.²⁶

I focus here on Pfefferkorn and von Carben because their books played a key role in the development of this new genre of describing Jewish ritual life. Their writings reveal the continuity and change in the books about Jews in the sixteenth century. On the one hand, they reflect the medieval approach of exposing the hidden anti-Christian expressions in Jewish writings, and on the other hand, they reveal the novelty of writing about the Jewish ceremonies and customs, and not only about Jewish texts. Pfefferkorn's and von Carben's works offer the Christian reader a picture of Judaism that is not limited to discussions of Jewish texts and to generalizations that are

²⁵ "uff das die toden so aus irem geslecht begraben sein des gesegneten weins auch mit tayl hafftig werden." See von Carben, *Hierinne wird gelesen*, B2v. The custom in medieval and early modern Germany was to throw the glass against the wall. See Jousep (Juspa) Schammes, *Wormser Minhagbuch*, 2:40. I could not find any reference to what von Carben says about the drinking of wine by the dead, although according to some Jewish sources, the wine was intended for the demons—see Jacob Z. Lauterbach, "The Ceremony of Breaking a Glass at Weddings," in *Beauty in Holiness: Studies in Jewish Customs and Ceremonial Art*, ed. Joseph Gutmann (New York, 1970), 340–69.

²⁶ For example, von Carben's reference to the belief that if the sound of the Shofar (ram's horn) on Rosh Ha-Shanah is clear and loud, it is a sign that the sins were forgiven and that they will not die in the coming year. See von Carben, *Hierinne wird gelesen*, B6v and see Diemling, "Christliche Ethnographien," 97–98 and 110–11, for more examples.

based on stereotypes.²⁷ This is the first time such a service is provided. Despite a polemical tendency, their depictions of the Jewish religion present Judaism as a religion of human beings and as dynamic, not as a static religion as it used to be portrayed.

Another step in the development of this new genre is found in Anthonius Margaritha's *Der gantz Jüdisch glaub*, published in Augsburg in 1530, which is discussed at length in the article by Maria Diemling in this volume.²⁸ The importance of this work for our discussion stems from the fact that Margaritha was the first author to provide a systematic description of the ritual life of the Jews. His book deals mainly with the annual cycle and the different Jewish holidays, but he also discusses most of the life cycle events from birth to death, the dietary laws and the daily prayers, and thus he tries to adhere to the completeness mentioned in the title of the work (*Der gantz Jüdisch glaub*). According to his title, the subject of the book is Jewish belief (*Jüdisch Glaub*), but in fact Margaritha does not write about the beliefs of the Jews nor does he write about their articles of faith.²⁹ Thus, more than being a book about the entire Jewish belief, his work is about the entire Jewish praxis. Another new, and at the same time old, feature of Margaritha's work is the translation of the Jewish prayers that appeared in the book. The novelty of this translation is that it is the first translation of the Jewish prayerbook for a non-Jewish audience.³⁰ On the other hand, it also reflects the medieval tradition of revealing the anti-Christian elements in Jewish texts, which I discussed earlier, since the primary reason for making the translation available was to expose the reader to the anti-Christian components of the Jewish liturgy.³¹

As Stephen Burnett and Maria Diemling have shown, Margaritha's work is also characterized by its discussion of theological issues.³²

²⁷ On the role of stereotypes in the medieval image of the Jews, see, for example, Robert Chazan, *Medieval Stereotypes and Modern Antisemitism* (Berkeley, 1997).

²⁸ See her article in this volume.

²⁹ The first writer who discusses the Jewish thirteen articles of faith in his ethnographic description of Judaism is Johannes Buxtorf, in his book *Synagoga Judaica: Das ist Juden Schul: Darinnen der gantz Jüdische Glaub und Glaubens-übung mit allen Ceremonien Satzungen Sitten und Gebräuchen* (Basel, 1603). See Burnett, *From Christian Hebraism*, 56–58.

³⁰ There are earlier translations of the prayerbook into Arabic, and probably also into Yiddish, but they were intended for Jewish audiences.

³¹ See Maria Diemling's article in this volume.

³² See Stephen G. Burnett, "Distorted Mirrors: Antonius Margaritha, Johann

Margaritha underlines the sharp distinction between biblical and rabbinic Judaism, and argues that by following the laws of the rabbis, the Jews do not obey the Mosaic Law. This approach is of medieval origin, and it is by no means Margaritha's invention.³³ Margaritha, however, is the first author who systematically deals with Jewish customs and ceremonies in order to prove this claim.³⁴ In his discussion of the circumcision ceremony, for example, he refers to three stages of the ceremony and says that the last two do not appear in the Mosaic law and are based on the interpretation of the rabbis,³⁵ and thus support his claim that rabbinic religion is different from the biblical one. Another polemical tendency which can be found in the writings of Margaritha is the exposition of the superstitious nature of Jewish rituals. As I mentioned before, this approach can be seen already in the works of Pfefferkorn and von Carben, but Margaritha is the first to mention this claim explicitly. This can be seen, for example, when he discusses a widespread custom observed by Jews, according to which they each light a candle on the evening of Yom Kippur. The belief was that the clarity of the flame predicted that person's fate in the year to come. Margaritha notes that the Jews have a custom to light a candle, and that "they have many superstitious beliefs regarding this candle, depending on whether the candle burns brightly all day long, or does not melt, break, or crumble."³⁶

Pfefferkorn and von Carben³⁷ can be characterized as those who

Buxtorf and Christian Ethnographies of the Jews," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 25 (1994): 275–87 and Maria Diemling's article in this volume. According to Burnett, however, the theological criticism of Judaism is secondary to Margaritha's agenda of changing the social and political status of the Jews.

³³ See above, note 6.

³⁴ A similar claim is found, for example, in Raymond Martini's work, where Martini argued that the sucking of the member during the circumcision ceremony is based on the sayings of the rabbis. See Raymond Martini, *Pugio Fidei adversus Mauros et Judaeos* (Leipzig, 1687), 786.

³⁵ "solchs saugen heissen sy מציצה mezizo aussaugen, solches thüt dem kindlin gar wee, ist aber gar nit in der schrift gründet;" "Soliche Prio ist in der Bibel gar nit gründet." See Margaritha, *Der gantz Jüdisch glaub*, H3v.

³⁶ "habenn sye vil aberglaubens, Wann aynen seyn Kertze den gantzen tag helle prentt, das sye nicht schmyltzt, krümpt, oder zerpricht oder erlichst." *Ibid.*, F1r.

³⁷ In addition, one should not entirely ignore François Tissard's *De Judeorum ritibus compendium*, which was published as part of the author's *Dialogus Prothymopatris kai Phronimos* (Paris, 1508). This work contains a very short description of some Jewish customs and ceremonies such as the abstinence from eating pork and from eating bread during Passover, and in this regard is part of the new genre of ethnographic writing about the Jews. The influence of this composition on the development of

laid the foundations for ethnographic writing about the Jews, and Margaritha as the author who brought this genre to an almost complete form. Nevertheless, their works are only the tip of the iceberg and their publications are just the beginning of a wave that continued and reached its peak during the first half of the eighteenth century.³⁸ Other sixteenth-century representatives of this genre are Paul Staffelsteiner, Marcus Lombardus, and Ernst Ferdinand Hess, who were all converted Jews.³⁹ In their books one finds descriptions of topics similar to those that were discussed in the writings of their predecessors—Pfefferkorn, von Carben, and Margaritha—but in addition they deal with new topics such as birth, the redemption of the firstborn, the prohibition to drink the wine of non-Jews, the interpretation of dreams, and more, widening the range of topics and subjects under discussion. The combination of a detailed description of the ritual life of the Jews mixed with a polemical attitude toward the Jews that was dominant in the works of Pfefferkorn, von Carben, and Margaritha is also present in the works of these later authors. Staffelsteiner, for example, devotes large parts of his discussion to customs that, according to his opinion, reflect the hostility of Jews

the ethnographic writing about the Jews was minimal, and I could not find any reference to this work in later ethnographic descriptions of the Jews. Since Tissard's work is not of German origin, I do not describe it here. For discussion of this work and its author, see Nathan Porges, "Die Anfangsgründe der hebräischen und griechischen Grammatik des Franciscus Tissardus," in *Festschrift I Anledning af Professor David Simonsens 70-aarige Fodselsdag* (Copenhagen, 1923), 176–84; David B. Ruderman, *The World of a Renaissance Jew: The Life and Thought of Abraham ben Mordecai Farissol* (Cincinnati, 1981), 98–106.

³⁸ For a general overview and a list of more than sixty-five books that belong to this genre, see Deutsch, "A View of the Jewish Religion."

³⁹ See Paulus Staffelsteiner, *Ein kurtze underrichtung, das man einfeltig dem Herrn Jesu Christo nach wandern und in in volkummenlich und seinem wort glauben sol und sich die Jüdischen Lerner als ire Rabini Schrifffgelerte und Phariseer heuchler und gleyzner mit iren ungegründet erdichteten Ceremonien, mit welchen sie ire ungelerte Juden und Judengenossen zü verführen untersteen nicht sol abwenden lassen, Aus Hebraischer gegründter sprach* (Nuremberg, 1536); *Von den zwelfff Monaten, Fasten, vier neuen Jarn, Beschneidung der Kneblin: vnd wie die Mutter die erste Geburt lösen müs bei den Juden auß Hebraischer sprach in deutsche gebracht* (Heidelberg, 1562); *Etlliche Artickel von den Juden als nemlich deren verheiratungen Hochzeiten Ehelichem leben Absterben Begrebnussen Grabsteinen Bahn Viehschlachtung Wein trincken und dergleichen aus irem Hebreischen Talmut vnd Cabolisten* (Heidelberg, n.d.). See also Marcus Lombardus, *Gründtlicher Bericht und Erklärung von der Juden Handlungen vnd Ceremonien* (Basel, 1573), and Ernst Ferdinand Hess, *Flagellum Iudaeorum, Juden Geißel, das ist ein neuwe sehr nütze und gründliche Erweisung, dass Jesus Christus, Gottes und der H. Jungkfrauen Marien Sohn der wahre verheissene und gesandte Messias sey* (Erfurt, 1598).

toward Christians. One example that he provides is the custom of breaking a plate during the engagement ceremony. According to Staffelsteiner, this childish custom symbolizes God's deeds; just as the plate broke, so too God will break and destroy Christianity.⁴⁰

Continuity and Change

One important aspect in regard to most of the books I mentioned so far is that they were all first published in German, and not in Latin, the accepted language of theological discussion in the sixteenth century. This decision meant that the authors of these voluminous works did not limit their scholarship to an academic and scholarly audience, rather they intended it for a wider public that read only the vernacular language. Another point of great importance regarding the publication of the ethnographic descriptions of Judaism is that almost all of them were published in more than one edition, something that testifies to their popularity. Thus, for example, Pfefferkorn's book was published six times in 1508,⁴¹ and eight years later was also published in Danish.⁴² Von Carben's work, first published around 1508, was published again in 1509, 1511, 1513, and 1550, and Margaritha's book was published at least seven times in the sixteenth century.⁴³

⁴⁰ "Mit disem kindischen gebrauch, meinen sie, das ir Gott die Christen also sol zerschmettern und gantz zu nicht machen." See Staffelsteiner, *Elliche Artickel von den Juden*, A2v. The custom of breaking a plate during the engagement ceremony is known from contemporary Jewish sources. See Daniel Sperber, *Customs of Israel: Sources and History*, 7 vols. (Jerusalem, 1990–2003), 6:58–61 [Hebrew]. The origin of this custom, however, is not the one mentioned by Staffelsteiner, and even if the Jews believed that it also had an anti-Christian meaning, it is not surprising that there is no written record of this belief.

⁴¹ Four editions were printed in different German dialects, and two others are translations to Latin. For a list of the different editions, see Kirn, *Das Bild*, 202.

⁴² See Martin S. Lausten, "Jodernes hemmeligheder; den danske udgave af det antijødiske skrift *Libellus de Judaica confessione* (1516)," *Rambam* 31 (1991–92): 67–81.

⁴³ Twice in 1530, twice in 1531, 1540, 1544, and 1561. In addition, it was published in 1617, 1689, 1705, and in 1713. See Diemling, "'Christliche Ethnographien,'" 238–39; Peter von der Osten-Sacken, *Martin Luther und die Juden: Neu untersucht anhand von Anton Margarithas "Der gantz jüdisch glaub" (1530/31)* (Stuttgart, 2002), 162–69. In addition, at least one of Staffelsteiner's books, *Elliche Artickel von den Juden*, was published again in 1583 under the title *Von der Iuden Ceremonien*. Lombardus' work was translated into Latin in 1575 and Hess' book, which was first published in 1598, was published again no less than nine times within ten years (twice in 1599,

The popularity of these books attests to the importance of the ethnographic writings on the Jews for studying the perception of Jews in early modern Germany.⁴⁴ Moreover, reading through these ethnographies about Jews and Judaism, one can not ignore the fact that all but one of the books that discuss Jewish ritual and ceremonial life in the sixteenth century are of German origin, making this a German phenomenon. As a result, one must ask why were these books so popular in Germany and why did they originate there?⁴⁵

One last shared feature of these books is that all the sixteenth-century authors who wrote these descriptions were converts from Judaism with one exception—Tissard. This is an important point because it means that the idea, and also the ability to write about the customs and ceremonies of the Jews, came from people who converted to Christianity. Only at the beginning of the seventeenth century, and with the aid of earlier works written by converts, did Johannes Buxtorf publish his book *Juden Schul*, the first description of the ritual life of the Jews penned by a Christian from birth.⁴⁶

The Emergence of the Ethnographic Literature

One question that arises from the discussion above is the reasons for the emergence of the ethnographic literature about Jews in the sixteenth century. As I argued before, prior to that period we witness only rare and partial descriptions of the customs and ceremonies of the Jews, and it is only from the beginning of the sixteenth century that this literature starts to appear as a unique genre. Ronnie

1600, twice in 1601, twice in 1605, 1606, and 1608) and once more later in the seventeenth century (probably in 1624).

⁴⁴ The reception and influence of these works is beyond the scope of this article, but elsewhere I discussed this topic at greater length; see Yaacov Deutsch, "Judaism in Christian Eyes—'Ethnographic' Descriptions of Judaism in the Writings of Christian Scholars in Western Europe from the Sixteenth to the Middle of the Eighteenth Century" (PhD diss., The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2004), 323–24 [Hebrew]. In addition, see Diemling's article in this volume, which deals with the reception and influence of Margaritha's book and Burnett, *From Christian Hebraism*, 84–89, who deals with the influence of Buxtorf's work.

⁴⁵ The only exception is Tissard, *De Judeorum ritibus compendium*, which was published by a Frenchman, based on observations made while he was residing in Italy; and see above, note 37.

⁴⁶ See Buxtorf, *Synagoga Judaica*.

Hsia, who was the first to describe this literature as ethnographic literature about the Jews, argued that the investigations that accompanied the ritual murder case in Trent (1475) show an interest in Jewish ritual, an interest that could not be found in earlier investigations. According to Hsia, the popularity of the ritual associated with Simon of Trent in Germany explains the growing interest with Jewish ritual in this country. Even if this claim is correct,⁴⁷ it does not explain why authors like Pfefferkorn or von Carben, who were converts, wrote their books, but only why their works were relatively popular in Germany.⁴⁸

In order to understand the rise of the ethnographic literature about the Jews, one needs to examine the first authors who composed these books, and the circumstances in which they were written. As mentioned before, all but one of the ethnographic works from the sixteenth century were published by converted Jews in Germany. In my opinion, this is an important point for understanding the rise of the ethnographic literature.⁴⁹ From the twelfth century and throughout the high Middle Ages, converts played an important role in the Christian-Jewish polemic, as initiators of disputations and debates, and as informants about texts that the Jews wanted to keep secret. Thus, Nicolas Donin instigated the attacks on the Talmud in the middle of the thirteenth century,⁵⁰ Pablo Christiani led the disputation against Nahmanides at Barcelona in 1263,⁵¹ the converts Solomon

⁴⁷ Hsia says nothing about earlier investigations of the inquisition, and therefore he does not prove that the interest in Jewish ritual is not an earlier phenomenon.

⁴⁸ And see also Elisheva Carlebach, who argues that the explanation that is given by Hsia is not sufficient. See Carlebach, *Divided Souls*, 173.

⁴⁹ The discussion here is based on some ideas that were pointed out by Carlebach in her book. I have added and emphasized some issues; see *ibid.*, 173–82.

⁵⁰ See Judah M. Rosenthal, "The Talmud on Trial," *JQR* 47 (1956): 58–76, 145–69; Jeremy Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews: The Evolution of Medieval Anti-Judaism* (Ithaca, 1982), 52–99; Robert Chazan, "The Condemnation of the Talmud Reconsidered (1239–1248)," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 55 (1988): 11–30; Merhavaya, *The Church versus Talmudic and Midrashic Literature*, 227–360.

⁵¹ See Robert Chazan, *Barcelona and Beyond: The Disputation of 1263 and Its Aftermath* (Berkeley, 1992). For a report about another polemic that was recently found and in which Christiani played a key role, see *La deuxième controverse de Paris: Un chapitre dans la polémique entre Chrétiens et Juifs au Moyen Age*, ed. Joseph Shatzmiller (Paris, 1994). For information about this polemic, see Jeremy Cohen, "The Second Disputation of Paris and its Place in Thirteenth-Century Jewish-Christian Polemic," *Tarbiz* 68 (1999): 557–78 [Hebrew].

Halevi and Abner of Burgos published polemical treatises against the Jews during the fourteenth century,⁵² and Joshua Halorki took an active part in the Tortosa disputation at the beginning of the fifteenth century.⁵³

The phenomenon of people who left their religion and then turned to attack their former religion is known from studies about conversion. In the Jewish context it has been described by Sander Gilman, who dealt with a list of people who converted from Judaism and then held key roles in the struggle against the Jews, among whom he also mentioned Pfefferkorn and von Carben.⁵⁴ Their convert identity can partly explain the anti-Jewish tendency in their writings, but it is not sufficient as an explanation for their decision to write about the customs and ceremonies of the Jews. Thus we should turn our attention to the wider context in which these converts acted, and here I allude to their relationships with the Dominicans in Cologne.⁵⁵

As mentioned before, from the thirteenth century and onward the mendicant ideology focused on the break between biblical and rabbinic Judaism. The Mendicants argued that contemporary Judaism was a new religion, and set out to prove this claim. Thus mendicant theology created the interest in contemporary Judaism, which was manifested in the thirteenth century mainly by the study of the Talmud, and in revealing the gap between ancient and contemporary Judaism. This concept in regard to the Jews continued during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and is evident mainly in Spain with the activities of Abner of Burgos and Joshua Halorki, and according to Chazan, it was still present during the sixteenth century.⁵⁶ As such, mendicant theology is a significant factor in the growing

⁵² On Abner of Burgos (Alfonso de Valladolid), see Yitzhak Baer, *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia, 1966), 1:327–54. On Solomon Halevi (Pablo de Sancta Maria), see *ibid.*, 2:139–50.

⁵³ On Joshua Halorki, see *ibid.*, 2:139–50; on his part in the Tortosa disputation, see Ram Ben-Shalom, “The Disputation of Tortosa, Vincente Ferrer and the Problem of the Conversos according to the Testimony of Isaac Nathan,” *Ẓion* 56 (1991): 21–45 [Hebrew].

⁵⁴ See Sander Gilman, *Jewish Self Hatred: Anti-Semitism and the Hidden Language of the Jews* (Baltimore, 1986).

⁵⁵ Carlebach was the first who pointed to the importance of the Dominican context for understanding the ethnographic writing about the Jews. See Carlebach, *Divided Souls*, 178.

⁵⁶ See Robert Chazan, *Daggers of Faith: Thirteenth-Century Christian Missionizing and Jewish Responses* (Berkeley, 1989), 165–69.

interest in contemporary Jews, and therefore it is not surprising that the publication of the first books that focus on the description of everyday life of the Jews was influenced by figures that were connected to the Dominican order.

It is not difficult to trace the links between the phenomenon in Spain and in Germany. The relationship between Spain and Germany became closer after 1496, as a result of the marriage of Habsburg Emperor Philip, son of Maximilian I, to Juana of Castile, the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella.⁵⁷ The tightening relationship between the two nations broadened the relationships between the Dominicans in Spain and those in Germany, and resulted in the attempts of German Dominicans to implement the anti-Jewish policy of the Spanish Dominicans.⁵⁸ It is not incidental that von Carben (in 1486, ten years after his conversion) and Pfefferkorn (who converted in 1504) reached Cologne, the center of the Dominicans in Germany and gained their support. In Cologne, von Carben met with Ortwin Gratius, one of the Dominican leaders, and as a result of this relationship he published his book about the Jewish customs discussed above. Pfefferkorn received the support of both Gratius and Jacob of Hoogstraten, who was at the time the inquisitor of the provinces of Cologne, Mainz, and Trier. The help that von Carben and Pfefferkorn received reflected the Dominican policy to employ converts in their campaign against the Jews, which was dominant mainly in Spain.

The first book that Pfefferkorn published was *Der Joeden Spiegel*, a polemical treatise against the Jews in which he explains why the Jewish belief is wrong, and brings evidence from the Bible to prove the truthfulness of Christianity. After Pfefferkorn published his booklets about Yom Kippur (*Ich heysß ein buchlein der iuden peicht*, 1508) and Passover (*In disem buchlein vindet yr ein entlichen furtrag wie die blinden Juden yr Ostern halten*, 1509), he occupied himself with the attempt to ban Jewish books and to destroy those that contain curses against Christianity, an attempt that led to a struggle between Pfefferkorn

⁵⁷ See Michael Hughes, *Early Modern Germany 1477–1806* (Philadelphia, 1992), 24.

⁵⁸ On the relationships between the Dominicans in Spain and those in Germany, see Carlebach, *Divided Souls*, 48–52. See also Carl Brisch, *Geschichte der Juden in Köln und Umgebung*, 2 vols. (Mülheim, 1879–82), 2:59, on the implementation of the Spanish method of using converts by the Dominicans in Germany.

and his Dominican supporters and Reuchlin and the humanists.⁵⁹ In this case, we can see that Pfefferkorn focused on the Jewish books and their anti-Christian content, and in this way he continued the agenda set by Nicolas Donin who led the war against the Talmud in 1235.

As such, both von Carben's book and Pfefferkorn's literary production and his activities against Jewish books, and the support they received from the Dominicans in Germany, indicate that their battle against the Jews was in many aspects the continuation of the medieval battle, which focused on revealing the anti-Christian character of Judaism. Thus, I suggest that von Carben's decision to deal also with Jewish ceremonies and customs and not only with Jewish texts comes from his motivation to bring forth new evidence for the hostility of Jews toward Christians, but not as a systematic attempt to change the nature of the polemic. Moreover, one cannot ignore the fact that Pfefferkorn's work on Yom Kippur, and to a lesser degree his booklet on Passover, exhibits a new dimension of exposing the absurdity of Jewish customs. It seems, however, that this tendency is not continued in his later works, which focus on the battle against the Jewish books and their anti-Christian content.

In short, von Carben and Pfefferkorn are a connecting link between the medieval tradition of the Dominicans and the new tendencies that will be manifested in the ethnographic writing in the years to come. Thus, even if they were not aware of their contribution to the creation of a new genre in the writing about the Jews, they deserve to be mentioned among the forerunners of this genre.

Another factor that might explain the interest of converts in Jewish customs and ceremonies is linked to an inner Jewish development, and here I refer to the flourishing of the customs literature among German Jews, especially from the fifteenth century and on.⁶⁰ According to Carlebach, authors like Pfefferkorn, who was a slaughterer, and Margaritha, who came from a family of rabbis, were from the same strata of second rank rabbis who composed the custom literature,

⁵⁹ See Kim, *Das Bild*, 121–88; Thomas Bartoldus, “Humanismus und Talmudstreit: Pfefferkorn, Reuchlin und die ‘Dunkelmännerbriefe’ (1515–1517),” in *Judentum und Antijudaismus in der deutschen Literatur im Mittelalter und an der Wende zur Neuzeit*, ed. Arne Domrös, Thomas Bartoldus, and Julian Voloj (Berlin, 2002), 179–228.

⁶⁰ See Yedidya Alter Dinari, *The Rabbis of Germany and Austria at the Close of the Middle Ages: their Conceptions and Halacha-Writings* (Jerusalem, 1984), 190–228 [Hebrew].

and therefore, despite the difference in their motivations, there is a great resemblance between the Jewish custom books and the description of Jewish customs in the works of the converts.⁶¹ If this assumption is correct, it seems easier to understand the attraction of the converts mentioned here to describe the customs and ceremonies of the Jews.

In addition to this internal Jewish factor, we should also take into account that from the end of the fifteenth century there was a growing interest in ethnographic descriptions of different nations and ethnic groups, in which the customs and ceremonies of these nations were discussed. Although we have no direct evidence for the influence of works like this on von Carben and Pfefferkorn or on later authors like Margaritha and Staffelsteiner, we cannot ignore the influence of these works on the *Zeitgeist*, and the contribution of the ethnographic literature in general to the increasing interest in the ethnographic writings about the Jews.⁶²

As I have argued elsewhere, the Jewish ethnographies reflect the place Jews filled within early modern European society. On the one hand, the importance of this new attitude should not be underestimated since these books lay open for Christian eyes an hitherto *terra incognita* by removing the veil that hung over Jewish life. In my opinion, this process of disenchantment with Jewish ritual was the beginning of a larger process that culminated during the Enlightenment, when Jews were integrated into the civil society.⁶³ On the other hand,

⁶¹ See Carlebach, *Divided Souls*, 176.

⁶² Although it is hard to prove direct influence of the ethnographic writing about other nations on the ethnographic writing about the Jews, there are several clues that link these two phenomena—for example, the publication of von Carben's book in a Latin translation together with a book describing the customs and ceremonies of the Turks (Georgius de Hungaria, *Tractatus de moribus conditionibus et nequicia Turcorum*), and a book about the Muslims (Ricoldo de Montecrucis, *Contra sectam Mahumeticam non indignus scitu libellus*, Paris, 1511). In later periods, this link is more evident with the publication of encyclopedic works that describe different religions and also include a description of Judaism. To the best of my knowledge, the first composition in which we can find a description of contemporary Judaism alongside the description of other religions is Samuel Purchas, *Purchas his Pilgrimage. Or Relations of the World and the Religions Observed in all Ages and Places Discovered, from the Creation unto this Present* (London, 1613).

⁶³ In my dissertation I touched upon the relationship between the disenchantment with Jewish ritual and the changing attitudes toward the Jews. See Deutsch, "Judaism in Christian Eyes," 156–57. In the future I hope to expand my research on this subject.

the polemical aspects of the ethnographic literature outlined above were a crucial component of these compositions.⁶⁴

The sixteenth-century ethnographic writing about the Jews was rooted in the medieval polemic against the Jews, and characterized by an anti-Jewish agenda. Already in some of the sixteenth-century works, though mainly in books that were published later, the polemical agenda became marginalized, and thus led to less biased and more neutral descriptions.

The outcome of this new literary genre of ethnographic writing about the ritual life of the Jews was that for the first time images of the Jews were based upon first-hand knowledge and not upon prejudice and generalizations. On the other hand, another consequence of this literature was that Jewish ritual became more visible and thus the customs and ceremonies of the Jews faced Christian scrutiny and attack.⁶⁵ The new knowledge revealed that the Jews were not monsters or children of the Devil, and therefore, that they were similar to their Christian neighbors. At the same time, this knowledge proved that the Jewish religion made Jews very different and strange, and therefore, very distant from their neighbors.

In order to underline the novelty of the ethnographies, it is important to note that other books published during the sixteenth century reflect a more traditional approach to the Jews. I refer to books that describe actual or fictional disputations with Jews, enlist different curses the Jews use against the Christians, and polemical works that

⁶⁴ Elsewhere I argued that the term “Christian Ethnographies of Jews” coined by Ronnie Hsia is problematic because it ignores this aspect of the ethnographic writings about the Jews, and suggested the term “polemical ethnographies” be used instead. And if this is true for this genre in general, it is even more so when we deal with the ethnographic writings of the sixteenth century. See Yaacov Deutsch, “Polemical Ethnographies: Descriptions of Yom Kippur in the Writings of Christian Hebraists and Jewish Converts to Christianity in Early Modern Europe,” in *Hebraica Veritas*, 202–33.

⁶⁵ On this point see also Carlebach, *Divided Souls*, 182–92, especially 191–92. Another locus where the change in the nature of the writings about the Jews is evident is the anti-Jewish propaganda that focuses on the social life of the Jews as usurers and criminals rather than on their theological inferiority and their responsibility for Jesus’ crucifixion. On this, see Ben-Zion Degani, “Evidence for the Appearance of the ‘Criminal’ Type in the Jewish Stereotype in Germany at the End of Middle Ages and the Beginning of the Modern Period,” in *Culture and Society in Medieval Jewry: Studies Dedicated to the Memory of Haim Hillel Ben-Sasson*, ed. Menahem Ben-Sasson, Robert Bonfil, and Joseph R. Hacker (Jerusalem, 1989), 655–86 [Hebrew].

deal with anti-Christian passages in the Talmud or in the Jewish liturgy. Among these books, one can mention *Verzeichniss . . . von den erschrecklichen Jüdischen Gottslesterungen* (A List of Frightening Jewish Blasphemies), which was first published in 1560 and contains more than a hundred different curses that, according to its compiler, are used by the Jews against the Christians.⁶⁶

Nevertheless, even some of these compositions, which reveal to some extent the medieval attitude that was first used in the polemic against the Talmud—that of exposing the anti-Christian elements of the Jewish texts—display the novelty of the ethnographic genre. In this new genre, instead of focusing on the written text, the authors' goal is to expose anti-Christian elements in the oral tradition of the Jews, and as such, these texts reflect a more intimate and accurate description of the Jews.

The main purpose of the first ethnographic descriptions of Jewish ritual life was similar, and their authors focused mainly on the ceremonies that proved that the Jewish ritual contained many anti-Christian elements. Only later—already in some works from the sixteenth century, although mainly during the seventeenth century—did these works begin to focus on other aspects of Jewish ritual, primarily its alleged superstition and deviance from biblical law.

The growing Christian interest and knowledge of Jewish ritual was also evident in more traditional polemical works, for example in a book written by Christopher Mandel in 1557 as a dialogue between the Christian author and a Jew named Simeon.⁶⁷ The first part of the book includes the question of the Christian about the ritual fringes (tzitzit) that the Jew wears, and a long answer of the Jew where he explains the laws and the meaning of this garment. In addition there is another discussion concerning the Jewish rules for

⁶⁶ See Anonymous, *Verzeichniss und kurtzer Auszug aus etlicher Hochgelehrter (auch vieler anderer Gottseliger Menner und erfahrner der Hebrayschen Sprach) von den erschrecklichen Jüdischen Gottslesterungen wider unsern Herrn Christum die Jungfrau Maria wider alle Christen und Weltliche Obrigkeit so von den Juden teglich geübt wirt* (n.p., 1560). For example, according to this book the Jews say “Moshec bachevel yipol bazevel,” literally the one who draws the rope will fall into the garbage, but the actual meaning is that the Dominican monks, who wear a rope on their clothes, will fall into the garbage. I intend to publish this book and deal with its content elsewhere.

⁶⁷ Christopher Mandel, *Beweisung aus der Juden Gesetz Nemlich aus den dreyen Ismaels Kündere Namen Mischma, Duma, Massa Das unser Herr Jesus Christus warer Gott und Mensch der verhaissen Samen Hailand und gelaisstet Messias sey Inn ain Gespräch zwischen ainem Christen und Juden Gestellt* (Newburg an der Thunaw, 1557).

the days in the week on which New Year and Passover cannot fall, again as a response of the Jew to his interlocutor.⁶⁸ It is not clear if this book reflects a real dialogue that took place or is fictional, but in any case it reveals the interest and familiarity of Christians with Jewish ceremonies and rituals.

In many important respects the sixteenth century marks a turning point in the attitude toward Jews and in the way that Jews were viewed by Christians. Christians began to write not only about Jewish texts but also about Jewish praxis. Christian focus moved from the study of Judaism to the study of Jews and the things they do. This shift in Christian attitudes toward the Jews, however, was a long process, and during the sixteenth century the publication of traditional works about and against the Jews continued.⁶⁹ Moreover, some of the authors who wrote books that marked the shift in Christian attitudes, and showed interest in the Jewish customs and ceremonies, wrote other works that reflect the medieval tradition of writing about the Jews—using proofs from the Bible to demonstrate the truth of Christianity and collecting and describing anti-Christian texts and curses against Christianity and Christian symbols. Thus, for example, Pfefferkorn compiled other polemical works in which he listed curses and maxims against Christianity and its symbols,⁷⁰ Staffelsteiner was the author of a few polemical treatises that deal with Jewish writings and opinions about Jesus, Christianity, and Christians,⁷¹ and Hess published a polemical work against the Jews that is more traditional and includes a chapter of proofs from rabbinic and kabbalistic sources for the truth of Christianity.⁷² This, along with the

⁶⁸ According to the Jewish tradition the first day of New Year will not be on a Sunday, Wednesday, or Friday, and the first day of Passover will not be on a Monday, Wednesday, or Friday (לֹא אֲדֹרֵי רֵאשׁ וְלֹא בְדֵי פֶסַח).

⁶⁹ See, for example, Georg Nigrinus, *Juden Feind: Von den Edelen Früchten der Thalmudischen Jüden, so jetziger zeit Teutschlande wonen* (Giessen, 1570).

⁷⁰ See, for example, his *Ich bin ain buchlin Der Juden veindt ist mein namen* (Cologne, 1509), A2r–v.

⁷¹ For example, Paulus Staffelsteiner, *Die grosse Gottes lesterung, der Talmutisten unnd Capholisten, die sie beschreiben, wieder Jhesum Christum unsern Erlöser und Seligmacher* (Heidelberg, n.d.).

⁷² See Ernst Ferdinand Hess, *Speculum Judaeorum, Das ist, Juden Spiegel: Ein new sehr nutzlich Buchlein, darinn sich nit allein die gottlose lästerer, schänder, schmäher Göttliches worts, die Juden, in besehen das Jesus Christus, Gottes, und der H. Jungfrauen Marien Son, der rechte Schlangen ttreter sey, Sonder auch ein jeder frommer Gottseliger Christ sich darinn ersehen und spiegeln mag, was die Juden davon halten* (Cologne, 1601).

publication of other traditional works in the sixteenth century, indicates that the sixteenth century was a period of transition and that the change in attitude toward the Jews was a long process. In spite of this, the emergence of this new genre of ethnographic writings about the Jews was not only an important indication of the changing attitude toward the Jews that paved the way to the acceptance of the Jews into the society during the eighteenth century, but also a central contributor to this process.

VISUAL REPRESENTATIONS OF JEWS AND JUDAISM IN SIXTEENTH-CENTURY GERMANY

Petra Schöner

Wittenberg—City of Extremes

At the time of Luther Wittenberg must have become an interesting city with regard to the question of how Jews were represented. In the castle-church there was a panel painting by Jacopo de'Barbari, from around 1503,¹ which represented the blessing Christ. On the hem of his vestment stands in adequately legible Hebrew: I, Adonai, am to be sure the truth and the life.² The text apparently refers to John 14:6: "I am the way and the truth and the life . . ." On the east wall of the Wittenberg city church, on the other hand, is a relief with the representation of a so-called *Judensau*. Jews, identifiable as such by the pointed *Judenhut*, suckle on the teats of a great sow, while another lifts the tail of the animal up and glances in its anus.³ Due to their better replicability, illustrations 1 and 2 show woodcut copies that both appeared as single-leaf prints in Wittenberg: the blessing Christ by Heinrich Königswieser around the year 1560,⁴ the *Judensau* by Wolfgang Meissner in the year 1596.⁵ In the tension between these two images the debate with Jews and Judaism in the

Translated by Dean Phillip Bell.

¹ Staatliche Kunstsammlung, Dresden, Gemäldegalerie; see the excellent illustration in Ruth Mellinkoff, *Outcasts: Signs of Otherness in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages*, 2 vols. (Berkeley, 1993), 2, fig. IV, 6.

² For translation of the text see Mellinkoff, *Outcasts*, 1:99.

³ The sandstone relief shows strong traces of weathering in all known illustrations. See Isaiah Shachar, *The Judensau: A Medieval Anti-Jewish Motif and Its History* (London, 1974), pl. 26.

⁴ Coburg, Kunstsammlungen der Veste Coburg: I, 435, 1. See Walter L. Strauss, *The German Single-Leaf Woodcut 1550–1600* (New York, 1975), here at vol. II, 529.

⁵ Staatsbibliothek Bamberg (VI G 203). See Petra Schöner, *Judenbilder im deutschen Einblattdruck der Renaissance: Ein Beitrag zur Imagologie* (Baden-Baden, 2002), 198, illustration 58 with the incorrect dating of 1546; here on 201–02 also for the word "Schemhamphoras." Norbert Schitzler made me aware of the false dating of the print in my work in his review in *Kunstform* (www.kunstform.historicum.net/2003/11/2695.html), and I thank him here.

sixteenth century unfolded. On the one hand, the deep-seated knowledge of the Jewish roots of its own faith, which had been strengthened by the Reformation's enthusiasm for Hebrew and biblical philology; on the other hand was the bestially demeaning representation of contemporary Jews. The question is: which position did the pictorial art assign to the Jews in the society of the sixteenth century? And, did a significant change of this position in art come about through the Reformation?

In 1523 Luther entitled a pamphlet *That Jesus Christ was Born a Jew*⁶ that was intended both to remind Christians that their own faith had arisen out of Judaism and to serve as a missionary attempt to reach a Jewish audience. People of the sixteenth century were far more aware of the fact that Jesus was a Jew than is the case today. History, as the Bible passed it down, stamped the historical consciousness of men. Faith was at that time not something that permitted itself to be restricted to certain areas of public life and it went beyond personal matters. Faith encompassed all social and private matters, and the Church claimed the absolute sovereignty of its interpretation in all the moral, legal, and social issues; everything that happened was seen in its eschatological connection.⁷

From this perspective, the special place that the Jews earned within Christian communal life as "unbelievers" is to be explained, as is the vehemence with which the Reformation movement gripped wide segments of the population and forced them to an extent not previously known to engage with their own religious conviction. The Christian claim of exclusivity—which both the reform parties as well as the adherents to the papacy claimed for themselves, the conviction alone to be able to possess and interpret the correct faith—allowed no room for toleration in its modern sense;⁸ integration could only mean conversion. While the hope circulated among Ashkenazic Jews that with the revival of the Reformation movement a reformed church would meet the Jews with greater tolerance, Luther apparently assumed for a long time that church reform would motivate

⁶ WA 11:314–36 = LW 45:199–229.

⁷ See Graus, *Pest-Geißler-Judenmorde*, 67.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 277.



Illustration 1. Single-Leaf Print by Heinrich Königwieser (Wittenberg, ca. 1560). Coburg, Kunstsammlungen der Veste Coburg (I, 435, 1). From Walter L. Strauss. *The German Single-Leaf Woodcut, 1550–1600*. 3 Vols. (New York, 1975), 2:529.

the Jews to convert. It was a misunderstanding with far-reaching consequences that engendered deep resentment on both sides.⁹

Earlier Representations of Jews

The role of the Jews and Judaism with regard to the Christian religion, but also the debate with contemporary Jews found its expression in the image production of the sixteenth century. First we must inquire about the means the artists employed in order to make Jews identifiable as such in their images: they drew from a wide tradition of visual depiction reaching back into the Middle Ages.¹⁰

The Fourth Lateran Council in the year 1215 had determined that Jews would have to be clearly distinguished by their clothes from Christians.¹¹ Representation of Jews in Christian as well as Jewish art of the thirteenth century shows that the Jews in central Europe until this time had, in many cases, retained their own clothing customs. This is not too surprising, as Jews were prohibited—following Lev. 18:3—to dress as unbelievers.¹² Christian as well as Jewish works of art show Jews mostly in foot-length vestments, with long coats that occasionally had a hood, or with a cap that tapered from above and curved to the forehead and was often held with a broad brim—the so-called Phrygian cap. Other pictures show them with a conical hat, the *pileus cornutus*.¹³

⁹ *Die Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes: Von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Haim Hillel Ben-Sasson, 3rd ed. (Munich, 1995), 792–93.

¹⁰ The representation of Jews in Christian art has attracted great research energy, and it would go beyond the scope of this essay even to list only the most important works. Here we refer to several standard works and their excellent bibliographies: Bernhard Blumenkranz, *Juden und Judentum in der mittelalterlichen Kunst* (Stuttgart, 1965); Joel Carmichael, *The Satanizing of the Jews: Origin and Development of Mystical Anti-Semitism* (New York, 1992); Rainer Erb, *Die Legende vom Ritualmord: Zur Geschichte der Blutbeschuldigung gegen die Juden* (Berlin, 1993); Mellinkoff, *Outcasts: Signs of Otherness*; Hsia, *Myth of Ritual Murder*; Heinz Schreckenberg, *Die Juden in der Kunst Europas: Ein historischer Bildatlas* (Göttingen, 1999) [= *The Jews in Christian Art: an Illustrated History*, trans. John Bowden (New York, 1996)]; Isaiah Shachar, *The Judensau: A Medieval Anti-Jewish Motif and Its History*; Eric M. Zafran, “The Iconography of Antisemitism: A Study of the Representation of the Jews in the Visual Arts of Europe 1400–1600” (PhD diss., New York, 1977).

¹¹ “Ut Judaei discernantur a Christianis in habitu;” see *Juden im Mittelalter*, ed. Dieter Berg and Horst Steur (Göttingen, 1979), 47; Schreckenberg, *Adversos-Judaeos-Texte*, 2:423–24; idem, *Bildatlas*, 15 = *Jews in Christian Art*, 15.

¹² See Alfred Rubens, *A History of Jewish Costume* (New York, 1967), 91.

¹³ Zafran, *Iconography of Antisemitism*, 10.

From this hat, the so-called *Judenhut*, various hat forms developed in the art of the Middle Ages, occasionally even simply mixed forms of the so-called *Judenhut* and the Phrygian cap: the cone of the hat could be bent forward, more or less rounded, it could taper in the form of a funnel (see Illustration 2, lower left) or form a thin shaft, sometimes it ended in a knob (see Illustration 5, second picture from the left in the lower row).¹⁴ A good clue for the variety of forms that the *Judenhut* could assume in the sixteenth century is a woodcut from the workshop of Michael Wolgemut, which appeared in the Schedel *Weltchronik*.¹⁵ Mostly the paintings of the time show these head coverings in a bright color, white or, predominately, yellow.¹⁶ As early as the eighth or ninth century yellow had become, in the areas controlled by Islam, the signature color for the Jews,¹⁷ and although in the thirteenth century the characteristic color was not uniform in northern Europe and the color association was not dealt with consistently in art, the Jews were relatively frequently represented in yellow vestments.¹⁸

The Fourth Lateran Council had merely ordered the marking of the Jews; the manner and style, however, were left to the territorial lords. The characteristically operative head covering in the art until this period appears to have been insufficient in the eyes of the territorial lords, so that further marks were introduced, which were to be worn on the outer garments. Whereas in England after 1215 the demarcation with two white or bright patches of cloths—whose form was to represent the Mosaic tablet of laws¹⁹—was made obligatory, in German territories the *rota*, the “Judenringel,” or the “Judenfleck”

¹⁴ Schreckenberg, *Bildatlas*, 15 = *Jews in Christian Art*, 15.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 372, illustration 2 = *Jews in Christian Art*, 360, illustration 2.

¹⁶ The Synod of Vienna in 1267 demanded that Jews wear a red hat so that they could be recognized from a distance. See *Monumenta Judaica: 2000 Jahre Geschichte und Kultur der Juden am Rhein. Ausstellungskatalog Stadtmuseum Köln*, ed. Konrad Schilling (Cologne, 1964), 110.

¹⁷ See Mellinkoff, *Outcasts*, 1:45.

¹⁸ For the varying implications that are tied to the color yellow in art, see Mellinkoff, *Outcasts*, 1:41–52.

¹⁹ Schreckenberg, *Bildatlas*, 15 = *Jews in Christian Art*, 15. Mellinkoff justifiably notes that the authentic form of the tablets of the Law that Moses received is not known. The form of the two rectangular tablets, which are rounded off above and bound in the middle with each other is much more an invention of Christian medieval art (the earliest evidence is found in the eleventh century), which circulated in Christian as well as in Jewish art. See Mellinkoff, *Outcasts*, 1:101.



Illustration 2. Single-Leaf Print by Wolfgang Meissner (Wittenberg, 1596).
 Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek: VI G 203.

was introduced. It was a more or less large circle of white, yellow, occasionally even red material,²⁰ which had to be sewn to the outer garment (see Illustrations 3 and 4).

The *Judenhut* appeared already early in Christian as well as in Jewish art. The fact that it was used not only in Christian but also in Jewish art may be taken as an indication that until this time it belonged to the Jewish dress and its wearing, at least at first, connoted nothing disparaging.²¹ It was a demarcation that was gleaned from direct observation and was apparently widespread enough to indicate sufficiently for the viewer of a work of art the identity of those represented as Jews. On the other hand, the numerous exemptions from the obligation of wearing a *Judenhut* or the *rota*, which were granted again and again by the territorial lords to travelling Jews in particular, show that the marking of the Jews through a certain prescribed raiment while in principle was not thought of as disparaging, in practice led exactly to that.²² As an indication that from the beginning the effect of the *rota* was disparaging is the fact that in art the Jews never represented themselves with the "Judenring."

There is much to indicate that in the art between the thirteenth and the sixteenth century there was at least the tendency that features of dress—not only *rota*, but also the *Judenhut*—evolved from a neutrally intended mark for Jews to a disparaging attribute. Whereas one could still find in the illustrated manuscripts of the thirteenth century the apostles represented with the *Judenhut* now and again, in later representations the *Judenhut* was more and more often connected with the damned, or indicative of the enemies of Christ. The development was in no way direct, however.

Even in the sixteenth century representations could be found in which the *Judenhut* was used merely as a demarcation for the Jewish identity of those depicted. In 1519 there appeared in Augsburg a

²⁰ For the red *Judenringel*, see Max Simonsohn, *Die kirchliche Judengesetzgebung im Zeitalter der Reformkonzilien von Konstanz und Basel* (Breslau, 1912), 11. For the *rota*, see Schreckenber, *Adversus-Judaeos-Texte*, 2:15; for its size, *ibid.*, 2:509.

²¹ So, for example, in an illustrated Hebrew manuscript of the thirteenth century. On f. 154v Moses is represented as he received the Law and gave it to the Israelites. Everyone portrayed is wearing Jewish hats. *Monumenta Judaica*, Catalog no. D 5 with illustration 3.

²² Schreckenber, *Adversus-Judaeos-Texte*, 2:424.



Illustration 3. Single-Leaf Print by Hans Wandereisen (Nuremberg, ca. 1520). Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Albertina. From Max Geisberg. *The German Single-Leaf Woodcut 1500–1550*. Rev. and ed. Walter L. Strauss. 3 Vols. (New York, 1974), 2:1436.

single-leaf print with the title “Die drei guten Juden;”²³ Joshua, King David, and Judah Maccabee were shown, the last wearing not only a *Judenhut* as a head covering, but such an image also adorned his shield. Nothing in this woodcut pointed to a negative connotation. Such representations with unambiguously positive uses of the *Judenhut*, however, were clearly the exception in the sixteenth century.

A further possibility for the artist to denote the Jews as such or to connect the represented action with Judaism was with the help of Hebrew or pseudo-Hebrew letters. Frequently these letters appeared on the hem of the garment or on the collar (see Illustration 1). It is not completely clear whether there was really such a form of garment decoration, whether the artist could also here draw from experience. But the multitude of instances where Latin letters were used on the garments, especially in portraits of Christian burghers, makes it appear probable that such a form of garment ornamentation was in fashion at the end of the fifteenth and in the sixteenth centuries. One can think, for example, of Lucas Cranach the Elder’s portrait of Sybille of Cleves as bride from 1526²⁴ or Dürer’s portrait of Elsbeth Tucher of 1499, on which the woman portrayed wears not only a clasp on the neck of her outer garment, which is adorned with the letters “NT,” but likewise letters on the band of her bonnet.²⁵ A charming drawing of an Upper Rhenish master shows Martha and Mary Magdalene with stylish bonnets, in the style of female burghers at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Martha’s name stands in Latin letters on the hem of the right sleeve, the base of

²³ Single-leaf print by Hans Burgkmair the Elder, produced in 1519 by Jost de Negker in Augsburg. Reproduction by Max Geisberg, *The German Single-Leaf Woodcut 1500–1550*, revised and ed. Walter L. Strauss, 4 vols. (New York, 1974), here G. 471. The title is a bit misleading for readers today: The use of the definitive article at the beginning in no way implies that the three represented were the only “good Jews” and all the rest were “bad”—they are much more singled out as models from a number of positive figures of the Old Testament. The correct translation of the title in modern English should read, however, “three good Jews,” comparable to the nine good heroes as they are seen on the *Schöne Brunnen* in Nuremberg. See Dieter Wuttke, “Nürnberg als Symbol deutscher Kultur und Geschichte.” Finally, in Wuttke, *Dazwischen: Kulturwissenschaft auf Warburgs Spuren* (Baden-Baden, 1996), II:558–63.

²⁴ Kunstsammlung Weimar. Illustration in *Lucas Cranach: Ein Maler-Unternehmer aus Franken*, ed. Claus Grimm, Johannes Erichsen, and Evamaria Brockhoff (Augsburg, 1994), 35, A 76.

²⁵ Gemäldegalerie Kassel. Illustration in Johannes Beer, *Albrecht Dürer als Maler und Zeichner* (Munich, 1954), 41.

Die legendr vnd marter die: die verstockten Juden angelegt haben das vnschuldig kint Symon von Trent. gar schon vnd heyllich zu lesen



Symon ein heylt bin ich genant
Der Trent wol in di welschen land.
Mein vater mit der wong ist
Zu den welschen landen er geboem
Zu den in dem selb figen land
Zobias so waz er genant
Mein miter waz ein welsch man
Vnd sy al Trent mit yem waz ein
Waz so waz sy genant
Sy waz mit Simon waz on alle schand
Lied miter waz vnd miter sagun
Eso han ich geburt nach den tagen
Zwey ier vnd fuff waz ich
Als es doch by geschriben stude
Drey vnd zwanzig tag im october sy mich geb
Lied vnd doch in das ist waz
Vnd als man hiez die wengeligen
Es ist waz ich vnd sy waz ich
Wan dem welschen geschicht genant

Der waz vns haben am genomen
Vor der schal sy all schamen fornen
Dannet mir miter eber oßeren eber
Die mit mein ließe miter an gelege bet
Da stand ich vor ym nacht vnd plog
Ich gebachte mir warum ich sy das
Eyn meinen halp sy mit da verlorde
Mit einem kintem das ich mit schreyen kunte
Da hoch sich am mein erste sein
Da ge dach ich an die ließe miter mein.
Da mit da stung sich mein waz er
Waz ein waz ich vnd sy mich han
Der al waz ich in die schiff nam
Er plicht mich gar geynglichen an
Zu den andern mal sy mit mein genant auß
Vnd er mich sy zart erformung beren
Da mit das das pade waz vns mit schiff
Das was die drey miter er groß
Der waz miter waz mit einer sungen
Da mit zertren sy mit meine geschicht wangen

Die ist in alle genant
Er waz mich in die schal sy ein
Zu lag ich die nacht sy an dem wogon
Zu den fust sy mich in ein bew vnd sygen
So mocht ich mit vnd ich die schal
Eso waz vnd miter waz mit mit waz
Wan die gottlich genant sy der pilzen sate
Nach die yet auch gemarter waz er
Darnach waz sy mich in ein waz
Da geschach der siben tag vnd ich waz
Das ich mit sygen mocht vns stat
Eso das waz er durch mich genant hat
In dem vnd ich alle waz er
Eso waz vnd miter waz miter genant das
Waz ich waz ich die hie die siben
Eso in waz in das al waz er
Eso kint in vnd ich genant den
Waz in genant hat ich
In dem man ich die waz er
Waz an den ofter montag sy miter
Waz an den ofter montag sy miter



Er sy miter oder er
Zu den waz ich in die schal sy ein
Zu lag ich die nacht sy an dem wogon
Zu den fust sy mich in ein bew vnd sygen
So mocht ich mit vnd ich die schal
Eso waz vnd miter waz mit mit waz
Wan die gottlich genant sy der pilzen sate
Nach die yet auch gemarter waz er
Darnach waz sy mich in ein waz
Da geschach der siben tag vnd ich waz
Das ich mit sygen mocht vns stat
Eso das waz er durch mich genant hat
In dem vnd ich alle waz er
Eso kint in vnd ich genant den
Waz in genant hat ich
In dem man ich die waz er
Waz an den ofter montag sy miter
Waz an den ofter montag sy miter

Zu den waz ich in die schal sy ein
Zu lag ich die nacht sy an dem wogon
Zu den fust sy mich in ein bew vnd sygen
So mocht ich mit vnd ich die schal
Eso waz vnd miter waz mit mit waz
Wan die gottlich genant sy der pilzen sate
Nach die yet auch gemarter waz er
Darnach waz sy mich in ein waz
Da geschach der siben tag vnd ich waz
Das ich mit sygen mocht vns stat
Eso das waz er durch mich genant hat
In dem vnd ich alle waz er
Eso kint in vnd ich genant den
Waz in genant hat ich
In dem man ich die waz er
Waz an den ofter montag sy miter
Waz an den ofter montag sy miter

Das ich mich
Zu den waz ich in die schal sy ein
Zu lag ich die nacht sy an dem wogon
Zu den fust sy mich in ein bew vnd sygen
So mocht ich mit vnd ich die schal
Eso waz vnd miter waz mit mit waz
Wan die gottlich genant sy der pilzen sate
Nach die yet auch gemarter waz er
Darnach waz sy mich in ein waz
Da geschach der siben tag vnd ich waz
Das ich mit sygen mocht vns stat
Eso das waz er durch mich genant hat
In dem vnd ich alle waz er
Eso kint in vnd ich genant den
Waz in genant hat ich
In dem man ich die waz er
Waz an den ofter montag sy miter
Waz an den ofter montag sy miter



Illustration 4. Anonymous Single-Leaf Print (probably Nuremberg, ca. 1500). Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek: VI G 75.

Martha's sleeves is decorated with pseudo-Hebrew writing just like the curve of Magdalena's bonnet.²⁶

Regardless of whether there had been such a form of garment decoration or not, in an artistic work the use of letters, if text is arranged, naturally goes beyond the purely decorative. It enriches the artwork around with a further level of meaning. That is the case with the painting of Jacopo de'Barbari, and the inscription on Königswieser's woodcut (see Illustration 1) was quite clearly written with the aid of a Hebrew Bible.²⁷ In contrast with the painting of Barbari, the woodcut was supplemented by the two coats of arms in the upper corners, which show the *Arma Christi*. In addition, the text on the neck detail is changed: in place of the passable translation of the verses from John, the fully correct text of Isa. 7:14 is translated by Königswieser: "and she will call him Immanuel."²⁸ The quotation of two such prominent biblical passages triggered the suspicion that the Barbari painting, as well as even Königswieser's woodcut, was thought of as a means for a missionizing of the Jews. Such a purpose notwithstanding, however, both works were also very good as devotional images for the Christian viewer. For, in contrast to the often negatively intended *Judenhüte* at the time and the pejorative *rota*, the use of Hebrew letters offered a neutral possibility to connect the depicted person with Judaism even for the Christian viewer who understood no Hebrew. Decades before Martin Luther attached his Ninety-Five Theses against the selling of indulgences to the door of the Wittenberg city church, the Church leadership had begun to allow letters of indulgence to be printed with the so-called Title of the Cross. The allegedly authentic plate that had hung over Christ on the cross was claimed to have been found in Rome in the time of Sixtus IV.²⁹ For a fee the believer could acquire a letter of indulgence with the illustration of this plate and through the pronouncement or the prayerful contemplation of the title in the three "holy" languages,

²⁶ Ca. 1470. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Albertina. Illustration in Mellinkoff, *Outcasts*, vol. II, illustration IV.5.

²⁷ See Schöner, *Judenbilder*, 266. Even the punctuation of the text is correct, and the two last letters are already from the beginning of Isa. 7:15: He will eat butter and honey. Either in ignorance that the desired verse already ended or in order to fill the free space, the woodcutter apparently simply continued the Isaiah text here.

²⁸ See Schöner, *Judenbilder*, 264–65.

²⁹ Pope from 1471–84.

Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, be freed from a portion of his sins. Occasionally, phonetic spellings placed over the foreign-language texts helped with the pronunciations.³⁰ Everyone who bought or saw such an indulgence, therefore, knew the characteristic form of the Hebrew square lettering, even if he could not necessarily decipher it.

The examples given, however, in no way mean that Hebrew or pseudo-Hebrew letters would always be used positively. Another example of the use of Hebrew is a single-leaf print by Hans Wandereisen, which appeared in Nuremberg around 1520 (Illustration 3).³¹ The man in the middle is clearly identified as a Jew by the *rota*; moreover, pseudo-Hebrew letters can be recognized on the hem of his garment—the specific form of representation identifies him in the context of the tradition of visual depiction as a Jewish “usurer.”

An attribute that was frequently used in connection with the representation of the Jews is the moneybag. Precisely here it becomes clear in what odious ways views that had first been established through Christian art continued to have an effect in daily discussion. While *Judenhut* and *rota* had penetrated art from reality, in the case of this demarcation established forms of Jewish representation overlapped with those of the visual representation of the abstract idea of sin.

In the eleventh century the moneybag was already being used as an attribute for Jews. In the image cycle of the *Bible moralisée* this mode of representation already frequently appeared and served to identify the person who wore a moneybag as a professional moneylender.³² Although the extent and the importance of the money-lending business for Jews in the thirteenth century is still unclear, it appears to be certain that in contrast to the eleventh and twelfth century the lending of money against interest had become an important factor in Jewish economic life. In the commentaries on the illuminated manuscripts of the *Bible moralisée* that were of the utmost importance for the development of pictorial programs in Christian art, the words “Jew” and “usurer” were used almost synonymously. Even among influential authors of the Middle Ages this association

³⁰ See Schöner, *Judenbilder*, 267–73, with illustrations 76 and 77.

³¹ Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Albertina. From Max Geisberg and Walter Strauss, *The German Single-Leaf Woodcut, 1500–1550*. 4 vols. (New York, 1973), here at 2:1436.

³² See Sara Lipton, *Images of Intolerance: The Representations of Jews and Judaism in the Bible moralisée* (Berkeley, 1999), 32–33.

is to be observed. Bernard of Clairvaux used the verb “judaizare” in order to denote every form of credit allocation.³³ The image of the Jew who held in his hand a moneybag and the association that this image gave rise to had far-reaching consequences. It connected the Jews not only with the poorly reputed profession of the moneylender, but was additionally combined with the idea that usury—the loaning of money against interest—per se was a sin. According to general opinion, usury was tantamount to theft, for which reason the lending of money was denounced time and again. Yet, the cities’ and princes’ increasing need for capital made the development of credit necessary, and for that reason, in the face of necessity, it was accepted. However, the traditional idea of a connection between moneylending and theft was not influenced by the spread of credit: consistently all usurers—both Christian, of which there were naturally also a number, and Jewish³⁴—were regarded as guilty of the sin of greed. But it was primarily the Jews, who, in Christian art, became not only a synonym for usurer, but rather a metonym for the concept of sinfulness.³⁵

Iconoclasm and the New Print Medium

If one wants to take into view the entire range of representations of Jews in the sixteenth century, there are two large areas to consider. There is the image production with religious content in the narrow sense: paintings, sculptures, objects of worship, which were created for the inside of the churches, or images that were intended for private worship. Today, we can hardly form a picture of the overarching fullness with which church spaces were furnished at that time. Even churches from that time that were not reformed and withstood without harm wars, revolution, and secularization, today have hardly any of the furnishings that they must have housed in the sixteenth century. Clues for the assessment of church furnishings

³³ Ibid., 34.

³⁴ Graus, *Pest-Geissler-Judenmorde*, 35–36.

³⁵ Lipton lists various examples from the *Bible moralisée* that provide evidence for this connection between Jews and sinners in general. See Lipton, *Images of Intolerance*, 39.

can be found in precisely those documents that were drawn up on the occasion of the destruction of those items in the course of the Reformation. The number of altars removed from the cathedral in Constance was sixty-three, and no fewer than fifty were removed from the Ulm cathedral.³⁶ In the south German and Swiss region in particular, which stood under the influence of Calvinism, the destruction of the images was especially prevalent.³⁷ The iconoclasm, however, took its point of departure in Wittenberg.³⁸ The reformers expressed reproach not only for the rampant development of indulgences, but also the manner of the veneration of images, which simply continued to grow and grow, and against which the Church not only did not intervene, but even capitalized on.

The idea that the donation of an altar image, a statue, or some other devotional object for a church was a good work, met with Luther's rejection. In his writing *Von den guten werckenn* [On Good Works] he already in 1520 turned against such "idolatry."³⁹ In the Catholic tradition, the artworks—in particular great altars with elaborate pictorial programs created for churches—were intended to serve not only as decorations, but they should also have conveyed the content of the Gospel and were part of the tradition initiated by Gregory the Great, which saw in such images a primer for the laity.⁴⁰ However, instigated not least by the escalating proliferation of donations, Luther, on the other hand, wished to restore to the foreground more strongly the value of preaching and of the Word.⁴¹ Indeed, the faithful were not only convinced that they had, with the donations of all kinds of "jewels, clothing, precious metals" ["kleinod, kleid, geschmeid"]⁴² done a good work in the view of God, they also firmly believed in the miraculous power of the images of saints, crucifixes, and Madonna statues. Numerous pilgrimages and stories of miracles circulating about alleged cures, bleeding hosts, and wondrous appearances electrified the people. For that reason Luther's demand for the removal of as much of the decoration and the saints' images from

³⁶ See Carl C. Christensen, *Art and the Reformation in Germany* (Athens, OH, 1979), 171.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 66–109.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 35–36.

³⁹ *Treatise on Good Works*, LW 44:30–34 = WA 6:211–12.

⁴⁰ Gregorius magnus, "Epistolarum liber XI, 13," PL 77:1128.

⁴¹ See Christensen, *Art and the Reformation*, 63.

⁴² *Treatise on Good Works*, LW 44:30–34 = WA 6:211.

the churches as possible, while leaving the faithful “a crucifix or saints’ image” “to look at, to witness, to remember, to mark,”⁴³ did not go far enough for many reformers. Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, Luther’s colleague at the University of Wittenberg, perceived in all pictorial representations of Christ, Mary, the Apostles, etc. a clear offence against the first commandment and demanded the immediate destruction of these “idols,” if necessary even by force. In Wittenberg on 27 January 1522 in his *Von der abtuhung der Bylder Vnd das keyn Betdler vnter den Christen seyn sollen*, he published a thinly-veiled call to destroy the images. In the writing he also explained why the Church did not intervene against this obviously sinful practice of image veneration: “Gregory the Pope . . . says that images are the books of the laity . . . I note, however, why the popes have given such books to the laity. They noted that if they led the little sheep into the books, their rubbish market would no longer increase. And one would know well what is godly or ungodly, correct or incorrect.”⁴⁴ The Church thus prohibited their faithful from reading the Bible themselves, because they would form their own judgment of the Church’s interpretations, and the business in indulgence letters, masses for souls, pilgrimages, and sources of income otherwise placed at their disposal would run dry. Despite Luther’s passionate appeal not to remove church decorations by force and despite his reproach against Karlstadt—who was setting the rabble against the authorities and indeed “ripped from the eyes” of the faithful their images while “allowing them to stay in their hearts”⁴⁵—violent confrontations arose. Several cities attempted to preempt this by appointing commissions that removed the church furnishings.⁴⁶ In any case, there was a significant decrease of production of large image works for churches, cloisters, but also for private individuals, especially since

⁴³ In his book *Against the Heavenly Prophets in the Matter of Images and Sacraments*, LW 40:96–97 = WA 18:80.

⁴⁴ “Gregorius der Babst . . . spricht / das bildnis / der Leyen bucher seind . . . Ich mercke aber / warumb die Bebst soliche bucher den Leyen fur gelegt haben. Sye haben vermerckt / wan sie die schefflein / yhn die bucher furten: yhr gremPELL marckt wurd nichts tzunehmen. Vnd man wurt welle wissen, was gotlich oder vngotlich, recht oder vnrecht ist.” Andreas Karlstadt, *Von der abtuhung der Bylder Vnd das keyn Betdler vnter den Christen seyn sollen* (1522), ed. Hans Lietzmann (Bonn, 1911), 8–9.

⁴⁵ *Against the Heavenly Prophets in the Matter of Images and Sacraments*, LW 40:84 = WA 18:67.

⁴⁶ For example, in Nuremberg; see Christensen, *Art and the Reformation*, 77–78.

several cities began prohibiting, under the threat of punishment, the painting of images with explicit Catholic content.⁴⁷

Even if Luther spoke out several times against pictorial representation of religious content, he too took advantage of the possibilities of the images as a pedagogic instrument, allowing his writings, even the translations of the Bible, to be illustrated with numerous woodcuts. The invention of the printing press and the spread of paper as an inexpensive medium revolutionized not only book production; it also led to the production of relatively inexpensive pamphlets, leaflets, placards, etc., which circulated not only religious content, but often also secular topics. They served an increasing interest among the urban population for news from home and abroad, reports about political developments, natural catastrophes, inventions, and discoveries. During the fifteenth century, with the multiplication of such prints, the illustration frequently filled a large area; the proportion changed in the sixteenth century. Increasingly productions were put on the market in which the pictorial illustration, if provided at all, was subordinated to the text, suggesting a relatively speedy spread of literacy among the urban population.⁴⁸ One can hardly overestimate the value of these productions for the perception of the Jews within the Empire, for unlike the images that were found in churches or books, which—regardless of whether still written by hand or already printed—remained for a long time an exclusive luxury good, the reach of these pamphlets and leaflets was much greater. They were produced in editions large for the time and spread the images literally “among the common people.”⁴⁹ Considered generally, they were a news medium and a discussion forum at the same time,⁵⁰

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 167–68.

⁴⁸ There has been considerable speculation about the growth of literacy in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. But the sheer number of extant single-leaf prints and pamphlets from the sixteenth century in which the text is the primary means of information dissemination gives cause to speculate that such print productions were not only received by a few scholars. Even Luther’s remark—in his 1530 commentary to Ps. 111—that one should provide paintings intended for the inside of churches with an explanatory text allows the conclusion that by the beginning of the sixteenth century a relatively large portion of the city population could read. See LW 13:375 = WA 31, I:415.

⁴⁹ See Falk Eisermann, “Auflagenhöhen von Einblattgedrucken im 15. und frühen 16. Jahrhundert,” in *Einblattgedrucke im 15. und frühen 16. Jahrhundert: Probleme, Perspektiven, Fallstudien*, ed. Volker Honemann, Sabine Griese, and Markus Ostermann (Tübingen, 2000), 143–77.

⁵⁰ See Wolfgang Harms, “Die kommentierende Erschließung des illustrierten

and it is not surprising that in the debates of the Reformation as well, both parties took advantage of such printed reports. What is surprising is instead the fact that the representation of Jews and Judaism, in other words, the tradition of representation that had been established over centuries, played an indirect role in this deeply inner-Christian debate. Such printed reports thus represent besides the artworks created for religious worship in the narrow sense the second great area that must be included in an investigation of the image of the Jews in the sixteenth century.

*The Jews as Corrupters of the Christians:
The Image of the Jews in the Sixteenth Century*

Let us first turn to the question how the tradition of representation regarding the Jews that had developed over centuries affected the debate with contemporary Jews of the sixteenth century. In this context, it is worthwhile to examine a few images somewhat more closely. If the medium had changed, the reproaches against the Jews themselves remained the same. Accusations of ritual murder, host desecrations, and usury were spread en masse in single-leaf prints and in pamphlets and acquired an entirely new level of publicity. The anti-Semitism spread therein came in such varied form and so frequently that, as Bernhard Blumenkranz expressed, it is difficult to decide “which art documents from among the abundance of those in existence” should be given the advantage in the course of investigation;⁵¹ this is demonstrated by the large number of single-leaf prints preserved that thematize the alleged ritual murder of the “blessed” Simon of Trent.⁵² This case occurred in the year 1475, but for centuries this alleged ritual murder was dragged up time and again, until the rites congregation finally officially abolished the cult of the “blessed” Simon in 1965. Into the nineteenth century, Jews were time and again still charged with alleged ritual murder.⁵³ The

Flugblatts der frühen Neuzeit und dessen Zusammenhang mit der weiteren Publizistik im 17. Jahrhundert,” in *Presse und Geschichte II: Neue Beiträge zur historischen Kommunikationsforschung* (Munich, 1987), 83–111, here particularly 83–84.

⁵¹ Blumenkranz, *Juden und Judentum*, 46.

⁵² See Hsia, *Trent*; Schreckenberg, *Bildatlas*, 289–92 = *Jews in Christian Art*, 277–80.

⁵³ See Rudolf Kleinpaul, *Menschenopfer und Ritualmorde* (Leipzig, 1892).

accusations of ritual murder throw a more specific light on the image that Christians had of their Jewish contemporaries in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Although all of these accusations, just like the reproaches of host desecration, were religiously masked, they were actually related to superstition creating magical practices and counter practices.⁵⁴ The trials arising from the accusations were in fact criminal trials without crimes.⁵⁵

Allegedly, as the legend of the “blessed” Simon reported it, a Jew by the name of Tobias abducted the three and a half year old child from the threshold of his father’s house on Holy Thursday 1475. In the house of the Jew Samuel, Simon was gagged, circumcised, and tortured with nails and pincers, in order to drain his body of its blood. As the Jews attempted to dispose of the child’s corpse in a body of water on Easter Sunday, it did not sink. The accused Jews testified before the bishop of Trent that the boy drowned.

At the heart of such ritual murder accusations was a transmission of the Passion of Christ and the idea that the descendants of the Jews, who had demanded the death of Christ,⁵⁶ must time and again carry out this death sentence on innocent Christian children.⁵⁷ In order to underscore this connection, one of the torments that the Jews allegedly inflicted on the children was circumcision. This motif was taken from the numerous representations of the circumcision of Christ and the “seven pains of Mary:” the Passion story begins with the first shedding of Christ’s blood.⁵⁸ There are examples of art in which the factual report of Christ’s circumcision (Luke 2:21) is represented as a dignified ceremony, which in part even demonstrated familiarity with the actual course of a circumcision ceremony, in as much as they show how the child is placed on the lap.⁵⁹ However, in the art of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the representation

⁵⁴ Hsia, *Myth of Ritual Murder*, 5.

⁵⁵ Rainer Erb, “Zur Erforschung der europäischen Ritualmordbeschuldigungen,” in *Die Legende vom Ritualmord: Zur Geschichte der Blutbeschuldigung gegen die Juden*, ed. Rainer Erb (Berlin, 1993), 9.

⁵⁶ According to the interpretation of the verse Matt. 27:25: “And all the people answered: ‘His blood be on us and on our children.’”

⁵⁷ Georg R. Schroubek, “Zur Tradierung und Diffusion einer europäischen Aberglaubensvorstellung,” in *Die Legende vom Ritualmord*, 19.

⁵⁸ See Zafran, *Iconography of Antisemitism*, 32.

⁵⁹ See, for example, Schreckenberg, *Bildatlas*, 152, illustration 1 = *Jews in Christian Art*, 144.

shifted increasingly to a gruesome ritual in which the circumcision knife is oversized or the child is surrounded by grim men who contrasted effectively with the tenderness of the Christ child.⁶⁰ In an initial miniature in the gradual of Friedrich Zollner, Christ appeared as if extended on a table for slaughter, the circumcision was performed with shears and resembles more closely a castration.⁶¹

An unfortunately damaged single-leaf print⁶² of the history of the “blessed” Simon (Illustration 4) is visibly influenced by such representations. In the tradition of the illustrated broadsheet there are three scenes from the “legend and torment” of the “innocent child Simon of Trent.” Shown from left to right, as Tobias approached Simon (represented not entirely small) and his father’s house, is how he brought him hidden under his coat to the house of Samuel. In the last image the torments of Simon are summarized with their cruel details. The circumcision thereby assumes a special meaning. One can clearly see how the Jew to the left of Simon positioned a large knife, and blood ran thick into the barrel that stood before the boy on the table. Moreover, the text alongside the images, which gave a detailed explanation of the event, suggests a castration more than a circumcision.⁶³ The Jews involved are made recognizable in long garments and with *rota*, but otherwise their Jewish identity is not emphasized. Since the heading, however, speaks of the “obstinate Jews,” that is hardly necessary.

Already since the sixteenth century the credibility of such ritual murder histories was called into question. In 1529 the Nuremberg

⁶⁰ See Schreckenberg, *Bildatlas*, 153, illustration 3 = *Jews in Christian Art*, 145, and Mellinkoff, *Outcasts*, vol. II, illustration II:23—the altar image from the Liebfrauenkirche in Nuremberg, originating around 1450 as a work of the master of the Tucheraltar, on which the mohel is shown with a large knife, or the panel from the Herrenberger Altar of Jörg Ratgeb, originating 1519 (see Schreckenberg, *Bildatlas*, 154 = *Jews in Christian Art*, 146). In both paintings Hebrew letters on the garments identify the protagonists as Jews.

⁶¹ See Schreckenberg, *Bildatlas*, 132, plate 12 = *Jews in Christian Art*, plate facing 145.

⁶² Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek, VI G 75 (probably Nuremberg, ca. 1500): A strip is missing in the middle and the lower portion of the leaf, which led to considerable loss of text. The text is handed down, however, on a fully preserved print by Johannes Zainer (Ulm, ca. 1500); a comparison of the texts on both prints proves merely that they are different from one another in orthography and occasionally in their choice of words. See Schöner, *Judenbilder*, illustration 30 at 124, illustration 33 at 130, and for the text, 350–53 and 354–57.

⁶³ See Schöner, *Judenbilder*, 129.

reformer Andreas Osiander gave a detailed opinion and refuted point for point the legend's claims, in a writing under the title *Whether it is True and Credible that the Jews Secretly Kill Children and Make use of their Blood*.⁶⁴ If one considers, however, that the Catholic Church was still addressing the cult of the "blessed" Simon as recently as the 1960s and that even today two baroque reliefs in Trent recall this alleged ritual murder,⁶⁵ one must admit that the voice of reason remained unheard for a long time.

Closely connected with the accusation of ritual murder is the accusation of host desecration, which included the conviction that Jews had sought to perform the Passion of Christ anew over and over. Accusations of host desecration could not originate until after the dogma of transubstantiation had been declared at the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215. After the introduction of the celebration of Corpus Christi in the year 1264, such accusations became more frequent, for thereby the ritual veneration of the body of Christ had received a new, more proximate form for popular belief.

Just as with ritual murder, the alleged host desecration always occurred according to the same pattern. An abettor, usually a non-Jew or a baptized Jew, stole or swindled a number of consecrated hosts and handed them over to the Jews. They stabbed, cut, pierced, and tormented the hosts in various ways, until blood flowed from them or the presence of God in the host was evident in some other way. The Jews did this in order to deride Christ and the Christians and—so the argument went—to perform and to renew the torment of Christ.

The question whether the Jews could accept the dogma of transubstantiation or not was never at debate. The host was often viewed as a vehicle for miracles.⁶⁶ It was considered as a "universal instrument" like the consecrated cross and later also consecrated water with which one could ward off evil spirits and even the Devil himself. Therein stood the conviction that in the host consecrated by the priest one had the power to hold God in one's own hands. Just as one occasionally tried to actuate the power of the saints through

⁶⁴ *Andreas Osianders Schrift über die Blutbeschuldigung*, ed. Moritz Stern (Kiel, 1893).

⁶⁵ Hsia, *Trent*, 134–35, with illustrations.

⁶⁶ Peter Browe, "Die Eucharistie als Zaubermittel im Mittelalter," *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 20 (1930): 134–54.

their relics for one's own purposes, so one could deal with the hosts—what is more, they were really God himself and therefore necessarily capable of miracles.⁶⁷

Reports of host desecration had, like the accusations of ritual murder, disastrous consequences not only for the directly accused, but also for other Jewish communities. The suspicion alone of being involved in the host desecration of Passau in the year 1477 had as a consequence the expulsion of the Jewish community of Salzburg in 1498. Such reports as the anonymous single-leaf print from Nuremberg, which was produced originally around 1500 (Illustration 5),⁶⁸ alarmed the Jewish communities in the Empire for good reason, for they stirred up anti-Jewish feeling in the populace.

Under the title “Ein grawsamlich geschicht Geschehen zu passaw Von den Juden als hernach volgt,” the story of the theft of consecrated hosts in Passau was described in word and picture. The upper part of the print forms an illustrated broadsheet; for detailed explanations short texts are added to the individual images. The text in the lower part of the print reports the events at full length. The pictures of this illustrated story show how one Christoff Eysengreißhamer stole the hosts, which the Jews then purchased, and describe how the Jews carried them into the synagogue and skewered them with a large knife. In the picture the location of the event is denoted by the tablets of the Law present, which are covered with pseudo-Hebraic letters. The Jews all wear the *Judenring*, but are not otherwise equipped with Jewish attributes. From the hosts flows blood and the Jews look genuinely frightened. In the next picture it is shown how they send off six hosts: two each go to Prague, Salzburg, and Neustadt—as is explained in the text accompanying the picture. The remaining two hosts the Jews attempt to burn in an oven, from which emerge two angels and two doves; in the oven itself the

⁶⁷ Graus, *Pest-Geissler-Judenmorde*, 287.

⁶⁸ Munich, Staatliche Graphische Sammlung. From Paul Heitz, ed., *Einblattdrucke des XV Jahrhunderts* (Straßburg, 1912), here at vol. 32, 159. Frieder Schanze could prove that the print mentioned here was no longer printed by Caspar Hochfeder, but in all probability by a Nuremberg printer not known by name, to whom Hochfeder had left a portion of his work material when he settled in Metz in 1498. He dated the print between 1498 and 1507. See Schanze, “Inkunabeln oder Postinkunabeln? Zur Problematik der ‘Inkunabelgrenze’ am Beispiel von 5 Druckern und 111 Einblattdrucken,” in *Einblattdrucke des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts: Probleme, Perspektiven, Fallstudien*, 51.

resurrected Christ becomes visible, a circumstance that the text accompanying the image fails to mention, and which is not mentioned in the text in the lower part of the print either. The last six images are dedicated to the capture and execution of the guilty. The Jews who had previously consented to baptism are beheaded. On the image appears one of the now baptized Jews with a Jewish hat, representing a certain contradiction. The two imprisoned Jews who had refused conversion are torn with pincers and afterwards burned with the rest who were accused "because they knew about the sacrament." In place of the synagogue, the Bishop Ulrich of Passau allowed a church to be erected, which probably also became a pilgrimage site as the depicted votive images suggest. This story of the alleged host desecration meant the end of the Jewish community of Passau.

Structurally the accusations of ritual murder and host desecration had much in common; the charges of shaming the crucifixes and crimes against images also belonged in this category.⁶⁹ The Christians who raised such accusations believed in the presence of a spiritual power in an object, for instance a picture, a crucifix, or a consecrated host. When such objects were damaged or mocked, the presence of this power revealed itself through miracles that confirmed its presence. The presumed immediate presence of God was an indication for the believer of something beyond his own small and in many ways oppressive existence; relics and images of saints, which were often carried on the body like talismans, promised protection from sickness and grief. In a time stamped by war, hunger, disease, and social inequality, these things provided hope for a better existence.⁷⁰ The accusation of ritual murder was in principle the same idea considered from the other direction. Since the Jews by their refusal to recognize Christ as the Messiah had disqualified themselves from salvation, they had to use Christian blood to make their existence, at least in this world, tolerable. Johannes Eck, in his pamphlet *Ains Judenbüchtlins Verlegung*, had brought together the alleged magical practices of the Jews and therein ascribed a special role to the blood of Christians, which they procured from such ritual murders:

⁶⁹ See Schreckenberg, *Bildatlas*, 272ff. = *Jews in Christian Art*, 259–63 as well as Zafran, *Iconography of Antisemitism*, 193–214 for image desecration and Thomas Murner's "Entehrung Mariä."

⁷⁰ See Graus, *Pest-Geißler-Judenmorde*, 18.

they needed it in order to anoint their rabbis and to be able to celebrate the Passover festival. Jewish children came into the world with two small fingers on the forehead, which could only be removed with Christian blood; moreover, every Jew, because of his guilt over the death of Christ, was marked with a bloodstain that could only be removed by this magical means.⁷¹

The Jews committed ritual murder and host desecration—in the imagination of those who made such accusations—in hiding, behind the closed doors of their houses and synagogues. One “transgression” of the Jews, however, took place in public view: their activity as “usurers.” One should think that at least here the reporting, even if not positive yet, did reveal a certain feel of common sense. Yet in this case as well, the work into which the Christians had forced the Jews—by prohibiting them land ownership and the practice of almost every other means of earning a living—was combined with a religiously motivated intent. The Jews allegedly tried to lend to every Christian child that was born 30 Pfennig and to allow this credit to stand as long as possible. The unbelievable amount of debt that accumulated would ruin every Christian, and the goal of the Jews to hurl the Christians into ruin would be achieved. That is, in any case, how Hans Folz, the Nuremberg writer of the late fifteenth century, represented “the usury of the Jews” [*Judenwucher*].⁷² The sum of 30 Pfennig was derived from the 30 silver pieces for which Judas had sold Christ to the Jews. Even if the illustrations of *Judenwucher* did not, at first glance, evince a connection to this religious reference, the negative connotation was there each time. The billowing moneybag alone, which the Jew holds in his hand in the single-leaf print of Hans Wandereisen (Illustration 3), connects him with Judas, who was depicted in countless representations of the Last Supper of Christ with the reward of his betrayal.

The accusation that the Jews wanted to injure the Christians wherever it was possible, and the linking of this accusation with religious content reached its climax in the idea that the Jews had concluded a pact with the Devil. For this conviction many instances can be found in the single-leaf prints and pamphlets of the sixteenth century. The peculiarity of the historical understanding of this time led

⁷¹ See Hsia, *Myth of Ritual Murder*, 127.

⁷² See Hans Folz, *Die Reimpaarsprüche*, ed. Hanns Fischer (Munich, 1961).

to a certain dichotomy in the idea of salvation.⁷³ On the one hand, the death of Christ on the cross was conceptualized as an historical event, as the culminating point of a linear course of time, directed towards a goal. On the other hand, the liturgical year, the Holy Week and the feast of Easter in particular, but also the Eucharist, made the event present again and again, thereby giving the Passion an atemporal character. In addition, God himself was prepared to intervene directly in the life of men; “evidence” for this was the miracles, such as those carried out in association with host desecration and ritual murder. But where God is there must also be the Devil—and in the imagination of the Middle Ages he was more than an abstract principle of evil.

The physical existence of the Devil and the possibility of his involvement in daily life was just as integral a part of belief as the idea of the Immaculate Conception or the holy Trinity. One suspected the Devil behind every thought and every event that was not immediately to be squeezed into orthodox categories.⁷⁴ In view of this perception the connection between Jews and the Devil looks like an outright logical consequence. Since Christians lived with the conviction that the Messiah had already come in the form of Jesus of Nazareth, the Jews, who still awaited the Messiah, could hope, from the Christian perspective, only for the arrival of the Antichrist. Increasingly Jews were seen not only as adherents, but even as children of the Devil,⁷⁵ a connection which one saw suggested in John the Evangelist, where Jesus said to the Jews: “You have the Devil as a father and want to do the desire of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him . . .” (John 8:44).

With this background it is not surprising that in representations of the sixteenth century the Antichrist could actually appear as a

⁷³ See Herbert Grundmann, “Die Eigenart mittelalterlicher Geschichtsauffassung,” in *Geschichtsdenken und Geschichtsbild im Mittelalter*, ed. Walter Lammers (Darmstadt, 1965), 430–33; Hans von Campenhausen, “Die Entstehung der Heilsgeschichte: Der Aufbau des christlichen Geschichtsbildes in der Theologie des ersten und zweiten Jahrhunderts,” *Saeculum* 21 (1970): 189–212.

⁷⁴ Moshe Lazar, “The Lamb and the Scapegoat: The Dehumanization of the Jews in Medieval Propaganda Imagery,” in *Anti-Semitism in Times of Crisis*, ed. Sander L. Gilman and Steven T. Katz (New York, 1991), 38–80, here at 38.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 54–55.

Jew. In the single-leaf print “Der Juden zukünfftiger Messias” (Illustration 6)⁷⁶ from the year 1563 there is a diabolical procession, really a triumphal procession of the Devil who leads the Jews—all made recognizable by a *Judenring*—into Hell. The mount of this “Messiah of the Jews” is a large sow, and devilish figures accompany the procession. The close connection between Antichrist and sow is explained by the interpretation of Ps. 80:14 regarding the boar in God’s vineyard. The boar here represents the sins of men, and in pictorial representations of the seven deadly sins the swine often appears combined with *Gula* or *Luxuria*, the sin of gluttony. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the connection between swine and Jews in the mockery of the *Judensau* was a commonplace (see Illustration 2) that apparently goes back to Hrabanus Maurus’ book *De universo*, which had established for the first time a connection between the symbolism of the swine and the Jews.⁷⁷ The *Judensau* was not only represented pictorially, it was also a far-reaching literary motif.⁷⁸ Even Luther employed it in his rabble-rousing writing *On the Jews and Their Lies*, which appeared in 1543: “Pfu . . . you damned Jews . . . you are not even worthy enough to look upon the Bible from the outside, never mind reading it. You should read only that Bible that lies under the sow’s tail, and you should eat and drink the letters that fall from the same.”⁷⁹ This probably covers everything that is to be said about interpretation of this degrading mockery.

Transformation of Jewish Representation in Reformation Polemics

What remained of the century-old tradition of visual depiction in regard to the representation of the Jews inside churches in the period of the Reformation? As mentioned earlier, large parts of the church furnishings were destroyed or removed, and so the continuity of rep-

⁷⁶ Halle an der Saale, Staatliche Galerie Moritzburg. From Schreckenberg, *Bildatlas*, 328, illus. 12 = *Jews in Christian Art*, 316.

⁷⁷ See Shachar, *The Judensau*, 287.

⁷⁸ See Schöner, *Judenbilder*, 197–98.

⁷⁹ “Pfu . . . jr verdampften Jüden . . . Seid jr doch nicht werd, das jr die Biblia von aussen sollet ansehen, schweige, das jr drinnen lesen sollet. Jr soltet allein die Biblia lesen, die der Saw unter dem Schwantz stehet, und die buchstaben, so da selbs herausfallen, fressen und sauffen.” WA 53:478 = LW 47:212.

Der Juden zu nuffender d'effen groß/
Sach Hofigeind d'nd G'heim genoff/
W'elche d'uffen G'ram L'offium ber'fpepen/
All' Ch'uffen d'nd d'bert ex' b'ermalebepn/

Die kommen auff irem Talmuch reppen/
H'uffen in wol auff allen reppen/
D'uffen irem L'offel der sic'uffen/
D'uffen b'ermach' g'lefen w'uffen.



Z'uffen 1.
D'ermach' b'ermach' ir' leben d'uffen/
All' mer' emacher in d'nd d'uffen/
D'uffen w'elch' d'uff' g'uff' w'uffen mach'uffen/
D'uffen w'uffen b'ermach' mer' d'uffen/
J'uff' d'uff' in lang' b'ermach' g'uffen/
D'uff' d'uff' in mer' emacher d'uffen/
D'uff' d'uffen d'uff' d'uff' d'uffen/
D'uff' d'uffen w'uffen d'uff' d'uffen.

**Die gemach' die gemach' w'uffen b'ermach' g'uffen/
W'uffen d'uff' mer' w'uffen d'uff' d'uffen/
D'uff' d'uff' in g'uff' w'uffen d'uffen mer' d'uffen/
J'uff' d'uff' w'uffen b'ermach' g'uffen mer' d'uffen/
D'uff' d'uff' in w'uffen d'uffen d'uffen/
D'uff' d'uffen g'uffen mer' in w'uffen/
D'uff' d'uffen b'ermach' mer' in w'uffen/
D'uffen in g'uff' w'uffen d'uffen.**

**J'uff' d'uffen d'uffen b'ermach' g'uffen/
D'uffen d'uff' d'uff' d'uffen mer' g'uffen/
W'uffen d'uffen d'uffen b'ermach' g'uffen/
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Illustration 6. Anonymous Single-Leaf Print (n.p., 1563). Halle an der Saale, Staatliche Galerie Moritzburg. From Heinz Schreckenberg, *Die Juden in der Kunst Europas: Ein historischer Bildatlas* (Göttingen, 1999), 328, illus. 12 = *The Jews in Christian Art: an Illustrated History*, trans. John Bowden (New York, 1996), 316.

resentation was interrupted. New pictorial programs were developed for the images, especially since the faction of the Protestants who stood close to the teaching of Luther did not want to do completely without images in the inside of the churches.⁸⁰ For them, however, the debate with Judaism played only a subordinate role: “The battle of the Catholics against the Protestants and the battle of the Protestants against the papists moved the battle of both against the Jews into the background.”⁸¹ That was true at least for the inside of the church. In print illustrations, however, the polemic against the Jews proceeded with undiminished sharpness, with a large number of prints addressing usury of the Jews, host desecration, blood libel, or the *Judensau* (Illustration 2), originating at a time in which the Reformation’s ideas had already spread far.

Scarcely a century after the host desecration in Passau (see Illustration 5), as “Ein erschroekliche Neue Zeitung” by Lucas Mayer from Nuremberg from 1591 would have us believe, a similar case occurred in Pressburg in Hungary (Illustration 7).⁸² The text tells the story of the baptized Jew Leo, who stole three hosts from a monastery in Worms—two of the hosts he gave to a Jew in Pressburg, with whom he was staying as a guest, on the occasion of a discussion over the truth of the Christian faith. After this conversation and after leaving the hosts with the Jews, the baptized Jew left his former brethren in faith, who then assembled immediately to test whether what was claimed about this holy sacrament was true. They lay the hosts on the table and stab at them with a knife. Blood flows from the hosts, lightning strikes the house, and the assembled Jews perish in the fire that results—except for three, who are able to flee. Only the table, on which the bloody hosts lie, remains unscathed in the ruins of the house.

God Himself, according to the devout report of the author, punished the criminals and through the unscathed table with the bloodied hosts instructed the Christians of the atrocious act of the Jews. The governor arranged investigations into the events in the burned

⁸⁰ For the development of the Protestant agenda in images, see Christensen, *Art and the Reformation*, and especially Ingrid Schulze, *Lucas Cranach d.J. und die protestantische Bildkunst in Sachsen und Thüringen* (Bucha bei Jena, 2004).

⁸¹ Blumenkranz, *Juden und Judentum*, 80.

⁸² Berlin, bpk/Kupferstichkabinett, SMB (D-439.8). From Schreckenbergh, *Bildatlas*, 283, illus. 7 = *Jews in Christian Art*, 271.



Es hat sich im lauffenden 91. Jar zu Wombis am Neinstrom zugera-
gen das ein Jude mit namen Leo ein erfahrer in allerley Episcopat-
en sonderlich aber in Deibtschrey / Orientischer vnd Lutenischer zum
Christen glauben ist bekert worden: sich tauffen lassen den nachbaltigen
Nestam bekent das er der gereinigete Christus der Juden König vnd aller
Menschden Kelscher vnd Seligmacher sey. Drey nach dem er die tauff emp-
fangen begibt sich darselbst zu Wombis ins Seewellseß zu ein Wönd-
sch Pfaffe Petrus Rodamus der dazv befleht das er die Sacrament besuch-
thens das Hochwirdige Sacrament Jesu Christi reichet vmb gibe. Wie nun
obgedachter getauffter Jud eine zeitlang im selben Kloster verharret bey die-
sem Wöndsch auffenthalten / von wain abt genomen wo die Consecrirten
Ostien behalten vnd verwaret worden. Umbt er auff ein zeit mit ill vnd be-
hengigen derselben drey wüchle sie in ein beß / behr sie fleißig auff vnd sich
maht damit darvon / ein Kompf endlich biß gen Preßburg in Ungern. da er
sich zu ein Juden zur Dreybig einglegt vnd bey im etlich tag verharret / in
da sie derhalten ein in disputacion gerathen / von der Henscherung vñ
dem H. Sacrament des leibs vnd bluts Jesu Christi vñ nderung gehalten
setzet in der Jud weil er getaufft were vñ Christum bekent / ob er auch das
H. Laibmal empfangen habe. Darauff hat der getauffte Jud geantwor-
ter hetze er empfangen. Nach welcher vnterredung / sie auch endlich so
weit kommen dy der getauffte Jud die 2. Consecrirte Ostien so er zu Wombis
im P. 91. Jar gehalten euffert vñ herforthat. vñd sagt / er hab die von einem
Christen gehalten. Als die der Jud gesehen hat er derselbigen 3wo von ihm be-
kommen außgeschaben vñd verwaret. Wiewol gedachter getauffter Jud
des Leo vñd auch vñd d. 3. Consecrirte wittererster vñ sich nach / hieselberg be-
geben / forder diese 3. Ostien die andere Juden zu sich setzet men die Ostien /
vñd saget es were ein getauffter Jud bey im gewesen / der bey dieselbigen bey
sich gehabe vñd sie von einem Christen gekaufft / von dem er sie empfangen.
Wie nun diese 3. Juden alle 3. einander behaltten sie sie wolten andere
3. Jude nicht zu sich nemen wie auch gehalten / ein probieren ob auch betrug
vnter der Christen Sacrament were oder nit. Tonen der wegen die Conse-
cirten 3. w. Ostien legen sie auß den Tisch / vñd ein messer darnedv / mit
welchem als bald einer vnter men die Ostien so auff dem Tisch gehalten hant
schneiden vñd setze biß zu der Christen Gott / so bewise es. Als bald ist Blut

auff den Ostien gesungen vñd auff den Tisch geseßen / darv her sie alle nicht
weng erschrocken. Vber dies gewunden vñd erschrocken that / hat Gott
sein 30. jar bey die Juden lassen / mit dem vñd plig in das Haus geseß / las-
sen vñd ist heiligs in geseß / vñd vñd schwer verkerret worden. Der Jud
sein Weib 3. w. Kinder auch andere Juden nicht mit verharret vñd sind
nur drey dem Sewer entommen. Der Tisch aber / darauff die blutend Ostien
gelegen / ist vñd vñd nicht sitzen blieben. Als nun der Statthalter der auff-
halt der Stattrauff ein Ch. loß wohnt / solch geschick Sewer gesehen hat / er
als bald seine diener in die Stadt geset / der meinung das sie das Sewer
sollen helfen suchen / denn als bald in der Stadt bericht worden / wie das in
dem brennenden Haus etliche Juden bey einander genossen / was sie abt dar-
vun gehandelt honte man nit wissen. deren etliche waren verharret bey aller
daruon kommen. Wie nun die diener item Dertin dem Statthalter solch es
berichtet hat er nach diesen 2. Juden lassen / dieselben auch endlich
bekomen / vñ für sich gefordert sie getragen. Was sie im selbst Dank gemacht
oder gehalten beten. Vñd wiewol sie sich lang geweret vñd nicht sagen wül-
len. hat doch einer etliche vñd er ihnen angefangen vñd vor dem Statthalter
den ganzen handel w. wie sie mit den Consecrirten Ostien vñd angan weren
bekant vñd erzehlet darvber / der Statthalter schert sooden / vñd als bald die
drey Juden gestendlich lassen einschicken / sich ihm vñd wider bedacht / was er
ihnen sie solch ist / er nicht that. für 40. Jar wolk anliegen / bey sich aber be-
schlossen vñd sie auff folgende weise töden vñd vmbkingen lassen.
Erstlich hat er sie halb lassen schinden vñd also eine Lachsligen lassen /
den ander tag hat er ihnen die Huf lassen in Dach setzen / vñd endlich den
dritten tag lassen queten vñd an die Landstetten setzen.
Gottes Allmätige gebe / das was solche vñd beroliet / L. Kempf betrach-
ten vñd vns zu demüt führen / nicht so leichtlich in Wind schlagen / verachten
vñd gedenden. Wo sie wolk er so vil geschrien / er sey nicht an ewig. Ob er ein
yber so gemeret vñd entliche sich den landstetten / er sey nicht an ewig.
Obstliche Tamens / vñd der heyligen hochwirdigen Sacrament / mit welchem
Man eben so wol Ch. ist W. und verkerret vñd erschert / das sie täglich
halten welches ein ieder zu seiner zeit bekunde wüch. Gott verleihe me (empfe-
lichen er / hantter leben / das wir endlich selig weren. 2. 17. 17.
Gedrukt zu Nürnberg bey Lucas Mayers. Formschneider.

Illustration 7. Single-Leaf Print by Lucas Mayer (Nuremberg, 1591). Berlin, bpk/Kupferstichkabinett, SMB (D-439.8). From Schreckenberg, *Bildatlas*, 283, illus. 7 = *Jews in Christian Art*, 271.

house, in order to get his hands on the three Jews who had escaped the fire. A short time later they were apprehended, tortured, and died a horrific death by being impaled on stakes.

In contrast to the Nuremberg print (Illustration 5), the events described in the text are collected here simultaneously in a single image that covers about half of the print. In the center the baptism of the Jew Leo is depicted, on the left the arrival of the newly converted in the monastery, which appears in the middle ground. The right margin of the image is occupied by the house of the Jew: the bloodied hosts are to be seen on the table, which is surrounded by four men who are not expressly marked as Jews, but appear styled as burghers of the sixteenth century. On the threshold of the house appears the wife of the Jew and his children, who, according to the text, were likewise killed in the fire that in the picture is already consuming the roof of the house. On the left one sees a man fleeing from it. The background of the depiction is dominated by the castle of the governor, and one can see his servants rushing to the scene of the fire. Finally, in the middle ground next to the monastery appears the maltreatment of the three imprisoned Jews and their end on the stakes on the country road.

The story is not entirely conclusive. The imprisoned Jews reported under torture that the baptized Jew Leo had purchased the hosts, which he had passed on to them, from a Christian. Apparently only the author was familiar with the truth regarding the theft of the hosts, but he did not say from where he acquired this knowledge. Even the governor—described in the text as extremely virtuous—who brought the Jews to the stake for their criminal deed by means of cruel torments, did not know of this theft, or he would certainly have done everything to imprison the thief as well. The purpose of this print is, in my opinion, something completely different than to report an alleged host desecration by the Jews in Pressburg; this story served, in any case, as a “peg” to hang the story upon. The last paragraph reveals the true intention of the author: He wants to warn his Christian reader of the misuse not only of God’s name, but also of the holy sacrament: “But everyone has been warned, to refrain from careless oaths, abuse of God’s name, and of the noble sacrament” [Aber ein jeder sey gewarnet / vnnd enthalte sich des leichfertigen schweren / missbrauch Goettliches Namens / vnd der heyligen hochwirdigen Sacrament /]. Jews are not to be deterred here, but Christians; he writes himself at the end of the caption above the

image, to whom the print is directed: “to every pious Christian as a warning” [allen frommen Christen zu einer warnung]. For this reason, so much care is taken in the text to describe the Jews not as malicious, obstinate people, who wanted to ridicule God in the form of the host; rather they wanted to test “whether or not [the] Christians’ sacrament was deceitful.” They acted, so to speak, from the desire for greater knowledge. The author directed this message not at the Jews, but at Christians who doubted the dogma of transubstantiation. This also explains why the Jews on the woodcut, which is added to the text, are not recognizable as such. Proceeding from the information in the picture alone, one could assume that it dealt with Christians just as well. In my opinion, therefore, the interpretation that the *Encyclopædia Judaica* offers for this print errs: “The church on the left and the synagogue on the right represent the two opposing religious forces with the castle on the hill in the center as the secular authority.”⁸³ It is not the Church and the Synagogue that here represent both the two religious forces—besides the fact that in the text the house of the Jews and not the synagogue was expressly named as the location of the event—but it is much more the monastery of the old belief (remaining true to the Catholic party) and the house of those who doubt the holy sacrament, which are represented here as opposing forces.

The confrontation between the Christian confessions did not always come in such a veiled form. The Protestants in particular were not prudish in the selection of their means when it came to the accusation of abuses in the Church. It has already been noted that the Jews had essentially become a metonym for sinful behavior in the tradition of visual representation: it connected the moneybag with usury and the sin of greed in general, which was linked again and again in art with the sow and the sin of gluttony⁸⁴—the supposed guilt for the death of Christ culminating in the idea of the Jews as children of the Devil. It was precisely this tradition, so disastrous for contemporary Jews, which advocates of the Reformation used in their images to illustrate abuses in the Church, images directed against the Church’s representatives.

⁸³ EJ 8:688, fig. 30 (in the article “History,” 569–781, by Haim Hillel Ben-Sasson).

⁸⁴ See Schöner, *Judenbilder*, 189–90; Shachar, *The Judensau*, 6–22.

A particularly clear example of this form of transmission is a woodcut from the Cranach workshop that appeared for the first time in 1545 (Illustration 8).⁸⁵ The print went through numerous new editions and revisions in the text, and even Martin Luther wrote a poem for this image of derision.⁸⁶ The image shows Pope Paul III riding on a sow. His right hand is raised for benediction, in the left he holds a steaming heap of excrement that arouses the attention of the sow. The heading interprets the three-fold crown of the papal tiara as composed of deceit, pompousness, and superstition. Two distichs that appear under the image refer to the image, in which anyone who acts in accordance with the decrees of such a pope is compared with the sow that snaps at the excrement. The satirical turn from *Decreta* to *Drecceta* forms, therefore, the basis for the representation of the heap of excrement.

Luther's criticism of the Church had become inflamed not the least by the concept of the traffic in indulgences: he countered the opinion that pious donations that encumbered man during the course of his life could pay off a part of the burden of sin with the conviction that the pardon of sins came from the grace of God alone—that salvation was in no way purchasable and was not effected with good works alone. It is therefore not more surprising to see that the tradition of visual representation that had shaped the depiction of Jews as “usurers” was now transferred on to the representative of the Catholic Church as well. A larger, programmatic single-leaf of Lucas Cranach the Younger (around 1546), who compared the practices of the Catholic Church with the Protestants', shows the pope counting coins with bulging moneybags before him and a letter of indulgence in hand, on which it is written: “As the coin still rings, the soul goes into heaven” [Weil der grosch noch klingt / feret die seel in Himmel].⁸⁷ The Protestant image propaganda did not even shrink from the association of pope and Antichrist. Luther himself had suggested this association in 1545 in his writing *Wider*

⁸⁵ Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek (32.4 Aug. 2° fol 876). From Harms: *Deutsche illustrierte Flugblätter des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts*, vols. I–IV (Tübingen, 1980–89), vol. II, no. 80.

⁸⁶ Wolfgang Harms, *Deutsche illustrierte Flugblätter des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts*, vol. II:146; here also for references to the numerous variants of the sheet.

⁸⁷ See Schulze, *Lucas Cranach d.J.*, here at 40–41, in the lower right corner of the image.

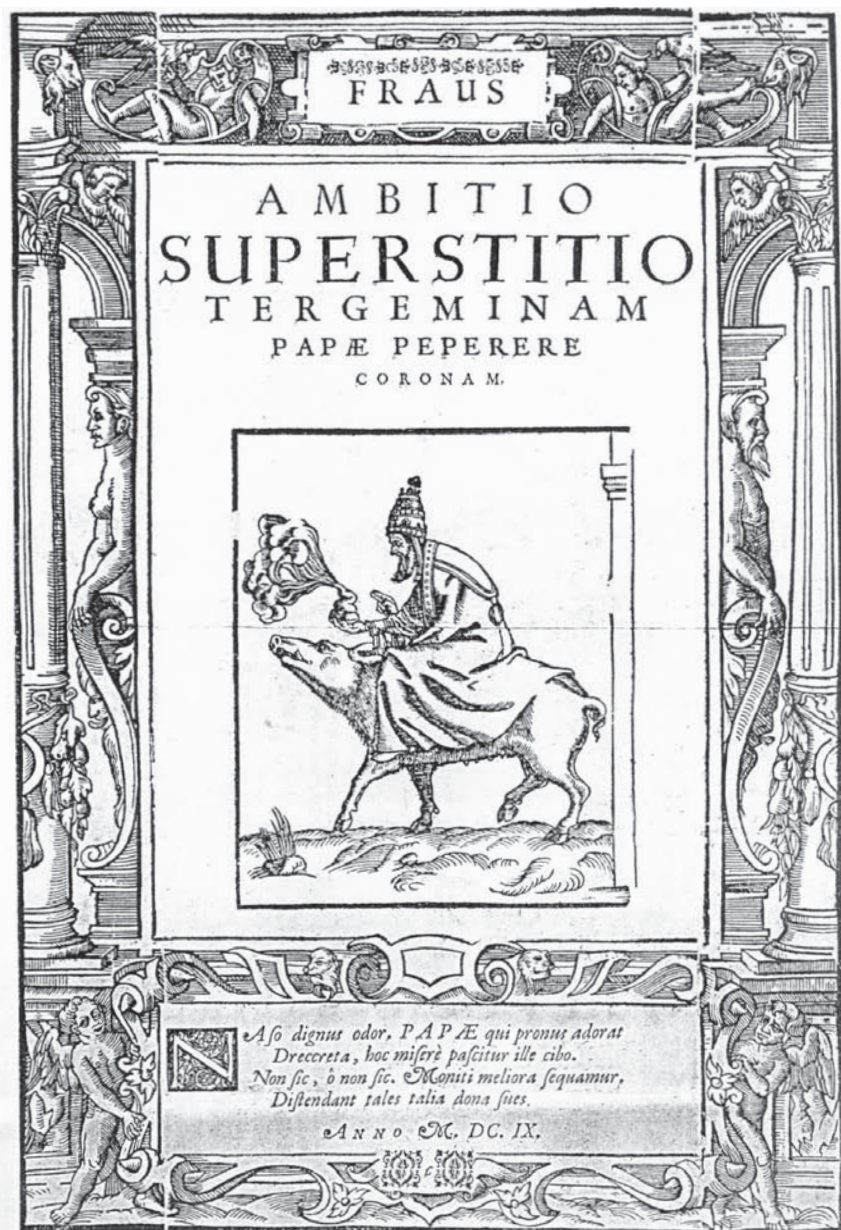


Illustration 8. Single-Leaf Print from the Cranach Workshop (reprint of 1609). Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek (32.4 Aug. 2° fol 876). From Wolfgang Harms, *Deutsche illustrierte Flugblätter des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts*, vol. II, no. 80 (Munich, 1980).

*das Papsttum zu Rom, vom Teufel gestiftet.*⁸⁸ One of the best-known images of derision shows the pope and cardinals as anus-birth of a she-devil and hellcats with serpent heads that care for the little popes as wet nurses and nannies.⁸⁹

On the other hand, one did not hesitate representing Luther on the altar table and grave epitaphs like a new Moses⁹⁰ or to show the main representatives of the Reformation at the table with Christ at the Last Supper.⁹¹

The Reformation was a battle that was waged not only with words, but also with images. These propaganda images were so effective not the least because one immediately understood the meaning of these images, which was tied so clearly to the representation of the Jews.

The inner churchly movement at first changed nothing at all in the position of the Jews in art; it deprived that position merely of its exclusivity through the transmission of devices that had been developed for the visual representation of the Jews as the enemies of Christ and Christianity. The Jews would no longer be perceived as the only “enemies of the true faith;” from the perspective of the Christians, however, they were nevertheless perceived as “enemies.” Leaflet and pamphlet circulation shifted the scene of the confrontation from the public area of the church to the public area of a new emerging media landscape. The pope, riding on a sow and blessing a heap of excrement, bishops with bulging moneybags, and small cardinals, who were born from a little she-devil: forms of representation previously used in imagery of derision against Jews were now transferred onto the respective Christian opponent; and exactly because

⁸⁸ *Against the Roman Papacy, on the Institution of the Devil*, LW 41:263–379 = WA 54:195–299.

⁸⁹ WA 54, illustration 1, with the explanation on 350. Further examples are in Ernst und Johanna Lehner, *Devils, Demons, Death and Damnation* (New York, 1971), 152–67.

⁹⁰ This connection was particularly clear on the grave epitaph for John Frederick the Magnanimous from 1555, today in Weimar, Stadtkirche St. Peter und Paul. In the background Moses appears with the tablets of the Law, which he holds and at which he points with his left hand; under the cross of Christ in the foreground stands Luther with the opened Bible in the exact same position. Illustration in Schulze, *Lucas Cranach d.J.*, as front cover image.

⁹¹ For example, on the main panel of the Dessau altar by Lucas Cranach the Younger from the year 1565; see Christensen, *Art and the Reformation*, here at 119, illustration 12.

the forms of representation were so familiar they were so catchy to the recipients.

This changes nothing of the sharpness of the anti-Jewish polemic; accusations of host desecration, ritual murder, and Jewish usury existed with equal frequency, even if partially blunted by the idea that Christians also perpetrated such evil deeds. Nevertheless, the hope of the Jews that a reformed, humanistically stamped Christendom would be more tolerant toward the people of the Old Covenant was disappointed. The Reformation did expressly appeal to the individual's power of judgment and strove, through deepened study of the sources and new structures, to alter erroneous developments in the Church; yet, secular or, in the modern sense, enlightenment thoughts lay still distant, just as they did in the case of the counter reformation movement within the Catholic Church, even if the solidification of the Church schism resulted in promoting secularizing tendencies.⁹² Nevertheless, religion remained the all-encompassing world-view; each person who believed differently was, as a matter of principle, suspect. There was still a long way to go until the Enlightenment.

⁹² *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes: Von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Haim Hillel Ben-Sasson, 791.

THE REPRESENTATION OF JEWS AND JUDAISM IN SIXTEENTH-CENTURY GERMAN LITERATURE

Edith Wenzel

Introduction

Any attempt to consider the images of Jews in sixteenth-century German literature will soon reach the limits of previous research. The literature of this era is too plentiful and diverse, and both the older principles of organization within literary history and attempts to categorize these different genres of literature have proved to be unsuitable.¹ The flood of texts in the German language, which during this period is almost impossible to survey, was shaped above all by two fundamental reforms that had a decisive effect upon literary production.

First, the invention of printing changed the societal role of the use of writing and led in the sixteenth century to a kind of “literary explosion,” which enabled new circles of readers to become part of the literary public. “In the second half of the sixteenth century, the book was transformed from an exclusive medium to a mass-market product, from a luxury article into an object of daily use, and the number of its users grew from a narrow circle of readers to a broader reading public.”² The introduction of print technology did not at first cause a radical break in the forms of reception. For a long time literature continued to circulate both orally and in writing. Oral and written (here meaning a *printed* circulation of texts), existed side-by-side, rather than in competition with each other. The

Translated by Stephen G. Burnett.

¹ In a recently published collection of articles on the transition from the Middle Ages to the early modern period both editors stated: “Offensichtlich erweist sich gerade die Literatur des Übergangs vom Mittelalter zur Neuzeit als besonders widersprüchlich und befremdlich, so daß die Kriterien ihrer ästhetischen Beurteilung schwer zu benennen sind.” See *Die Literatur im Übergang vom Mittelalter zur Neuzeit*, ed. Werner Röcke and Marina Münkler (Munich, 2004), 9.

² Jan-Dirk Müller, “Formen literarischer Kommunikation im Übergang vom Mittelalter zur Neuzeit,” in *ibid.*, 21–53, here 22.

observation that “reading” meant in the first instance “reading-hearing,” remained valid even in the sixteenth century, in view of the fact that at most thirty percent of the entire population was literate, despite an immense educational movement in the cities.³ Reading and reading aloud together allowed a communal discussion of texts and images, which also offered the illiterate majority the opportunity to take part in the newly introduced form of public discourse.

The Reformation made the instruction of the laity into a policy. The production of religious and devotional works in the broadest sense increased to a previously unknown volume, caused by the new medium of printing, which made possible quick and relatively inexpensive circulation. The need for religious reading material, already apparent in the fifteenth century (encouraged through the *Devotio Moderna* movement), increased under the impact of the Reformation and the turn to the laity, who now could read even the Holy Scripture in translation. Luther’s Bible translation was not his only best seller. His writings published between 1517 and 1520 established a record with roughly 300,000 printed exemplars.⁴ Accordingly, Luther’s writings reached a hitherto unknown large circle of recipients, who could participate in the Reformation public discussion, regardless of their social origins or educational level. The Counter Reformation also employed the new medium for its goals. Therefore it is no surprise that above all devotional literature, in the most diverse forms, was prepared for the laity during the sixteenth century.

On this account some scholars are inclined to interpret the sixteenth century as a period of revolutionary change. For the vernacular literature of this century, however, this interpretation is valid only with certain restrictions. The literature of the early modern period is marked by religious change, by a proliferation of literary forms, the introduction of new media and an accompanying change of public. At the same time, however, this literature was oriented in many respects towards the past, both with respect to themes and to form. Despite the new medium, the typically medieval forms of literature, predominantly those connected to oral presentation such as religious drama, existed and remained effective as a mass medium, even in the sixteenth century. The same was true in a modified form

³ Albrecht Dröse, “Anfänge der Reformation,” in *ibid.*, 198–241, here 200.

⁴ Müller, “Formen literarischer Kommunikation,” in *ibid.*, 52.

for popular religious texts, for books on preaching and collections of legends, each a literary genre that already in the later Middle Ages had propagated an antagonistic portrayal of Jews, and reproduced this in the sixteenth century as well. There was an explosive increase in the number of texts, the use of religious themes and new forms in writing and illustration, but at the same time there seems to have been a marked return to traditional forms and themes of late medieval literature. This was particularly true for the image of Jews and Judaism in texts of the sixteenth century.⁵

Humanism and the Reformation, the “new” and revolutionizing intellectual movements, preserved to a great extent the negative image of “the Jew,” which had developed into a stereotype already in late medieval vernacular literature and religious writings. The Jews were considered to be “Christ-killers,” enemies of Christian society, who engaged in host desecration and ritual murder. They were regarded as parasites, who sucked life from Christian society. These fundamental elements of the late medieval anti-Semitic image remained virulent, even in the sixteenth century and were propagated through a diverse variety of media.⁶ Neither humanism nor the Reformation led to a fundamental correction of this negative stereotype. “If humanism and Reformation, the most impressive products of Europe north of the Alps, did not lay the roots of anti-Semitism, neither did they fully seize upon the opportunities that were theirs as two critical movements of renovation. Anti-Jewish sentiment was not, like so much else, identified, stigmatized, and weeded out as ‘medieval.’”⁷

⁵ The full extent of the divergent texts that were produced during this century has only been studied sporadically regarding the representation of the Jews. The works of humanist authors have been adequately evaluated, as is also true of the writings of the reformers. Jewish representation in literary texts has only been studied with reference to particularly prominent authors or different literary genres. It is beyond the scope of this essay to provide a comprehensive analysis. Instead I can only discuss here a few aspects.

⁶ “Wie wenig sich aber ungeachtet dessen in der Einstellung zu den Juden verändert hatte und wie wenig sich auf Dauer ändern konnte, zeigt ein Blick auf die in der Tendenz gleichbleibende, aber immer effektivere Indoktrinierung der Gesamtbevölkerung mit Hilfe der neuen Druckmedien. Mit enormer Breitenwirkung und erfinderischer Aktualisierung wurden so die alten Verleumdungen wie Ritualmord an Christenkindern, Hostienschändung und Brunnenvergiftung wachgehalten.” See Dieter Breuer, “Antisemitismus und Toleranz in der frühen Neuzeit: Grimmelshausens Darstellung der Vorurteile gegenüber den Juden,” in *Judentum, Antisemitismus und europäische Kultur*, ed. Hans-Otto Horch (Tübingen, 1988), 74–96, here 85.

⁷ Oberman, *Roots of Anti-Semitism*, 43–44 [= *Wurzeln des Antisemitismus: Christenangst*

The turn of the humanists to the languages of antiquity effected an intensive encounter with the languages of the Jews and their cultural tradition, but did not lead to a change in negative attitudes toward contemporary Jews. The stance of Erasmus of Rotterdam (1469–1536) was true of most humanists: “If it is Christian to hate the Jews, then are we not all Christians to excess?”⁸ [Si Christianum est odisse Iudaeos, hinc abunde Christiani sumus omnes?]⁹ The tolerance propagated by many humanists was concerned with scholarship, not, however, with Jews.¹⁰ The cautious pleas of some Hebraists for a more humane relationship with the Jews led to defamation and public attacks. The best-known example is the conflict between Johannes Reuchlin (1455–1522) and Johannes Pfefferkorn (ca. 1469—sometime after 1521),¹¹ which culminated in the notorious *Letters of Obscure Men* (1515–17).¹² The conflict fascinated the learned world, as did the years long, public controversy between Reuchlin, opposing the confiscation of Jewish writings, and Pfefferkorn, who was

und Judenplage im Zeitalter von Humanismus und Reformation, 2nd rev. ed. (Berlin, 1983), 55].

⁸ Quoted by Mordechai Breuer, “The Jewish Middle Ages,” in *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*, ed. Michael A. Meyer and Michael Brenner (New York, 1996), 57.

⁹ *Opus epistularum Des. Erasmi Roterodami*, ed. Percy S. Allen, (Oxford, 1922), 4:46 = CWE 7:49.

¹⁰ “It should no longer surprise us if the trinity of peace, harmony, and learning was conceived exclusively for application to Christian society. Tolerance was a Christian virtue that did not make place in society for the ‘most pernicious plague and bitterest foe of the teachings of Jesus Christ, Judaism.’” Oberman, *Roots of Antisemitism*, 40 [= *Wurzeln des Antisemitismus*, 51].

¹¹ I will not provide a more detailed account of the famous conflict between Reuchlin and Pfefferkorn here, but will refer to the basic study by Kirn, *Bild vom Judentum Deutschland des frühen 16. Jahrhunderts*. See also Ellen Martin, *Die deutschen Schriften des Johannes Pfefferkorn: Zum Problem des Judenhasses und der Intoleranz in der Zeit der Vorreformation* (Göppingen, 1994) and Johannes Bartoldus, “Humanismus und Talmudstreit. Pfefferkorn, Reuchlin und die ‘Dunkelmännerbriefe’ (1515/17),” in *Judentum und Antijudaismus in der deutschen Literatur im Mittelalter und an der Wende zur Neuzeit: Ein Studienbuch*, ed. Arne Domrös, Thomas Bartoldus, and Julian Voloj (Berlin, 2002), 179–228.

¹² Winfried Frey, “Die ‘Epistolae obscurorum virorum’—ein antijüdisches Pamphlet?” in *Probleme deutsch-jüdischer Identität*, ed. Norbert Altenhofer and Renate Heuer (Bad Soden, 1986), 147–72; Idem, “Multum teneo de tali libro. Die Epistolae obscurorum virorum,” in *Ulrich von Hutten: Ritter, Humanist, Publizist, 1488–1523: Katalog der Ausstellung des Landes Hessen anlässlich des 500. Geburtstages*, ed. Peter Laub and Ludwig Steinfeld (n.p., 1988), 197–209. Erich Meuthen, “Die Epistolae obscurorum virorum,” in *Ecclesia Militans: Studien zur Konzilien- und Reformationsgeschichte*, ed. Walter Brandmüller, Herbert Immenkötter, and Erwin Iserloh (Paderborn, 1988), 55–88.

considered the representative of scholasticism, a narrow-minded, restrictive form of scholarship.

The Reuchlin-Pfefferkorn controversy can be considered representative for the stance of most humanists. It demonstrated on the one hand the scholarly interest in the cultural tradition of the Jews, their language, and their Holy Scripture but many humanists were deeply rooted in the Jew-hatred of the late Middle Ages.¹³

Even the Reformation demonstrated no break with the late Middle Ages in its evaluation of Jews and Judaism.¹⁴ The onset of the Reformation and the first book of Martin Luther which directly concerned the Jews, *That Jesus Christ was Born a Jew*,¹⁵ awakened at first hope among Jews that the reformer would advocate a more humane and fair treatment of the Jews, because he had vehemently attacked the Church and the papacy in his books for their treatment of the Jews, and he himself spoke out for a kinder treatment. "I hope that if one deals in a kindly way with the Jews and instructs them carefully from the Holy Scripture, many of them will become genuine Christians."¹⁶ He defended the Jews against ritual murder accusations in this book, branding such accusations as "foolishness:" "Instead of this we are trying only to drive them by force, slandering them,

¹³ "Tailored exclusively to the needs of a Christian society fragmented by competing social and religious forces, the sixteenth-century ideal of toleration had primarily the character of a Christian restorative, not of a modern, pluralistic ideal. The late fifteenth- and sixteenth-century dream of toleration made no allowances for unbaptized Jews." Oberman, *Roots of Antisemitism*, 13 [= *Wurzeln des Antisemitismus*, 15].

¹⁴ Luther's position on the Jews has been repeatedly the focus of critical conflict over the past several decades. I cannot discuss the particulars of these arguments here, but will refer to the most important studies. Walter Bienart, *Martin Luther und die Juden: Ein Quellenbuch mit zeitgenössischen Illustrationen, mit Einführungen und Erläuterungen* (Frankfurt am Main, 1982); Johannes Brosseder, *Luthers Stellung zu den Juden im Spiegel seiner Interpreten: Interpretation und Rezeption von Luthers Schriften und Äusserungen zum Judentum im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert vor allem im deutschsprachigen Raum* (Munich, 1972), and Brosseder, "Luther und der Leidensweg der Juden," in *Die Juden und Martin Luther—Martin Luther und die Juden: Geschichte, Wirkungsgeschichte, Herausforderung*, ed. Heinz Kremers (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1985), 109–34; Ben-Zion Degani, "Die Formulierung und Propagierung des jüdischen Stereotyps in der Zeit vor der Refomation und sein Einfluss auf den jüngeren Luther," in *Die Juden und Martin Luther*, ed. Kremers, 3–44; Oberman, *Roots of Antisemitism*; Edith Wenzel, "Martin Luther und der mittelalterliche Antisemitismus," in *Die Juden in ihrer mittelalterlichen Umwelt*, ed. Alfred Ebenbauer and Klaus Zatloukal (Vienna, 1991), 301–19.

¹⁵ LW 45:199–229 = WA 11:307–36.

¹⁶ LW 45:200 = *Ibid.*, 315.

accusing them of having Christian blood if they don't stink, and I know not what other foolishness. So long as we thus treat them like dogs, how can we expect to work any good among them?"¹⁷ Luther even found these exculpatory words for usury: "Again, when we forbid them to labor and do business and have any human fellowship with us, thereby forcing them into usury, how is that supposed to do them any good?"¹⁸ These were in fact words that appeared to correct the traditional image of the Jews. Yet they contained restrictions. The toleration which appeared to be articulated did not at all represent a recognition of differences in belief, much less equality. It was much more a plea for more effective and gentle methods for missionizing among the Jews.¹⁹ Luther hoped that with his new interpretation of the Bible he could move the Jews (or at least some of them) to convert, though this hope remained unfulfilled.

In the years that followed Luther continued to mention the Jews. His tone became sharper. In 1543 Luther published his book *On the Jews and Their Lies*, which was directed toward Christians as a warning to them about the Jews.²⁰ There is no thought of conversion in this text anymore. "Much less do I propose to convert the Jews, for that is impossible."²¹ Luther accused the Jews of being obdurate and blind, because they were still awaiting their messiah. On this account he thought that they were filled with hatred for Christians, mocking them and cursing them daily. According to Luther, they stole from Christians and were not punished for it, because they had protection from princes who supported their usury out of greed. "A thief is condemned to hang for the theft of ten florins, and if he robs anyone on the highway, he forfeits his head. But when a Jew steals and robs ten tons of gold through his usury, he is more highly esteemed than God himself."²² Luther referred to the old stereotypes

¹⁷ LW 45:229 = *Ibid.*, 336. Already in the Middle Ages, both the popes and the emperors repeatedly objected to these accusations, rejecting them as superstitious. See Graus, *Pest-Geißler-Judenmorde*, 284ff.

¹⁸ LW 45:229 = WA 11:336.

¹⁹ Breuer, "Antisemitismus und Toleranz," 79. "His criticism of past policies toward the Jews is one link in a chain of evidence documenting ecclesiastical oppression and misguidedness; but it is not, however, as it is often wrongly construed, a call for Jewish emancipation." *Roots of Anti-Semitism*, 73–74 [= *Wurzeln des Antisemitismus*, 97].

²⁰ LW 47:137–306 = WA 53:417–522.

²¹ LW 47:137 = WA 53:417.

²² LW 47:218 = WA 53:483.

that were so widely circulated by late medieval literature, and accused the Jews of well poisoning, child murder, and usury.²³ For him the Jews were the most dangerous foes of Christendom.

I have read and heard many stories about the Jews . . . how they have poisoned wells, made assassinations, kidnapped children. For their kidnapping of children they have often been burned at the stake or banished. I am well aware that they deny all of this. However, it all coincides with the judgment of Christ, which declares that they are venomous, bitter, vindictive, tricky serpents, assassins, and children of the Devil, who secretly sting and work harm stealthily wherever they cannot do it openly . . . That is what I had in mind when I said earlier that, next to the Devil, a Christian has no more bitter and galling foe than a Jew.²⁴

Luther recommended that “with prayer and the fear of God we must practice a sharp mercy” so as not to remain a party to the blasphemy of the Jews, to their hatred and their lies.²⁵ In the research literature this has been interpreted either as a failed attack²⁶ or has been attributed either to the reformer’s stubbornness of old age or depression.²⁷

Neither humanist writings nor those of the reformers appear to have had any great influence upon the negative portrayal of Jews promulgated by vernacular literature the sixteenth century. Contemporary beliefs that Jews were blasphemers, obdurate and blind unbelievers, were taken over unchanged from medieval literature, as was the stereotype of the “usurious Jew.” When Jews appeared in German literature of the sixteenth century they were negatively portrayed as a rule. It would be several centuries before this negative literary image of the Jews would be corrected.

Medieval Anti-Jewish Motifs in Sixteenth-Century Literature

Various genres of vernacular literature were involved in the transmission and promulgation of the negative image of the Jews at the end of

²³ Wenzel, “Martin Luther und der Antisemitismus,” 301–19.

²⁴ LW 47:277–78 = WA 53:530.

²⁵ LW 47:268 = WA 53:522.

²⁶ Bienert, *Martin Luther und die Juden*, 155.

²⁷ Wenzel, “Martin Luther und der Antisemitismus,” 302–03.

the Middle Ages and the beginning of modern times.²⁸ Among the most important texts when considering their effect upon the masses are *religious dramas*. Normally religious dramas are considered late medieval literature. The form of their performance, their composition in rhymed couplets, their deep roots in the world of Christian faith, and not least their close connection to Church ritual are used to categorize this genre as late medieval rather than early modern. However, records of performances tell another story. A lively dramatic culture existed in towns until late in the sixteenth century. The centers of this culture were above all those regions where, in the wake of the Counter Reformation, religious dramas were considered an opportunity for a powerful and effective demonstration of the (Catholic) faith. In Lucerne, for example, which had become a mighty center of the “old” faith within confessionally-divided Switzerland, a splendid two day long performance of the Passion of Christ took place in 1571, with over 400 participants. The play was repeated in 1583, 1597, and 1606.²⁹ In Tyrol as well there was an intensive dramatic culture where elaborate Passion Play productions took place into the sixteenth century.³⁰ The majority of the dramatic texts that were produced came from the medieval period, yet they were apparently felt to be relevant in the Reformation era, and the tradition of religious drama continued in Catholic regions into the Baroque era.

The reformers had an ambivalent attitude toward the traditional dramas. Plays about saints’ legends or the Virgin Mary were no longer permitted. The reformers encouraged instead humanist school plays and productions with biblical themes. Luther himself was apparently not fundamentally opposed to religious plays, though he rejected the portrayal of the suffering of Christ.³¹ Even in some Protestant cities the production of religious plays was supported, a clear sign

²⁸ I must leave sermons and the books of the Reformers out of consideration here. They will be discussed in other essays in this volume.

²⁹ David Brett-Evans, *Von Hrotsvit bis Folz und Gengenbach. Eine Geschichte des mittelalterlichen deutschen Dramas*, vol. 2: *Religiöse und weltliche Spiele des Spätmittelalters* (Berlin, 1975), 107ff.

³⁰ Hans Rupprich, *Die deutsche Literatur vom späten Mittelalter bis zum Barock*, part 1: *Das ausgehende Mittelalter, Humanismus und Renaissance* (Munich, 1970), 249–50.

³¹ Bernd Neumann, *Geistliches Schauspiel im Zeugnis der Zeit: Zur Aufführung mittelalterlicher religiöser Dramen im deutschen Sprachgebiet*, 2 vols. (Munich, 1987), 2:900–02, appendices nos. 3738–43.

how important dramatic culture was for the cities, even when these plays were still predominantly a feature of the “old” faith.³²

Passion Plays belonged to the most important category within the larger genre of religious plays. They were based on the accounts of the four Evangelists of the New Testament, frequently supplemented by popular religious texts. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the plays developed into grandiose events lasting several days, often involving hundreds of lay actors and thousands of spectators. Theological instruction was not their paramount purpose. Rather, the plays sought to bring sacred history to life and to draw actors and onlookers into an emotionally bound community of Christian believers.³³

The staging of the performance, which we can reconstruct from various stage directions, director’s rolls, and stage plans, was central to the experience. The performance took place in great open spaces, without the accoutrements of the modern stage. Performance and spectator areas tended to intermingle, except when a wooden barrier was erected to remind the public not to intervene in the action of the play, apparently a common occurrence. This kind of staging, without meaningful separation of actors and the audience, engendered in the spectator a direct emotional involvement in the events of the Passion. The actors continually appealed directly to the audience, encouraging it to lend *compassio* [sympathy] and share grief. The sacred characters, consciously represented in the play as real and “human,” spoke the same rough, earthy, everyday language as those watching the performance, helping to fuse the worldly experience of the audience and actors. The late medieval plays were purposefully produced to be living illustrations of sacred events. Intense scenes depicting violent confrontations, often with the obscene language familiar from contemporary life, were just as much a part of the experience as moments of sublime religious spirituality.³⁴ The

³² Werner Williams-Krapp, “‘Praxis pietatis’: Heilsverkündigung und Frömmigkeit der ‘illiterati’ im 15. Jahrhundert,” in Röcke and Münkler, *Die Literatur im Übergang*, 139–65, here 165.

³³ Ingrid Kasten, “Ritual und Emotionalität: Zum geistlichen Spiel des Mittelalters,” in *Literarisches Leben: Rollenentwürfe in der Literatur des Hoch- und Spätmittelalters. Festschrift für Volker Mertens*, ed. Matthias Meyer and Hans-Jochen Schwiewer (Tübingen, 2002), 335–60.

³⁴ Hansjürgen Linke, “Vom Sakrament zum Exkrement: Ein Überblick über

element of shared experience was enhanced by accompanying ritual: plays began in the morning with a communal mass followed by a procession to the performance space. The actual play lasted from midday until twilight. They could take place over a single or several days.

The Passion Play stood totally in the service of the Christian message of salvation, building upon the conflict between Good and Evil, Heaven and Hell, Believer and Unbeliever. In most of the Passion Plays, Jews as a group embody the evil counter-world. Often they incarnate unbelief and blindness and are made to bear the guilt for the suffering and death of Jesus. They were assigned responsibility for the suffering and death of Jesus. The contention that the Jews were the murderers of God was hammered home to the audience. According to surviving directorial notations, actors portraying Jews were instructed to adopt a negative body language. Like the Devil himself—the other denier of the Christian God—the Jews appeared with grotesque gestures, making infernal noises, performing wild dances to the accompaniment of menacing songs, parading their vile-ness even during the scenes of the Crucifixion,³⁵ which for Christians was the holiest moment of suffering and death.

Among the most popular features of the plays was the exposure of the usurious Jew. The Judas-scenes were particularly suitable for representing Jews as greedy and unscrupulous, catering to the familiar prejudices of the public; in some of the plays, the Jewish characters were even given the names of recognizable moneylenders from the town.³⁶

Above all in the crucifixion scenes, which tirelessly evoked the compassion of the audience, the Jews were presented as horrible torturers, pitiless helpers of the executioner, and comrades of the Devil.³⁷ The emotional impact of such portrayals of Jews must have been powerful. Apparently, there was a constant danger that the audience, inflamed by what they had witnessed during the play, might riot after the play, attacking the Jewish neighborhood. We learn from

Drama und Theater des deutschen Mittelalters," in *Theaterwesen und dramatische Literatur. Beiträge zur Geschichte des Theaters*, ed. Günter Holtus (Tübingen, 1987), 127–64.

³⁵ Edith Wenzel, "Do worden die Judden alle geschant:" *Rolle und Funktion der Juden in spätmittelalterlichen Spielen* (Munich, 1992), 140ff.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 48.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 93ff.

city ordinances that the watch for the Jewish neighborhood had to be strengthened to protect Jews against attacks. In some places the performances themselves were forbidden, because the Jews were portrayed too negatively and provocatively and the town authorities feared that unrest would result from them.

Like medieval texts and the graphic arts, the Passion Plays helped propagate for mass consumption a potent negative image of the Jew. At the end of the Middle Ages and beginning of modern period, the “evil Jew” had been established as stereotype and furnished with concrete physical attributes—he was grotesque in manner, physically ugly, and spoke an eerie, bewildering language—a negative Jewish stereotype that would remain potent even in the modern period and play a significant role in the construction of modern anti-Semitism.

Legends and *miracle stories* were other kinds of texts that promulgated the late medieval image of the “Jewish enemy.” These shorter religious stories were among the best-loved texts, which the Church especially promoted, in order to teach the true Christian life through the use of examples to the *simplices*, the theologically unlearned.³⁸ It is hardly a surprise that, at least until the Reformation,³⁹ legends and stories of the saints were among the most popular narrative literature.⁴⁰ The miracle stories were as a rule literarily uninspired texts, which portrayed the dualism of Good and Evil, God and Devil in a simple, pithy language. Not surprisingly the antagonism between Christianity and Judaism was also a theme for legends and miracle stories, not in learned theological form, but rather staged as everyday stories, in order to transmit the Christian doctrinal teachings as a clear, unmistakable message to simple hearers and readers.

Miracle stories could look back to two medieval motifs with a long tradition behind them: legends of *host desecration* and legends of *ritual murder*. They had a persistent influence upon the image of the “Jewish enemy.” In many late medieval collections of *exempla* and miracle

³⁸ Edith Feistner, *Historische Typologie der deutschen Heiligenlegende des Mittelalters von der Mitte des 12. Jahrhunderts bis zur Reformation* (Wiesbaden, 1995), 56ff.

³⁹ Luther rejected the Catholic veneration of the saints as a kind of idolatry, and categorized popular stories (*volkstümliche Erzählungen*) as “lies.” Williams-Krapp, “Praxis Pietatis,” 155.

⁴⁰ “Circa 800 deutsche und niederländische Einzelhandschriften und eine Vielzahl von Drucken aus dem 15. und frühen 16. Jahrhundert belegen überaus deutlich, dass diese Gattung in der Beliebtheit die restliche erzählende Literatur der Zeit weit hinter sich ließ.” *Ibid.*, 153.

stories there are numerous narratives about the miracle working power of the consecrated host. One popular miracle story known throughout Europe was of the small, guiltless Jewish boy who participated in the mass and in Holy Communion and was therefore sentenced by the Jewish community to death by burning. Yet the boy withstood the fiery torture, because the Mother of God protected him from the flames. The boy was baptized and many Jews followed his example.⁴¹

Beginning in the late thirteenth century the tales concentrated more upon the accusation that Jews had allegedly desecrated the host. The first instance of this type appeared in a miracle story from 1290 in Paris. A poor woman who needed money was persuaded by a Jewish lender not to swallow a host at communion, but instead to keep it and sell it to him. The Jewish moneylender struck and bored a hole through the host, which then began to bleed. His family converted thanks to this miracle, while he himself remained obdurate, was arrested and executed. In the house where the miracle occurred a chapel was erected at first, and then monks lived there in order to celebrate and publicize the story of the sacrament of the altar and the miracle of the host.⁴² In other versions of the story the Jews threw the bloody host into a kettle of boiling water, which was transformed into blood. The host disappeared, and instead an image of the crucified Christ appeared. Some Jews converted immediately, while others remained obdurate and were executed.⁴³ All versions are based upon a standard pattern; the procurement of the host by the Jews, the torture of the host, the miraculous appearance, and the revenge of the Christians upon the Jews.

These stories spread quickly as so-called migratory legends throughout Europe. Host miracles and so-called host desecration belonged henceforth to the regular inventory of anti-Jewish polemical writing. The motive that was assigned to the Jews was that they stole and tortured consecrated hosts in order to reenact the suffering and death of the Son of God. It was an absurd contention for it presupposed

⁴¹ See Heike Burmeister, *‘Der Judenknabe.’ Studien und Texte zu einem mittelalterlichen Marienmirakel in deutscher Überlieferung* (Göppingen, 1998); text editions and translations of the “Jüdel,” 257–89, and “Der Judenknabe im Alten Passional,” 290–318.

⁴² Jean Delumeau, *Angst im Abendland: Die Geschichte kollektiver Ängste im Europa des 14. bis 18. Jahrhunderts*, 2 vols. (Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1985), 2:432–33.

⁴³ Stefan Rohrbacher and Michael Schmidt, *Judenbilder: Kulturgeschichte antijüdischer Mythen und antisemitischer Vorurteile* (Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1991), 292.

that the Jews believed in the doctrine of Transubstantiation, accepting the (long-debated) doctrine of the Catholic Church that postulated the transformation of the host into the body and blood of Jesus Christ.⁴⁴ The simple and standardized basic pattern of the stories made possible rapid distribution in collections of exempla, and later in pamphlets and posters,⁴⁵ and was also frequently mentioned in chronicle literature. These stories could without great effort be modified to fit local and contemporary conditions. News of an alleged host desecration spread very quickly and could actually become the catalyst of a wave of pogroms to which entire Jewish communities fell victim.⁴⁶

The serial character of these reports catches the eye, as does the nearly stereotypical staging, which appears to be independent of variable local circumstances. This impression also disturbed contemporary critics, and there were critical voices raised against alleged host desecrations as there were against ritual murder legends, suggesting that this kind of “miracle” could well involve fraud.⁴⁷ In the era of humanism and Reformation the accusations of host desecration slowly disappeared, but lived on in collective memory through these legends, protected by literary transmission, illustrated by numerous posters,⁴⁸ and preserved in many pilgrimage chapels that had been erected on the sites of alleged host desecrations.

The *Deggendorfer Gnad* (“Deggendorf Grace”) is an exemplary case for the fabrication of a host desecration and its development in literature from the fourteenth through the nineteenth centuries.⁴⁹ In

⁴⁴ František Graus, “Judenfeindschaft im Mittelalter,” in *Antisemitismus: Von der Judenfeindschaft zum Holocaust*, ed. Herbert A. Strauss and Norbert Kampe (Bonn, 1985), 29–46, here 36ff.

⁴⁵ Christine Mittlmeier, *Publizistik im Dienste antijüdischer Polemik: Spätmittelalterliche und frühneuzeitliche Flugschriften und Flugblätter zu Hostienschändungen* (Frankfurt am Main, 2000), and Petra Schöner, *Judenbilder im deutschen Einblattdruck der Renaissance: Ein Beitrag zur Imagologie* (Baden-Baden, 2002).

⁴⁶ Graus, *Pest-Geisler-Judenmord*, 287ff. Concerning pogroms resulting from a host desecration accusation, see *ibid.*, 292ff.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 292ff.

⁴⁸ Examples in Rohrbacher and Schmidt, *Judenbilder*, 294ff. Further examples in Heinz Schreckenberg, *Die Juden in der Kunst Europas: Ein historischer Bildatlas* (Göttingen, et al., 1996), 276–85 [= *The Jew in Christian Art: An Illustrated History*, trans. John Bowdon (New York, 1996), 264–73].

⁴⁹ In the following I will refer to the fundamental study of Manfred Eder, *Die “Deggendorfer Gnad.” Entstehung und Entwicklung einer Hostienwallfahrt im Kontext von Theologie und Geschichte* (Deggendorf, 1992).

1338, a group of Deggendorf residents murdered the Jews of the town, plundered their houses, and burned the Jewish quarter to the ground. An enormous wave of anti-Jewish persecutions spread from Deggendorf throughout Bavaria, reaching as far as Hesse, the middle Rhine region, and ultimately Alsace. A church was erected on the site of the ruins of the old Jewish quarter in 1360, which under the name of the “Deggendorfer Gnad” became one of the most important pilgrimage churches in Bavaria. An inscription dating from its construction states: “in the year of our Lord 1337, on the day after Saint Michael’s day, the Jews were struck down, and they burned down the town. God’s Body was found. Women and men saw this. Then they began to build the house of God.”⁵⁰

The inscription suggests a connection between the construction of the church and a host miracle. However, no historical source from the period reports a host desecration in Deggendorf, and a study of the documents and accounts suggests that the legend of a Jewish host desecration was only invented later. Only in the fifteenth century did a rhymed version of the legend appear,⁵¹ which clearly sought to justify the killing of the Jews and the founding of the lucrative pilgrimage.

The miracle story shows the typical elements and literary pattern, which are characteristic for this kind of standardized form of the story. The Christians appear as believing witnesses of the miracle. Heavenly light and the appearance of an angel and the Mother of God reveal the “misdeeds” of the Jews. According to the narrative the Jews react with new “misdeeds” when the miracle occurs and the tortured host is transformed into a child. Even the complaints of the Mother of God cannot move them to stop their cruelty. “Maria came with great sorrow / She said, You false, blind Jews, / why are you martyring my dear child?” In a reversal of the historical sources that report the murder of the Jews, the Jews are represented

⁵⁰ “ANNO DOMINI MCCCXXXVII DES NACHSDE TAGS NACH SAND MICHELS TAG WVRDEN DI IVDEN ERSLAGEN—DI STAT SI ANZVNDEN—DO BART GOTES LAICHENAM FVNDEN—DAZ SAHED FRAVEN VND MAN—DO HVAB MAN DAZ GOTSHAUS ZE BAVN AN.” Quoted from Bjorn Berghausen, “von Tegkendorff das geschicht waz den schalckhaffigen Juden ist worden zu lon: Das Lied von Deggendorf—Fiktion eines Hostienfrevels,” in *Juden in der deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters: Religiöse Konzepte—Feindbilder—Rechtfertigungen*, ed. Ursula Schulze (Tübingen, 2002), 233–53, here 243.

⁵¹ Eder, *Die “Deggendorfer Gnad,”* 189ff and 356ff.

here as the murderers (of Jesus Christ), who were persecuted by the villagers and the headman of the town: "The servant came with his lord / the Jews prepared themselves for defense/ yet the Jews were defeated / both women and also men / then the Jewish houses were burned down."⁵² Different versions of the legend were printed around 1500 in Bamberg and 1520 in Augsburg,⁵³ a longer version in stanzas appeared in 1582, and in 1604 a prose version by J. Sartorius, which was repeatedly reprinted in the following centuries.⁵⁴ Following these came a series of "grace booklets" and two dramatic adaptations from the years 1800 and 1926.⁵⁵ In this version the Jews were referred to as the "brood of Judas," the "Devil's horde," "fiendish mutineers," "well-poisoners," "arsonists," and "pack of mangy Jewish dogs."⁵⁶ Against the opposition of some members of the clergy the pilgrimage was finally abolished in 1992.⁵⁷

The supposition of ritual murder, which had circulated throughout Europe, proved to be as long-lived as the legends of host desecration. This allegation dates back to the twelfth century.⁵⁸ The first ritual murder accusation against the Jews was made in Norwich in 1144.⁵⁹ A little boy named William was found dead at Easter time

⁵² "Der pfleger kom mit seinem her / Dy iuden sactzen sich zw wer / Doch sigt man dy iuden an / Payde frawen und auch man / Do man der iuden haws verprant" (vv. 107–11). Printed by Eder in *ibid.*, 230–35. Michaela Willeke provides a translation in "Der Vorwurf des Hostienfrevels als ein Höhepunkt des spätmittelalterlichen Antijudaismus Die "Deggendorfer Gnad" (1338)," in *Judentum und Antijudaismus*, 61–83, here, 79ff.

⁵³ Concerning the transmission, see Burghart Wachinger, "Der Judenmord von Deggendorf," in *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters: Verfasserlexikon*, ed. Wolfgang Stammer et al., 2nd rev. ed. (Berlin, 1983), vol. 4: 893–96.

⁵⁴ Eder, "Die 'Deggendorfer Gnad,'" 276ff.

⁵⁵ Wachinger "Der Judenmord von Deggendorf," col. 895.

⁵⁶ Winfried Frey, "Das heilige Mirakel: Ein Spiel vom Gnadenwunder zu Deggendorf," in *"Ir sult sprechen willekomen." Grenzenlose Mediävistik. Festschrift für Helmut Birkhan zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Christa Tuczay et al. (Bern, 1998), 165–86.

⁵⁷ Berghausen, "Das Lied von Deggendorf," 253, Rohrbacher and Schmidt, *Judenbilder*, 292–93, and Willeke, "Der Vorwurf des Hostienfrevels," 74.

⁵⁸ This phenomenon has been comprehensively studied in research literature. Rainer Erb offers an overview of the research in "Zur Erforschung der europäischen Ritualmordbeschuldigungen," in *Die Legende vom Ritualmord: Zur Geschichte der Blutbeschuldigung gegen die Juden*, ed. Rainer Erb (Berlin, 1993), 9–16.

⁵⁹ Gavin I. Langmuir, "Thomas of Monmouth. Detector of Ritual Murder," *Speculum* 59 (1984): 820–46; Friedrich Lotter, "Innocens Virgo et Martyr: Thomas von Monmouth und die Verbreitung der Ritualmordlegende im Hochmittelalter," in *Die Legende vom Ritualmord*, ed. Erb, 25–72 and Gerd Mentgen, "Über den Ursprung der Ritualmordfabel," *Aschkenas* 4 (1994): 405–16.

and was buried at first without further ado. Ten years later the rumor began to spread that the Jews had captured a poor Christian child on Good Friday, hung him on a cross, and finally killed him. Only then did the monks of a monastery in Norwich convey the body to their church and circulate the news that the corpse performed miracles. Outrage against the Jews in Norwich followed immediately. Soon thereafter little William was declared a martyr, whom the cruel, unbelieving Jews had murdered in order to repeat the Passion and death of Jesus Christ. Some unusual features and contradictions led to doubts among some contemporaries concerning the course of events, but these were soon ignored under the impact of the quickly emerging cult of the martyr. The legend spread quickly throughout Europe, and numerous ritual murder accusations followed in France and also in Germany.⁶⁰

Ritual murder legends functioned according to a relatively stable pattern, following a formulaic series of stages, similar to the legends of host desecration. Even in the first ritual murder legends we recognize the typical pattern of events: at Easter time a dead child is discovered (usually a dead boy), then a rumor spreads that the Jews are responsible for the death of the child. As a rule the entire Jewish community was accused rather than individual Jews. The point in time was also typical, in that it usually took place on Good Friday, normally a dangerous day for Jews, when assaults by Christians were common. The religious accusations against the Jews as alleged murderers of God repeatedly led to riots. Hence we read in city records that extra guards were added on that day to the watch on the Jewish quarter and to the fire protection detail.⁶¹ It was also typical that the news spread quickly through legends and sermons, which evoked the *compassion* of the hearer and reader. In the thirteenth century the fable was further embroidered: the Jews murdered an innocent Christian child because they needed blood for ritual purposes, such as for the preparation of Passover unleavened bread (*matzot*) or for the healing of hemorrhages that Jewish men allegedly suffered from. These legends were tirelessly circulated, and repeatedly acted upon.

⁶⁰ Graus, *Pest-Geissler-Judenmorde*, 282–86.

⁶¹ Markus J. Wenniger, “Das gefährliche Fest: Ostern als zeitlicher Kristallisationspunkt antijüdischen Verhaltens,” in *Feste und Feiern im Mittelalter: Paderborner Symposion des Mediävistenverbandes*, ed. Detlev Altenburg et al. (Sigmaringen, 1991), 323–32.

Trials against Jews were staged and some confessions were obtained through the use of torture in order to demonstrate that the legends were “true.”

The best-known case was the ritual murder accusation against the Jews in Trent in 1475. The chronology of the alleged murder of little Simon and its investigation were documented in many extensive protocols and trial documents.⁶² They report the following sequence of events. On Good Friday of 1475 a tanner named Andreas reported that his young son Simon had been missing since the day before. Immediately it was suspected that the Jews who were living in Trent might have kidnapped the boy. This suspicion was stirred up by the sermons of Bernardino da Feltre, who had shortly before warned emphatically about the Jews. Bernardino was considered a bitter foe of the Jews, and anti-Jewish riots had broken out repeatedly after his sermons. Still it was not considered impossible in Trent that the incident might have been an accident. The father himself searched vainly for his son in the city moat together with neighbors and the police. Next to the moat lay the property of Samuel, the richest Jew in Trent. Therefore his house was searched, but no trace of the child was found. The following night the Jews reported that the corpse of the boy had been found in the moat. At the same time the Jews were interrogated. Allegedly they made contradictory assertions, and it was allegedly established that the wounds on the boy's corpse had begun to bleed again in the presence of the Jews. According to medieval belief this was an important sign that the murderer was present. Consequentially all of the Jews were arrested. The doctors who then examined the boy's corpse could not rule out an accident, but were inclined to accept the murder theory. In order to ensure the appearance of “objectivity,” a Jewish convert was interrogated. He asserted that ritual murder by the Jews was nothing unusual. Thereafter everything was done, following the opinion of the city government, to bring charges against the Jewish community of Trent. The trial began after Easter. With the help of torture the judge elicited confessions from the accused.

Throughout Europe the trial caused a great sensation, especially because the judge sought to prove that it was a ritual murder, although

⁶² Hsia, *Trent*, and Wolfgang Treue, *Der Trientiner Judenprozess: Voraussetzungen-Abläufe-Auswirkungen* (1475–1588) (Hannover, 1996).

it was well known that Pope Sixtus IV had repeatedly spoken out against such accusations and had even threatened excommunication.⁶³

The case became even more famous because news of it spread quickly and circulated widely through the use of a new technical medium, the printing press. While the trial was still in progress a pamphlet appeared with the title *Hystorie von 1475*, obviously printed at the order of the bishop of Trent, in order to reinforce the controversial charge of ritual murder. The author probably had access to the records and he boasted that he would only tell the true story “so that the truth of the story would neither be diminished nor changed, just as it was noted in the trial records and written up there.”⁶⁴ Through structure and writing style the writer sought to leave the impression of an historically trustworthy account. In the period from 1475 to 1511, numerous Latin and German pamphlets were printed, among them many posters with both text and illustration,⁶⁵ in which the alleged ritual murder of Trent was condemned.⁶⁶

The extent of public awareness of the Trent case can be measured by the fact that the story of the little “martyr” appeared in many Latin and German chronicles of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.⁶⁷ These printed world chronicles were large scale, expensive undertakings that found a large market, and affected the worldview of their contemporaries. In the first instance intellectual and especially humanist-oriented groups were the producers and recipients of such works in both Germany and Italy.⁶⁸ An outstanding example was the famous Nuremberg *Schedelsche Weltchronik*, which first

⁶³ Pope Sixtus IV attacked the trial and appointed a commissioner with papal authority to represent him at the trial. This commissioner initiated a trial to counter the first, but without success. In 1478 the Vatican finally declared that it recognized the trial of 1475.

⁶⁴ “. . . da mit der warhait der hystorie nicht abgenomen noch verzigen, als die in den gerichtspucheren aufschriben vermerket vnd ausgeschriben ist.” Quoted from Nicole Spengler, “Das er in sijn leiden gheglicht ist der marter vnsers heren: Legendenbildung um Simon von Trient—Ein Ritualmordkonstrukt,” in Schulze, *Juden in der deutschen Literatur*, 211–31, here 219.

⁶⁵ Treue, *Trientiner Judenprozess*, lists forty imprints that have been preserved.

⁶⁶ On the “Nürnberger Simon-Gedicht” (1475) and the “Ulmer Simon-Gedicht” (1491) see Spengler, “Legendenbildung um Simon von Trient,” 224–30. See also the illustrations in Treue, *Trientiner Judenprozess*, 348–92 and Schreckenberg, *Die Juden in der Kunst*, 285–303 [= *Jews in Christian Art*, 273–91].

⁶⁷ Treue, *Trientiner Judenprozess*, 320–21, reports on roughly twenty different printed and twenty manuscript chronicles, which report the Trent case.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 285.

appeared in 1493 in Latin, and then a few months later in German. The author Hartmann Schedel (1440–1514) was one of the most prominent humanists in Nuremberg and his monumental *World Chronicle*, furnished with more than 1,800 woodcuts, can be counted among the greatest publishing ventures of the early modern period. This chronicle contains on folio CCLVIII verso a woodcut, which shows the innocent child surrounded by murderous Jews. A detailed account of the events in Trent accompanies the illustration, concentrates upon the evocative martyrdom of the child, and portrays the Jews as pitiless, cold-blooded, premeditated murderers.

As night fell, Samuel, Tobias, Vitalis, Moses, Israel, and Mayer rejoiced before the synagogue in the shedding of Christian blood. Now they stripped the child and placed a tiny scarf around his neck, so that none could hear his cries and stretched his little arms out. First they cut off his male organ, cut a small piece from his right cheek and pierced him on all sides with sharp thorns, staples, or needles, one holding the hand, another the foot. And after they had cruelly collected the blood, they sang a song of praise and spoke to the child with threats and mockery . . . until the little martyr departed.⁶⁹

The ritual murder accusation of Trent was also taken up in Protestant texts. Andreas Hondorff published a handbook for Protestant preachers in 1568, which also served the needs of “those who loved reading and the story-hungry bourgeoisie of the time as a treasure trove of learned, edifying, and entertaining stories.”⁷⁰ His handbook

⁶⁹ „Als Als nw die / nacht herfiele do frewten sich Samuel Thobias Vitalis Moyses Israhel vnd Mayer vor der synagog vber / vergiessung christenlichs pluots. Nw entploebeten sie das kindlein vnd legten ime ein facetlein vmb sein helblein / das man es nit schreyen hoeren moecht vnd spannerten imme sein ermlein auß. schnyten ime erstlich sein manlich glid / lein ab vnd auß seinem rechten wenglein ein stuecklein vnd stachen es allenthalben mit scharpffen spitzigen sta / cheln hefflein oder nadeln, einer die hend der ander die fueßlein haltende. vnd als sie nw das pluot grawsamlich / gesammelt hetten do huoben sie an lobsang zezingen vnd zu dem kindlein mit hoenischen bedroeworten zesprechen (. . .) dieweil verschied das vnschuldig mertrerlein.” Transcription of the text (without the abbreviations and the diacritic marks) in Wenzel, “*Do worden die Judden alle geschant*,” 250 and illustration, 307.

⁷⁰ Heidemarie Schade, “Andreas Hondorffs Promptuarium Exemplorum,” in *Volkserzählungen und Reformation: Ein Handbuch zur Tradierung und Funktion von Erzählungstoffen und Erzählliteratur im Protestantismus*, ed. Wolfgang Brückner (Berlin, 1974), 647–703, here 692. See also Winfried Frey, “Ritualmordlüge und Judenhass in der Volkskultur des Spätmittelalters: Die Schriften Andreas Osianders und Johannes Ecks,” in *Volkskultur des europäischen Spätmittelalters*, ed. Peter Dinzelbacher and Hans-Dieter Mück (Stuttgart, 1987), 177–97, here 188.

Promptuarium exemplorum was repeatedly reprinted in German and Latin throughout the seventeenth century. In this context it is also necessary to mention *Ain Judenbüechlins verlegung* by Johannes Eck (1486–1543), which was published in 1541 and devotes twelve pages to an extensive treatment of the case of Simon of Trent, in order to provide irrefutable proof of Jewish ritual murder.⁷¹ In this book Eck responded to a book printed in 1540, anonymously written, without indication of printer, place of printing, or year, in which the author exposed the blood libel as a lie and a pure fabrication.⁷² The author was Andreas Osiander (1496–1552), the well-known reformer of Nuremberg and student of Reuchlin.⁷³ The fact that Osiander did not wish to publish his polemical pamphlet under his own name, in order to protect himself from the accusation of being in league with the Jews, indicates how widespread and deeply rooted the lie of ritual murder had become.⁷⁴ Stories of alleged Jewish ritual murders were published in saint's lives, books of martyrs, in catechisms and other books intended for instructing the laity until the twentieth century, ignoring the doubts that the popes themselves had raised concerning alleged ritual murder accusations.⁷⁵ The Catholic Church finally distanced itself from this kind of honoring of martyrs, and forbade their cults with the Second Vatican Council (1962–65). This decision met frequently with considerable resistance from the churches of the places in question and from many believers.⁷⁶

Old Anti-Jewish Images and New Literary Genres

Among the most successful literary innovations of the sixteenth century, apart from the prose novel, were the *Schwankzyklen*, collections of short narratives, which were to serve to entertain and edify the

⁷¹ Brigitte Hägler, *Die Christen und die "Judenfrage." Am Beispiel der Schriften Osianders und Ecks zum Ritualmordvorwurf* (Erlangen, 1992), 96–102.

⁷² For the individual arguments, see Frey, "Ritualmordlüge und Judenhass," 177ff.

⁷³ Oberman, *Roots of Antisemitism*, 36–37 [= *Wurzeln des Antisemitismus*, 44].

⁷⁴ Kirn, *Bild vom Juden*, 51.

⁷⁵ Concerning the literary transmission, see Willehad Paul Eckert, "Aus den Akten des Trienter Prozesses," in *Judentum im Mittelalter: Beiträge zum christlich-jüdischen Gespräch*, ed. Paul Wilpert (Berlin, 1996), 283–336.

⁷⁶ Rohrbacher and Schmidt, *Judenbilder*, 360ff.

reader, as the authors continually emphasized. *Schimpf und Ernst*⁷⁷ (Entertainment and Earnestness) was the title of a collection by Johannes Pauli, which appeared in 1522. *Wendunmuth*⁷⁸ (Turn away the Ill-Humor) was what Hans Wilhelm Kirchof (1525–1602) called his seven volume collection of short tales, intended to “drive away both his own and others’ melancholy.” Jacob Frey praised his *Gartengesellschaft* (Garden Society) (1556) promising to the potential buyer, that his book contained “many joyful conversations, jests, mockeries and amusing pranks.”⁷⁹ Comical and morally instructive stories mingled with puns and obscene jokes. Stories of the victory of cunning over stupidity were typical for the style of these text-collections, and were responsible for their tremendous success.⁸⁰ Making fun of human failings and weaknesses, mocking the depravity of the clergy and the stupidity of farmers were popular topics in these satirical little stories.

Jews were not central figures in such works, but when they did appear it was in the role of an inferior, as a fool who was exposed to mockery and derision. In order to unmask the Jews, feared on account of their profound knowledge of Scripture, the authors repeatedly referred to the model of a religious disputation, which had been widely circulated in learned works for centuries,⁸¹ and had frequently appeared in medieval literature in order to prove the superiority of the Christian faith over Judaism.⁸² In sixteenth-century satire the theological dimension was left out, and instead these short texts were primarily interested in exposing the Jews and their religion, and demonstrating the powerful superiority of the Christians. The dispute was constructed in such a way that puns and aggressive jokes were dominant. In some tales Jews were allowed word humor of their own, yet in the end the “pugnacious” Christian won, and no

⁷⁷ Johannes Pauli, *Schimpf und Ernst*, ed. Hermann Oesterley (Stuttgart, 1886).

⁷⁸ Hans Wilhelm Kirchof, *Wendunmuth*, 5 vols., ed. Hermann Oesterley (Tübingen, 1869; repr. Hildesheim, 1980).

⁷⁹ Jacob Frey, *Gartengesellschaft (1556)*, ed. Johannes Bolte (Tübingen, 1896).

⁸⁰ Werner Röcke, “Fiktionale Literatur und literarischer Markt: Schwankliteratur und Prosaroman,” in Röcke und Münkler, *Die Literatur im Übergang*, 463–506, here 472ff.

⁸¹ Schreckenberg, *Adversus-Judaeos-Texte*, vols. 1–3.

⁸² Wenzel, “*Do worden die Judden alle geschant*,” 172–73 (concerning the religious drama) and 225ff (on Shrovetide-Plays).

other outcome could have been expected.⁸³ Frey reported under the title *A Jew and a Christian Dispute with Each Other Concerning Faith*,⁸⁴ how a Jew asked a Christian merchant to provide proof for his faith. Christ said if someone strikes you on one cheek, then offer him the other. The merchant agreed with the Jew and allowed him to box his ears. But then he offered a counter argument. "Listen, Jew," said the merchant, "you have seen that I wish to fulfill the words of my Christ, so be careful! Christ also said, 'With the measure that you have used it will be measured to you yourself.'" The merchant then beat the Jew up, and the author concluded with the satirical comment: "Afterwards the Jew ceased to dispute and our left our Christ alone with his doctrine."

In another story Pauli tells how a Jew fell victim to his own religion. This Jew fell into a sinkhole on the Sabbath and called for help, yet his fellow-Jews could not help him because of the strict regulations pertaining to Sabbath rest. Hence they waited until the next day to begin a rescue, but then Christians prevented them from doing so: "No, no you poor Jews, today is our holy day. You may not do this. Yesterday was your Sabbath and your holy day. Today is our Sunday and our holy day." And the author concluded mockingly, "So the Jew had to stand a second day in the filth and stink."⁸⁵

Two topics were particularly popular, known already during the Middle Ages, the story of the birth of the Messiah, and the motif of "wisdom berries." The story of the Messiah's birth appears already in the exempla collection of Caesarius von Heisterbach in the thirteenth century.⁸⁶ A young Jewish woman is made pregnant by a cleric. He tells the Jews that she bears their long-awaited Messiah. The news spreads quickly among the Jews, who stream in to witness the birth. But instead of their eagerly awaited Messiah, a girl is born. The messianic hope of the Jews is exposed to the laughter of Christians. Hans Folz took up this story at the end of the fifteenth century⁸⁷

⁸³ For further examples, see Sonja Zöller, "Judenfeindschaft in den Schwänken des 16. Jahrhunderts," *Daphnis* 23 (1994): 345–69, here 360ff.

⁸⁴ Frey, *Gartengesellschaft*, chap. 104, 120–21.

⁸⁵ Pauli, *Schimpf und Ernst*, 237; see also Kirchhof, *Wendunmuth*, 1:483 (no. 33).

⁸⁶ Caesarius von Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum*, ed. Joseph Stange (Cologne et al., 1851), vol. 1, dist. 2, chap. 24, 94–95. See Zöller, "Judenfeindschaft in den Schwänken," 351.

⁸⁷ Hans Folz, *Die Reimpaarsprüche*, ed. Hanns Fischer (Munich, 1961), 92ff (no. 12).

and shaped it in accordance with his outspokenly anti-Jewish conception, which was characteristic for the author.⁸⁸ Kirchhof also adapted this tale, but sharpened the mockery of the Jews, for in his version the duped Jews “seek out their rabbis to learn whether the Messiah, whose coming had been so long delayed, could be born in the form of a woman or not.”⁸⁹ Kirchhof exposed the Jews not only as un-teachable unbelievers, but also as particularly stupid. For Christian hearers and readers this particular point would have been welcome, giving them the opportunity to laugh at the otherwise feared learning of the Jews.

A similar motive lies behind the story of the alleged “wisdom berries,” of which Hans Folz wrote two versions.⁹⁰ A swindler who was on the run offered three Jews at the market his own feces, which he had carefully shaped into little balls and attractively packed as “wisdom berries.” The Jews bought the berries hoping that they could learn when their Messiah would come. But the fraud became apparent when the rabbi tasted the “wisdom berries.” In this story as well the Jews are represented as unbelievers, and their unbelief makes them so blind that they do not recognize the source of the “berries,” and are even willing to pay dearly for them. They suffered damage and mockery at the same time. Heinrich Bebel included this story, in a slightly changed form, in his Latin *Liber facetiarum*.⁹¹ Presumably this kind of “fecal” wit contributed to its circulation, since the provocative play with feces was especially popular in the late Middle Ages, particularly in the genres of farce (*Schwankmaere*) and Shrovetide-Plays (*Fastnachtspiele*).⁹² The disgusting association of Jews and feces (*Kot*, or Middle High German *dreck*) also appeared repeatedly as a topic in sixteenth century satire, in order to brand the Jews as “filthy” people, who ought to have no place within Christian society on account of their odor.⁹³

⁸⁸ Edith Wenzel, “Zur Judenproblematik bei Hans Folz,” *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie* 101 (1982): 79–104, here 79ff.

⁸⁹ Kirchhof, *Wendunmuth*, vol. 1, part 2, 511 (no. 50).

⁹⁰ Folz, *Reimpaarsprüche*, nos. 9a–9b. See Wenzel, “Zur Judenproblematik bei Hans Folz,” 86ff.

⁹¹ Heinrich Bebel, *Facetien: Drei Bücher*, ed. Gustav Bebermeyer (Leipzig, 1931), book 2, 61–62 (no. 46).

⁹² Wenzel, “*Do worden die Judden alle geschant*,” 252ff.

⁹³ Further references in Zöller, “Judenfeindschaft in den Schwänken,” 356ff.

In this context belongs the image of the *Judensau*, which was passed down into the nineteenth century.⁹⁴ This discriminatory, mocking image shows a sow, whose teats suckle some Jews, while others hang onto her tail or are under her hind legs while the sow defecates. Frequently the illustrations were combined with texts that mock the Jews, describing how they consumed the sow's excrement.⁹⁵ The particular perfidy of this mocking image lies, apart from the obscenity, in the combination of Jews and pigs. For Jews pigs were considered unclean, and the cultic laws of purity expressly forbade the consumption of pork. Even in Christian iconography the pig was considered an unclean animal, and in their iconography of vice the pig was a symbol of sins and evil or of the Devil. Even more significant than the nauseating depiction is the associative chain which links the Jews with pigs and at the same time with the Devil. Such a chain of associations appeared in numerous printed representations of the *Judensau* during the sixteenth century. Here the motif appeared in combination with diabolical figures, labeling the figures—half-human, half-demon—with the Jewish Badge [*Judenfleck*].⁹⁶ This offensive and discriminatory representation frequently appeared in sculptures or paintings on public buildings, bridges (Frankfurt am Main), churches (St. Sebaldus in Nuremberg, St. Mary's in Wittenberg) and on choir benches.⁹⁷ During the sixteenth century this image was widely circulated with the help of printing and continued to be promulgated until the nineteenth century.

To sum up, it is obvious that the representation of the Jews in sixteenth-century literature largely follows in the tradition of the Middle Ages. Jews were denounced as dangerous enemies of the Christian faith and as a threat to the Christian commonwealth, or were mocked as fools. According to Christian conception, Jews remained even in the sixteenth century hated and feared outsiders, who had demonic

⁹⁴ Isaiah Shachar, *The Judensau: A Medieval Anti-Jewish Motif and its History* (London, 1974).

⁹⁵ Shachar reprinted several texts in *ibid.*, 52ff.

⁹⁶ See the title page of a sixteenth-century pamphlet *Der Juden Erbarkeit*, in Wenzel, "Do worden die Judden alle geschant," illus. 13 and Rohrbacher and Schmidt, *Judenbilder*, 160. For further illustrations, see Schreckenbergh, *Die Juden in der Kunst*, 347ff [= *Jews in Christian Art*, 331–37].

⁹⁷ Shachar, *Judensau*, 1.

characteristics, presumed to commit child murder and host desecration. The new medium of print promulgated information that was hostile to Jews, frequently in the effective combination of text and illustration. Within the shortest possible time and with previously unheard of circulation, printed anti-Jewish material inscribed upon the cultural memory the anti-Semitic images of "the Jew," the effect of which could be observed into the nineteenth century.

PART IV

JEW, JUDAISM, AND JEWISH RESPONSES
TO THE REFORMATION

JEWISH SETTLEMENT, POLITICS, AND THE REFORMATION

Dean Phillip Bell

Historiographical Orientation

Sixteenth-century Jewish historiography was not uniform or consistent in its evaluation of the Reformation.¹ Modern Jewish historiography remains divided in its assessment of Jews and the Reformation. In part the various approaches are indebted to the fractured status of the German political landscape—then and now—and in part to questions of Jewish identity. While many have seen in the Reformation the sparks of modern anti-Semitism, many other celebrated figures perceived the matter rather differently. Heinrich Heine, for example, attributed freedom of conscience to Luther; Hermann Cohen compared Luther with Moses; and Franz Rosenzweig showed a great deal of respect for Luther the biblical translator.² The complexities of modern German Jewish identity have, of course, contributed to the lack of clarity. When one of Franz Rosenzweig's cousins, Rudolf Ehrenberg, for example, could trace his ancestry on his father's side to the Maharal of Prague and on his mother's to Martin Luther,³ we might be put on guard that both early modern and modern approaches to the topic of the Reformation and the Jews are likely to be complex and sensitive.

Most Jewish historiography has balanced its treatment of the Reformation and the Jews between two poles, reflected in the varying interpretations of Luther as the embodiment of the German "Lauter," pure,⁴ or the Hebrew "lo-tahor," impure.⁵ On the one

¹ See Abraham David, "The Lutheran Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Jewish Historiography," *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 10:2 (2003): 124–39, especially 138.

² Günther B. Ginzler, "Martin Luther: 'Kronzeuge des Antisemitismus,'" in *Die Juden und Martin Luther, Martin Luther und die Juden: Geschichte, Wirkungsgeschichte, Herausforderung*, ed. Heinz Kremers (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1985), 189–210, here at 189.

³ Paul Mendes-Flohr, *German Jews: A Dual Identity* (New Haven, 1999), 70.

⁴ "light" according to some translations.

⁵ See Haim Hillel Ben-Sasson, "The Reformation in Contemporary Jewish Eyes,"

hand, the Reformation is recognized as a decisive event that led to increasingly bitter and abusive theological and political, and in some cases even “racial,” discrimination and concomitant expulsion from various cities and territories throughout central Europe. Indeed, according to some interpretations, the Reformation’s attitude toward the Jews paved the way for the centuries-later annihilation of European Jewry—the *Sonderweg* theory.⁶

On the other hand, the Reformation, as interpreted by some scholars, ushered in a dissolution of the homogeneous and all-powerful Church and led to the removal of anti-Jewish motifs such as host desecration and ritual murder. Further, the Reformation, with its emphasis on the Hebrew Bible and the refashioning of Protestants as the ancient Israelites and Christian centers as the new Zion, led eventually, by the end of the sixteenth century, to an unprecedented degree of toleration of Jews and the interest in Hebrew language, the Hebrew Bible, and Jewish customs. In addition, the upheaval of the Reformation and the burning apocalyptic feeling of the age affected Jews as well, who envisioned their own redemption and the beginning of a messianic era. What is more, according to many scholars the Reformation, with its Protestant ethic, led to the economic reintegration of European Jewry by the end of the sixteenth century.⁷

The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities Proceedings 4:12 (1970), 272 and n. 96, and 288; see also Joseph Davis, “The ‘Ten Questions’ of Eliezer Eilburg and the Problem of Jewish Unbelief in the 16th Century,” *JQR* 91:3–4 (2001): 293–336, here at 295; see also Joseph of Rosheim, *Historical Writings*, 301.

⁶ “Hence it was mainly in the territory of the Holy Roman Empire that the great drama of the Reformation immediately affected many Jewish communities and constituted a major factor in the subsequent destinies of the Jewish people, down to the Nazi era and beyond.” Salo Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, vol. XIII: *Late Middle Ages and Era of European Expansion* (New York, 1969), 217.

⁷ According to Salo Baron, for example, “At the same time, the chronologically preceding influences of the Protestant Reformation upon Jewish history had to be treated in a subsequent chapter as an integral factor in the transformation of modern Europe and the ensuing emancipation of the Jews.” Baron, “Emphases in Jewish History,” in idem, *History and Jewish Historians* (Philadelphia, 1964), 69 (the essay was originally published in 1939). He argues that “. . . in the long run, the Reformation contributed to the religious diversification, and subsequently to the growing secularization, of Europe. In time, these forces were bound to affect deeply also the position of Jews in the modern world” (ibid., 206). See also Jonathan Israel, “Germany and Its Jews: A Changing Relationship (1300–1800),” in *In and Out of the Ghetto: Jewish-Gentile Relations in Late Medieval and Early Modern Germany*, ed. R. Po-chia Hsia and Hartmut Lehmann (Cambridge, 1995), 295–304.

Traditionally, the Reformation has been interpreted to have had little direct impact on the religion of sixteenth-century Jews. As one scholar writes, “Despite the spread of Luther’s writings among the Jews, it left the spirit of the people untouched, and only in isolated instances did conversions to Lutheranism occur; Luther himself complained that Jews read his works only to refute them.”⁸ The same author notes, however, that the Reformation did have a significant impact on later Jewish history, ushering in a new era for European Jewry and paving the way and serving as a model for the nineteenth-century Reform movement within Judaism.⁹

Even though Heinrich Graetz, in the fourth volume of his *History of the Jews*, found the Jews themselves wanting in spirituality and freedom of philosophical inquiry,¹⁰ he continued, “It is astonishing, yet not astonishing, that the surging movement, the convulsive heaving that shook the Christian world from pole to pole in the first quarter of the sixteenth century scarcely touched the inner life of the Jews . . . Having had no ‘Middle Ages,’ they needed no new epoch. They needed no regeneration, they had no immoral course of life to redress, no cankering corruption to cure, no dam to raise against the insolence and rapacity of their spiritual guides. They had not so much rubbish to clear away . . .”¹¹

Whether one accepts Graetz’s interpretation or not, the practical effects on real Jews could vary widely depending upon a variety of circumstances. Scholars have become frustrated in trying to determine how Jews fared in Protestant and Catholic regions in Germany, and to some extent have had difficulty in differentiating the treatment of Jews before the Reformation, during the early Reformation, and throughout the period of confessionalization.¹² And while some Jews ardently advocated on behalf of the Protestant sectarians, many others clung to the long-tested relationships with individual rulers or dynasties.

⁸ Louis I. Newman, *Jewish Influence on Christian Reform Movements* (New York, 1925), 629.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Heinrich Graetz, *History of the Jews*, vol. IV (Philadelphia, 1956, orig. 1894), 477 and 249

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 477.

¹² According to Rotraud Ries, for example, confessionalization ushered in the real anti-Jewish shifts at the end of the sixteenth century. “Zur Bedeutung von Reformation und Konfessionalisierung für das christlich-jüdische Verhältnis in Niedersachsen,” *Aschkenas* 6:2 (1996): 353–419.

While the representation of Jews and Judaism, and even the impact of Jews and Judaism on the Reformation has received a good deal of attention, comparatively much less attention has been paid to the effect of the Reformation on the internal life of the Jews, in terms of political and communal life and social, religious, and intellectual developments.

The relative inattention to the internal effects of the Reformation on the Jews is no doubt due in part to the dearth of sources available to scholars. This neglect has also been due in part to the assumption that Jewish and Christian interaction was limited. If one begins with the assumption that Jews and Christians were heavily involved with one another throughout the later Middle Ages and early modern period, and if one is ready to read the limited sources available with new questions in mind, it may, in fact, be possible to say something more about Jewish responses to the Reformation.

One of the few, and certainly the central, scholar to examine the contemporary Jewish view of the Reformation was Haim Hillel Ben-Sasson. As Ben-Sasson noted at the outset of one of his landmark essays: "Whatever the cause, it can hardly be denied that many of the phenomena of the Christian controversy and attendant problems had a definite bearing upon Jewish life and thought."¹³ In another article, Ben-Sasson reflected that "On closer inspection Jewish culture in Germany turns out to be much more receptive to nonnative elements, more variegated, than current views about it would allow."¹⁴ The social teachings of the early sixteenth-century scholar Johanan Luria, he noted by way of example, reflected a humanistic influence.¹⁵

There have been some scattered observations in support of the idea that Jews responded to the Reformation in rich and diverse ways and that the Reformation—defined in its broadest scope—had real impact on internal Jewish life. The work of the late sixteenth-century Prague astronomer and historian David Gans, for example, has been seen within the context of contemporary German and Czech chronicles as well as within the context of burgeoning burgher literature and the elevation of the lay element over the rabbinic in

¹³ Ben-Sasson, "The Reformation in Contemporary Jewish Eyes," 239.

¹⁴ Haim Hillel Ben-Sasson, "Jewish-Christian Disputation in the Setting of Humanism and Reformation in the German Empire," *HTR* 59 (1966): 369.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 370.

early modern Germany.¹⁶ Of course the shifting of power from rabbinic to lay authorities was hardly new to the Jewish community after the Reformation. As I have argued elsewhere, such shifts in the distribution of sacred authority—for both Jews and Christians—began already in the fifteenth century.¹⁷

On the other hand, some scholars have also found more positive responses to the Reformation in regard to the rabbinic post and rabbinic authority. Regarding Maharal of Prague, for example, Joseph Davis argues that clear parallels can be seen between Christian models of clerical activism and the activist model of the Ashkenazic rabbinic created by Maharal and his successor Ephraim of Luntshits.¹⁸ The same, argues Davis, might be said about Maharal's educational reforms, which paralleled those instituted by the Czech Protestant educator John Comenius.¹⁹ Ben-Sasson posited that Maharal's biblicism, his understanding of the relationship between religion and secular enforcement, and his appeal for freedom of expression²⁰ might have been influenced by the broader conditions and changes in the Christian world around him.²¹ Selma Stern likewise compared the work of Josel of Rosheim with the moral rebirth associated with the Brethren of the Common Life.²²

Some Reformation-era ideas, such as predestination and the emphasis on the vernacular (as opposed to Latin, or in the case of Jews, Hebrew)²³ raised points of contention, as the work of Hayyim ben Bezalel demonstrated.²⁴ Hayyim wrote that "Hence, it is our custom

¹⁶ Mordechai Breuer, "Modernism and Traditionalism in Sixteenth-Century Jewish Historiography: A Study of David Gans' 'Tzemah David,'" in *Jewish Thought in the Sixteenth Century*, ed. Bernard Dov Cooperman (Cambridge, MA, 1983), 49–88, here at 70; see also Dean Phillip Bell, *Sacred Communities: Jewish and Christian Identities in Fifteenth-Century Germany* (Leiden, 2001), 157–58.

¹⁷ See Bell, *Sacred Communities*.

¹⁸ Joseph Davis, *Yom-Tov Lipmann Heller: Portrait of a Seventeenth-Century Rabbi* (Oxford, 2004), 30 and n. 57.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 34.

²⁰ Though see Maharal's opposition to Azariah de' Rossi, more generally, as described in Lester A. Segal, *Historical Consciousness and Religious Tradition in Azariah de' Rossi's Me'or 'Einayim* (Philadelphia, 1989).

²¹ Ben-Sasson, "The Reformation," 303 and 307–10.

²² Stern, *Josel of Rosheim*, 125–28.

²³ In this case again, however, the decline of Hebrew appears to have begun in many Jewish communities already in the later Middle Ages. See Bell, *Sacred Communities*, 193–94.

²⁴ Ben-Sasson, "The Reformation," 299; see Hayyim ben Bezalel, *Sefer Ha-hayyim* (Jerusalem, 1992/93), 63–64.

that even women and children and the uninstructed pray in the Holy Tongue, although they do not understand it, since in any case the soul finds joy in the Holy Tongue and these words. And even though they do not know, their guardian spirit does; and even though they do not understand, they are at least able to direct their hearts toward their Father in Heaven . . .”²⁵ In Hayyim’s emphasis on the sacred language and his apparent opposition to “justification by faith,” some have seen a reaction to the Protestant debate.²⁶

Spurred on by these limited observations of apparent Jewish and Christian interaction, we turn now to consider Jewish settlement patterns and one aspect of Jewish and Christian exchange, namely political involvement in Germany within the context of the Reformation.

Demographics

Jewish demographic patterns in Germany were complex and highly changeable. While there were nearly 1,100 different Jewish settlements in the later Middle Ages,²⁷ only nine percent of all these settlements continued into the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.²⁸ The last references to particular Jewish settlements in Germany were numerous in the period from 1399 until 1520 (approximately 705; by contrast, around 230 were from 1520 through the end of the sixteenth century).²⁹ On the other hand, serious rebuilding of medieval Jewish communities occurred from the sixteenth century on: of the 390 communities eventually rebuilt, for example, 120 were rebuilt in the sixteenth century.³⁰ But, like so much else in early modern

²⁵ Ben-Sasson, 299; Hayyim ben Bezalel, *Sefer ha-Hayyim*, “Sefer Seliha u-Mehila,” chap. 9.

²⁶ See Byron Sherwin, “In the Shadows of Greatness: Rabbi Hayyim ben Betsalel of Friedberg,” *JSS* 37 (1975): 54–56.

²⁷ See Bell, *Sacred Communities*, 126–48, as well as the important work of Michael Toch.

²⁸ Michael Toch, “Siedlungsstruktur der Juden Mitteleuropas im Wandel vom Mittelalter zur Neuzeit,” in *Juden in der christlichen Umwelt während des späten Mittelalters*, ed. Alfred Haverkamp and Franz-Josef Ziwes (Berlin, 1992), 37.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 38, diagram 7.

³⁰ 110 in the seventeenth, around 50 in the eighteenth, and around 100 in the nineteenth). See Michael Toch, “Aspects of Stratification of Early Modern German Jewry: Population History and Village Jews,” in *In and Out of the Ghetto*, 77–89, here at 79, figure 5.2.

Germany, Jewish settlement and community development varied according to region and over time.

The primary period of settlement in Riess, in Swabia, for example, was during the sixteenth century (there were approximately sixteen communities between 1500 and 1549 and 20 between 1550 and 1599), and then again between 1648 and 1699 (there were approximately nine communities), with an appreciable dip in the first half of the seventeenth century and very low numbers of communities for the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In Württemberg, with an initial policy of exclusion, the small number of Jewish communities (around five in the period from 1500 to 1549, eight between 1550 and 1599, and seven between 1600 and 1648) began to increase, nearly doubling after the Thirty Years War. In Silesia, very small numbers of Jewish communities in the sixteenth century gave way to more than a dozen Jewish communities in the period between 1648 and 1699.³¹

As in the later Middle Ages, Jews inhabited both urban and rural areas. Jewish population could be especially significant in the large cities. In Prague, for example, in 1522 there were roughly 600 Jews, in 1541 around 1,200, and by 1600 there were around 6,000 Jews. Although a fire in 1689 destroyed 318 houses within the ghetto, the *Judenstadt* was soon rebuilt. By 1702 there were 11,517 Jews in the city, a remarkable 28.9% of the total population. A smaller Jewish population, but one that increased dramatically during the course of the sixteenth century, could be found in Frankfurt am Main. By 1600, there were at least 2,200 Jews in the city. Although there were only fourteen houses in the Frankfurt Jewish ghetto in 1496, there were 197 by 1600. The city of Worms, a multi-confessional city that included Lutherans, Catholics, and Jews, had 300 Jews by the middle of the sixteenth century and 650 by 1610. In both Worms and Frankfurt am Main Jews made up nearly eleven percent of the total population. In both cities, however, there were menacing social revolts that affected the Jews during the second decade of the seventeenth century. In each case the revolts were eventually put down and the Jews were allowed to resettle in the city.

While some cities might have large Jewish populations, others might have only a single or handful of Jews. Friedrich Battenberg

³¹ Ibid., 80, figure 5.3.

asserts that around 1600 there were 35,000–40,000 Jews spread throughout the German Empire, constituting approximately 0.2% of the total population.³² The southeast remained a center of Jewish life, with significant Jewish settlement in Prague, Vienna, Eisenstadt, Schnaittach, and Nikolsburg (the last three with populations of around 1,000 at various times during the early modern period). There were also several towns with several hundred Jews (Fürth in 1582, for example, had about 200 Jews). In all, Battenberg estimates that there were approximately 15,000 Jews in the southeast.

In northeast and north central Germany there were major territorial expulsions at the end of the fifteenth century, such as those from the Duchy of Mecklenburg in 1492 and the Archbishopric of Mecklenburg in 1493. The 1590/91 expulsion from the lands of Braunschweig/Wolfenbüttel drastically reduced the number of Jews in the region, as did a number of other significant expulsions from the first half of the sixteenth century. In Berlin in 1571 there were only around 100 Jews, though the region saw some general population increases with the growing importance of the Leipzig fair.

In the northwest (including part of the Netherlands and lower Rhine territories), there were few Jews who had already settled in this region in the Middle Ages, but in north central Germany there were some important Jewish communities in cities such as Braunschweig, Einbeck, Göttingen, Goslar, Hanover, Hildesheim, Münden, Northeim, and Wunstorf. In Braunschweig the number of Jews reached almost 100 in 1546, on the eve of the expulsion.³³ The pattern of Jewish settlement could vary widely. In Hanover between 1530 and 1600, for example, we have some indication of length of residence in the city (including Altstadt and Neustadt) for 64 of 69 Jews. While the length of residence for the majority (38) was under five years, fourteen Jews seem to have resided there for more than 20 years.³⁴ In the same way, the length of letters of protection could vary quite a bit, with most for periods under ten years, but some

³² J. Friedrich Battenberg estimates a total population of 18–20 million; here and following, see his *Die Juden in Deutschland vom 16. bis zum Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Munich, 2001), 10.

³³ Rotraud Ries, *Jüdisches Leben in Niedersachsen im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert* (Hanover, 1994), 83.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 126–27.

for between eleven and twenty years and a fair number intended to be for life or under special circumstances.³⁵

In the sixteenth and into the seventeenth century most Jews could still be found in the middle west, in the core of the Empire. In the Middle Rhine, Franconia, and Wetterau, relatively densely populated areas were attractive to Jews. Here the urban Jewish tradition continued, as in Frankfurt am Main, Friedberg, Fulda, and Worms. Friedberg in the first quarter of the sixteenth century had about 50 Jews; by the middle of the century there were approximately 200 Jews (250 in 1545 and 140–50 in 1555); by the end of the century, with more than 100 Jewish taxpayers there were probably in excess of 400 Jews in the city (600 according to another estimate, constituting a quarter of the total population).³⁶ Immigration was important in Friedberg, with many Jews settling there after persecution or expulsion from other parts of Hesse.³⁷ Indeed, a close connection between the city and surrounding communities developed, with the Friedberg rabbinate playing an important role and the city serving as the center of a region that was comprised in 1540 of fourteen villages and cities.³⁸ Fulda had 75 Jewish families (about 450 Jews) in 1633, and also represented perhaps a quarter of the total city population. Early in the seventeenth century, there were 100 Jews in the imperial city Wetzlar and 150 to 200 in the ducal city of Hanau. Deutz, in 1592, maintained a Jewish population of nearly 100.³⁹ The total Jewish urban population of the Middle Rhine was more than 5,000. In the 1640s there were 1,200 *Landjuden*, rural Jews, in the upper principality of Hesse around the city of Giessen, a situation that existed in other areas as well. By the early seventeenth century there were 15,000 Jews in this entire central region.

We have limited details about Jewish population and settlement in the southwest, though we do possess more information about particular cities and areas. Metz at the end of the sixteenth century, for example, was home to 120 Jews; by 1620 there were 400 Jews

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 179.

³⁶ For Friedberg in general, see Cilli Kasper-Holtkotte, *Jüdisches Leben in Friedberg (16.–18. Jahrhundert)* (Friedberg, 2003), 7–8, and for the latter estimate see Battenberg, *Die Juden in Deutschland*.

³⁷ Kasper-Holtkotte, *Jüdisches Leben in Friedberg*, 40.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 42 and 214.

³⁹ GJ III, 3:1913.

in the city. In Alsace, around 1600, there were 120 Jewish families, representing a little more than 700 people; about half of these were in the area of the *Reichslandvogtei* of Hagenau. The Nellenburg villages were inhabited by 100 Jews (nineteen families), and the city of Günzburg was a very important Jewish center. Nonetheless, there were significant restrictions and expulsions. Since 1498, for example, Württemberg was closed to Jews. In 1573/74 Jews were expelled from Outer Austria. The total southwest Jewish population was about 3,000.

In the history of early modern German Jewry, one tendency seems very clear. The number of Jews living in small towns and rural areas, particularly in southern Germany, increased drastically. By the nineteenth century, landed Jewry, or *Landjudentum*, was substantial and at times represented a large proportion of the total population of a given region and a large proportion of the total German Jewish population. In the Palatinate, for example, already in 1550, government authorities accounted for 148 licensed Jewish families, but these families were spread across 88 different areas, including only one sizeable city, Heidelberg.⁴⁰ Associations or groupings of rural Jewry, the *Landjudenschaften*, could be tools for territorial governance and taxation, and yet they also clearly had important impact on internal Jewish governance and identity. In Thuringia as in many parts of Germany, most Jewish settlements were small—with one or two families—even if the number of settlements might increase.⁴¹ In 1541 there were six Jewish settlements in Thuringia, peaking to nineteen in 1552 before declining from sixteen to four after the 1556 expulsion edict.⁴²

The initiative for settlement in certain areas was from local princes. In Fürth near Nuremberg, for example, the margrave gave initial permission for two Jews to settle for six years in 1528. In 1556, one more Jew was admitted, and in 1573 Jewish settlement in Fürth received imperial confirmation. By 1582, there were 200 Jews in Fürth.

⁴⁰ Toch, "Aspects of Stratification of Early Modern German Jewry," 82.

⁴¹ And even the number of individual privileges granted could be large (between 1550 and 1580 there were 220 in Thuringia); See Stefan Litt, *Juden in Thüringen in der Frühen Neuzeit (1520–1650)* (Cologne, 2003), 139.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 126–28.

Despite re-urbanization and frequent Jewish visitors to markets in many imperial cities with no Jewish settlement, entire territories still remained or became closed to Jews, for example the electorates of Bavaria and Saxony, as well as the duchies of Mecklenburg, Pomerania, and Württemberg (and later, after 1670 Lower Austria). There were further expulsions of small communities and village Jews.⁴³ Jewish demographics in early modern Germany reflected the precarious balance of Jewish life. While highly changeable, there was real continuity in some areas, leading to the development of centers of Jewish life. Overall, the regional and territorial nature of early modern Germany was well reflected in the settlement pattern of Jews.

Expulsions

Often sovereignty over Jews was shared between two or more authorities, and in many areas Jews lived under the constant threat of local or regional expulsion.⁴⁴

Of course, expulsion could lead to settlement in new regions, including heavy movement in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries to Poland-Lithuania and to some extent to Italy, and could be accompanied by drastic upheaval within the Jewish and “host” Christian communities. Often Jews settled in nearby areas, creating new communities on the outskirts of the regions from which they were expelled. At times, when Jews were expelled, the expulsion might be reversed soon afterwards, or even several years later, further complicating Jews’ relations with their neighbors and upsetting Jewish communal institutions and social, political, economic, and religious structures. In the end, many threatened expulsions were in fact never carried through, due to challenges from other sources of authority or changing conditions in the region. The 1595 expulsion of the Jews from Hildesheim, for example, was reversed finally in 1601 after a complaint to the imperial court. In between periods of crisis, rising hostility,

⁴³ At the end of the Thirty Years War, the total imperial population (including Moravia and Bohemia) was 20 million. At that time there were 60,000 Jews in the Empire, representing only a slight increase in the percentage of the total population in 1600.

⁴⁴ See also Jonathan I. Israel, *European Jewry in the Age of Mercantilism, 1550–1750*, 3rd ed. (London, 1998), 82–83.

and threatened expulsion, Jewish communities continued to exist and function. Although the important Jewish community of Fulda, for example, was plundered in 1591, the Jews maintained residence and were not officially expelled until 1671.

Throughout the early modern period Jewish settlement seems to have been dictated largely by territorial complexity and the personal attitude of the individual territorial ruler or city council. There was generally no uniform Jewry policy, and Jews could face restrictive measures as well as positive opportunities. Complicating territorial Jewry policies was the position, and frequently protection, of the Jews in imperial legislation. Even numerous links between Jews and the Protestant armies during the Thirty Years War do not seem to have fundamentally altered the relation of the Jews to the emperor, who was, any way, eager to utilize the Jews in his rebuilding program.⁴⁵

We do find a transition from individual to general letters of protection at the end of seventeenth century, suggesting broader, though still limited, communal opportunities for Jews; nevertheless the situation could remain frequently changeable even amidst comprehensive repopulation policies. In that light, the treatment of the Jews varied greatly and must be viewed within the context of specific social and legal developments. Increasingly, during the second half of the seventeenth century, absolutist territorial princes sought to control more closely internal Jewish matters, and forbade, for example, Jewish litigants from appealing to rabbinic courts outside their municipalities.⁴⁶

Throughout the late medieval period and into the sixteenth century there were numerous expulsions—of various lengths and impacts—and granting of privileges of *non tolerandis* of the Jews. There seem to have been peaks in expulsions and anti-Jewish activity in the following decades: 1380–89, 1420–29, 1450–59, 1470–79, 1490–99, and 1510–19. This was followed by a significant decrease and slow growth again by 1540–49 (though here still about a third of the number from 1510–19).⁴⁷ *Germania Judaica* identifies some general trends correlating to geographical and chronological sequencing. The earliest territorial expulsions were in the southwest (Palatinate), then

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 84.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 157.

⁴⁷ GJ III, 3:2299.

the southeast (Austria and Bavaria), the east (Silesia), and the north; this was followed by the west (Archbishopric of Mainz) and Middle Germany (Hochstift Bamberg), then the northeast, the southeast again, and finally the northeast.⁴⁸ While there were many factors, and often complex situations, behind expulsions, it must be pointed out that local conditions were most determinative.⁴⁹

And yet, while there were a number of quite significant expulsions in the middle of the sixteenth century—which were certainly inflamed by Reformation rhetoric—it seems difficult to equate the spread of the Reformation with anti-Jewish incitement. To begin with, there were many expulsions and attempts at expulsion throughout the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. To give but a few examples: the Swiss persecutions in 1467/77 were reinforced later by numerous expulsions in the second and into the early third decade of the sixteenth century; the Brandenburg host desecration charges and trials in 1510 affected a wide range of Jewish communities, as did the earlier expulsions from the Archbishopric of Magdeburg (1493), Styria (1496), and Pomerania (1492/93), in addition to several very important urban expulsions, including Nuremberg (1499), Nördlingen (1507), Rothenburg ob der Tauber (1519/20), and Regensburg (1519).

In addition, the introduction of the Reformation frequently preceded anti-Jewish actions by a long time;⁵⁰ and such actions frequently had pre-Reformation precedents upon which they built. In Lower Saxony, for example, there were numerous city and territorial expulsions and expulsion attempts in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. These included: Goslar (1414), the city and Stif of Hildesheim (1457), Göttingen (1460), Helmstadt (1479/85), and Braunschweig (1510/46).⁵¹ Although a 1542 expulsion from Hildesheim coincided with the 1542 turn to Lutheranism, the Jews in Goslar

⁴⁸ Ibid., 2312.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 2316.

⁵⁰ Though this was of course not always true; the expulsion from the county of Henneberg, for example, followed shortly after the introduction of the reformed teaching—see Litt, *Juden in Thüringen in der Frühen Neuzeit*, 209; in Hanover (1587) the anti-Jewish violence “of the common rabble” resulted directly from the preaching of the Protestant clerics against the Jews, their usury and their toleration (Ries, *Jüdisches Leben in Niedersachsen*, 430); also, the Bergheim synagogue was plundered in 1525, though the expulsion did not occur until 1568 (see GJ III, 1).

⁵¹ Ries, *Jüdisches Leben in Niedersachsen*, 287–88.

were expelled only in 1543/44 and 1549, even though the town became Lutheran in 1528; the Jews in Hanover were expelled in 1598, although the city was Lutheran by 1533.⁵²

While the spread of the Reformation might have significant, and frequently negative, effects on Jewish settlement, it is clear that the Reformation was, in many respects, part of a longer and on-going trend of marginalization of the Jews. What is more, the introduction of the Reformation itself needs to be examined within specific contexts, as it did not necessarily lead to the immediate expulsion of the Jews from the area.

Jews and German Politics in the Reformation Period

Jewish life in early modern Germany was subsumed under a variety of layers of experience and authority. While Jews lived in specific cities, towns, or villages, they were also subject to territorial and imperial conditions as well. Territorial politics could affect Jewish settlement and Jewry law, at times creating opportunities and at times leading to restriction or expulsion. In these cases Jewish relations with the emperor and the imperial court could be quite important. Jewish delegates made their way to the emperor and to imperial diets to plead the case of their communities and to offer much needed financial support. In fact, Jews often reminded the emperor that previous emperors had allowed the Jews not only to gather but also to address appeals to his office.⁵³

Jews also sought imperial or territorial permission to hold synods to address particularly grave concerns, such as the seizure of Hebrew books in 1509 at the instigation of Johannes Pfefferkorn, or accusations of blood libel or host desecration that threatened to engulf numerous communities. Jewish synods might debate internal Jewish regulations as well as external relations, dealing with such issues as business relations or the practice of usury.

According to Eric Zimmer a system of Jewish communal governance in which representatives legislated came to be replaced after

⁵² Ibid., 443.

⁵³ Eric Zimmer, *Jewish Synods in Germany During the Late Middle Ages, 1286–1603* (New York, 1978), 53.

the Black Death by a system in which authority was vested in rabbinic scholars.⁵⁴ The refusal of some communities to participate in synods, such as the refusal of the Swabian communities to participate in the 1603 Frankfurt synod, may have been related to efforts to maintain territorial rabbinates and autonomous jurisdiction.⁵⁵

The external control or appointment of Jewish leaders was seen in many circles as an effective means to manage, and benefit from the Jews (especially through their tax payments) in the Empire. There were certainly attempts to install “chief rabbis,” to serve the emperor as for example with the appointment of Rabbi Samuel of Worms in 1521⁵⁶ as the “*rav ha-kaiser*” (he served until 1552).⁵⁷ Recent scholars have argued that there is evidence to suggest some kind of cohesive German Jewish collective representation in the later Middle Ages until the middle of the fourteenth century and again in the sixteenth century,⁵⁸ but that such cohesion was lacking between 1350 and into the sixteenth century.⁵⁹ By the time of Samuel’s successor in 1559 there was an established imperial-wide organization of the Jews.⁶⁰ In any event, argues Zimmer, the growing regionalization allowed little room for broader Jewish communal activity by the beginning of the seventeenth century.⁶¹

Given the demographic, political, and religious situation of the early sixteenth century, Jews were forced to respond to external conditions in a variety of ways. Among the best documented, most visible, and influential of the Jewish respondents and defenders was Josel of Rosheim.⁶² Josel was involved in numerous political and

⁵⁴ Ibid., 104 and 71.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 90–91.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 57–58.

⁵⁷ Eric Zimmer, *Fiery Embers of the Scholars: The Trials and Tribulations of German Rabbis in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Be’er Sheva’, 1999) [Hebrew], 263.

⁵⁸ Yacov Guggenheim, “*A suis paribus et non aliis iudicentur*: jüdische Gerichtsbarkeit, ihre Kontrolle durch die christliche Herrschaft und die obersten rabi gemeiner Judenschaft im heiligen Reich,” in *Jüdische Gemeinden und ihr christlicher Kontext*, ed. Christoph Cluse, Alfred Haverkamp, and Israel J. Yuval (Hanover, 2003), 405–39, here at 412; see also Fraenkel-Goldschmidt’s introduction in Joseph of Rosheim, *Historical Writings*, 130–31.

⁵⁹ Guggenheim, “*A suis paribus et non aliis iudicentur*,” 419.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 424.

⁶¹ Zimmer, *Jewish Synods*, 90–91.

⁶² For the entry in the Deutz memorybook regarding Josel, see Joseph of Rosheim, *Historical Writings*, 48–49.

religious confrontations and events and has also left us some of the only Jewish sources for the period. He was elected to a communal post for Lower Alsace in 1510, the year of the martyrdom of the Jews in Mark Brandenburg (they were accused of host desecration) and the affair with Pfefferkorn. He had contacts with Emperors Maximilian I and Charles V, King Ferdinand, the electors of Brandenburg, Saxony, and the Palatinate, the dukes of Bavaria and Württemberg, the bishops of Strasbourg and Würzburg, the Landvogte of Alsace, as well as a host of town magistrates.⁶³ By 1530 he began to address himself as the Regent of all Jewry in Germany, and even after that title was rejected by the imperial fiscal agent, he fashioned himself as the commander or advocate of German Jewry.⁶⁴

Josel was intimately involved in attempts to forestall or reverse the expulsion of Jews from a number of cities and regions, including the Archbishopric of Strasbourg in 1515 (the Jews had already been expelled from Strasbourg itself (1479)); Regensburg (1519); Dangolsheim (1519); Hagenau (1528 by imperial order); Saxony (1537); Württemberg (1535); and Hesse (1539). He was also involved in imperial-wide convocations, such as the Imperial Diet in Nuremberg in 1522, in which accusations were levied that Jews forged coins and smuggled good currency out of the region.

Josel exerted efforts on behalf of Jews during the Peasants' War, at the time of the martyrdom of thirty Jews in Pösing in 1529 due to ritual murder accusations, when Jews were accused of colluding with the Turks in Hungary in 1530, at the Imperial Diet of 1530 in Augsburg—especially significant because of Josel's debate with Margaritha—and in connection with blood libels in Silesia (1533), Tittingen (1541), and Würzburg (1544). He was also involved in efforts to have the circulation of Luther's later writings limited during imperial diets and through political lobbying in the 1540s.⁶⁵ Josel died in the spring of 1554.

Josel's famous twentieth-century biographer Selma Stern saw Josel as a social critic and social reformer of the Jews of Germany, who like humanists brought the Jews back to the well springs of their history, and like adherents of the *devotio moderna*, patterned his own con-

⁶³ Stern, *Josel of Rosheim*, xix.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 85, 86–87, and 142–43.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 192–93; see also Joseph of Rosheim, *Historical Writings*, 376–77.

duct and lifestyle after the Pietists of Germany.⁶⁶ Stern compared Josel's petition to the Royal Commission with the same spirit that pervaded broadsides and articles of the rebellious peasants.⁶⁷ Indeed, she saw his Articles and Regulations as the first large-scale attempt to purge the life of Jews, improve deteriorating social and economic positions, and assist in adjusting to changing conditions.⁶⁸ Further, Stern pointed to a certain Biblicism (referring to divine right and divine justice and to humans as created in the image and likeness of God) among Jews, leading them to consult ancient Jewish commentaries.⁶⁹ Indeed, in his "Article and Ordinance" of 1530, Josel refers to "godly law" when discussing what happens when a Christian has a complaint against a Jew.⁷⁰ Later on he notes "We are also men, created by God the almighty to live on the earth, to live and deal among them and with them."⁷¹

Josel continued to engage in traditional early modern politics as well, petitioning the Catholic emperor with whom he came to side and raising vast sums of money.⁷² Ben-Sasson attributes this to his "conservative turn of mind and social ideology,"⁷³ though it is also related to political realities. According to Josel:

At all times—as we have now seen with our own eyes in the case of a people *that has established a new faith, with all kinds of leniencies in order to cast off the yoke*. And their aim was to set upon us and annihilate the people of Israel by various and harsh legal measures and massacres. But God, seeing the affliction of His people, sent His angel, merciful kings, to give power and might to his majesty, the Emperor Charles—long may he live!—that he might prevail over them on many occasions, breaking their covenant and voiding their conspiracy. . . . And by a miracle he triumphed and saved the people of Israel from the hands of the new faith established by the priest called Martin Luther, *an unclean man*, who intended to destroy and slay all the Jews, both

⁶⁶ Stern, *Josel of Rosheim*, xviii.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 70–71.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 119.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 95–96.

⁷⁰ Ludwig Feilchenfeld, *Rabbi Josel von Rosheim: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland im Reformationszeitalter* (Strasbourg, 1898), 156.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 157.

⁷² At the Diet of Worms in 1545 Josel paid 3,000 Rhenish fl on behalf of Jewry. Stern, *Josel of Rosheim*, 206–07.

⁷³ Ben-Sasson, "The Reformation," 293.

young and old. Blessed be the Lord, who foiled his counsel and frustrated his designs and allowed us to behold His vengeance and many salvations to this day.⁷⁴

Hava Fraenkel-Goldschmidt argued that Josel's writings reveal two general poles: the particular providence of God for the people of Israel, resulting in direct salvation from the hands of their enemies; and Jewish resistance, especially in acts of martyrdom (*Kiddush Hashem*).⁷⁵ Josel combined Jewish tradition and learning with real world politics and communal activity. In this regard, his activities and writings fit into a broader attempt by early modern Jewry to contest exclusion and marginalization. But how exactly did Jews navigate and respond to the political developments of the Reformation?

Exempla

Let us turn now to two concrete cases of attempts at expulsion associated with the Reformation, those of Braunschweig and Hesse. According to the report of a Jewish fugitive from Braunschweig around 1547, who later reached the Holy Land through Poland and Italy:

We were all suddenly expelled . . . on the advice of this foul priest Martin Luther and that of the rest of the council of scoundrels who emanated from the stock and root of the arch-heretic and who were brought by the accursed rebels, for the multitude of our sins—this was the cause of our expulsion. And in consequence of this, the council of the town of Brunswick, may its name be blotted out, proceeded to prefer false and malicious charges against us. So they disqualified us and broke up our writs of rights, which my ancestors had procured from them many years ago. Moreover, we have recently reacquired from them those privileges at great cost. These accursed and impecunious repudiators of this town and council have invalidated and broken everything . . .⁷⁶

But what was the context of the events narrated here? The historian Rotraud Ries offers a description of the situation for fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century Braunschweig that seems representative

⁷⁴ From *Sefer ha-Miknah*, translated in *ibid.*, 291; the italics belong to Ben-Sasson.

⁷⁵ Joseph of Rosheim, *Historical Writings*, 47.

⁷⁶ Ben-Sasson, "The Reformation," 289.

of a number of communities and is, therefore, worth outlining here.⁷⁷ According to Ries, the relations between Jews and Christians at the end of the fifteenth century seem to have been relatively good. Around 1478, however, the city council prohibited Jews from taking interest on loans, but in return released them from paying the yearly 100 fl *Schutzgeld* (protection money) for a period of thirty-five years. Nevertheless, many Jews were no longer able to make a living in Braunschweig and a considerable number of Jews left the city. Ries discerns a very serious decline in relations between the Jews and the city at the beginning of the sixteenth century. In 1506 the city council imprisoned the wealthy Jew Akiva and some of his relations and released them only after payment of 5,000 fl (two thirds of their fortune).⁷⁸ New measures against the Jews were implemented in the midst of the Brandenburg host desecration trial in 1510. The Jews were expelled from Braunschweig, but within half a year, probably because of financial considerations, were allowed to resettle in the city.⁷⁹ The consolidation of Lutheran politics within the city, particularly after 1531, initially seems not to have affected the financial position of the Jews in the city. By 1542, however, *Schutzbriefe* (for twelve Jewish families and two widows), which did not include economic innovations did include a number of new religiously-motivated restrictions on the social interaction between Jews and Christians and condemnation of perceived Jewish attacks against Christianity.⁸⁰ The city, now entered into the Smalkaldic League, began to press the Jews actively for financial resources. According to Ries the publication of Luther's biting book *On the Jews and Their Lies* sparked mounting

⁷⁷ See Rotraud Ries, "Zum Zusammenhang von Reformation und Judenvertreibung: Das Beispiel Braunschweig," in *Civitatium Communitas: Studien zum europäischen Städtewesen: Festschrift Heinz Stob zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Helmut Häger, Franz Peri, and Heinz Quirin, part 2 (Cologne, 1984): 630–54; for the relation between Lutheran theology and expulsions see also Klaus Deppermann, "Judenhass und Judenfreundschaft im frühen Protestantismus," in *Die Juden als Minderheit in der Geschichte*, ed. Bernd Martin and Ernst Schulin (Munich, 1981), 127–28. See Ries, "Zum Zusammenhang," 630–31. See also Joseph of Rosheim, *Historical Writings*, 214–19; Josel's chronicle, no. 22, 301–02; see also no. 28, 308–10 and 306.

⁷⁸ Ries, "Zum Zusammenhang," 633.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 634.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 637. The following was declared: that Jews were not to blaspheme Christianity in their ceremonies; that Jews and Christians were not allowed to dine together; that Jews must not be seen on the streets during Christian celebrations. Regulations regarding clothing were also included.

measures against the Jews, until 1546, when the Jews were finally ordered expelled from the city.⁸¹

Ries elsewhere contends that the connection between anti-Jewish activity and the Reformation was not always clear, direct, or immediate, however.⁸² In Braunschweig although there was a connection between the anti-Jewish demands and the Reformation,⁸³ Ries points out that the council, which had become decidedly Lutheran since 1531/32 with the final securing of the Reformation, did not want to expel the Jews and time and again ordered that existing contracts be maintained. Regardless of the demands for expulsion, the council issued new contracts in 1530, 1536, and 1542. Indeed, even the Lutheran reformer Urbanus Rhegius (1489–1541) had argued strongly for Jewish toleration, with hopes of eventual conversion.⁸⁴ At the same time, steps were taken to shape Jewish and Christian interaction. In 1532 the council promised to lower the number of Jews and the number of houses occupied by them and also announced the closing of the synagogue.⁸⁵ Jews were also forced to take an oath to renounce blasphemies and were threatened with steep penalties for usury. Finally in 1546 the council ordered the expulsion of the Jews.⁸⁶

In staunchly Lutheran Braunschweig, Luther's anti-Jewish writings were received directly after their appearance in 1546 and used in the opinion of the spiritual ministerium for the legitimization of the expulsion; Luther's writings may also have been influential in Goslar as well, where the Jews were threatened with expulsion in the summer of 1543.⁸⁷ But this position, Ries maintains, was not typical for Lower Saxony, where other priorities existed for the theologians during the formation, consolidation, and spread of the new teaching.⁸⁸

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 638–39.

⁸² Ries, "Zur Bedeutung von Reformation und Konfessionalisierung," 362.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 366.

⁸⁴ Scott H. Hendrix, "Toleration of the Jews in the German Reformation: Urbanus Rhegius and Braunschweig (1535–1540)," *ARG* 81 (1990): 191; Of course even in the 1536 Saxon expulsion we cannot be entirely certain to what extent Luther had a hand in practical political maneuvers—see Johannes Brosseder, *Luthers Stellung zu den Juden im Spiegel seiner Interpreten: Interpretation und Rezeption von Luthers Schriften und Äusserungen zum Judentum im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert vor allem im deutschsprachigen Raum* (Munich, 1972), 355.

⁸⁵ Ries, "Zur Bedeutung von Reformation und Konfessionalisierung," 369.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 371.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 374.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 376.

In fact, the most difficult period of anti-Jewish invective, according to Ries, came at the high point of confessionalization (1580s to 1620s), when increasing polarization and internal factions served as catalysts to differentiate religious teachings.⁸⁹

What is interesting about the case of Braunschweig is that it demonstrates the effect that Lutheran rhetoric could have on the real political existence of the Jews; yet it also betrays the reality that anti-Judaism was nothing new to Reformation Germany. In many places, such as Augsburg or Cologne, anti-Jewish measures were widespread in the first few decades of the fifteenth century. In Nuremberg the expulsion of one of the largest Jewish communities took place in 1499, many years before any of Luther's writings. Even one of the latest expulsions, that of Regensburg in 1519 occurred at the instigation of the radical Balthasar Hubmaier, an individual later attacked by both Catholics and Lutherans.

Another important example of the interplay between religion and politics is the situation that developed in Hesse. Scattered possessions of the landgraves of Hesse, descendants of the dukes of Brabant who were established in the region in the thirteenth century with Kassel as their capital, were unified during the fifteenth century after years of struggle with the nobility, towns, and archbishops of Mainz. Landgrave William II finally reunited the territories in 1504, the same year in which the future Landgrave Philip was born; but William died early, in 1509, resulting in a struggle for the regency of the young Philip.⁹⁰ When Philip reached ruling age, however, his role in the Reformation allowed the Hessian territory to take on particular political and religious significance. Philip became Landgrave in 1520 and declared himself a Lutheran four years later. According to most historians, Philip had an energetic reforming zeal. He worked politically with the rulers in Wittenberg in the mid 1520s to establish a common Protestant front, and in 1526 he held a diet of the Hessian estates at Homberg to entertain ideas about Church structure. In 1527 a Protestant university was established in Marburg.

Philip's personality as well as his participation in the political events of the 1530s and 1540s, and particularly in the Smalkaldic War, has

⁸⁹ Ibid., 395.

⁹⁰ See F. L. Carsten. *Princes and Parliaments in Germany: From the Fifteenth to the Eighteenth Centuries* (Oxford, 1959), here at 150f.

received a great deal of attention.⁹¹ During his protracted struggles with the emperor, Philip and his legal consultants developed two extremely significant constitutional concepts: first, the legitimization of the idea of armed resistance to the emperor; and, second, the maintenance of the Lutheran notion “that all the powers that be are ordained by God.”⁹² After initial attempts to expel the Jews in 1524, and in the midst of his political endeavors, in 1532 Philip granted the Jews in his territory permission to reside for a period of six years. It must be noted, however, that Philip’s decree regarding the Jews occurred at precisely the same time at which he was forced to reconvene regular meetings of the nobility for financial reasons. Philip’s political jockeying with the nobility and his need for money no doubt dictated a good deal of his Jewry policy as well.⁹³

In the period prior to the Reformation (i.e., 1350–1519) there were over 80 Jewish communities in Hesse. The majority of those communities were rather small.⁹⁴ There were numerous expulsions and expulsion attempts in Hesse and nearby areas throughout the late medieval and early modern periods. In some cities Jews were expelled or banned in the fifteenth century. In Giessen, for example, the Jews had been banned as early as 1444. Between 1512 and 1514, the Jews of Münzenburg were expelled. In 1516 the Jews of Gelnhausen (the expulsion was finally carried out in 1576 (the Jews returned in 1599)), Hanau (The Jews were finally expelled in 1591), Lindheim, and Rüdningen among others, were subjected to an unsuccessful expulsion attempt. This 1516 expulsion attempt was part of a rather broad and regionally-planned event, and we have a document from Frankfurt in January of that year that records a meet-

⁹¹ See Thomas A. Brady, Jr., *The Politics of the Reformation in Germany: Jacob Sturm (1489–1553) of Strasbourg* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ, 1997), as well as Carsten, *Princes and Parliaments*.

⁹² Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, vol. 2: *The Age of the Reformation* (Cambridge, 1978), 195–96.

⁹³ See Carsten, *Princes and Parliaments*, 164–65.

⁹⁴ Thirty-one of those were new since 1238, while only eight had been established before 1238. More than half of the communities were established after 1350. The majority of communities seem to have been comprised of less than five Jewish families in the fifteenth century, and only a few had more than a handful of Jews in the sixteenth century. Of the 23 communities with Jews appearing on the tax registers after 1500, seven were founded after 1238 and only two before 1238; the rest, fourteen (or 61%), are first mentioned after 1350. This information has been gleaned from a study of material made available in GJ III, parts 1–2.

ing of numerous representatives of princes, nobles, and cities for the purpose of expelling the Jews.⁹⁵ It is rather suggestive that the broadest attempt to expel the Jews from Hessian lands occurred before the Reformation. The year 1516, however, would not end the trials faced by the Hessian Jews. In 1524, at the time of his Lutheran conversion, Landgrave Philip ordered the expulsion of the Jews from his territory, including the cities of Kassel (apparently not completely carried through) and Marburg an der Lahn.⁹⁶ In a letter to a local magistrate in July of 1524 Philip requested that Jews not be allowed to reside in the magistrate's area of jurisdiction, including the noble estates. The Jews should be refused escort in the principality and the Jews not resident [in Kassel] should pay the customary toll upon travel through the region.⁹⁷

Having provided some general context, let us turn to some documents related to the Hessian case.⁹⁸ In this case there are primarily three groups of protagonists: Martin Bucer (1491–1551) and the committee of Hessian preachers (Johannes Kymeus, Dionysius Melander, Johannes Leningus, Justus Winther, Johannes Pistorius Niddanus, and Caspar Kauffungen); Langrave Philip of Hesse; and the Jewish Shtadlan, Josel of Rosheim.

On May 28, 1532 the Landgrave had issued a *Schutzbrief*, assuring the Jews of his territory an additional six years of residence. He offered the Jews freedom to settle in his lands and protection, though he warned them to abstain from usury and “the swearing of unseemly contracts and things.”⁹⁹ When the *Schutzbrief* expired in 1538, the Landgrave had to contend with clerical opposition to continued toleration of Jews in Hesse. The clerical opposition was particularly strong because the Jews were forbidden to settle or pass through Saxony beginning in August of 1536. Philip was not yet content to follow the clerics. Since 1530 all financial transactions with Jews in Strasbourg had been legally prohibited, and so Philip's counselor

⁹⁵ See *Quellen zur Geschichte der Juden im Hessischen Staatsarchiv Darmstadt: 1080–1650*, prepared by Friedrich Battenberg (Wiesbaden, 1995), here at 317, no. 1185.

⁹⁶ BDS 7:321–22.

⁹⁷ *Quellen*, 325, no. 1208.

⁹⁸ For an older and more general summary of the situation, see Carl Cohen, “Martin Bucer [1491–1555] and his Influence on the Jewish Situation,” *LBIYB* 13 (1968): 93–101.

⁹⁹ BDS 7:322–23.

Feige inquired from the Strasbourg diplomat Jacob Sturm about the toleration of the Jews.¹⁰⁰ This correspondence, or perhaps one dealing with the Anabaptists in Strasbourg or even Josel of Rosheim's work at the Augsburg Imperial Diet of 1530, resulted in a proposal of seven articles, to which Martin Bucer would reference in his *Ratschlag* of 1538.¹⁰¹

Martin Bucer himself had already turned his attention to the Jewish issue in his "Dialogi" on the responsibilities of a Christian magistrate prepared for delivery in Augsburg in 1535,¹⁰² as well as in his commentary to Romans in 1536. His role in the reorganization of the Hessian Church during the Synod (and resulting in the ordinance) of Ziegenhain also needs to be considered—for it was in this capacity that Bucer was eventually invited to pass judgment on the question of the Jews as well. Much of Bucer's discussion in 1538 was, therefore, a resounding of his position outlined earlier.¹⁰³ Bucer's recommendations are enumerated in his *Judenratschlag* of 1538, where he set forth the central question whether "the Christian authority may commission that Jews live tolerated under Christians, and how they should be tolerated . . ."¹⁰⁴ Bucer dwelled upon the Christian duty of governmental authority. According to Bucer, "Christian heads should make an effort to prepare and maintain the best policy, because they should order and maintain everything according to the spirit of Christ, who in all things orders and affects the well-being of men for the most certain and best . . ."¹⁰⁵ Bucer concluded that as matters then stood in the principality it would be better "no longer

¹⁰⁰ Hastings Eells, *Martin Bucer* (New Haven, 1931), 241.

¹⁰¹ Bucers "Judenratschlag," in BDS 7:342. The seven points included that: Jews be allowed to "buy and sell" in cities where there were no guilds; all Jewish business should be conducted honestly, and that if they do conduct unjust business, Jews should be punished; Jews should not practice usury, though they might extend small loans with official presence, approval, and estimation; Jews should have officials amongst themselves to police and punish their co-religionists transgressing these laws; every Jew should give *Schutzpfennig*; Jews should attend Christian preaching; and, Jews should not dispute regarding their beliefs.

¹⁰² See Willem Nijenhuis, *Ecclesia Reformata: Studies on the Reformation* (Leiden, 1972), here at 65f.

¹⁰³ See BDS 7, introduction, 325–30, though here more from a legal than a theological perspective—of particular note is Bucer's discussion of Roman and Natural law.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 343.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 343–44.

to tolerate the Jews.” Such action would serve “a good example to deter the people from godlessness . . .”¹⁰⁶ In suggesting that Jews should not be tolerated in Hesse, Bucer utilized religious, legal, and historical arguments. Citing passages from Deuteronomy,¹⁰⁷ he noted that God forbade everything that corrupts the people from true religion.¹⁰⁸ Ironically, of course, biblical passages referring to Israel were taken as referencing Christianity and turned against the Jews themselves. According to one scholar, Bucer drew a distinction “in principle between the biblical Israel of the elect, the Israel according to the spirit to which the eschatological promises of salvation applied, and empirical Judaism, that is, corporeal Israel, the enemy of Christ and as such the sign of God’s punishment and of his own downfall.”¹⁰⁹ This distinction had been much discussed in Bucer’s earlier Romans commentary.¹¹⁰

Bucer next argued that according to the law of God as well as the law of Nature “one should punish to the utmost offensive and false religions and should not tolerate them.”¹¹¹ To complete his argument, Bucer noted that this mandate to obliterate false religions was taken to heart in several kingdoms, principalities, and cities, and even by the ancient Church. He asserted that “we know that the king, princes, and cities are not damned that have not wanted to tolerate the Jews with them and they have for a long time expelled the Jews from their lands. For the Jews, previously and for a long time tolerated freely in these lands from which they were expelled, have affected our Lord Christ and his holy religion through their harsh blasphemy . . .”¹¹² In bolstering his position, Bucer cited a number of Church councils, Justinian, and Gregory the Great—this despite the fact that Gregory has been seen as generally tolerant of the Jews.¹¹³

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 360.

¹⁰⁷ Deut. 13:6, as well as 17:12 and 7:1–5.

¹⁰⁸ BDS 7:344–45.

¹⁰⁹ Nijenhuis, *Ecclesia Reformata*, 47.

¹¹⁰ See *ibid.*, 57–58.

¹¹¹ BDS 7:345.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 345–46, and here at 350.

¹¹³ See Nijenhuis, *Ecclesia Reformata*, 33f; Kenneth R. Stow, *Alienated Minority: The Jews of Medieval Latin Europe* (Cambridge, MA, 1992), 9; and Mark R. Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross: The Jews in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1994), 36–37.

Bucer next outlined a policy regarding the Jews that would have to be met before they would be allowed to reside in Hesse. The Jews who would be tolerated must promise and declare by oath not to blaspheme Christianity,¹¹⁴ follow the teachings of the Talmud,¹¹⁵ construct new synagogues,¹¹⁶ or “dispute in any way with anyone of us regarding religion, except the preachers, who are specially ordained for such.”¹¹⁷ Bucer also demanded that Jews attend sermons together with their wives and children,¹¹⁸ and that they not lend to anyone at interest. He further advocated “that all business be forbidden to them . . . [since] . . . according to a common saying: to a businessman belongs great diligence and little conscience . . .”¹¹⁹ In fact, Bucer noted, there were many coarse examples of Jews throughout Turkey and Poland, who possessed the most lucrative trade in money—“all Europe appears in their registers.”¹²⁰ It is doubtful, however, that Bucer every really believed that the Jews could be tolerated. To be sure, like the early Luther, Bucer too had hoped that the remnant of Israel could be cajoled into accepting Christianity. But, as one recent scholar makes clear, Bucer’s emphasis on Justinian amounted to a recognition that Jews were excluded from the community, particularly so “if state and the kingdom of God are so closely connected that participation in the sacramental communion of the church coincides with that of the civic community.”¹²¹

Landgrave Philip’s response to the *Judenratschlag* was respectful but argumentative and based very extensively upon theological concepts.¹²²

¹¹⁴ BDS 7:351.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.* Bucer maintained that Jews should not follow the Talmud, “for through the talmudic godless writing, the poor, good-hearted Jews are kept from our distinguished true religion . . .” and, as he continued, “now it is an obligation for every Christian authority, where they also take these poor people under their protection, to help them to their well-being, and, as long as they are in their protection, not to hinder or injure anyone . . .”

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 352.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 353.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 355.

¹²¹ Nijenhuis, *Ecclesia Reformata*, 71.

¹²² BDS 7:380–82. An interesting context for this discussion was the debate over Philip’s bigamy in 1539. See Eells, *Martin Bucer*, 256–69, for details about Bucer’s concessions, the Wittenberg *Ratschlag*, and the use of Scripture.

Philip noted that “we cannot find or conclude that one should simply stop so abruptly and be so completely restricted as the learned advice suggests.” What is more, Philip argued that the Jews were “a noble race, from which even Christ, our savior, was born in the flesh; so are the apostles come from such a race, which race also is confident that God has saved it.” Philip utilized both the Old and the New Testaments for a twofold purpose: first, to suggest to his clerics that Christians need to be careful about presuming that they have replaced the Jews—such would be the case only if the Christians were not proud, but rather humble and beneficent. Quoting Rom. 11:17–24, Philip noted that:

You say therefore: the branches are broken that I might be grafted in. That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief. You, however, stand through faith. Do not be proud, but be afraid. Had God not spared the natural branches, then perhaps He will also not spare you, etc. If God can graft you in again . . . how much more will the natural [branches] be grafted in their own olive tree, etc . . .

Philip went on to assert that Jeremiah states that God will make a new bond with the House of Israel (Jer. 31:31–34).

In his second use of Scripture, however, Philip like Bucer cast Christians in the role of the ancient Israelites and made contemporary Jews the biblical strangers. But for Philip, the stranger should be loved since, after all, the biblical Israelites, i.e., Christians, were also strangers in the land of Egypt (Deut. 10:18ff and 28:43–44).

Philip concluded with a similar historical argument, but again an inversion of Bucer’s interpretation:

We do not find it in the Holy Scriptures or in the New Testament that we should treat the Jews so badly and could perhaps, therefore, in the meantime, tolerate the Jews above all the other unbelievers, as did the old Christian emperors and bishops; but all under the condition that the Lord may also want to alleviate (as indeed the learned advice also says) His old people, and He supports us so that we be from the wild olive tree grafted in the natural branches. Therefore, the Jews are above other unbelievers in order, because they willingly love the Father, even if they are enemy to the Evangelist.

In consequence, Philip would allow the Jews to be tolerated for one or two more years; at that point, based on the Jews’ behavior, he would decide whether or not to tolerate them longer in his lands. Philip then promulgated an eleven-article ordinance, incorporating

some clerical advice, while rejecting other advice as too narrow and punitive and the earlier seven-article ordinance.¹²³ Philip's ordinance added several new and significant clauses,¹²⁴ and the net effect of the legislation was to strengthen restrictions against the Jews, while maintaining their ability to participate in the financial well-being of the territory. Simultaneously, the Jews were located within an administrative infrastructure that was to approve their business dealings as well as enforce the ordinance itself. A decree from Philip to his officials on 1 April 1543 reaffirmed much of this legislation.¹²⁵

Josel of Rosheim, in response to the writings of Bucer wrote a letter of consolation to his correligionists in Hesse.¹²⁶ Josel noted the "burden and misery" caused by Bucer's writings, agreeing that Bucer sought "to bring you to unfavorable status with your overlord [*Oberkeit*], with such bitter words . . . also against our belief and conscience . . . as if you [have] a doubt in your conscience regarding our belief of old, that we have had since the time of Abraham and have today . . ."¹²⁷ What is particularly striking here is that Josel sought to reclaim the connection between biblical Israel and contemporary Jewry.

¹²³ The ordinance is reprinted in BDS 7:383–85. See also *Quellen*, 337, no. 1258 (1539).

¹²⁴ For a summary analysis and a placement of the ordinance within a larger historical context, see Friedrich Battenberg, "Judenordnungen der frühen Neuzeit in Hessen," in *Neunhundert Jahre Geschichte der Juden in Hessen: Beiträge zum politischen, wirtschaftlichen und kulturellen Leben* (Hesse, 1983), 90–93. Philip stipulated that Jews: should not blaspheme Christianity and that they should follow the teachings of Moses and not the Talmud; may not construct new synagogues, though they may take precautions with those still in use; cannot dispute with anybody except specially-designated preachers; must attend conversionary sermons with their families; should follow proper methods of business, offer a fair price, and secure official approval before selling any wares; must conduct all business honestly, and if they do not, be subject to punishment; not practice usury that strains the poor, though they can make small loans with approval of officials, taking up to five percent interest on money loaned; swear an oath to give no gifts to Christians; appoint officials among themselves to see to it that their co-religionists follow these articles; and, finally, give protection money to the landgrave, "each and every one according to his means." He also ordered that the burgomaster and council should see to it that the Jews maintained these articles.

¹²⁵ *Quellen*, 341–42, no. 1280. It reaffirmed that all Jews over eight years old were to attend sermons; that books against the Christian faith should be burned by the preacher or sent to Marburg to be evaluated; the taking of usury by Jews was to be forbidden; and, to ensure maintenance of the ordinance, an inquisitor should be named. Any disobedient Jews would be expelled from the territory.

¹²⁶ See the *Trotschrift* in Joseph of Rosheim, *Historical Writings*, 328–49; Stern, *Josel of Rosheim*, 176–77; and Feilchenfeld, *Rabbi Josel von Rosheim*.

¹²⁷ Joseph of Rosheim, *Trotschrift*, in *Historical Writings*, 329 [German].

Josel noted that Bucer's writings had the effect of stirring up the common people [*gemain Volck*] and inciting them against the Jews, pointing to the events on the streets of Friedburg where "a poor Jew was struck and his goods taken, while the perpetrators jeered: 'see, Jew, the writings of Bucer say that your goods should be taken and distributed among the poor.'"¹²⁸ In the midst of his consolation, however, Josel offered a number of other observations. Regarding attending Christian sermons, he stated that no Jew should be compelled to attend if such attendance might place a doubt in his belief; on the other hand, however, a pious Jew might want to hear such sermons. Josel mentioned that he himself had gone to hear the learned doctor Wolfgang Capito several times in Strasbourg and "when he preached the belief that I did not accept I cut off."¹²⁹ Josel also argued that Jews may charge interest on money loaned to Gentiles, provided that it is with the Gentiles' approval and good knowledge. He asserted that:

we have approval from God, because we are oppressed so harshly under the people with tolls, safe-conduct [money] and yearly tributes as well as appraisals more than any other people living on the earth.¹³⁰

However, Josel noted that there were many unlearned and misunderstanding people who were not satisfied with small measure and "now have more business than our law itself permits, therefore bringing against us all such disputation and writing . . ."¹³¹ Josel commented that some Jews maintained arrogance and worldliness and did not even maintain peace among themselves.¹³² Jewish responses to political debate over their fate could be both direct, defending Jewish settlement and privileges, as well as more indirect, calling for internal reform, both for communal needs and because of external pressure.

Conclusions

What, then, were the effects of the Reformation on the Jews? On the one hand, it is quite tempting to assert that the Reformation

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 331.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 335.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 339.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² *Ibid.*, 342 [from the Hebrew].

ushered in no major changes in the perception or treatment of Jews. Anti-Jewish legislation and discourse seem to have changed little—in fact much of what has traditionally been ascribed to the Reformation existed long before, as I have shown elsewhere. Certainly there was a great deal of continuity in political, economic, communal, and religious argumentation against the Jews. On the other hand, the increasing political centralization, complexity, and bureaucratization throughout Germany, combined with the emphasis on the moral obligation of secular authority and the reassessment of the idea of community, to affect politics, religion, and the Jews very significantly. In addition, just as Protestants may have Judaized Christianity, with the use of “Old Testament” arguments and language and as Christians refashioned themselves as ancient Israelites, the texture of the Jewish communities themselves was shifting. Jewish attempts to protect their existence and contest external political and religious oppression combined with significant internal criticism and reforms, which if they did not take over Reformation issues, certainly drank from a broader religious and cultural well that nourished sixteenth-century Germany. Though the sources are often few and far between, the Jewish communities themselves were significant, and in some cases continuous, enough to warrant further study and comparison.

JEWISH RESPONSES TO CHRISTIANITY IN REFORMATION GERMANY

Elisheva Carlebach

How did Jewish society interact with the Reformation-era German context to produce new variations on traditional patterns within Jewish culture? Changing political realities, novel religious configurations, and the printing press, among other things, forced all Germans, Jews among them, to modulate and adjust their own traditions. The diversity of German Jewry in this period, comprising urban ghetto and rural village populations, barons and beggars, the barely literate alongside intellectual titans, makes it difficult to chart a common experience for all. What follows, then, is an attempt to draw some general outlines concerning the subtle reshaping of a culture in the context of historical change.

Persecution and the Creation of Jewish Culture

In his *Ways of Lying*, Perez Zagorin identified dissimulation as one of the central characteristics of early modern European life.¹ Pressure for religious or political conformity was so great in some instances that dissident individuals or groups would hide their true beliefs and opinions for self protection. For some in the early modern world, dissimulation was a principled doctrine, based on prooftexts or logical arguments. For others it was a survival strategy dimly acknowledged. As his case study for Jewish life within Christian Western Europe, Zagorin chose the amply documented case of Iberian marranism.² But marranism, for all its dramatic pathos is almost too obvious a case study. Massive outright coercion turned the mask of Catholic belief into a necessary survival tool for every affected victim;

¹ Perez Zagorin, *Ways of Lying: Dissimulation, Persecution, and Conformity in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA, 1990).

² *Ibid.*, 13 and 38–62.

a culture of deceit evolved virtually as a matter of course. The Jewish communities of early modern German lands and their responses to the Christian polemical pressure might yield a more subtle but no less compelling study of masked resistance.³

Unlike marranos who concealed their very identities as Jews, the Jews of German lands were tolerated as professing Jews. Indeed, they were often compelled to identify themselves by conspicuous hats, ruffs, and badges. Their dissimulation would not pertain to their basic identity as Jews within the Christian world but to something more difficult to gauge: their posture toward Christianity. By definition, Jews did not believe in Jesus as messiah, they rejected his divinity, and denied belief in other basic Christian doctrines. No dissimulation of the Jewish stance was necessary for any of these positions. Nevertheless, Jews were expected to refrain from mocking beliefs they did not hold to be true, to relate to these Christian beliefs with proper dignity, and to avoid expressing their countervailing opinions in public.

The fear of Jewish blasphemy emerged as a central motif in German thinking about Jews around the turn of the sixteenth century. Udo Arnoldi has traced the evolution of the blasphemy threat as the critical factor in the Protestant discussion over the toleration of Jews from Luther through the eighteenth century.⁴ It is on this delicate question of tone, then, that accusations of Jewish blasphemy often turned. Whether a Jewish voice uttered a statement of fact or a vile defamation depended on the very subjective judgment of the Christian hearer.

Like members of any despised minority, Jews built into their culture defenses of their faith and the way of life that distinguished it, and indeed justified it, to every successive generation. Any strategy they adopted to resist the implicit lure and explicit overtures of Christian culture could have been interpreted as an insulting rejection of Christianity. A posture and polemic of derision were born out of the fierce medieval Jewish-Christian exchange.⁵ Historian David

³ For a different view of the constitutive role of Christian censorship on Jewish culture see Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, "Censorship, Editing, and the Reshaping of Jewish Identity: The Catholic Church and Hebrew Literature in the Sixteenth Century," *Hebraica Veritas*, 125–55.

⁴ Udo Arnoldi, *Pro Iudaicis: Die Gutachten der hallischen Theologen im 18. Jahrhundert zu Fragen der Judentoleranz* (Berlin, 1993), 26f.

⁵ Judah Rosenthal, introduction to R. Joseph ben Nathan Official, *Sefer Joseph*

Berger has long noted the sharpness and lack of passivity that marked the medieval Jewish ripostes, reactions to the insults Jews heard when their own religion was being attacked.⁶ This tradition of derision, its tone and its terms remained even after the medieval setting receded. Medieval texts such as the *Sefer ha-Nizzahon* of Yom Tov Lipmann Mühlhausen (late 14 c.) and the *Toldot Yeshu*, particularly in its Yiddish versions, preserved and transmitted this tradition into the early modern period.⁷

A strain of anti-Jewish preaching that reached back to the days of the black plague and revived in the early sixteenth century convinced Christian princes that their toleration of blasphemy resulted in divine punishments such as famine, plagues, and wars. Descriptions of Judaism, such as that by convert Anthonius Margaritha, persuaded Luther and those who followed him that practice of contemporary Judaism was inherently blasphemous to Christianity. They came to believe that Judaism contained strands that were intolerable to Christian thinking. Luther argued that there was simply no way for Christians to monitor Jewish blasphemy since it could be uttered in secret. Thus, toleration of Jews directly endangered the welfare of Christians, not just theologically but physically as well. He and other Protestant reformers counseled the princes to expel the Jews for the sake of their Christian subjects. The only alternative was mass conversion of the Jews, and that grew less likely with the passage of time.⁸

Other polemicists argued that Judaism did not so much constitute an inherent threat but an overt one. Georg Nigrinus in his *Juden Feind*, provides one sixteenth-century example of this argument. Nigrinus first described blasphemous Jewish anti-Christian literature,

ha-mekaneh (Jerusalem, 1970), 25. See examples there, on 147, and the polemical analysis of the Christian Bible, 125–38.

⁶ David Berger, *The Jewish-Christian Debate in the High Middle Ages: a Critical Edition of the Nizzahon Vetus* (Philadelphia, 1979), 21–23.

⁷ Frank Talmage, introduction to Yom Tov Lipmann Mühlhausen, *Sefer ha-Nizzahon* (Jerusalem, 1984; photo offset of Hackspan edition, Altdorf-Nuremberg, 1644), 24, for examples of his use of derisive dysphemism. Mühlhausen employed these terms, already well established by his time, as part of a strategy to appeal to popular taste. He knew, but did not employ in this work the more rationalist, philosophical polemic. See Ora Limor and Israel Jacob Yuval, “Skepticism and Conversion: Jews Christians and Doubters in Sefer ha-Nizzahon,” in *Hebraica Veritas*, 159–80. See in particular the accusations leveled against the Jews on 163.

⁸ Arnoldi, *Pro-Judaeis*, 26–27.

then linked it to the charge that Jews supported the Turks and would prove a dangerous fifth column in future military confrontations.

The Talmudists [he did not believe they deserved to be called Jews] not only mock us, along with articles of the Christian faith, they have also written abominable blasphemous treatises against the birth, life, suffering, resurrection, ascension, lordship, indeed against the person, nature, and vocation of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Concerning his birth they have a little book (*Büchlein*) called in their language *Toldot Yeschu*, that is, 'The Birth of Jesus.' May God save us from the blasphemies they pour out against the virgin Mary (whom they call Hariam, that is madwoman (*Wütterin*)) . . . They call Jesus 'Jeschu,' in a derogatory manner. No Jew would give his child this name. In fact if one Jew called the other with this name he must take it back, as when one of us defames the other. Its numerical value is 316, which they turn into spit . . . Baptized Jews say they are embarrassed to speak of the blasphemy contained in this book.⁹

From here Nigrinus went on to speculate that Jews, taught this enmity for Christianity "the way we teach our children to loathe the bogeyman," await a messiah so that they can murder all their Christian friends, and plot together with the Turks, "whose secret allies they are, because they are both circumcised."¹⁰ In practical terms, Nigrinus advised Christian rulers to bar further Jewish settlement and to expel Jews already living in their lands. Princes and municipalities granting settlement privileges to Jews often stated explicitly that these individuals must refrain from blasphemous statements "against our Redeemer Lord Jesus Christ as well as against our Christian faith on pain of severe punishment."¹¹

Faced with this alleged link between secret blasphemy and secret treachery, Jewish apologists asserted that Jews and Judaism presented

⁹ Georg Nigrinus, *Jueden Feind: Von den edelen Fruechten der Thalmudischer Jueden, so jetziger zeit in Teutschlande wonen . . .* (N.p., 1570), n.p., chapter 2.

¹⁰ "Doch sind sie heimlich jre Freund; Die weil sie auch beschnitten sind." Nigrinus, *Jueden Feind*, n.p.

¹¹ Moritz Güdemann, *Zur Geschichte der Juden in Magdeburg* (Breslau, 1866), 28. Every *Schutzbrief* for the Jews of Magdeburg contained the following clause: "Vor allen Dingen aber soll Er und die Seinigen sich alles blasphemirens Unsers Erlösers und Herrn Jeus Christi wie ach Unsers Christlichen Glaubens bey harter Straffe enthalten, auch dem so mehr allerhöchst gedachte Sr. K.M. wegen des Gebehts Allenu Leschabbeach verordnet haben allergehorsamst nachkommen." When in 1538 Philip, Landgrave of Hesse, drew up a series of conditions under which a Christian government should be prepared to tolerate Jews, the first stipulation read, "That they do not blaspheme or insult in any form Jesus or Christianity . . ." Joseph of Rosheim, *Historical Writings*, 318.

no actual danger to Christendom. They could not afford to offer the partial admission that deep within its structures, the culture contained strategies of internal resistance to the religious narrative of Christian society, trenchant polemic in the guise of folklore. Jews had no choice but to conceal these strategies. Professing Jews of early modern Europe needed mechanisms of concealment, not of their Jewish identity, but of the anti-Christian messages embedded in their culture. When Johannes Pfefferkorn made a list of Jewish books to be confiscated from the Jews of Worms on December 18, 1509, 28 titles appeared on it, including *Sefer ha-Nizzahon* of Mülhausen. Next to the title a Jew had written: “Keyn haben wir da von.”¹² It is impossible to know whether this was the plain truth, or whether Jews had hastily destroyed or hidden offending manuscripts. Limor and Yuval note that *Sefer ha-Nizzahon* was the most widely circulated of any Ashkenazic manuscript, despite the fact that these texts may have had to be hidden or moved from one location to another to avoid destruction.¹³

Another example of disingenuousness concerning an anti-Christian work in Jewish hands is the public declaration by Josel of Rosheim in his 1543 letter to the Strasbourg city council:

Dr. Marti [Martin Luther] was not satisfied with the terrible crimes that he attributed to us, and now he has published a new book titled *Schem Hamphorasch* in which he writes that ‘our forefathers have written coarse things against your savior and against your religion,’ matters that very few Jews know about today. I, too, who am an elderly man, can say upon my honor, that I have never read them except once in Strasbourg the great scholar Doctor Capito . . . complained to me that a package of books came to him from Constantinople; one of them contained writings about the Messiah so scurrilous that I do not want to mention or write them now . . . Respected Gentlemen, why are we guilty if some individual wrote a book according to his views fifteen hundred years ago? It does not obligate us. Concerning these derisive terms and other libels, as though we curse you, as though we insult your messiah, as though we entice you away from your faith, these are things that he [Luther] may have taken from Antonius Margaritha . . .¹⁴

¹² Israel Jacob Yuval, *Scholars in Their Time* [= *Hakhamim be-doram: ha-manhigut haruhanit shel yehude Germanyah be-shilhe yeme ha-benayim*] (Jerusalem, 1988) [Hebrew], 306. See sources cited there.

¹³ Limor and Yuval, “Skepticism and Conversion,” 165.

¹⁴ Joseph of Rosheim, *Historical Writings*, 386–88.

Josel's impassioned defense rested on two arguments. First, long standing imperial policy and experience confirmed that there is nothing inherently inimical to Christendom in permitting Jewish settlement. Second, he contended that any overtly blasphemous material was marginal and compartmentalized, certainly not part and parcel of Jewish culture. He based the second argument on his personal testimony that he had never in his lifetime come across the defamatory text *Toldot Yeshu* among Jews; he had seen it only once, in the library of a Christian scholar. Yet as Hava Fraenkel-Goldschmidt commented on this testimony, Josel was not telling the whole story. In the same autograph manuscript in which he wrote his *Sefer hamiknah*, Josel copied several sections of *Toldot Yeshu*: "This is the book of the judgment of Yeshu ben Pandira. Although it cannot be found in German lands, I copied it as a novelty, and who can blame me for this. It concerns what happened in ancient times and great things that our predecessors received by oral tradition. It is not fitting for me to write things that were not written or did not happen: I have not refrained from writing the truth in order that it should last for many days."¹⁵ Thus while publicly denying that Jews made use of the book, Josel secretly perpetuated and preserved it, albeit partially and in only one manuscript, for future generations.

A similar defensiveness can be found in Zalman Zvi Aufhausen's *Jüdischer Theriak* of the early seventeenth century. Aufhausen met accusations of anti-Christian strains in Jewish culture with vehement denial.¹⁶ In his response to convert Samuel Friedrich Brenz' accusation that Jews had a scurrilous treatise they called "maase tole" which he described at length, and which is in fact identical to *Toldot Yeshu*, Aufhausen responded, "In all my life, I have never seen such a book, and if we keep it such a secret, I wonder how this man came upon it."¹⁷ Referring to a strain of subterranean popular cul-

¹⁵ Ibid., 387, n. 20.

¹⁶ Solomon Zvi Aufhausen, *Jüdischer Theriak* (orig., Hanau 1615; Altdorf, 1680; Yiddish translation by Sussman ben Isaac Roedelsheim, Amsterdam, 1737).

¹⁷ Aufhausen, *Jüdischer Theriak* (Altdorf, 1680), 4a. Samuel Friedrich Brenz, *Jüdischer abgestreiffter Schlangen = Balg/ Das ist: Gründliche Entdeckung und Verwerfung aller Lasterungen und Lügen . . . in häusern und heimlichen zusammenkunften pflegt zu gebrauchen* (orig. Nuremberg, 1614; repr. *Theriaca Judaica ad Examen Revocata*, ed. Johannes Wülfer (Nuremberg, 1681)), 2, describes "Maase Thola," "welches nicht gedruckt: sondern mit Hebräischer Current geschrieben und die Juden in grosser Geheim an der Christ-Nacht in ihren Häusern lesen" to which Aufhausen responded: "me nunquam per totam vitam,

ture, conducted primarily in the vernacular, its conduits women just as often as men, Aufhausen denied its existence. He too was not telling the whole truth.

Toldot Yeshu served as the exemplar of Jewish subversiveness for many anti-Jewish polemicists.¹⁸ This early Jewish counter-biography of Jesus, dating to somewhere between the fourth and eighth centuries, circulated among Jews originally in Aramaic and then in Hebrew and Yiddish in many different variants. Ashkenazic scribes wrote the largest number of Hebrew manuscripts of *Toldot Yeshu*. Some translators and copyists freely admitted that they had embellished the texts of their own initiative. Some elements common to the narratives place Jesus as a gifted rabbinical student among the rabbis of his age, and cast him as a magician who possessed the secrets of the divine name. The texts contain conspicuous and repeated invectives referring to Jesus' conception out of wedlock while his mother menstruated, rendering him a "bastard son of a menstruant," doubly impure. Even today, the transgressive power of these words can jolt; for the Jews of early modern Europe they must have held far greater potency.¹⁹

Jewish copyists and owners of these manuscripts officially held their existence to be a secret that required safeguarding from hostile eyes. Krauss cites a perfect example of an injunction to secrecy regarding the *Toldot Yeshu*. The scribe did not situate it as a warning to the reader at the beginning of the manuscript, as that would have been too conspicuous. Rather, he concealed the adjuration to secrecy itself at an unexpected point within the narrative:

ejus commatis Librum, meis usurpasse oculis." Aufhausen's answer is either a testimony to real scarcity, or a sign of disingenuousness. The copyist of the *Toldot Yeshu* in ms. Oxford Neubauer 2240, mentions specifically that he copied it because it is difficult to find "be-dore Ashkenaz." Samuel Krauss, *Das Leben Jesu nach jüdischen Quellen* (Berlin, 1902), 10. Copies of such polemically sensitive materials were so difficult to obtain that Theodore Hackspace wrote openly in the preface of his book that he stole his copy of Lippman Mühlhausen's *Sefer Nizzahon* from a Jewish acquaintance. Peter T. van Rooden, *Theology, Biblical Scholarship, and Rabbinical Studies in the Seventeenth Century: Constantijn L'Empereur (1591–1648)*, trans. J. C. Grayson (Leiden, 1989), 171. I thank the editors for this reference.

¹⁸ For a brief description of its history and contents see Joseph Dan, "Toledot Yeshu," *Ej* 15:1208–09. The standard reference remains Krauss, *Das Leben*.

¹⁹ On the origins and meaning of this double invective, see Evyatar Marienberg, *Niddah: lorsque les juifs conceptualisent la menstruation* (Paris, 2003), 159–213.

This treatise has been transmitted orally; it is permitted to write it but not to print it. Therefore, the wise at this time will see it and remain silent, for it is a bad time and he will remain silent, because of the bitter exile, and heaven forefend he should not read it in public or to young girls and simple minded people, and certainly not in front of Gentiles who understand German; he [the discreet reader] will be rewarded, for it is greatly prohibited to publicize it, and one does not reveal [secrets] except to the modest, for one never knows what the future may bring; and God does not trust even his saintliest [possible reference to potential converts]. I have copied it from three separate treatises, not from the same land, and they are all similar, only I have written it with cunning, for He has chosen us among all the nations and given us the language of cunning.²⁰

Christian Hebraist Johann Christoph Wolf wrote that Jews destroyed this book themselves and prevented their own from reading it.²¹ Despite Nigrinus' assumption that converts were embarrassed by its contents, and the internal mandate to readers to conceal the manuscripts, the existence of the *Toldot Yeshu* must have been one of the least well-kept secrets in early modern Ashkenaz. Seventeenth-century sexton and scribe Leyb ben Oyzer, best remembered for the Yiddish chronicle of Sabbetai Zevi that he included in his compilation *Ma'asim Nora'im*, actually opened the manuscript with his own abbreviated version of *Toldot Yeshu*, "Gezeires Yeshu ha-Notzri."²² The manuscript is a translation from Hebrew original texts, or an amalgamation of Hebrew and Yiddish sources, as many of his sentences begin with Hebrew phrases and then slip into Yiddish. Writing in the preface that he based his text on three separate reliable manuscripts, Leyb apparently had no trouble collecting these for his literary purposes, a sign that for all the cautionary directives, the manuscripts circulated widely.²³

Cited by medieval Christian polemicists throughout the Middle Ages, *Toldot Yeshu* was not unknown or inaccessible to Christian scholars in early modern German lands. In the very early sixteenth century, German Hebraists Johannes Reuchlin and Sebastian Münster

²⁰ Krauss, *Das Leben*, 10–11.

²¹ Johann Christoph Wolf, *Bibliotheca Hebraea*, 4 vols. (Leipzig, 1715–33), 2:1443.

²² Leyb ben Oyzer, *Ma'asim Nora'im*, Hebrew University ms. Heb. 8° 5622, fols. 1–13v.

²³ Günter Schlichting, *Ein jüdisches Leben Jesu: die verschollene Toledot-Jeschu-Fassung Tam u-mu'ad* (Tübingen, 1982), 267, lists four Yiddish manuscripts of the *Tam u-mu'ad* variant alone in Amsterdam libraries.

were able to acquire copies, and by the seventeenth century, the first printed texts by Wagenseil in 1681 and Huldreich in 1705 had appeared.²⁴ Their sense that in publishing these texts they were revealing the shame and perfidy of the Jews attests that for most Jews in Ashkenaz, copying, editing, possessing, reading, and passing on this text constituted transgressive acts. This resistant, anti-Christian, strand of Ashkenazic culture must be taken into account, along with the weak and decentralized efforts at enforced proselytization, if we are to understand why conversion out of Judaism in this period remained a numerically negligible phenomenon and martyrdom an ideal.

The Christian-Jewish Polemic

There was no centralized drive to convert Jews in German lands in the late medieval period. For all their vehemence, missionary encounters between Jews and Christians in Germany remained sporadic and disorganized. While individual rulers occasionally sanctioned polemical exchanges, Germans generally did not have the mechanism of a unified state church to mount disputations such as those in France, Iberia, or Rome.

In the last quarter of the fifteenth century Peter Schwarz (Nigri), a Dominican who trained at Salamanca, hoped to import into German lands the methods used by Spanish clerics to bring impressive numbers of Jews to the baptismal font. He tried in vain to force German Jews to produce a candidate suitable for a public disputation with him. He was prepared to preach to Jews in Hebrew, and apparently even in Yiddish. According to one witness in Nuremberg, after his public diatribe Schwarz tried to engage individual Jews in further polemical exchange but he could find no willing disputants among the local Jews. "They said, 'He preached well . . . but we can find rabbis to interpret otherwise.' They sent to Erlangen for the Jew Vogelein, who was a rabbi; he came but he refused to dispute. They

²⁴ Johann Christoph Wagenseil, *Tela Ignea Satanae* (Altdorf, 1681). The text (separately paginated), 1–24, is accompanied by Wagenseil's Latin translation and followed, 25–45, by his confutation of the book. Johann Jacob Huldricus (Huldreich), *Historia Jeschuae Nazareni* (Leiden, 1705), accompanied by Latin translation and his comments and refutations interspersed throughout the text. I thank Dr. Benny Ogorek for making his collection of materials relating to *Toldot Yeshu* available to me.

then sent to Bohemia for the most learned scholar among the Jews. He came and said that he was happy to have met the monk; that the monk was an excellent doctor, but he did not wish to dispute him; he had a letter drawn up that they did not wish to oppose him.”²⁵ Having failed at Regensburg, Frankfurt, Worms, and Nuremberg to stage disputations, Schwarz arranged forced sermons, but no conversions resulted. His frustrating experience in contrast to his Dominican confreres’ success in Spain was not due to lack of zeal on his part, but rather to the structural differences between a sustained and powerful state-sponsored policy toward Jews and the decentralized nature of the German body politic.²⁶

Another example of failed implementation of Jewish-Christian disputation on German soil is that of Anthonius Margaritha. When this convert from Judaism published his book in 1530 “exposing” the treachery of Jews and the subversive rituals of Judaism, Charles V, the first Habsburg emperor to govern both Spanish and German territories, ordered that a “disputation” be staged. He ordered Josel of Rosheim (1478–1554), ombudsman of Imperial Jewry, to defend the Jewish position against Margaritha’s new charges at the Imperial Diet of Augsburg in 1530. Although the exchange may have taken place before a distinguished audience of participants in the Reichstag, it was not configured along the lines of a public religious disputation. No other Jews were compelled to appear, no theologians cited proof-texts or logic to buttress their religious claims, and no protocols were preserved, or apparently even written, by any of the participants.

According to Josel (in his address to the City Council of Strasbourg) the results of this confrontation were bitter for Margaritha: “The aforementioned baptized Jew was arrested and expelled from the city,” an inconceivable outcome for a true religious polemic.²⁷ The event at Augsburg was no medieval style disputation over the correctness of the Jewish faith or the superiority of Christianity, but rather a

²⁵ Cited in Peter Browe, *Die Judenmission im Mittelalter und die Päpste* (Rome, 1973), 69–70.

²⁶ Samuel Krauss, *The Jewish-Christian Controversy*, vol. I: *History*, ed. and rev. William Horbury (Tübingen, 1995), 113.

²⁷ “den ich dan zu Augschpurck uff ghalten reichs tag im xxx Jor vor K.M. ussner aller G.H. verordenten Comesarien und retten umb solci drey punten von aller Judischeidt wegen verantwort, und gmelter gedauffter Jud gifangen worden die stadt hot mussen verschweren.” Joseph of Rosheim, *Historical Writings*, 380.

political debate as to whether the emperor should extend the customary privileges of toleration to Jews as his imperial forebears had done. The desired result was not the conversion of Jews but the clarification of the new emperor's Jewry policy.

Medieval style disputations do not seem to have been widely emulated, nor even correctly understood, by German clergymen. Johannes Müller, seventeenth-century pastor of St. Peter's church in Hamburg and active missionary to the city's Jews, wrote of Hieronymus de Sancta Fide, a prominent medieval Iberian convert from Judaism, that Sancta Fide's anti-Jewish book was "read" publicly in Spain to Jews and Christians, resulting in the conversion of five thousand Jews to Christianity. Müller's account conveys a total lack of comprehension of the dynamics of public disputation, medieval style.²⁸ Manfred Agethen notes ruefully that attempts to preach conversion to Jews often resulted in heightening anti-Jewish feelings among Christians, but no more than that.²⁹ Along with the political fragmentation in German political life, the thinly dispersed population profile of early modern German Jewry, no longer concentrated in urban areas, did not easily lend itself to the methods that had succeeded so well under different circumstances. As Stephen Burnett notes, "The clergy could offer theological advice to their political masters and could, on their own initiative, seek to proselytize individual Jews but otherwise they had little to say about the political and social conditions of Jewish life."³⁰ While early modern German society continued to reshape its religious character, giving rise to both Catholic and Protestant forms of piety in the sixteenth century, they did not often provide opportunity for direct theological confrontation with Jews.

The isolated instances of disputations in German lands remained mostly private and spontaneous.³¹ In 1601, Phillip Ludwig II, Calvinist prince of Hanau-Münzenberg, staged a theological disputation, with

²⁸ Johannes Müller, *Judaismus oder Jüdentumb* (Hamburg, 1644), introduction, n.p.

²⁹ Manfred Agethen, "Bekehrungsversuche an Juden und Judentaufen in der frühen Neuzeit," *Aschkenas* 1 (1991): 68. See his discussion of mission to the Jews, 65–80.

³⁰ Stephen Burnett, "Calvin's Jewish Interlocutor," in *BHR* 55 (1993): 113–23. Johannes Buxtorf himself only entered a dialogue with individual Jews twice, and neither converted. Burnett, *From Christian Hebraism*, 84.

³¹ Martin Friedrich, *Zwischen Abwehr und Bekehrung*, 173–74; Stern, *Josel of Rosheim*, 100.

no apparent positive conversionary outcome.³² A rare record of a disputation held under the auspices of a secular authority took place in 1704 in the court of Hanover.³³ As Martin Friedrich has noted, that disputation is striking for the manner in which it differed from the medieval-Spanish model. Here, both sides had freedom to dispute as equals, and the dignity of the Jewish disputant remained intact to the end. Friedrich, Agethen and other scholars cite several other instances of disputation, but all these examples combined simply prove that medieval-style missionizing to the Jews did not make an effective and lasting impression in early modern German lands. They remained truncated and fleeting affairs, mirroring the political and religious fragmentation in German lands. The Reformation and the ambivalent posture of its founders toward Jews and Judaism contributed further to divide and scatter the Christian approach to Jews in German lands.

Jewish Responses

Given the diffuse nature of the late medieval and early modern challenge to Judaism in German lands, we must seek Jewish polemical response in diverse and scattered venues as well. One theme that emerges from Jewish writing is the Jewish insistence that the covenant between God and the Jews is everlasting. The very first argument that Josel of Rosheim listed in his *Epistle of Consolation*, in defense of the Jewish faith, was the unembellished proof-text from Malachi chapter 3. With this final chapter of the last of the Prophets, Josel intended Jews to understand that God's covenant with the people of Israel was still in force. In verses such as "I am God, I do not change; you the people of Israel are not annihilated" (Mal. 3:6) he implied that the sheer persistence of Jewish life in the face of such enmity was in itself a polemical response.³⁴ German Jews cited frequently and defiantly a verse of consolation for the long duration of the exile, Lev. 26:44, "And yet for all that, when they are in the lands

³² Agethen, "Bekehrungsversuche an Juden," 76.

³³ See Joseph Stadthagen, *Religionsgespräch gehalten am kurfürstlichen Hofen zu Hannover, 1704*, ed. and trans. A. Berliner (Berlin, 1914); Friedrich, *Zwischen Abwehr*, 173–74.

³⁴ See the specific text in Joseph of Rosheim, *Historical Writings*, 336, and the context of the *Epistle*, 313–22.

of their enemies, I will not reject them nor will I abhor them to destroy them utterly, and to break My covenant with them, for I am the Lord their God.”³⁵ Josel could not, in this constrained venue, state the negative corollary against the validity of Christianity; the polemic is implicit.

The hypertrophy of custom among Jews of Ashkenaz may also be considered in this light. Joseph Juspa Hahn of Nördlingen (1570–1637) introduced his *minhag* collection saying, ‘I will record’ [these customs] so that we can mend our ways, and perhaps appease God thereby.”³⁶ The notion that God prolonged the exile because Ashkenazic Jews neglected their customs has roots in the thinking of medieval Ashkenazic pietists. It was sharply pronounced in the writings of Asher Lemlein Reutlingen as well (see below). While pietism rather than polemic may have been the primary motivation for strict adherence to a corpus of customary law, this adherence contained a polemical edge. As apostates von Carben, Pfefferkorn, Margaritha, and their many emulators mocked Jewish manners, mores, rituals, and customs, German Jews resolutely and proudly upheld every jot and tittle of their customs and liturgy. Early modern German Jews were heirs to a medieval legacy that produced a rich and diverse *minhag* literature. The Jews of Ashkenaz cultivated *minhag* intensively, devotedly, and over a very long period of time.³⁷ It became one of the distinguishing features of their culture.

³⁵ See my “The Sabbatian Posture of German Jewry,” in *The Sabbatian Movement and its Aftermath: Messianism, Sabbatianism and Frankism*, ed. Rachel Elijor, 2 vols. (Jerusalem, 2001), 2:1–2, and literature noted there.

³⁶ Joseph Juspa Hahn, *Yosif Omets* (Frankfurt, 1723; repr. Jerusalem, 1965) introduction, n.p.

³⁷ On the origins of this emphasis in medieval German Jewry, see Israel M. Ta-Shma, *Early Franco-German Ritual and Custom* [= *Minhag Ashkenaz ha-kadmon*] (Jerusalem, 1992): 9–105 [Hebrew] and idem, *Ritual, Custom and Reality in Franco-Germany 1000–1350* [= *Halakhah, minhag u-metsi’ut be-Ashkenaz, 1000–1350*] (Jerusalem, 1996): 13–19 [Hebrew]; Eric Zimmer, *Society and Its Customs* [= *Olam ke-minhago noheg: perakim betoldot ha-minhagim, hilkhotehem ve-gilgulehem*] (Jerusalem, 1996) [Hebrew], especially the introduction. On its persistence, see Hildesheimer, *German Jewry in the Seventeenth Century in Light of the Responsa Literature* (M.A. Thesis, Bar Ilan University, 1972) [Hebrew], 189.

Conversion

While the actual number of converts from Judaism to Christianity in German lands remained extremely small through the late eighteenth century, converts occupied a central position as mediators between cultures and religions.³⁸ Their role expanded beyond their rather narrow theological-polemical role in medieval disputations. Although not a meaningful sociological trend until the late eighteenth century, converts were nevertheless an extremely significant presence in Jewish-Christian discourse in German lands from the first years of the sixteenth century. Three innovators, Victor von Carben, Johannes Pfefferkorn, and Anthonius Margaritha pioneered in the creation of new roles and areas of activity for converts in German lands. Many of their successors emulated their work but few left as deep an impression on the image of Jews and Judaism in German lands. These sixteenth-century figures loomed large in the shaping of Jewry policy within the Empire. They presented a distorted image of Jews and the Jewish religion to Christian clergymen and policy-makers in the early modern period.

Although two of these public figures, von Carben and Pfefferkorn, rose to prominence in the decade before Luther's Reformation, their public critique of Judaism converged with some strands of emerging Protestant thought. Protestantism placed fresh emphasis on the importance of obtaining converts from Judaism. In the earliest phase of his thought, Martin Luther placed great hopes in securing mass conversion of Jews, which he saw as the greatest testimonial for his project of Christian renewal and his rejection of the religious accretions of Papistry.

³⁸ On conversion in the early modern period see Agethen, "Bekehrungsversuche an Juden," and my *Divided Souls*, 47–66. Some of that material is included here in revised form. In the half century from 1600–50, Friedrich found a total of 85 conversions mentioned in printed sources. This amounts to one or two each year in all German lands, and includes cases in which entire families with young children converted. Even if the number is approximate, and taking into account that the numbers grew progressively, a parallel period in the sixteenth century would scarcely have yielded higher numbers. Friedrich, *Zwischen Abwehr*, 150–63. See also the discussion in Stephan Litt, "Conversions to Christianity and Jewish Family Life in Thuringia: Case Studies in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," *LBIYB* 47 (2002): 83–90.

If I had been a Jew and seen such dolts and blockheads govern and teach the Christian faith, I would rather have been a hog than a Christian . . . When the Jews then see that Judaism has such strong support in Scripture, and that Christianity [Catholicism] has become a mere babble without reliance on Scripture, how can they possibly . . . become right good Christians? . . . I hope that if one deals in a kindly way with the Jews and instructs them carefully from Holy Scripture, many of them will become genuine Christians.³⁹

Luther eventually abandoned his hope for the mass conversion of Jews; in practice, the mission to Jews remained a largely neglected element of the early Protestant agenda. After a long hiatus in missionizing to the Jews, several waves of reforming clergy, culminating with the Pietist movement in the late seventeenth century devoted serious attention to proselytizing among the Jews. The establishment of “institutes” devoted to the friendly persuasion of Jews to convert to the Protestant faith, such as those of Esdras Edzard in late seventeenth-century Hamburg and of Heinrich Callenberg in early eighteenth-century Halle lent new impetus to the Christian mission in German lands. The Protestant critique of Catholic compulsion tactics largely served the internal polemical purpose of attacking Catholicism.

Although some Protestant princes promoted coercive measures to get Jews to convert, most Protestants criticized the recourse to forced baptism, and even the use of compulsory conversionary sermons, a practice then still widespread in papal domains. One wry observer remarked that while Jews could be compelled, through fines and other punishments, to be present at sermons, they could not be compelled to pay attention.⁴⁰ In addition to the critique of “Roman” tactics, the competition between denominations brought other benefits to potential converts, allowing them more spiritual latitude. The multiplicity of Christianities available to potential converts gave them greater choice and agency in the conversion process. For some converts the existence of alternatives to Catholicism came as a pleasant surprise. It allowed them to circumvent the aspects of Catholic devotion that appeared repugnant to their sensibilities, such as the adoration

³⁹ Martin Luther, *That Jesus Christ was born a Jew*, (1523) LW 45:200 = WA 11: 314–15.

⁴⁰ Friedrich, *Zwischen Abwehr*, 167.

of saints and the centrality of icons. One convert remembered his first encounter with the notion of another type of Christianity. Shalome ben Shalomon, approached by a young Christian contemporary seeking to convert him to Christianity, retorted, “‘Why, think you I will worship images?’ For such was my ignorance that I thought all Christians were papists, there being none but Papists, who were called Christians, and Jews, in the country where I was born.”⁴¹

Other converts were confused by the choices: which was the “real” Christianity? As Lotharius Franz Fried, formerly Joseph Marcus, reminisced, “When I look back upon my conversion, I wonder how it happened. There were so many byways and sidepaths. Each side calls out, ‘Christ is here, this is He, I am the right path to embrace the true mother.’ Many [Jews] like me missed the right path, stumbled from the rain into the river.”⁴²

The policy of territorially determined denomination, difficult enough for Christians who were forced to change confessions when their leaders changed their minds or when land changed hands, sometimes led to absurd results for Jewish converts. In one Jewish family, children born in different confessional territories had to be converted to the confession of their respective birthplace.⁴³ When he considered the reasons for the meager numbers of conversions from Judaism, eighteenth-century anti-Jewish Hebraist Johannes Eisenmenger cited first “the great disunity within the Christian religion.” He recounted that when he approached a Jew concerning conversion, the Jew retorted, “First you Christians clean up your own house, quit cursing one another, and decide on the essentials of your religion. Then, come back to us.”⁴⁴ According to Eisenmenger, Jews even had to devise two separate terms of debasement for the “religions of the Christians.” They referred to Roman Catholicism as “the insignificant faith,” and to Luther’s religion as “the new faith.”⁴⁵

Clear guidelines no longer served even with respect to fundamental issues like the sacraments. One observer noted in an early eight-

⁴¹ Shalome ben Shalomon, *A true narrative of God’s gracious dealings with the soul of . . . A Jew*, 2nd ed. (London, 1700), 2.

⁴² Lotharius Franz Fried, *Neupolierter und wohlgeschliffener Juden-Spiegel* (Mainz, 1715), n.p.

⁴³ Friedrich, *Zwischen Abwehr*, 159, n. 240. The conversions took place in 1700.

⁴⁴ Johann Andreas Eisenmenger, *Entdecktes Judenthum* (Königsberg, 1711), 2:991.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 1:499: “emunah tefelah” and “emunah hadashah.”

eenth-century treatise on baptism, that a chart was now needed to tabulate the differences between the doctrines of the Reformed Church in France, England, and Scotland. If committed believers needed a diagram to keep track of what each denomination believed, what were the newcomers to the faith to do?⁴⁶ Eighteenth-century missionary Heinrich Callenberg planned to publish a separate pamphlet on the history of the erring sects in contemporary Christianity, because “the Jews are very put off by such divisions and claim that even if they would wish to convert they would not know to which side to convert.”⁴⁷ A polemical reversal had occurred. Medieval Christians had argued that sectarianism and rabbinic contentiousness proved that Jews no longer possessed the true interpretation of the divine word. This charge could now be leveled against Christians.

A small but significant number of converts changed denominations after their conversion. Most left Catholicism for a Protestant denomination, to the chagrin of their Catholic converters. Christian converters of all denominations now began to view Jewish converts to one denomination as potential defectors to others. The fear that Jewish converts might defect to another Christian denomination complicated the older concern that Jewish converts could be tempted to slide back to Judaism. Some Christian missionaries worried that Jews could never be regarded as truly converted. The vexation caused by watching hard-won converts leave the fold to a competing denomination produced rhetorical venom as sharp as reversions to Judaism had caused.

The case of convert Johannes Isaac and his son Stephan (1542–97), provides a dramatic example of the complications that the Reformation introduced into the lives and destinies of the converts. Each underwent multiple conversions. Johannes, along with his then four-year-old son, Stephan, originally converted from Judaism to Lutheranism under the influence of pastor Johannes Draconites, in 1546. When Martin Luther died that same year, Johannes even wrote a “Zionide,” an elegy mourning Luther’s death. After two years, the political climate in Hesse changed. Johannes Isaac’s Protestant sponsor, the

⁴⁶ Christophoro Ludovico Hartmann, *Oeconomia Conversionis ex Jerem. 31.18...* (Altdorf, 1704), 26.

⁴⁷ Florence Guggenheim-Grünberg, “Pfarrer Ulrich als Missionar im Surbtal: Ein Beitrag zur Judenmission in der Schweiz im 18. Jahrhundert,” *Beiträge zur Geschichte und Volkskunde der Juden in der Schweiz* 3 (1953): 15.

Landgrave of Hesse, imprisoned by Granvelle, Chancellor of (Catholic) Emperor Charles V, could no longer serve as his protector. When the Catholics decided that Isaac could be useful to them, they asked Johannes Isaac to serve as teacher of Hebrew in the [Catholic] University of Louvain, in Brabant. He apparently had no qualms about converting again, this time to Catholicism.

In 1551, Isaac left Louvain, and went on to serve as Professor of Hebrew in Cologne. But the charge of instability in matters of faith clung to Johannes. When the issue of Johannes Isaac's inconstancy was raised years later, his son Stephan justified it by claiming that Johannes was only a convert of two years duration and did not really understand the differences between the denominations! In 1570, almost twenty years after he arrived in Cologne, someone tendered a complaint against Johannes Isaac, that he had derided the mass and denigrated the host by turning his back to the altar during the communion. Feeling that he would never truly be accepted as a Catholic, [according to Stephan] Johannes then began to regret his conversion from his original Protestantism. As a result of this incident, the Jesuits who had been orchestrating Stephan's career as a Catholic priest alienated the father from his then Catholic-priest son, to Johannes's permanent dismay. Johannes remained in Cologne until his death in 1577, estranged from the son he had fought to tear from his mother's Jewish home so many years earlier. But the story did not end with Johannes' death; questions of denominational constancy followed Stephan into the next generation.

Stephan's Jesuit mentors, aware of his intellectual gifts, prepared him for a life as a polemicist against Protestantism. They granted him special dispensation to read Protestant works in order to refute them. According to his defensive testimony, reading Protestant theology aroused questions within him. In 1582–83, he delivered sermons against the worship of icons and saints, some of the most vexing issues that separated the denominations. He claimed that he had wished to repair the Church from within, but as a result of these sermons, the Catholic hierarchy forbade him to preach, and tried to distance him from Cologne. By 1584, the dispute had escalated and become exceedingly bitter. Stephan left his lucrative priestly domain as well as the Catholic Church, a bitter defeat for his Catholic sponsors. He reverted to Protestantism, which he had already experienced briefly during his father's first stage of conversion. Stephan's experience of multiple conversions as he matured within the Catholic

world enabled him to look at each denomination and its doctrines critically. Despite years of training for missionary work and his profound training in Catholicism and polemic, his various opponents attributed his critical faculty to a single underlying factor: that he had been born a Jew. As an Inquisitor wrote to the Pope concerning Stephan, “È nato hebreo, poi ha ricevuto il battesimo.”⁴⁸ Another Church document from that month of controversy in Cologne described Isaac’s sermon as “the devil having reached the ultimate sanctuary, and . . . his instrument was a badly baptized Jew.” Stephan Isaac never forgave the Jesuits of Cologne for their role; they in turn never failed to remind their audiences that this fierce polemicist, whom they had once prized, was only a “Jew turned false Christian.”⁴⁹

When converts from Judaism changed Christian denominations, their converters often regarded them as failed or lapsed converts.⁵⁰ Converts who sought to manipulate their baptism for base ulterior motives could now claim a legitimate excuse for multiple conversion, provided they did it only once in each denomination. They proceeded from one denomination to the other, claiming that they had not found their true place in the first. But once we discount the incidents motivated by chicanery, the competition between denominations allowed converts from Judaism greater leverage and freedom of movement than at any earlier time. The existence of more than one official denomination in German lands by the third and fourth decades of the sixteenth century opened more choices to converts, granting them greater latitude and control in their lives after conversion.

⁴⁸ Wilhelm Rotscheidt, *Stephan Isaak: Ein Kölner Pfarrer und Hessischer Superintendent im Reformationsjahrhundert. Sein Leben, von ihm selbst erzählt und aus gleichzeitigen Quellen ergänzt* (Leipzig, 1910), 140–41.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 99: Stephan Isaac wrote *Sendbriff: Darinnen der Jesuiten Secten Geheimniss und Triegerey . . . klar an den Tag gegeben wird = Warning Letter: In which the secrets of the Jesuit sect and their Deceit . . . is clearly set forth* (Bremen, 1592) when he was pastor in Bensheim as a warning “to pious and Godfearing Christians who are concerned about their spiritual welfare.” Peter Michael Brillmacher’s response to it called him “A Jew turned false Christian.” *Send = Schreiben Pet. Michaelis, genannt Brill-Macher, geben an einem guten freund damit die lügenhaften Schmach = Reden, so von Stephano Isaaco, aus einem Jüden falschen Christen . . .* (Münster, 1593).

⁵⁰ Andreä Würfel, *Historische Nachrichten von der Juden-Gemeinde welche ehehin in der Reichstadt Nürnberg angericht gewesen aber Ao 1499 ausgeschaffet worden* (Nuremberg, 1755), 112, provides an example of a Protestant chronicler who regarded subsequent conversions to Catholicism “apostasies.”

All the evidence indicates that Jews were not resigned to allowing their family and community members to be enticed to Christianity. Battles for the souls of potential converts had to be waged with discretion. Jewish communal emissaries and family members followed the departing future converts, or sent emissaries, to entreat them, sometimes to threaten or bribe them, to return to the Jewish community. Baruch Jofe of Fürth followed his relative, later the convert Johann Adam Gottfried, after Gottfried's dramatic announcement to the Jewish community that he intended to convert. While Jofe could not openly make his pitch when Christians were present, he communicated in a code that the imminent convert understood at once. He told Gottfried in Hebrew to think of the "Joched umjuched," the One and Only God. "He wanted me to reject the Trinity." Gottfried replied that he had thought about it, and "the one and only God wanted me to believe in His Son." When Gottfried showed Jofe the biblical prooftexts that had convinced him to convert, and told him the baptism was scheduled for eight days hence, the relative promised to return shortly, armed with the necessary refutations.⁵¹ Joseph Guggenheim, conflicted for many years over the decision to convert, was spirited away by his brother and brother-in-law as soon as he announced his decision; the tug of war over his soul continued for many years.⁵² Even after the baptism of a convert, rejection by Christian society combined with the continued connection to Jewish circles could lead converts to reconsider their fateful step. Relapsed converts had to leave German lands where they could be prosecuted for heresy if they reverted to Judaism. Some left to the Ottoman Empire. In the course of the seventeenth century, Amsterdam became a center of reversion for regretful converts.⁵³

⁵¹ Johann Adam Gottfried, *Wahrhafter Bericht von M. Johann Adam Gottfrieds sonderbaren Bekehrung vom Judenthum zum Christenthum* (N.p., 1776), 54–57.

⁵² Guggenheim-Grünberg, "Pfarrer Ulrich," 5–6.

⁵³ See my "Ich will dich nach Holland schicken . . .? Amsterdam and the Reversion to Judaism of German-Jewish Converts," in *Secret Conversions to Judaism in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Martin Mulso and Richard Popkin (Leiden, 2004), 51–69.

Messianism and Martyrdom

In his pioneering essay on the reactions of Jews to news of the Reformation Haim Hillel Ben-Sasson noted a seeming paradox.⁵⁴ While many Jews interpreted the schism in the Western Christian Church that followed Luther's challenge to be a signal of apocalyptic dimensions, this reaction diminished with proximity to the heart of the events. Distant observers tended to attribute momentous significance to the Reformation. Rabbi Joseph of Arles believed that the Protestant emphasis on individual study of the Bible and its overthrow of the patristic tradition signaled a new era of religious tolerance. In Germany itself, any such initial positive reaction was tempered by the sober reality. Protestant leaders, with several notable exceptions, were just as intolerant of basic human rights for Jews as their Catholic predecessors. Josel of Rosheim was particularly stung by Luther's denunciations against Jews in the later part of his life. Towards the end of his career, he saw the Catholic emperor as the guardian of the rights of Jews to live under the same terms that imperial laws had traditionally vouchsafed them. Far from seeing the reformers as harbingers of a more peaceful and just world, to Josel they loomed as a disturbing and potentially violent incursion into the precarious stability of German Jews.

Josel's stance is emblematic of that of German Jewry in this period. His unshakeable faith in the ultimate destiny of the Jewish journey through history was tempered by a pragmatic realpolitik. The cautious and practical side of this response should not obscure the fundamental and continuous nature of Jewish messianism in German lands. At the very least, virtually all traditional Jews nurtured or expressed hope in a redemptive Jewish destiny: the end of history would vindicate their Jewish faith. Christian polemicists mocked the Jewish hope in a messiah yet to come, and seized opportunities such as failed messianic movements to drive home their point. This particular polemical exchange struck a sharp note through late medieval German popular culture. The vernacular literature and polemical writing that developed around the time of the Reformation continued to mock Jewish messianic notions. Jews developed several strategies

⁵⁴ "The Reformation in Contemporary Jewish Eyes," *Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities* 4:12 (1971): 241–326.

in the face of this assault on their sense of destiny. Messianic movements, in which human redeemers attempted and failed to bring about the end of history, represent only one of these strategies, and the least likely to occur within the atmosphere of ridicule and scorn of late medieval German lands. Needless to say, when such instances occur, they must be carefully evaluated.

Asher ben Meir Lemlein Reutlingen was the sixteenth century's first messianic figure.⁵⁵ The testimonies of chroniclers and some contemporaries about Lemlein's public activities were somewhat vague. They date his appearance variously to the years between 1500 and 1503. All reports agree on the location of the first public appearances of this Ashkenazic Jew, Istria near Venice in northern Italy. It is unclear from the reports whether he claimed to be a messiah, a harbinger of the Messiah, or merely an agitator for certain reforms that, in his view, would pave the way for the messianic age. Abraham Farissol, renowned Italian Jew who was an eyewitness to Lemlein's movement, described him as

a man of the ramparts *from the ranks of Ashkenaz* who arrogantly proclaimed, 'I will rule.' With a number of clever tricks and with the help of his disciples he was able to mislead the entire region about the coming of the redeemer and he let it be known to the multitudes that he had already come. He would hide himself in a chamber within a chamber, and he inclined the entire Diaspora to believe in him, his doctrines, his fasting, and his flagellation, for they said 'the redeemer has come.' In the end it was all vanity and evil spirits. And this took place in Ferrara in the year 262 in the fifth thousand [1502 CE].⁵⁶

Gedaliah ibn Yahia, in his chronicle *Shalsholet Hakabbalah*, emphasized the penitence movement aroused by Lemlein's appearance: "In this time in the year 5260 [1500] a Jew named Rabbi Asher Lemle *Ashkenazi* arose in the region of Istria. He purported to be a prophet, and told [the people] to fast and repent for the redemption was near. All the Diaspora in Italy believed him, and each man repented of his evil ways, almost like the repentance of Nineveh . . . and that year is still called the year of repentance."⁵⁷ Another chronicler,

⁵⁵ On Lemlein see Ephraim Kupfer, "Hezyonotav shel R. Asher b"r Meir ha-mekhunch Lemlein Reutlingen," *Kobez al Yad* 8/18 (1975): 385–423.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 388, quoting from Farissol's *Magen Avraham*.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, quoting from Gedaliah ibn Yahia's *Shalsholet ha-kabbalah*.

Joseph Ha-Kohen, termed him an evil prophet “And Jews streamed to him saying ‘For he is a prophet and God has sent him as a Prince over his people Israel, and he will gather in the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth, and some of the sages also gathered behind him, decreeing fast days and girding themselves in sackcloth, and each person repented his evil ways at that time because they said, our redemption is at hand.’”⁵⁸

While these testimonies firmly identified Lemlein as an Ashenazi, only one chronicler preserved the memory of the profound impact of Lemlein’s message on German Jews. In his late sixteenth-century chronicle from Prague, *Ẓemah David*, David Gans recalled what must have been a family tradition:

Rabbi Lemlein announced the advent of the Messiah in the year 1500/01, and his words were credited throughout the dispersion of Israel. Even among the Gentiles, the news spread and many of them also believed his words. My grandfather Seligmann Gans z”l smashed the special oven in which he baked matzot being firmly convinced that the next year he would bake matzot in the Holy Land. And I, the writer, heard from my old teacher, R. Eliezer Treves, head of the Bet Din [rabbinical court] in Frankfurt, that the matter was not without basis, and that he had shown signs and proofs, but that perhaps because of our sins, he was delayed.⁵⁹

To date, Gans’ comments within his chronicle supply the only evidence we have of the positive impression the movement made within German Jewry’s rabbinical ranks.

In 1975/76 Ephraim Kupfer published remnants of Asher Lemlein’s writings from a manuscript copied for the Italian physician and kabbalist Elijah Menachem Chalfan in 1537, shedding new light on the forces that propelled Lemlein.⁶⁰ If these documents are in fact the writings of the messianic figure, they show him to have remained active at least until 1509. Some of his correspondents are still unknown. Called to his vision by a nighttime revelation, the supernal message was brief but clear: “Know that the prayer liturgy is the true witness above all, it is the straight path . . . And if, Heaven forbid, they

⁵⁸ Ibid., quoting from Joseph Ha-Kohen’s *Emek ha-bakha*.

⁵⁹ David Gans, *Ẓemah David*, ed. Mordechai Breuer (Jerusalem, 1983), 137, no. 1530.

⁶⁰ Kupfer, “Hezyonotav,” 391.

omit or add to its words, then the enemies will have the upper hand. They will put a stumbling block before the person who prays, for the heavenly guards judge it [prayer that deviates from the set liturgy] to be an alien fire.”⁶¹ Lemlein lashed out bitterly against Sephardic grammarians, Sephardic pronunciation of Hebrew, and the openness of Sephardic culture even in the pre-expulsion period to “gentile ways.”⁶² He expressed great indignation that Sephardic Jews derided Ashkenazic pronunciation, when they were the perpetrators of much worse crimes against Hebrew.

They do not distinguish in their pronunciation between *samekh* and *tsadi*. As for the vowel points . . . they do not know how to clarify them, because the *kametz* and *patach* are the same to them, the *tzere* and the *segol* as well, the *sharak* with three dots and the *shuruk* with a *vav*, they pronounce as the same sound. All this happened to them because ‘they mingled with the Gentiles and learned their ways’ . . . For in order to curry favor in the eyes of the kings and nobles . . . they learned the language and script of the uncircumcised and the science of astronomy and philosophy in order to triumph over the priests and before the nobles and in order to sound clear of tongue before them they [eliminated] all the vowel sounds and kept only five, like the uncircumcised . . . As a result of the study of philosophy the number of heretics in Israel has risen, due to our many sins. And that is the reason that when a trial came from Heaven they all became apostates. The vice-regents and nobles were first to sin, as they did not believe in God and did not have faith in His salvation, because they said all faith is only a creation of the masses, and all this is the result of philosophy, may the Lord save us.⁶³

Lemlein’s rage appears to be a product of the mingling of Jews from disparate communities with different liturgical traditions. Each attempted to elevate or impose its own sacred tradition, adding a new cause of turmoil in the age of exile, expulsion, and reconfiguration of Jewish settlement. Writing within the decade after the expulsion of the Jews from Spain and Portugal, Lemlein heard about the many Spanish Jews who converted to Christianity, and he blamed their rationalist ways.

Lemlein’s muse enjoined him to remain firm in his study of Kabbalah and significantly linked knowledge of the Kabbalah to

⁶¹ Ibid., 399.

⁶² Ibid., 405–06.

⁶³ Ibid.

redemption: "You will rest securely in your lot at the end of days."⁶⁴ Lemlein's movement, then, can be seen as a response to currents and controversies within the Jewish world. Unlike the projections of Christian polemicists and satirists the most significant Jewish messianic movement to center on an Ashkenazic Jew paid virtually no attention to the Christian world around it.

We can contrast the messianic movement of Lemlein to that of Solomon Molkho, a former Portuguese marrano turned messiah.⁶⁵ Molkho traveled to Regensburg, possibly accompanied by the exotic adventurer David Reubeni, to meet Emperor Charles V in 1532 to request permission to draft Jews into his battle against the Turks. His sojourn left a deep and lasting impression on German Jews. Molkho was ultimately burned at the stake in Mantua; Reubeni met his end in a Spanish prison.

Josel of Rosheim recorded in his chronicle: "There came [to Regensburg] that speaker of a foreign tongue, the righteous convert called R. Shlomo Molka [sic], may he rest in peace, with alien doctrines to arouse the emperor by saying that he had come to call all Jews to war against the Turks."⁶⁶ Josel recalled that he had sent a letter imploring Molkho to desist from his plan; when that failed he left the city so as not to be associated by the emperor with the schemes of Molkho. He concluded his entry by describing Molkho as having died the death of a martyr, and having caused many Jews to repent.

Josel's report is remarkable, both for what it contains as well as for what it omits. The word, as well as the concept of, messiah is totally absent from his account. He characterized Molkho as one who espoused alien doctrines, whose activities consisted solely of his entreaty to the emperor for a joint offensive against the Turks. There was no mention in Josel's account that he was regarded by many Jews as a messiah, and no mention of Molkho's flamboyant partner, David Reubeni. Molkho's image in this source is that of an heretical

⁶⁴ Ibid., 405.

⁶⁵ For sources on the messianic careers of Reubeni and Molkho, see Aaron Ze'ev Aescoly, *The Story of David Hareweni* [= *Sippur David ha-Reuweni*, 2nd ed. (Jerusalem, 1993) [Hebrew]; and idem, *Jewish Messianic Movements*, 2nd ed. (Jerusalem, 1987) [Hebrew], 357–433.

⁶⁶ Joseph of Rosheim, *Historical Writings*, 296; see the discussion of this entry on 177–86.

fantasist, whose primary virtue resided in his martyrdom. Josel totally suppressed the messianic character of the movement.

Molkho's legacy of martyrdom was preserved with great fidelity among other Ashkenazim. Rabbi Yom-Tov Lipman Heller recalled: "Here in the Pinkas synagogue in Prague which I had frequented prior to my appointment as head of the rabbinical court, there is a pair of *tzizit* (fringed four cornered garments) exactly the color green as in an egg yolk. It was brought here from Regensburg, and it belonged to the martyr Solomon Molkho, may God avenge his blood. Also two of his banners, and the caftan called *kittel*."⁶⁷ Heller too makes no mention of messianic aspirations.

In his chronicle *Zemah David* David Gans also recorded Molkho's visit:

R. Shlomo Molkho, righteous convert of the conversos of Portugal, was scribe of the king who converted in secret, and adhered to David Reubeni of the land of the Ten Tribes . . . This R. Shlomo, although he was lacking in Torah from his youth, became an expert in Torah. He preached in public in Italy and Turkey and wrote a kabbalistic work. I, the writer, have seen a copy of that work in the possession of the Gaon my kinsman, my cousin R. Nathan Horodna. R. Shlomo and his companion Reubeni had audiences with the King of France and Charles V, and they tried to direct their hearts to the Jewish faith, for which R. Shlomo was condemned to the flames in Mantua in 1532/33.⁶⁸

The word messiah or any overt references to a messianic mission are absent from Gans' chronicle. An anonymous Prague chronicle of 1615 referred only to the rumors that were associated with the appearance of David Reubeni in the entry for 1523: "News of saviors from beyond the Sambatyon River spread among all the lands, in addition to other messianic expectations."⁶⁹ The chronicler did not mention Molkho's name or messianic activities either in the entry for 1523 or in any subsequent entries. Hava Fraenkel-Goldschmidt has noted that although Josel never mentioned Lemlein, the precedent must have shaped his response to Molkho's messianism. Several

⁶⁷ Yom-Tov Lipman Heller, *Divrei Hamudot*, commentary to *Hilkhot Ketanot la-Ro"sh*, *Hilkhot Tzizit*, end of no. 25; additional references in nos. 48 and 59.

⁶⁸ David Gans, *Zemah David*, 138, for the year 1533.

⁶⁹ Anonymous, *A Hebrew chronicle from Prague, c. 1615*, ed. Abraham David, trans. Leon J. Weinberger with Dena Ordan (Tuscaloosa, 1993), 27.

other aspects of the chronicles are worthy of note. First, Christians made repeated use of these exemplars of Jewish messianic activism for polemical purposes.⁷⁰ Second, Ashkenazic chroniclers selectively embraced Molkho's martyrdom at the same time as they rejected his active messianism. This is no coincidence. The struggle between Catholics and Protestants in the sixteenth century produced a new crop of Christian martyrs and raised afresh the profile of martyrdom as the supreme expression of religious faith. This context granted a newly pronounced emphasis to deeply rooted Ashkenazic traditions that elevated martyrdom as the ultimate religious ideal.

Martyrdom, *Kiddush Hashem* (literally, sanctification of the name) is one of the constitutive elements of pre-modern Ashkenazic identity, a legacy bequeathed by medieval Ashkenazic Jews to their early modern descendants. While much has been written about the formative influences on medieval Jewish martyrdom of Jewish history and tradition as well as of the Christian context in the late eleventh century, less attention has been paid to the persistence and development of this tradition well into the sixteenth century and beyond. Martyrs were designated by the term *kadosh*, holy one, and a striking number of *Memorbücher*,⁷¹ historical chronicles,⁷² and *Yichus briven* (family chronicles), mention ancestors who were martyrs and allude to the events.⁷³ For example a scaled down version of the *Yichus briv* (which survived only in German translation) comes from the Jebenhaus family of Seligmann Lindauer and his brother Tobias: "This is the chain of my pedigree. I [am] the writer, Manasse, son of the scholar R. Meir. From the day of my birth until today I have lived in the community of Gemmingen, 51 years. My respected father R. Meir was the son of . . ." The chronicle unfolds nine generations

⁷⁰ On the use of Jewish messianism by Christians to score polemical points against Judaism see my "Between History and Hope: Jewish Messianism in Ashkenaz and Sepharad" (New York: Selmanowitz Lecture, Touro College, 1998).

⁷¹ See L. Löwenstein, "Memorbücher," ZGJD 1 (1887): 194–98; 274–76; 389–91. See, for example, the reference to the martyrs of Mark Brandenburg of 1510, 196.

⁷² See the examples related to the Black Plague depredations brought by Avraham David, "Tales from the Persecutions in German lands in the Middle Ages," [Hebrew] in *Papers on Medieval Hebrew Literature Presented to A. M. Habermann on the Occasion of His 75th Birthday*, ed. Zvi Malachi (Jerusalem, 1977) [Hebrew], 69–83.

⁷³ Josel of Rosheim derived one episode of martyrdom from the endpapers of a prayerbook, a common place for brief family chronicles. Joseph of Rosheim, *Historical Writings*, 277–78.

back, culminating with, “He was *a son of the martyr*, the learned and pious Rabbi Süsskind, who was burned along with the community of Lindau; this martyrdom is also cited in the book *Emek ha-bakha*.”⁷⁴

Josef of Rosheim saw martyrdom as the antithesis of the betrayals by malign apostates, particularly because the direct consequences of their activities included condemnation and execution of the Jews they slandered. Josef’s desire to preserve the memory of the martyrdom of his uncles in Emdingen and his wife’s uncle in Pforzheim inspired and informed his entire chronicle. While Josef devoted his life to preventing the execution of Jews condemned for religious hate crimes based on the anti-Jewish tradition, and Jews certainly did not seek death, they nevertheless saw martyrdom as the ultimate expression of religious devotion. Josef wrote with deep reverence for the memory of martyrs, and to perpetuate their names and deeds. Josef apparently preserved an Ashkenazic tradition with instructions on how to withstand physical pain and endure torture and face death without breaking.⁷⁵ His own work was lost, but some paragraphs were copied and preserved in the following generation by Joseph Juspa Hahn in his book of customs, *Yosif Omets*. Under the rubric, “Laws of the Blessing for one who sanctifies the Name, along with some of its particular laws,” Hahn notes: “I have copied this from the manuscript of the noble R. Josefman Rosheim, the great *shtadlan* (intercessor).”

If, Heaven forbid, [one] should come to a trial, on account of some sin, he is guaranteed that God will strengthen his heart to endure severe torments, worse than death . . . for as the RI”F (Rabbi Isaac Alfasi) has written, if a person, man or woman, has directed his thoughts from the outset to the great Name to sanctify it, he is guaranteed that he will withstand the trial and it will not pain him. There is a proof-text for this: ‘Regardless of whether He saves us or not, we will not

⁷⁴ My emphasis. From “Die Geschichte der Familien Lindauer und Weil, aufgezeichnet von unserem seligen Vater Moses Jacob Lindauer,” cited in Stefan Rohrbacher, *Die jüdische Landgemeinde im Umbruch der Zeit: Traditionelle Lebensform, Wandel, und Kontinuität im 19. Jahrhundert* (Göppingen, 2000), 7–10. Rohrbacher notes that *Emek ha-bakha*, published in 1558, mentions the gruesome end of Lindau Jews in 1430, but does not mention this ancestor. See Fraenkel-Goldschmidt’s comments on the lack of precision in some of Josef’s memories of persecution, Josef of Rosheim, *Historical Writings*, 65–67. These chronicles underscore the centrality of *memories* of martyrdom for German Jews but cannot be relied on for reconstructing the events.

⁷⁵ Josef of Rosheim, *Historical Writings*, index, s.v. “Kiddush Hashem.”

worship your god.’ It is well known that for a long time now they have submitted themselves to being burned and to being killed for the sanctification of the name and they do not scream, not ‘Oy’ and not ‘avoy,’ and some of them are crucified, as I the writer [Josel] have seen myself. I was also present when they accepted upon themselves the yoke of Heaven with great love although they endured several tortures and survived up to ten days, and they did not reject the yoke [convert, to ease their pain] until their souls departed in purity. And what I have seen I write faithfully.

Another proof can be brought from the virgin who came into the hands of her rapist, who tormented her along with several other people with all sorts of torture, and despite this she did not exchange her honor [convert] and she along with three women and one man withstood the trial . . . This is what our sages meant when they said he who determines in his heart to sanctify the name does not taste the pain, and they supported this with the proof-text . . . It is good to remember this verse in times of coercion and pain on condition that one decides in his heart to sanctify the name without reservation. It appears to me [Hahn] that he [Josel] wishes to say that a person should not rely in his heart that he will withstand the trial because it will not pain him, but he should decide that he would willingly endure severe pain out of love of sanctification of the Name, and I believe that I have seen this [written elsewhere]. May God in his mercy deliver us from trial and embarrassment, and strengthen our heart to worship him with full hearts, in sanctity and purity. Amen and may it be His will.⁷⁶

Juspa continues to cite from Josel: “If, heaven forbid, some evil decree should occur, he should say this *vidui* (confession) [written by] R. Asher of the holy community of Frankfurt.” The first part of the prayer concerns penitence for sins committed by the individual about

⁷⁶ הן יציל אן לא לאלהך לית אן פלהן. A sixteenth century ms., Columbia X893 H13, contains a likely source or parallel to Josel’s tradition: “In a book that they call the scroll of Amraphel it says the following: . . . Abraham ha-Levi said, ‘This is a tradition of the sages: that the man who decides in his heart to stand firm on the matter of God’s honor and his great name, regardless of what happens and what is done to him, that man will not feel the pain of those blows, that pain felt by other people who have not made such a firm decision . . . If he concentrates at that time on the great and awesome name between his eyes and has decided in his heart to sanctify it . . . he is vouchsafed that he will withstand the trial . . . and will not feel the pain of the blows and torture and death will not roil him.’” For another reference to this “Sefer Amraphel,” see Gershom Scholem, “The Kabbalist R. Abraham ben Eliezer ha-levi,” *Kiryath Sefer* 2 (1925–26): 113–14 [Hebrew]. For a sixteenth century parallel see the depiction of a Christian martyr in Joyce Salisbury, *The Blood of Martyrs: Unintended Consequences of Ancient Violence* (New York, 2004), 8.

to be martyred, then a prayer justifying God's will, and finally, a blessing for the *mitzvah* of sanctification of the Name, followed by the *Shema*.⁷⁷ While the text assumes that conversion may help the individual avert death or diminish the pain, the prayer itself contains no overt anti-Christian sentiment. It affirms the unity of the Jewish God. The sharp contrast to the triune and human form of the Christian deity remained unspoken, unnecessary.

Jewish religious and social developments in sixteenth-century Germany developed both from within a traditional Jewish framework and in response to the momentous external developments of the Reformation. Jewish polemicists, for example, struggled to defend Judaism without giving the appearance of insulting Christianity. Converts from Judaism, small in number until the eighteenth century, served as cultural and religious mediators, at times benefiting from often heated internal Christian competition. Jewish messianic movements could be complex and were steeped within an environment expecting the End of Days. Similarly, just as the struggles between Catholics and Protestants produced a new generation of, and concept of, Christian martyrs, martyrdom was seen by Jews as a supreme expression of religious faith. In the end, Jewish social and religious developments must be cast within both Jewish and broader contexts.

⁷⁷ The entire section in Hahn, *Yosif Omets*, 100–01.

JEWISH LAW AND RITUAL IN EARLY MODERN GERMANY

Jay Berkovitz

The Reformation era has long been viewed as a critically important transitional period in the annals of German Jewry. It marks the denouement of an epoch of impressive rabbinic scholarship while also heralding the concomitant rise of Poland as the unrivalled center of learned Jewish culture in early modern Europe. One cannot overstate the lasting impact of these developments on the course of modern history. Jewish ritual and law would be definitively transformed by the social, political, and cultural forces that dominated in the east, and its powerful, ramified effects are still felt centuries later. But as Eric Zimmer has convincingly demonstrated, rabbinic scholarship in Germany did not pass into oblivion. Rabbinic and communal leaders remained committed, even under particularly challenging conditions, to sustaining the intellectual and spiritual legacy of Judaism as before. Focusing on several of the dynamics of rabbinic culture in the sixteenth century, the present study will examine German Jewry's changing relationship to the celebrated legacy of ritual and law it inherited from its medieval forebears. To illustrate these trends more carefully, the second half of this paper will consider *Minhagot Wormaiza*, by Juda Loewe Kirchheim, the first among a new wave of efforts to compile religious customs at the end of the sixteenth century and in the early seventeenth century. Our goal is to understand the conception of religious ritual that emerged in the early modern period, and especially the heightened efforts to infuse ritual with spiritual meaning.

One hardly need emphasize that the religious and cultural concerns of any community are deeply embedded in the particulars of time and space, that is, in the actual, political, and legal conditions under which its members lived. German Jewry in the latter Middle Ages is certainly no exception. Its internal life was, at each stage, deeply affected by external forces and developments. In the eleventh through the thirteenth centuries—the era of Rabbenu Gershom,

Rashi, the Tosafists, Hasidei Ashkenaz, and prominent *posekim* such as R. (Rabbi) Meir of Rothenburg and R. Mordechai ben Hillel—the accomplishments were path breaking in the areas of communal organization, law, ritual, and mysticism. However, substantial devastation caused by widespread anti-Jewish persecution following the Black Death left an unmistakable imprint on the cultural achievements of the ensuing centuries. Even so, a renewed commitment to rabbinic scholarship is clearly evident in the writings of R. Meir b. Barukh Ha-Levi, Rabbi Abraham Klausner, R. Jacob Molin (Maharil), R. Jacob Weil of Nuremberg and Erfurt, R. Israel Isserlein, R. Israel Bruna, and R. Moses Mintz. If the oeuvre of these and others lacked the creative impulse that was characteristic of the earlier period, their achievements in the reconstruction of Jewish communal life, in the realm of Jewish law, and in the preservation of religious rituals are, nonetheless, certainly impressive insofar as they reflect a remarkable responsiveness to the pressures of the day.

Whatever stability had been attained through the determined efforts of the aforementioned rabbinic leaders was steadily eroded by deteriorating political conditions in the fifteenth century. Invariably subject to the caprice of princes, dukes, and bishops, the Jews discovered that German emperors were seldom able to provide adequate protection; occasionally, expulsion was averted, as in the case of Lower Austria and Görz, owing to the efforts of *shtadlanim* who were able to gain political support for their coreligionists. But overall, worsening conditions in Germany triggered a precipitous decline in the Jewish population between the Rhine and Oder rivers. A series of expulsions removed the Jews from most imperial cities, and from territories such as Bavaria, Bamberg, Passau, Styria, Carinthia, Krain, Mecklenburg, Brandenburg, Salzburg, and Magdeburg. In isolated instances the order of expulsion included a provision permitting them to settle in a nearby city, as in the case of Cologne (to Deutz) and Nuremberg (to Fürth). In addition to suffering the harsh effects of these expulsions, the Jews of Austria, Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia were exposed to the terrors of massacre, forced baptism, and martyrdom during the war on the Hussites. With the rise of Lutheranism, the Jews of Germany were exposed to even greater danger than before, as evidenced by the spate of accusations that were leveled against them and by the expulsions that continued unabated. Jews were expelled from Saxony, from the towns and villages of Thuringia,

and from the principalities of Braunschweig, Hanover, Lüneburg, and subsequently from Berlin and Silesia.¹

Over the course of the sixteenth century, an often beleaguered Catholic Church unleashed an aggressive assault on rabbinic literature, aided by the maneuverings of Jewish apostates to Christianity who endeavored to expose anti-Christian elements in the Talmud and Jewish liturgical texts.² Most notorious was Johannes Pfefferkorn of Bohemia, who underwent baptism in 1504. His first book, *Judenspiegel, oder Speculum Hortationis*, written in 1507, contained vicious charges against the Jews and the Talmud, and urged them to follow his example and join Christianity. In several other works he called for the enactment of measures intended to humiliate the Jews and expel them from Germany, and urged the forceful confiscation of all copies of the Talmud and volumes of rabbinic literature. Both Pfefferkorn and another baptized Jew, Victor von Carben, published anti-Jewish diatribes. In 1509, Emperor Maximilian authorized Pfefferkorn to confiscate Hebrew books in the Frankfurt synagogue for investigation, though this order would later be rescinded. Also active in efforts to pillory the Jews and their religion was Anthonius Margaritha, son of R. Samuel b. Jacob Margoliot, rabbi of Regensburg. Born at Regensburg at the beginning of the century, he was baptized in 1522; he subsequently published *Der gantz Jüdisch glaub* (1530), in which he denounced talmudic and kabbalistic texts for their alleged anti-Christian tendency and blasphemy against Jesus. He also condemned Jewish ceremonies and prayers, such as *Alenu*, for the deep-seated hostility toward Christians that they purportedly harbored, and took pains to refute their messianic beliefs. Luther acknowledged having derived from Margaritha the arguments contained in his vicious work, *On the Jews and Their Lies*.³

¹ Eric Zimmer, *Fiery Embers of the Scholars: The Trials and Tribulations of German Rabbis in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Be'er Sheva, 1999), 5–6 [Hebrew].

² Elisheva Carlebach, "Attribution of Secrecy and Perceptions of Jewry," *JSS* 3 (1996): 115–36.

³ *Der gantz Jüdisch glaub* was published in Augsburg in 1530. It also condemned Jewish idleness and involvement in usury while urging the magistrates to compel the Jews to perform manual labor. Among its many accusations was the charge that Jewish physicians were ignorant and avaricious, that Jews were neither pious nor charitable, and that their goal was, ultimately, to attract adherents to their faith. The book was praised by most Christian Hebraists, though Wagenseil did not view

Christian interest in Hebrew language and literature had been growing steadily in the later Middle Ages, but it was in the era following the Reformation that this trend broadened to include a fascination with Jewish customs, ceremonies, and the history of the Jews. Luther's emphasis on Bible study inspired the publication of Hebrew grammars and texts and, indirectly, translations of rabbinic literature, the study of the Kabbalah, and the profusion of ethnographic studies describing rituals and ceremonies practiced by contemporary Jews. These developments naturally entailed significant collaboration between Christians and Jews, as in the case of the noted Johannes Reuchlin, who studied with R. Jacob Loans, personal physician to Frederick III, and with the Italian Bible commentator R. Obadiah Sforno. The vast majority of Christian Hebraists focused on biblical interpretation and grammar, though a smaller number—both prior to the sixteenth century and after—engaged in polemical efforts against Jewish prayers and practices believed to be anti-Christian, superstitious, and misrepresentative of biblical religion.⁴

Scores of books authored by Christian Hebraists were devoted to the general subject of Judaism as a religion, with many focusing specifically on its theology, biblical foundations, mystical teachings, and contemporary religious practices. Recent research on this literature by Yaacov Deutsch indicates that the scholarly treatment of rituals can be subdivided into several categories: (a) systematic descriptions of the ritual life of the Jews, (b) extracts from Jewish prayers in translation, published for Christian audiences, and (c) listings of the six hundred thirteen precepts of the Jewish religion, based on the major Jewish works on this subject. The topics that received the most attention were the annual cycle of Jewish festivals, rites of pas-

it favorably. Owing to the efforts of Josel of Rosheim, then at Augsburg, the book was examined closely and Margaritha was imprisoned and later expelled from Augsburg. Other apostates included Paul Ricius, a professor of Hebrew in Pavia and physician to Maximilian, who prepared a translation of a section of Joseph Gikatilla's *Sha'arei Orah* in 1516, thereby arousing Reuchlin's interest in Kabbalah. For analysis of these and other Christian Hebraists, see Carlebach, *Divided Souls*.

⁴ See Stephen G. Burnett, "Reassessing the 'Basel-Wittenberg Conflict: Dimensions of the Reformation-Era Discussion of Hebrew Scholarship,'" in *Hebraica Veritas*, 181–201; idem, "Christian Hebrew Printing in the Sixteenth Century: Printers, Humanism, and the Impact of the Reformation." *Helmantica* 51 (2000): 13–42; and Yaacov Deutsch, "Polemical Ethnographies: Descriptions of Yom Kippur in the Writings of Christian Hebraists and Jewish Converts to Christianity in Early Modern Europe," in *Hebraica Veritas*, 202–33.

sage, daily prayers, dietary regulations, and family purity laws, and of these, the rituals relating to the holidays were favored overwhelmingly. Three dominant trends in this literature have been identified by Deutsch. First, in contrast to earlier attempts to uncover anti-Christian elements in Jewish liturgy and literature, efforts now focused more specifically on customs and rituals. Thus the *kapparot* ceremony—an atonement rite performed on the eve of Yom Kippur—was portrayed as an example of how Jews transferred their sins to Christians, while the custom of ridiculing Haman on Purim became a target of anti-Christian sentiment. Second, Judaism was represented as an irrational and superstitious religion.⁵ Third, emphasis was placed on how contemporary rituals deviated from biblical tradition, a critique that tended to be much more common among Christians from birth than among converts.⁶

Signs of cultural decline were already evident in the migration patterns of rabbinic scholars in the fourteenth century. Many went east to Bohemia, Moravia, Austria, and eventually to Poland; others journeyed south to Italy. By the beginning of the Thirty Years War, the Jews had been expelled from nearly all the large cities in Germany, with the notable exception of Frankfurt am Main and Worms, where residence was restricted to the Jewish quarter. Ironically, the Jewish population in Frankfurt grew in this period, evidently because the conflict between Lutherans and Calvinists had left the city in near financial ruin, which enabled the Jews to reside there without opposition. Those who dwelled in areas controlled by Emperor Charles V also weathered the threat of expulsion. Charles defended the Jews' right to reside in or around Augsburg, Speyer, and Regensburg, in part, because they represented a counterweight to the growing Protestant movement. Others who remained in Germany

⁵ Here, too, *kapparot* and *tashlikh* served as the object of ridicule, as did the four species. See Friederich Albert Christiani, *Der Jüden Glaube und Aberglaube* (Leipzig, 1705), 67–74.

⁶ Deutsch, "Polemical Ethnographies." Deutsch analyzed the differing approaches of Christians from birth and converts to Judaism. The anti-Christian tendency was common in the sixteenth century; from the seventeenth century it was the superstitious nature of Judaism that was emphasized. The most outstanding example is Johannes Buxtorf, *Juden Schul*, but this trend can also be noted in the writings of others such as Bodenschatz, von Carben, Margaritha, and Guthertz. See Stephen G. Burnett, "Distorted Mirrors: Antonius Margaritha, Johannes Buxtorf and Christian Ethnographies of the Jews," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 25 (1994): 277–82.

settled in small towns and villages in the Catholic areas, having found refuge in the towns and villages of Cologne, Mainz, Trier, and in the principalities of Würzburg, Bamberg, and in the bishopric of Speyer. Overall, however, waves of accusations, expulsions, and persecution weakened the Jews economically and in spirit, leaving them vulnerable and unprotected. Outstanding scholars such as R. Moses Mintz and R. Jacob Polak left Germany for Poland, where many found relief from the oppression, fear, and economic hardship that had become commonplace in Germany. Of those who were able to secure rabbinic positions in Germany, many were trained in Poland, since so few suitable Torah institutions in Germany were still viable. As a result, the halakhic traditions of Poland came to exert a substantial influence there, and with this emerged a distinct sense of superiority toward those who had been trained exclusively in German *yeshivot*.⁷

The waning of Torah study in Germany is attested by R. Eliezer Treves, rabbi of Frankfurt am Main and R. Eliakim Gotschalk, *av bet din* of Swabia (end of sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth century). Similar complaints were voiced by R. Jacob Reiner, who lamented the passing of the glory of Israel, as once reflected in its esteemed judicial system, *yeshivot*, and superior achievements of its scholars. With the greater security and tranquility offered by Poland, the latter became a natural refuge for students and scholars.⁸ Prague was another common destination. R. Judah Loew b. Bezalel (c. 1525–1609), the Maharal of Prague, had served as Moravian chief rabbi in Nikolsburg until he left for Prague after 1573. A unique figure among Ashkenazic scholars, he combined outstanding erudition in rabbinic learning and Jewish thought, while also offering extensive social criticism, especially in the educational realm. Prague had become, in the sixteenth century, a cosmopolitan center of vigorous intellectual life where Hebrew presses published on a wide range of subjects, including philosophy. The fact that R. Judah Loew's foremost students—R. Mordechai Jaffe, R. Yom-Tov Lipmann Heller,

⁷ The example of R. Kalman of Wormaiza (d. in Lemberg, 1560), the first known rabbi of Lemberg, offers a case in point. Probably a native of Worms, he spent his entire career as rabbi and head of a *yeshivah* in Lemberg. Zimmer, *Fiery Embers*, 7–13 and 220–37.

⁸ Eric Zimmer, *Rabbi Hayyim ben Bezalel of Friedberg* (Jerusalem, 1987) [Hebrew], 5–6.

and David Gans—all remained in Prague further confirms the eastward shift that transformed the religious and cultural landscape of Ashkenazic culture. This trend continued into the next century, as the biography of R. Isaiah Horowitz, author of the kabbalistic-moralistic work *Shenei Luhot ha-Berit*, reveals. Appointed *av bet din* of Frankfurt am Main in 1606, he was forced to return to his native Prague following the expulsion in 1614.

Despite these grave problems, and contrary to the standard historiographical view, it is now evident that rabbinic learning and scholarship in Germany retained a measure of its former vitality. Thanks to the extensive research of Eric Zimmer, the ranks of important rabbinic scholars in sixteenth-century Germany has been expanded to include figures such as R. Eliakim Gotschalk Rothenberg, R. Isaac Halevi of Günzburg, R. Naftali Hirtz Treves and his son R. Eliezer Treves, R. Abraham Naftali Hirtz Halevi (author of glosses to *Sefer Maharil*), R. Samuel Didelsheim of Friedberg, and R. Isaiah Horowitz. The Worms rabbis included R. Jacob b. Hayyim, R. Moses Luria, and his son R. Aaron Luria. Authors of responsa included several rabbis of smaller communities, such as R. Isaac Mazia and R. David Bluma. R. David b. Isaac of Fulda was a student of R. Hayyim Friedberg. Other important figures included Simon of Aschaffenburg, author of a supercommentary to Rashi on the Torah, and Samuel b. Eliezer of Friedberg.⁹

In addition to the standard themes discussed in rabbinic literature, several issues that highlight the distinctive culture of modern German Jewry emerged plainly within rabbinic scholarly writings of the sixteenth century. The most important was the codification and popularization of Jewish law. This issue was articulated most forcefully by R. Hayyim Friedberg, a native of Posen who held various rabbinic positions in Germany before becoming head of the *yeshivah* of Friedberg. In *Viku'ah Mayyim Hayyim*, a sharp polemical work directed against R. Moses Isserles' digest of the laws of kashrut titled

⁹ Zimmer also suggests that the status of the German rabbinate may have been superior to what it had been in the two previous centuries, if the case of R. David b. Isaac of Fulda was at all representative. According to Zimmer, it appears that the German rabbinate was able to maintain a dominant position in communal affairs, as compared to fourteenth- and fifteenth-century German rabbinic leaders. Zimmer reports that R. David conceived of his own position as the unchallenged master of his community. See Zimmer, "R. David ben Isaac of Fulda," 220–21.

Torat Hatat, R. Hayyim adamantly opposed efforts to codify Jewish law and to disseminate these new books among the wider public. R. Hayyim averred that the popular, abbreviated style of *Torat Hatat* would discourage Talmud study and, ultimately, detract from rabbinic authority. Such codes, argued R. Hayyim, not only lacked novelty and creativity, but also flouted established Ashkenazic tradition by its general predilection for leniency. In particular, R. Hayyim took exception to the privileging of Polish customs and the tendency to treat the entire Ashkenazic world as a single bloc—trends that diminished the distinctiveness of *minhag* Ashkenaz and failed to account for variations in Ashkenazic practice.¹⁰ This criticism was hardly limited to R. Hayyim alone. A similar position was held by his student, R. David b. Isaac, who had established religious, educational, and communal institutions in Fulda. His main halakhic work, *Emet Mishpat*, was a concise subject index of the three main sources of law for Ashkenazic Jewry: the Tosafists, R. Mordechai b. Hillel, and R. Asher b. Yehiel. He also composed his own abridgement of *Sha'arei Dura*, entitled *David Maskil*. R. David made no mention in his halakhic writings of the *Shulhan Arukh* or of the Isserles glosses, apparently because these failed to account for the uniqueness and importance of German rite and custom.¹¹ R. David was also a lone voice of protest in Germany against *pilpul*.¹²

¹⁰ See Zimmer, *Fiery Embers*, 186 and 210–215; Byron L. Sherwin, “In the Shadows of Greatness: Rabbi Hayyim Ben Betsalel of Friedberg,” *JSS* 37 (1975): 35–60.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 224–25. Zimmer notes that beginning in the seventeenth century new connections between Germany and Poland were forged, especially through travel and study. See his comments on Rabbi Moses Bürgel and Rabbi Hayyim Ulma, and the fact that the importation of customs from the east was viewed sympathetically by some, such as Joseph Juspa Hahn of Nördlingen.

¹² Zimmer, “R. David b. Isaac,” 223–24. On the basis of this comment, Zimmer confirms the view advanced by Mordechai Breuer that *pilpul* was already known in Germany in the mid-fifteenth century and by the sixteenth century it was a dominant trend. In fact, R. Israel Isserlein was an ardent supporter of *pilpul*, and the view that *pilpul* was the most authentic form of learning, and the main focus of instruction by the head of the academy, as Elchanan Reiner has shown. He promised that this index would be concise in nature, stripped of all *pilpul*. See Mordechai Breuer, “The Rise of Pilpul and Hilukim in the Yeshivot of Germany” [Hebrew], *Rabbi Jacob Jehiel Weinberg Memorial Volume* (Jerusalem 1970), 241–55, and Elchanan Reiner, “Changes in the Yeshivot of Germany and Poland in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, and the Controversy over Pilpul” [Hebrew], in *Studies in Jewish Culture in Honour of Chone Shmeruk* [Hebrew], ed. Yisra'el Bartal, Havah Turnyanski, and Ezra Mendelson (Jerusalem, 1993), 9–80.

The question of cultural and juridical independence was very much related to the foregoing concerns. It is not unlikely that the unremitting series of expulsions and the persistent dispersion throughout Germany contributed to a loss of confidence in the authority and expertise of local rabbis. As a result, communal rabbis turned increasingly to rabbinic authorities outside of Germany, a development that had already begun in the fifteenth century but now had intensified in the face of worsening conditions in the following century.¹³ Two major rabbinic bodies in this period reacted to the problem. The Worms synod of 1542, under the direction of R. Samuel b. Eliezer, issued a *takkanah* objecting strongly to attempts by rabbis from abroad to impose their authority on the Jews of Germany and to require litigants from Germany to appear in rabbinic courts in other countries. The Worms synod was adamant about the illegality, from the standpoint of Jewish law, that is, of overstepping the jurisdiction of a local court. Sixty years later, the 1603 synod that convened in Frankfurt am Main ordered the establishment of five regional courts for all of Germany, apparently to eliminate internecine battles. In section 13 of the ordinances the rabbinic body declared that a *herem* or *gezerah* pronounced by a foreign *bet din* against any resident of Germany shall be null and void.¹⁴ The range of issues taken up by the Frankfurt synod also included warnings against individuals who took their cases to gentile courts, those engaged in unauthorized *she-hitah*, those who failed to observe the prohibition against purchasing *yein nesekh*, consuming gentile milk, wearing clothing designed in accordance with gentile styles, wearing clothing made of linen and wool, and the requirement that no book could be published without the permission of three courts.¹⁵

German interest in Kabbalah likewise reflected the distinct perspective of Ashkenazic culture. Although R. Hayyim exhibited little interest in either speculative or practical Kabbalah, he did engage quite a few kabbalistic sources and ideas in his writings. He accepted demons as part of the cosmic reality, and viewed various ritual

¹³ Indeed, there had been some turning abroad, especially to Italian rabbis, in the fifteenth century, for decisions and instruction, but the phenomenon was still limited. (Zimmer, *Fiery Embers*, 20–21)

¹⁴ Decisions of the 1542 Worms synod. Zimmer, *Jewish Synods in Germany During the Late Middle Ages* (New York, 1978), 67–72, 148–89, and 192–97.

¹⁵ Decisions of the 1603 Frankfurt synod. *Ibid.*, 148–89 and 192–97.

practices as capable of counteracting their power. Thus, he held that *mayyim aharonim* (water used to wash hands at the end of a meal) neutralized demonic influences, and the rite of circumcision functioned, effectively, as a sacrifice that freed the child from the demonic realm. The removal of the foreskin further provided the child with divine protection. Astrology, he maintained, was an instrument of divine will, while he favored the use of amulets and precious stones in combating demons.¹⁶ Such examples of magic, it would seem, as long as they were drawn from rabbinic sources, were more expressive of popular religion and superstition than mystical. When he did articulate kabbalistic ideas, he tended to draw these from Nahmanides, R. Bahya b. Asher, and the *Zohar*, though he rarely quoted the latter by name. In some instances, he cited *Sefer Hasidim*, *Sefer Recanati*, and *Sefer Tzioni*, particularly in relation to *gilgul* (transmigration of souls).¹⁷ Nevertheless, it is clear that magic and Kabbalah were forms of religious expression that were closely intertwined. This confluence of magic and mysticism would remain in force into the eighteenth century, as the early history of Hasidism attests.¹⁸

Several other German rabbis were engaged more openly in the study of Kabbalah. The most accomplished of these was R. Naftali Hirtz Treves, who published a supercommentary in 1556 on the kabbalistic passages appearing in the biblical commentary of Bahya ben Asher. He also published a kabbalistic companion to the sid-dur, titled *Dikduk Tefilah* (Tiengen, 1560). The work is a compendium of kabbalistic commentaries that relied heavily on *Sefer Rokeah*, somewhat less so on the writings of Joseph Gikatilla, and on Ashkenazic and Sephardic commentaries to the Bible. It is cited on a number of occasions by Joseph Juspa Hahn of Nördlingen in *Yosif Omets*.¹⁹

¹⁶ Each of these views is set out in *Sefer Ha-Hayyim* (Cracow, 1595; repr. Jerusalem, 1958), as reported by Sherwin, "In the Shadow of Greatness," 47–50.

¹⁷ Sherwin admitted that R. Hayyim did show "a distant intellectual curiosity about certain mystical notions and was, it seems, conversant with Jewish mystical literature." See *Ibid.*, 50–51.

¹⁸ Moshe Idel, *Hasidism: Between Ecstasy and Magic* (Binghamton, 1995); Ephraim Kanarfogel, *Peering through the Lattices: Mystical, Magical, and Pietistic Dimensions in the Tosafist Period* (Detroit, 2000), 29–31; Immanuel Etkes, "The Role of Magic and Ba'alei Shem in Ashkenazic Society at the Turn of the Eighteenth Century," *Zion* 60 (1995): 69–104 [Hebrew].

¹⁹ See Eric Zimmer, "Jewish and Christian Hebraist Collaboration in Sixteenth Century Germany," *JQR* 71 (1980–81): 69–88. On later interest in Treves' supercommentary, republished under the title *Sefer Naftali*, see Joseph Davis, *Yom-Tov*

It is noteworthy that a number of Christian Hebraists, among them Caspar Amman, head of the Augustinian Order in Swabia and the Rhineland, and ultimately a proponent of the Reformation, took great interest in the biblical and kabbalistic scholarship produced by Treves, and in the case of Amman, established a warm personal relationship with him.²⁰ It is nonetheless clear that Christian Hebraists such as Amman, Reuchlin, and Böschenstein did not turn to the Kabbalah purely for academic reasons, but in order to substantiate their own religious views, hoping that they could persuade Jewish scholars with whom they came in contact to convert to Christianity.²¹

R. David of Fulda composed a kabbalistic book of his own, *Migdal David*, in 1595. The author was deeply involved both in preserving older kabbalistic texts and in composing comments on them. *Migdal David* reveals a strong affinity to the mysticism of Hasidei Ashkenaz, to *Sefer Razi'el*, and to the commentary of the *Shi'ur Koma*. It referred to *Sefer Razim* (which is cited in *Sefer Razi'el* via the *Sodei Razaya* of R. Eliezer of Worms), the commentary of R. Judah he-Hasid to *Sefer Yetzirah*, as well as numerous prayers composed by R. Judah (or transmitted by his school), and mystical incantations drawn from these same traditions. A lone reference to Moses Cordovero, and no mention of Lurianic Kabbalah, suggests that Lurianic Kabbalah was either unknown or of little interest in Germany.²² After the turn of the seventeenth century, the new pietism found literary expression in *Shenei Luhot ha-Berit* by R. Isaiah Horowitz of Frankfurt am Main. Religious duties were to serve as a stimulus to mystic contemplation and the elevation of the earthly life above ordinary affairs by fostering greater reverence for God.

Juda Loewe Kirchheim's Minhagot Wormaiza

Late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Germany witnessed a series of new initiatives to assemble customs relating to the order of

Lipmann Heller: Portrait of a Seventeenth-Century Rabbi (Oxford, 2004), 54 and 59. For citations of *Dikduk Tefilah* by R. Joseph Juspa Hahn of Nördlingen, see *Yosif Omets* (Frankfurt am Main, 1723), nos. 29, 293, 295, and 972.

²⁰ Zimmer, *Fiery Embers*, 246–48.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 7. Zimmer, “Jewish and Christian Hebraist Collaboration,” 69–88.

²² Zimmer, *Fiery Embers*, 32; Zimmer, “R. David b. Isaac,” 221–23.

worship in the synagogue. Juda Loewe Kirchheim's *Minhagot Wormaiza*, the first such compilation of his era, was apparently begun in the late 1590s and completed sometime between 1615 and 1632.²³ A generation later a similar work, also devoted to ritual practices in Worms, was undertaken in 1648 by Juspa Shamash, in his *Sefer HaMinhagim le-R. Juspa*. Likewise, the customs of Frankfurt were compiled in two volumes: *Yosif Omets*, by R. Joseph Juspa Hahn of Nördlingen, was completed in 1630 (Frankfurt am Main, 1723); *Sefer Noheg Katzon Yosef*, by Joseph Juspa Kosman, a grandson of Nördlingen, was based on *Yosif Omets* and was published in Hanau in 1718.²⁴

Several distinct features of the Worms and Frankfurt *Minhagbücher* set them apart from comparable works produced in the fourteenth century. The earlier works—such as *Leket Yosher* and *Semak Zurich*,²⁵ and the various customs books bearing the name of Maharil, R. Isaac Tyrnau, R. Abraham Klausner, and Mordechai b. Hillel—were secondary accounts invariably assembled by disciples-attendants. Accordingly, succeeding generations would question their reliability. By contrast, the compilations undertaken by Kirchheim and others never represented themselves as anything but anthologies of local traditions. For this reason, they were never viewed as independently authoritative. The later works also evinced a distinctly popular style. Popularization was certainly not unique to the sixteenth century, as is evident from the rather ordinary manner of presentation that typified the earlier works. But the more unambiguously popular character of *Minhagot Wormaiza* and the collections that followed ought to be ascribed to the sharp downturn in the conditions of Jewish life in the preceding century. German Jewry was severely taxed by the harsh effects of persecution, expulsion, relocation, and emigration.

²³ There are conflicting views on the dates. See Mordechai Peles, introduction to Juda Lowe Kirchheim, *The Customs of Worms Jewry* [= *Minhagot Wormaiza*] (Jerusalem, 1987), 31–33 [Hebrew], and cf. Eric Zimmer, introduction to *Wormser Minhagbuch* [= *Minhagim di-k.k. Vermaisa*], ed. Benjamin S. Hamburger, 2 vols. (Jerusalem, 1988–92), 1:32 [Hebrew]. for literature in Yiddish, cf. Jean Baumgarten, “Prayer, Ritual and Practice in Ashkenazic Jewish Society: the Tradition of Yiddish Custom Books in the Fifteenth to Eighteenth Centuries,” *Studia Rosenthaliana* 36 (2002): 121–46.

²⁴ Peles, introduction, *Minhagot Wormaiza*, 46–48. Concerns about the reliability of these texts, especially in the case of Kirchheim, turn on the question of which of the glosses was produced by the author and which was added by later editors. As a rule, we will assume that unless a gloss is prefaced with the term “*ha-ma’atiq*” [the copyist], it was produced by Kirchheim.

²⁵ See *Minhagot Wormaiza*, 30 gl. 2, where *Semak Zurich* is referred to as *Sefer Yashan*.

An historical rupture of considerable magnitude marked the end of the medieval period, and the accompanying crisis demanded novel strategies for overcoming the difficult challenges to ritual literacy and spiritual fulfillment.²⁶

The Kirchheim project was dedicated both to the preservation of local customs and to the restoration of those that were either lost or forgotten over the course of the preceding centuries. Formally, it focused on synagogue rites, but in fact extended to areas of personal observance as well. By Kirchheim's own admission, the idea of compiling local customs originated among members of his own Worms community. Conceptually, the project rested on the Ashkenazic principle of *minhag avoteinu be-yadeinu* (lit. "the customs of our ancestors are in our hands") at least insofar as it signified the strict observance of liturgical rites and melodies established by earlier generations. Nevertheless, despite an avowed commitment to recording local customs faithfully, Kirchheim admitted to having inserted *piyyutim* and explanatory notations that were not part of the original Worms rite, just as he added several *minhagim* intended to commemorate events of recent years.²⁷ Moreover, the frequent citation of contemporary sources implies that Kirchheim utterly rejected the idea that *minhag* possessed an unchanging character. *Minhagot Wormaiza* is thus a subtle blend of two fairly discrete objectives. Efforts to preserve and restore longstanding ritual traditions were not an uncommon response to the disruptions of the sixteenth century. But this inherently conservative goal was in tension with the inexorable cumulative-constructive approach that could ignore neither the effects of the passage of time nor more recent efforts to respond to changing conditions.²⁸

Emblematic of this restorative impulse was Kirchheim's insistence on reinstating the custom to eat the third Sabbath meal (*se'udah shelishit*) before reciting the Minhah prayers. Such was the Rhineland

²⁶ The invention of printing was, as a rule, an important factor in the popularization of religious culture. See Elchanan Reiner, "The Ashkenazic Elite at the Beginning of the Modern Era: Manuscript versus Printed Book," *Polin* 10 (1997): 85–98.

²⁷ Kirchheim, *Minhagot Wormaiza*, introduction.

²⁸ Referring to the noted initiation rite for boys ready to begin their schooling, R. David of Fulda reported that he was not aware of the practice when his own children were young. He subsequently found mention of the ceremony in an ancient volume, but clearly it had fallen into desuetude. Zimmer, "R. David b. Isaac of Fulda," 223.

practice, as recorded in *Sefer Maharil* and based on the view of Rabbenu Tam.²⁹ For Kirchheim, the issue typified a broader—and more troubling—concern:

It was also the *minhag* here in Worms in my day to eat *se'udah shelishit* before Minhah on the Sabbath, but now things have been overturned and the custom is scorned. And not only this custom they disparage, but nearly all the customs that were practiced by our august forebears and viewed as if they were transmitted to them from Mount Sinai, whether it was a minor or major matter, they observed them all the same. But now they overturn them and ridicule them.³⁰

In an effort to strengthen his case further, Kirchheim also cited *Sefer Kol Bo*, where the custom was portrayed as a broad-based Ashkenazic practice. Later in the seventeenth century, R. Ya'ir Hayyim Bacharach referred to this forgotten custom as an authentic “*minhag Rheinus*,” and urged its reinstatement as the custom in Worms.³¹

Kirchheim's professed loyalty to the cultural and religious legacy of Ashkenaz was further complicated by the existence of multiple traditions. The various Ashkenazic sources that were available to Kirchheim included the Worms Mahzor of 1272, the siddur of 1457, the Tiengen siddur (published in 1560), and various traditions of Hasidei Ashkenaz, *Sefer ha-Maharil*, and others. It should also be noted that the availability of the siddur of Judah b. Samuel he-Hasid of Regensburg (c. 1150–1217), which was published in Tiengen in 1560, reveals how the invention of printing made earlier traditions more accessible in the early modern period.³² These sources were not at all uniform on matters of custom. On some occasions Kirchheim

²⁹ *Sefer Maharil*, “Hilkhot Shabbat,” no. 11, cited in *Minhagot Wormaiza*, 63, gl. 8. Related to this was the eleventh-century custom, enacted by R. Tam, as noted on 66, gl. 6 to avoid drinking water at twilight on the Sabbath, as such individuals were viewed as having stolen from the dead. See Israel Ta-Shema, *Early Franco-German Ritual and Custom* (Jerusalem, 1992), 201–20 [Hebrew].

³⁰ *Minhagot Wormaiza*, 64, gl. 8.

³¹ *Sefer Kol Bo* 40, cited in *Minhagot Wormaiza*, 64, gl. 8. Also see Bacharach, *Mekor Hayyim* 291:2, and cf. *Yosif Omets*, 671 where it was stated that the custom in Frankfurt am Main was to observe *se'udah shelishit* before Minhah, but that after the expulsion in 1615 the old custom was discontinued. The sages of the city tried to restore the original *minhag*, but evidently to no avail.

³² The authenticity of liturgical compositions attributed to R. Judah he-Hasid of Regensburg is uncertain. As regards his *Shir Ha-Yihud*, printed in Tiengen, 1560 there is very great divergence of opinion, and the question of its authorship is still undecided.

cited practices either recorded in the Tiengen siddur or reported in the name of R. Judah he-Hasid, while he rejected these same sources in other instances. This inconsistency, which was only apparent, reflects both the wide range of views characteristic of the Ashkenazic tradition and the large number of variables at work. On countless issues the Worms Mahzor, the Tiengen siddur, and the *siddur* of R. Samuel of Worms diverged sharply, and therefore to embrace any one of these sources was to reject the others.³³ Clearly, no single source commanded absolute loyalty. In general, however, Kirchheim was partial to customs recorded in the name of R. Isaac Tyrnau, Maharil, and in the *Matteh Moshe* of R. Moses Matt. Explanatory notes were drawn from a larger number of sources, such as *Sefer Kol Bo*, *Sefer Abudraham*, R. Mordechai Jaffe's *Levush*, and many others.³⁴

It also appears that Kirchheim's preference for certain sources over others depended, in part, on their availability to the author and their suitability to the specific language or imagery that he was determined to convey. Accordingly, sections of the *Minhagot Wormaiza* (for example, on the laws of marriage and circumcision) followed *Sefer Maharil* fully, even where these differed slightly from established Worms customs. Where there was a more significant disparity between the custom attributed to *Maharil* and the ritual practiced in Worms, Kirchheim would typically cite the source but omit from his own presentation any mention of those sections that varied with local practice. In other instances it was not uncommon for Kirchheim to amend the language of his source to conform to the Worms rite. For example, his comments concerning the sounding of the shofar in the month of Elul were patterned closely after those of *Matteh Moshe*; however, when addressing the question how many days in

³³ For a range of views on particular prayers, see, for example, *Minhagot Wormaiza*, 115, nos. 13–16. Also see, for example, Kirchheim's rejection of the custom recorded in the Tiengen *siddur* to recite *למען שמך*, *והושיענו למען שמך*, in *Minhagot Wormaiza*, 41.

³⁴ For references to *Sefer Abudraham*: *Minhagot Wormaiza*, 61, gl. 3; Maharil, see *Minhagot Wormaiza*, 45, gl. 5; 96, gl. 1; 125, gl. 3; 135, gl. 7; *Minhagei Eizik Tyrnau*: *Minhagot Wormaiza*, 69, gl. 2; 70, gl. 2; 97, gl. 9; 98, gl. 22; 101, gls. 16 and 22; *Levush*: *Minhagot Wormaiza*, 69, gl. 1; 135, gl. 1; *Matteh Moshe*: *Minhagot Wormaiza*, 40, gl. 44; 43, gl. 3; 71, gl. 2; 135 gl. 6; 136 gl. 5. For examples of Kirchheim's adaptations from *Sefer Kol Bo*, see *Minhagot Wormaiza*, 57, gl. 20; 63, gl. 8; 69, gl. 10. *Sefer Kol Bo*, a collection of ritual and civil laws, is of unknown authorship. Many are of the opinion that it was written by Aaron b. Jacob ha-Kohen or was either an abridgement or earlier form of the latter's *Orhot Hayyim*. It dates from the end of the thirteenth or beginning of the fourteenth century.

advance of Rosh Ha-Shanah should one conclude the sounding of the shofar, Kirchheim replaced the wording “on the eve of Rosh Ha-Shanah” (as per *Matteh Moshe*) with “three days prior to Rosh Ha-Shanah,” in order not to contradict the prevailing *minhag* in Germany.³⁵ There were, however, instances of incongruity between the custom as recorded historically and the contemporary local custom. For example, according to Maharil, it was customary to pronounce the *shehehiyanu* benediction at the evening reading of *Megilat Esther* on the night of Purim, and again at the morning reading. Kirchheim, however, recorded the local custom to pronounce *shehehiyanu* only in the evening, refusing to follow the more widely observed custom of Maharil. In most instances, local custom took precedence over more classical *minhagim*.³⁶

Owing to the substantial accent on ethics, morality, and spirituality that pervades *Minhagot Wormaiza*, it is no surprise that Kirchheim cited liberally from an array of sources that included *Midrash Aggadah*, *Sefer Hasidim*, and the traditions linked to R. Judah he-Hasid. These sources are quoted regularly in the author’s explanatory glosses, and are used to expand upon the terse text that rather dryly presents the order of prayer and ritual. Troubled by the potentially harmful spiritual effects of drunkenness, for example, Kirchheim quoted a lengthy story recorded in *Sefer Hasidim* about the causal nexus linking sexual promiscuity and intoxication. The account was intended as a general warning against overindulging in wine drinking on Purim, and its objective was to counter the popular claim that it is permissible to cast off the yoke of Torah and *mitzvot* during times of celebration.³⁷ In another instance, Kirchheim recounted a folktale, written in biblical language, about a king who offered a group of Jews a choice of eating pork, drinking his wine, or partaking of prostitution. They chose the wine, immediately became drunk, and before long were tricked into eating the pork and having sexual relations with women in the king’s court. When the king told them what they had done, they opted to die, “and within a year each one suffered a strange demise.” Kirchheim explained that “all of this came upon them because they chose to drink wine, which is rabbinically pro-

³⁵ Peles, introduction to Kirchheim, 32–33.

³⁶ Kirchheim, *Minhagot Wormaiza*, 221 and gl. 8.

³⁷ *Sefer Hasidim*, no. 169, cited in *Minhagot Wormaiza*, 222, gl. 9.

hibited in these times because it might lead to intermarriage, and even though the king is not considered in these times an idolater, the stringency and the punishment as set forth by the sages remain in force.” Kirchheim concluded that two lessons ought to be taken from the story: First, that “everyone must take heed not to be lenient concerning rabbinic teachings, whether in a large or small matter, “. . . and [second, that] wine especially brings a man to levity and shame.”³⁸ The fact that drunkenness was conceived as both the cause and effect of sinful behavior is consistent with the standard view that the Reformation had ushered in a new set of negative beliefs about alcohol and intoxication.³⁹ Kirchheim clearly shared this moral outrage.

Kirchheim turned regularly to traditions recorded in the name of R. Judah he-Hasid in order to establish the historical (and biblical) roots of selected prayers, and in so doing, to infuse prayer with greater meaning. In one instance, he cited a tradition preserved by *Matteh Moshe* that King Hezekiah established the prayer “*Elohai Yisrael*” (included in the elongated *Tahanun* petition recited on Monday and Thursday mornings) when Sennacherib had placed Jerusalem under siege. This is indicated by the fact that the number of words in the prayer is equivalent to the *gematria* (numerical value of Hebrew letters) of “Hezekiah,” when added to the two hours he prayed, and that the initial letter of each stanza spells the name Hezekiah, in reverse order. Finally, if one were to add all of the words in the prayer, including the refrain “*Elohai Yisrael*” between each stanza, the number would be the equivalent of “Hezekiah b. Ahaz,” which teaches that with this prayer, Hezekiah saved his father from being condemned to Gehinnom. Similarly, the experiences of the German Pietists (*Hasidei Ashkenaz*) furnished examples of extraordinary piety. In one instance Kirchheim quoted a story about R. Judah he-Hasid who strongly discouraged men from shaving their beards. A wealthy man who refused to heed the warning of R. Judah was severely punished for having shaved with a razor regularly.⁴⁰

³⁸ Kirchheim, *Minhagot Wormaiza*, 64–65, gl. 8.

³⁹ For a more nuanced view of drunkenness in terms of its social and cultural value, see B. Ann Tlusty, *Bacchus and Civic Order: The Culture of Drink in Early Modern Germany* (Charlottesville, VA, 2001).

⁴⁰ *Minhagot Wormaiza*, 43, gl. 4. Kirchheim here based himself on *Matteh Moshe* 220; *Minhagot Wormaiza*, 93, gl. 4.

Related to Kirchheim's loyalty to the classical Ashkenazic tradition were his strenuous efforts to defend German customs from becoming eclipsed by the burgeoning influence of Polish Jewry. His discussion of the phrase *El Melekh Ne'eman* offers a clear example of the growing tension between *minhag* Ashkenaz and *minhag* Poland. According to standard Ashkenazic practice, one would add the formula *El Melekh Ne'eman* immediately before reciting the Shema; by so doing one would bring the total number of words in the three paragraphs of the Shema to two hundred forty eight, which corresponds, according to rabbinic tradition, to the number of organs in the human body and to the number of positive commandments in the Torah. Kirchheim noted that R. Israel Issachar Shapira, who came from Pinsk in 1592 to assume the rabbinic post of Worms, instructed him not to say *El Melekh Ne'eman*, though this was the accepted custom in the community. Shapira's effort to introduce the Polish practice in Worms was undoubtedly an echo of kabbalistic influence, as indicated by R. Naftali Hirtz Treves in his siddur commentary. R. Naftali Hirtz reported that it had become common outside of Ashkenaz for the *sheli'ah tzibbur* to follow the kabbalistic practice to repeat the last three words of the Shema, יה' אלקיכם אמת, instead of each individual saying "*El Melekh Ne'eman*." Kirchheim nonetheless resisted the growing pressure emanating from the east—as affirmed in the ruling of R. Moses Isserles—and resolutely upheld the traditional Ashkenazic custom.⁴¹

The overwhelming majority of Kirchheim's glosses to *Minhagot Wormaiza* sought to anchor the finer points of liturgical and ritual performance in the classical texts of *halakhah* and *aggadah*. These sources were frequently cited at length and used in conjunction with parables, folklore, and *gematria* to supply vital explanations for ritual details, and wherever possible, to provide a spiritual stimulus as well. Such efforts represent a model of spiritualization that was free of the more speculative kabbalistic influences common elsewhere. This

⁴¹ *Minhagot Wormaiza*, 25, pls. 14–15; 240. See Tiengen siddur, with commentary of R. Naftali Hirtz, end of "Kri'at Shema," cited in Hamburger, *Shorshei Minhag Ashkenaz* (Benei Brak, 2000), vol. 2, 243; Joseph Nördlingen cited *Sefer Roke'ah* and his school, but his solution to reach the number 248 involved saying "amen" instead of *El Melekh Ne'eman*; see *Yosif Omets*, nos. 7 and 16–17. For the view of R. Aaron Worms of Metz, see *Me'orei Or* (Metz, 1790), vol. 1, 24b; *Be'er Sheva* (Metz, 1819), 5a and 26a. Isserles's ruling was recorded in *Shulhan Arukh*, Orach Hayyim 61:3.

trend is evident in Kirchheim's presentation of customs performed on the Sabbath and festivals. The considerable attention devoted to Sabbath preparations includes discussion of restricted activities on Friday afternoon, details concerning dress, baking of *hallah*, extensive discussion of candle lighting, and food preparation.⁴² Each of these themes was grounded in talmudic and midrashic sources, accompanied by a comprehensive digest of rabbinic instructions and aphorisms. They offer an image of the mundane world awaiting sanctification, poised to rouse spiritual elevation. Kirchheim would occasionally turn to rabbinic folklore as well to highlight the importance of certain Sabbath customs, including cutting the fingernails before the Sabbath, ensuring bodily cleanliness, and avoiding idle talk during certain prayers. Many cases of *gematria* were cited (or devised) in order to establish a clear connection between prayer and piety, and to indicate as well the protective properties of certain prayers.⁴³ Likewise, Kirchheim called attention to the special properties of individual psalms that belonged to *pesukei d'zimra* in the Sabbath morning liturgy.⁴⁴ His designation as to which of the Sabbath loaves to cut first—the bottom one on Friday night and the top one on the Sabbath day—followed the kabbalistic tradition.⁴⁵ Overall, a central theme in *Minhagot Wormaiza* was the enhancement of the soul through the fear of God.

An additional indication of the popular tendency of *Minhagot Wormaiza* was its enlistment of midrashic imagery in order to elucidate what were, undoubtedly for most householders, unintelligible terms and phrases in the liturgy. In the Midrash, Kirchheim found non-technical language to explain difficult halakhic concepts, as is evident in his glosses on the phraseology in the Sabbath Musaf liturgy.⁴⁶ Equally important to the general objective of the Worms compendium was the use of Midrash to enhance the spiritual meaning of prayer. Frequently, the attempt was made to link a liturgical phrase to a biblical/midrashic narrative. For example, the midrashic

⁴² *Minhagot Wormaiza*, 49–50.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 52, gl. 5; 53, gl. 9; 55, gl. 12; 56, gl. 16.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 55.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 54, gl. 10. Kirchheim's position in this case resembles that of Isserles, *Orah Hayyim* 271:1. According to *Sefer Kol Bo* 24, one always cuts the top loaf.

⁴⁶ See *Minhagot Wormaiza*, 61, gl. 2, where the explanation of קרבנותיה רצית based on *Vayikra Rabba* 27, s.v. vehaya shivat.

allusion to primordial Adam as the first to recite *Mizmor Shir le-Yom Ha-Shabbat* permitted Kirchheim to portray the Sabbath as a time for reconciliation with God.⁴⁷ In another instance, seeking to explicate the general order of prayers on the Sabbath, Kirchheim cited a passage in *Shemot Rabbah* that compared the Sabbath to a bride and God to a bridegroom. The variations of the Sabbath *amidah* were, in each case, an expression of this theme: “*Ata kidashta*” was intended to denote the betrothal ceremony (*kiddushin*), “*Yismah Moshe*” signified the joy of the bridegroom with the bride, and the Musaf service symbolized the extra amount that the bridegroom would add to the bride’s *ketubah*. Even well after the emergence of the Lurianic Kabbalah, this explanatory effort remained within the bounds of Midrash and was strikingly non-kabbalistic.⁴⁸ Concerning the prayer *Yismah Moshe*, Kirchheim offered two midrashic explanations, each of which was cited from *Sefer Abudraham*, aiming to place the Sabbath squarely within the Exodus narrative.⁴⁹ In each of the foregoing examples Kirchheim proved himself to be a skilled anthologist who regularly turned to well-known works on prayer and ritual, evidently to gain easy access to suitable *midrashim*.

Recourse to Midrash also permitted Kirchheim to supply popular explanations for the finer points of various rituals. On several occasions, he indicated that in the course of prayer one emulates the conduct of angels. The basis of the custom to stand during the recitation of יהי כבוד, he explained, was an aggadic passage about an angel that rises each morning in the middle of the firmament and proclaims the divine kingship. Kirchheim commented that “just as angels say [the prayer] standing, so we do as well.”⁵⁰ It is clear that the author believed that by locating a ritual act in an aggadic source, the ritual gained a spiritual dimension by becoming virtually timeless. Kabbalah appears to have served an identical function, as is evident from the several occasions when Kirchheim referred to R. Naftali Hirtz Treves’ kabbalistic commentary siddur. There it is explained that the expression הַפְּרוּחָה בְּכֹל יוֹם refers to the moment when שְׁהַרְיָאֵל הַמַּלְאָךְ opens the windows in the east, from where light

⁴⁷ Ibid., 57, gl. 20.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 57, gl. 22; 58; *Sefer Abudraham*, “Shaharit shel Shabbat” (source: *Shemot Rabbah* 1:32).

⁴⁹ Ibid., 57, gl. 22. *Sefer Abudraham*, “Shaharit shel Shabbat.”

⁵⁰ Ibid., 56, gl. 14; Joseph Karo, *Beit Yosef*, Orah Hayyim 50:1.

comes, with the doors facing the world, and the windows to the outside.⁵¹ Concerning the importance of reciting a daily regimen of psalms, Kirchheim referred to a kabbalistic custom to utter psalms every day, based on the view that the book of Psalms was subdivided into seven sections, corresponding to the seven days of the week. He reported that this was an ancient custom, based on a great *sod* from the early kabbalists, instituted by King David, that the *mizmorim* originate in “*lo tizmor*” and “*zamir aritzim ya’aneh*” (Isa. 25:5), each of which signifies destruction of adversaries and talebearers seeking to do harm. The psalms are thus portrayed as instruments of protection against the persecution or devastation that may be visited upon the nation or upon individuals.

The protection afforded by prayer is a recurring theme in *Minhagot Wormaiza*. In the popular imagination, demons were unquestionably the leading offenders. The inclusion of phrases imploring God to “grant us good advice” in the evening *השכיבנו* (*Hashkiveinu*) prayer were deemed necessary “because the night requires protection from demons more than the day.” To make this point more emphatically, Kirchheim cited a parable, as he frequently did, to augment the standard explanation. He recorded the story of a king who needed to carry weapons only when he was without the protection of his own soldiers. In the same way, Kirchheim asserted, Jews during the week days were overcome with fear and therefore were unable to fulfill the *mitzvot* as they should; “and since these days possess no merit on their own, as does the Sabbath, there is a need to pray that they will not be harmed by demons.” The weekday *השכיבנו* prayer therefore concluded with “protect our comings and goings” and “Blessed are you God, protector of Israel forever.” Whereas the *mitzvot* performed on the Sabbath acted as a protective shield, prayer was likened to weaponry with power of its own. And since the Sabbath was viewed as providing respite from the onslaught of demons that have free reign during the week, the pronouncement of the prayer *וידי גועם* at the close of the Sabbath was considered necessary as a countervailing force.⁵² Whether the preoccupation with demonology was connected to the difficult circumstances facing German Jewry in the early modern period is unclear. Although belief

⁵¹ Ibid., 57, gl. 18.

⁵² Ibid., 48, gl. 8 and 67, gl. 4. Cf. 51, citing *Matteh Moshe*, no. 425.

in demons was still commonplace, the precariousness of life in this era, especially insofar as it reflected Jewish-Gentile tensions, doubtless made the need for protection more pressing still. Frequent references to adversity and persecution punctuate Kirchheim's exposition of local customs, as is evident from examples of threats to the physical security of the Jews at sensitive times, e.g. Easter, or the general tension that existed between the community and members of the guilds.⁵³

The challenges of the sixteenth century produced enormous pressures that were felt in all areas of life, not least of which in the spiritual realm. Despite the undeniably constructive efforts of humanists, anti-Jewish sentiment remained unrelenting in both Protestant and Catholic territories. Legal disabilities persisted, the threat of expulsion was undiminished, and the possibility that persecution could erupt without warning was ever-present. With the spectacular rise of Poland as a new center of Jewish life, German Jewry was, by most accounts, left orphaned. Nevertheless, a close examination of sixteenth-century rabbinic culture offers evidence to the contrary. Though not nearly as well known as their prominent contemporaries to the east, members of the German rabbinic elite were nonetheless involved in serious Talmudic scholarship and the study of Kabbalah. From the standpoint of cultural history, the determination to assemble and preserve local customs signified an historic transition from elite to more popular religion. Although the compilation of *minhagim* by Juda Loewe Kirchheim was undertaken in an era of diminished scholarly activity in Germany, it ought to be viewed as an adamant refusal to surrender the legacy of Ashkenazic culture in light of the ascendancy of Polish Jewry. The example of *Minhagot Wormaiza* offers substantial insight into the method of selecting among the various strands of a centuries-old tradition, and reveals one generation's sustained effort to come to terms with the changes wrought by the inexorable passage of time.

⁵³ Ibid., 245–46, gls. 19 and 20; 264.

GERMAN JEWISH PRINTING IN THE REFORMATION ERA (1530–1633)*

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The pioneers of German Jewish printing faced daunting obstacles in their attempts to found and run profitable businesses during a century of religious and political conflict. Yet the Jewish book trade grew and flourished during this period as both the import of Jewish books from Bohemia, Italy, and Poland and the founding of new Jewish presses within the German territories of the Holy Roman Empire demonstrate. While the religious rivalry and conflicts between Catholic and Protestant and between Reformed and Lutheran often complicated the business prospects of these entrepreneurs, the thirst for Hebrew learning among Christians, particularly among Protestants, proved to be a strong argument in favor of allowing Jewish presses to operate. Nevertheless, a combination of restrictive local work and residency policies and the relatively small regional Jewish customer base in Reformation-era Germany doomed many of these presses to failure.

Over the past fifty years most of the scholarly research in the field of German Jewish printing in the Reformation era has fallen into three major categories: bibliographical research, studies of individual printers, and studies of the language and/or text of individual imprints. The most important bibliographical study of German Jewish imprints both in terms of its significance and quality is Joseph Priejs' monumental study of Basel Hebrew printing (1964).¹ More recently Moshe

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¹ Joseph Priejs, *Die Basler Hebräische Drucke (1492–1866)*, ed. Bernhard Priejs (Olten and Freiburg im Breisgau, 1964).

Rosenfeld's bibliographies of Augsburg Hebrew imprints and of early Yiddish printing have provided greater clarity for these two classes of imprints.² Herbert C. Zafren analyzed more technical elements of book production, contributing studies on the typography of Yiddish and an impressive analytical bibliographic study of Hanau imprints. In the latter work he provided not only a rigorous study of his chosen topic, but a word of methodological caution that the true volume of German Jewish printing, as measured by number of titles produced, has yet to be measured accurately.³

Some German Jewish printers have also received scholarly attention, especially those active before 1550. Abraham M. Haberman wrote bio-bibliographical studies of the presses of Hayim Schwarz, Paul Fagius, and Israel Zifroni.⁴ Raubenheimer and Weil in their biographies of Fagius and Elijah Levita each devoted some discussion to the Fagius press as well.⁵ I have written an article on Hebrew censorship in Hanau as not only a reflection of local standards of censorship, but as an expression of German imperial law.⁶ The third trend within German Jewish book history, the study of individual texts, lies outside of the scope of this article, but a number of studies especially of Yiddish language works have been published over

² Moshe N. Rosenfeld, *Jewish Printing in Augsburg during the First Half of the Sixteenth Century* (London, 1985), and "The Origins of Yiddish Printing," in *Origins of the Yiddish Language*, Winter Studies in Yiddish Volume 1, ed. Dovid Katz (Oxford, 1987), 111–26.

³ Herbert C. Zafren, "Variety in the Typography of Yiddish: 1535–1635," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 53 (1983): 137–63, and "A Probe into Hebrew Printing in Hanau in the Seventeenth Century or How Quantifiable is Hebrew Typography," in *Studies in Judaica, Karaitica and Islamica Presented to Leon Nemoy on his Eightieth Birthday*, ed. Sheldon R. Brunswick (Ramat Gan, 1982), 274–85.

⁴ Haberman's essays "The Press of Hayim Shahor [Schwarz], his son and his son-in-law," "The Press of Paul Fagius and the Books of his Print Shop," and "The Press of Israel Zifroni and his Son Elishema and their Books," [all in Hebrew] have been reprinted in his *Studies in the History of Hebrew Printers and Books* (Jerusalem, 1978), 103–30, 149–66, and 167–214.

⁵ Richard Raubenheimer, *Paul Fagius aus Rheinzabern: Sein Leben und Wirken als Reformator und Gelehrter* (Grünstadt, 1957), 25–48, and Gerard E. Weil, *Élie Léviata Humaniste et Massorète (1469–1549)* (Leiden, 1963), 133–51.

⁶ Stephen G. Burnett, "Hebrew Censorship in Hanau: A Mirror of Jewish-Christian Coexistence in Seventeenth Century Germany," in *The Expulsion of the Jews: 1492 and After*, ed. Raymond B. Waddington and Arthur H. Williamson (New York, 1994), 199–222.

the last two decades, most recently Astrid Starck's French translation and commentary on the *Maase Buch* (1602).⁷

The portrait that emerges from most existing research is a rather fragmented one of individual printers and books bobbing like corks within the stormy political seas of Reformation-era Germany. The broader political and religious trends that set the conditions under which Jewish printers operated have not been fully considered, although these trends were of critical importance for understanding Jewish presses as businesses. Scholars of German Jewish printing have also tended to focus upon the evidence of the books themselves without seeking to use archival records to flesh out the circumstances in which these books were produced.⁸ An analysis of German Jewish printing within the context of the overall German book trade provides important new insights into both the limitations and possibilities for Jews as producers of cultural products in the Reformation era. Hans-Jörg Künast provided an excellent example of this approach in his study of Jewish printing in Augsburg. By analyzing Jewish printing within the overall context of printing in Augsburg he shed important new light upon the printing career of Hayim Schwarz.⁹

In this study I will consider how the Reformation affected these Jewish printers and their businesses as they attempted to produce and sell Jewish books to a largely Jewish clientele. First I will present capsule histories of the various presses as they operated both before the suppression of the Talmud in 1553, and then afterwards in a new climate of restrictions and press controls. Then I will discuss aspects of the Hebrew printing business, including the creation of printable texts (authors, editors, and censors), customer demand for Jewish books, and how presses financed their activities. And finally, I will consider the theme of Jewish-Christian cooperation in producing Jewish books, since many of these presses were owned by Christians.

⁷ *Un beau livre d'histoires/Eyn shön Mayse bukh, Traduction du Yiddish, introduction et notes*, 2 vols, ed. and trans. Astrid Starck (Basel, 2004).

⁸ Zafren warned of the limits of a purely "artifactual approach" in his "Probe into Hebrew Printing in Hanau," 283.

⁹ Hans-Jörg Künast, "Hebräisch-jüdischer Buchdruck in Schwaben in der ersten Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts," in *Landjudentum im deutschen Südwesten während der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Rolf Kiessling and Sabine Ullmann (Berlin, 1999), 277–303.

German Jewish Printers, 1530–1633

The Reformation had little practical impact upon German Jewish presses before 1553. The printers who produced books in this period were either independent “wandering printers” in the manner of Gershom Soncino or were dependent upon wealthy patrons. Only after 1553 did the papal campaign to suppress the Talmud and the increasingly intrusive imperial printing laws begin to limit where printers could work and what they could print.

Hayim Schwarz (1530–46) had been a printer in Prague during the late 1520s but decided to seek his fortune in Germany after 1527, when the Cohen family was granted an exclusive privilege to print Jewish books in Prague.¹⁰ He printed books in Oels (1530), Augsburg (1533–40), Ichenhausen (1543–44), and Heddernheim (1546), and ultimately left Germany for Lublin, where he died between 1548 and 1551.¹¹ While in Augsburg Schwarz worked in the print shop of Silvan Otmar, and lived in the home of Bonifacius Wolfhart, a Protestant pastor who also served as the censor of Hebrew books for Augsburg.¹² Schwarz left Augsburg in 1540 when he and Jewish convert Paul Aemilius were unable to form a partnership. Aemilius worked only a relatively short time as a Jewish printer, but he is important because he was one of the first printers of Judeo-German books. He enjoyed the generous patronage of Johann Albrecht Widmanstetter.¹³

The Hebrew press of Paul Fagius was also relatively short-lived, but it was particularly important for Christian Hebraists since it produced texts and reference books that were critically important to their work.¹⁴ Fagius was able to hire Elijah Levita to work at the press between December of 1540 and November of 1541.¹⁵ Levita

¹⁰ Bedrich Nosek, “Katalog mit der Auswahl Hebräischer Drucker Prager Provinenz, Teil 1: Drucker der Gersoniden im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert,” *Judaica Bohemiae* 10 (1974): 15.

¹¹ Marvin J. Heller, *Printing the Talmud: A History of the Earliest Printed Editions of the Talmud* (Brooklyn, 1992), 328.

¹² Künast, “Hebräisch-jüdischer Buchdruck in Schwaben,” 283 and 286.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 287–91.

¹⁴ Weil, *Élie Levita*, 248–85.

¹⁵ Levita arrived in Isny at the beginning of December, 1540. Gervasius Schuler to Heinrich Bullinger, Memmingen, 14 December 1540, in *Heinrich Bullinger Briefwechsel*, vol. 10: *Briefe des Jahres 1540*, ed. Hans Ulrich Bächtold and Rainer Heinrich (Zurich,

was not only an experienced printer and corrector, but also a scholar and well-known writer. He reprinted a number of his earlier books in Isny and two books for the very first time: *Sefer Meturgeman*, an Aramaic dictionary for readers of the Targums, and *Sefer Tishbi*, a short dictionary of post-biblical Hebrew. Yet after a promising beginning, Fagius was unable to attract enough customers to make the press financially successful. Fagius sold the remainder of his press inventory to Strasbourg bookseller Georg Messerschmidt in 1549. The size of his unsold inventory gives mute testimony to Fagius' shortcomings as an entrepreneur.¹⁶ In the end Fagius left over 1,000 Reichstaler in debts behind him when he was called to Strasbourg in 1544 to serve as a pastor there and to teach Hebrew at the Strasbourg academy.

The final Jewish printer who worked before 1550 was Samuel Helicz, a member of the first family of Jewish printers in Poland. With his partner Helicz moved to Oels in Silesia in 1534 to found a press there. But a terrible storm severely damaged his press, and scattered his inventory throughout the town and countryside. As Oels minister Ambrosius Moibans described it, "... the printed gatherings were blown over all houses, in the streets, throughout the town and outside of the town, even in the fields, torn and hanging from walls and trees." There were so many printed leaves throughout the area that it "looked as if it had snowed."¹⁷ Samuel was able to print one book in 1536, but in 1537 he converted and was baptized. At the end of his life, after he had left Germany for Constantinople, he returned to Judaism.¹⁸

2003), 197. Levita had already left Isny by the time Fagius was first called to Strasbourg in November of 1541. Weil, *Élie Lévitá*, 141–43.

¹⁶ The inventory is printed in Weil, *Élie Lévitá*, 149–51.

¹⁷ "Dergleichen so haben sie daselbst bey jnen eine fast werckliche drückerei zugericht, darinne sie das Alte testament, so jnn jrer sprache auff's new mit einer glossen und auslegung corrigirt worden, jnn Hebreischer zunge zu drucken furgenommen, welcher exemplar sie ein gantz gemacht alle vol gehabt. Dieses eingerissen, die Exemplar und gedruckten sexternen uber alle heuser jn die gassen, der stad, fuer die stad, auch jnn alle weite feld gefurt eines jnn das ander gemenet, zurissen, an die zeune und beume gehangen, das man des morgens, wie es tag worden, jnn und fur der stad, auch auff dem felde hin und wider geringes umb die stad die selber scarten und gedruckts papir souviel und gantz dicke geligen und funder jnn massen, wie es geschneiet hette." Printed in Gotthard Münch, "Das Oelser Unwetter von 1535 und Moibans Auslegung des 29. Psalms," *Jahrbuch für schlesische Kirchengeschichte* 52 (1973): 55–56.

¹⁸ *The Hebrew Book: An Historical Survey*, ed. Raphael Posner and Israel Ta-Shma (Jerusalem, 1975), 155.

These early Jewish printers all printed their books before the Reformation had begun to have an effect upon the laws regulating printing and the sale of books. Jewish presses had been allowed not only in Germany but also more importantly in various Italian cities, in Prague, and in Cracow. There were no religious or legal limitations upon which books or which kinds of books Jewish printers could produce. Pope Leo X had even granted Daniel Bomberg a privilege to print the Talmud in 1520.¹⁹ The only legal obligation that Jewish printers had to fulfill under imperial law was that each book be properly censored.²⁰ After 1553, the legal environment for Jewish printing changed abruptly.

On 9 September 1553, the Talmud was publicly burned in the Campo de' Fiori in Rome by command of the Roman Inquisition.²¹ The Inquisition justified the destruction of the Talmud by claiming that it was a blasphemous work. Over the next several months other Italian cities confiscated and publicly burned the Talmud following this decree.²² The Talmud and its interpretations were added to the *Index of Prohibited Books* in 1559.²³ The Holy Roman Empire did not officially take up the papal campaign against the Talmud, yet it was a religious and political factor in their policies on printing and the book trade. The Jewish presses in Tiengen and Thannhausen, located in Catholic ruled lands, were both closed down by the authorities, in part because in each case the printers planned to print the Talmud.

If the Holy Roman Empire did not follow papal policy, imperial law increasingly restricted the activities of printers during the second half of the sixteenth century. In response to Luther and other

¹⁹ The privilege itself has not survived but was extensively quoted in Shlomo Simonsohn, *The Apostolic See and the Jews*, vol. 4, *Documents: 1522–1548* (Toronto, 1990), document 1559.

²⁰ Stephen G. Burnett, "The Regulation of Hebrew Printing in Germany, 1555–1630: Confessional Politics and the Limits of Jewish Toleration," in *Infinite Boundaries: Order, Disorder, and Reorder in Early Modern German Culture*, ed. Max Reinhart and Thomas Robisheaux (Kirkville, 1998), 329–48.

²¹ Fausto Parente, "The Index, The Holy Office, The Condemnation of the Talmud and Publication of Clement VIII's Index," in *Church, Censorship and Culture in Early Modern Italy*, ed. Gigliola Fragnito and trans. Adrian Belton (Cambridge, 2001), 164.

²² Kenneth R. Stow, "The Burning of the Talmud in 1553, In Light of Sixteenth Century Catholic Attitudes Toward the Talmud," *BHR* 34 (1972): 435.

²³ Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, "Censorship, Editing and the Reshaping of Jewish Identity: The Catholic Church and Hebrew Literature in the Sixteenth Century," in *Hebraica Veritas*, 129.

Protestant polemicists, the estates of the Empire began in 1521 at the Diet of Worms to create a legal framework for controlling what was printed and sold within Germany. A series of decisions passed by the Diets of Nuremberg (1524), Speyer (1529), and Augsburg (1530) made territorial princes and city magistrates responsible for ensuring that all books produced within their jurisdictions were properly censored and made it clear that all offenders, whether authors or printers, would be punished for violations.²⁴ New regulations passed by the Diet of Speyer (1570) and incorporated into the *Reichspolizeiordnung* of 1577 required that all presses be located in imperial cities, university towns, or residence cities to ensure that all books were properly censored. No clandestine presses (*Winkeldruckereien*) were to be tolerated. Printers who operated such presses were to be arrested and their books and printing equipment to be seized. All books were to list on their title page the place where they were printed, the name of the author, and the year, to ensure that responsibility for each book was clear.²⁵ In 1579, Emperor Maximilian II attempted to extend his authority over book sales at the Frankfurt book fair by creating the Imperial Book Commission. Each of these measures had consequences for German Jewish printing. These new policies, above all those that limited the possible locations for printing businesses, affected German Jewish printers disproportionately because of the highly restrictive residence policies of most German cities.

Eliezer b. Naftali Hirz Treves and Joseph b. Naftali were the first German Jewish printers to experience the consequences of the Talmud prohibition. After they had printed a Judeo-German Psalter in Zurich (1558), they moved their press to Tiengen (Baden). While their only extant works are prayerbooks, they evidently planned to print the Talmud as well. The Suffragen Bishop of Constance was willing to allow the press to operate, but the Swiss Confederation, to which the County of Sulz was subject, was not. On 24 June 1560, representatives of the Confederation learned of the Tiengen press and ordered that the press be closed. Apparently Eliezer and Joseph did not completely give up on their plans. In 1561 unnamed Jewish printers sought permission to print the Talmud in Basel. Hieronymus Froben and Nicolaus Episcopius were willing to print the Talmud,

²⁴ Burnett, "Regulation of Hebrew Printing," 331–32.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 332.

but they were forbidden to do so by the city council.²⁶ Only twenty years later Ambrosius Froben, son of Hieronymus, would print the Talmud in Basel.

The Jewish press in Thannhausen was the best example of the effectiveness of the new imperial laws concerning clandestine presses. The printers operated openly, and the title pages of their books contained not only Thannhausen as their place of origin and year, but even the names of both the Jewish and Christian printers themselves (in Hebrew). But the press was located in a market town, not in an imperial city, a university town, or a residence city. The imperial authorities in Burgau ordered that the press be closed in June of 1594, and that both the printing equipment and the books be confiscated. One of the correctors, Rabbi Isaac Mazia was arrested, but the other three printers were able to escape from the authorities in time. The time of itinerant and small town German Jewish printers was over.

The final three Jewish presses active between 1550 and 1630 were quite different firms from their predecessors. They were not only much larger firms that produced far more books (75% of all Jewish books produced in Germany before 1650), but they were also far better financed and had close connections with the Frankfurt Jewish community, the second largest in the Holy Roman Empire outside of Prague.²⁷ Significantly, they were also located in Protestant cities, whose rulers were aware that some kinds of Jewish printing, particularly Hebrew Bibles, could benefit Protestants as well.

Basel was one of the most important centers of Hebrew printing in Europe, both for Christian Hebrew imprints and for Jewish printing.²⁸ The two Basel Hebrew press owners, Ambrosius Froben (1578–84) and Conrad Waldkirch (1593?/98–1612) were both Christians. Neither Froben nor Waldkirch printed Hebrew books at the beginning of his printing career, but when each of them entered the business he printed Hebraica for both Jewish and Christian customers.

²⁶ “Spes erat hic aliqua illum sustentari posse si Talmud Judaicum types excusum esset. Quod conabantur Frobeniami & Eposcopii nisi a m(a)g(ist)ratu prohibiti essent.” Johannes Jung to Heinrich Bullinger, Basel, 15. Juli 1561, ZüSA E II 375, 637r.

²⁷ Herbert C. Zafren, “Hebrew Printing by and for Frankfurt Jews—to 1800,” in *Jüdische Kultur in Frankfurt am Main von den Angängen bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Karl E. Grözinger (Wiesbaden, 1997), 231–71.

²⁸ Yeshayahu Vinograd, “The Hebrew Press in the Sixteenth Century (1540–1640),” *Alei Sefer* 15 (1988–89): 131 [Hebrew].

Ambrosius Froben officially began his career as a Hebrew printer on 2 April 1578, when he signed a contract with a Frankfurt Jew, Simon Günzburg zum Gembs, to print the Talmud.²⁹ Froben was to hire the necessary Jewish printers and prepare his press to produce 1,100 copies of the Talmud. He would make six deliveries to Simon zum Gembs during the spring and fall Frankfurt book fairs over the course of the following three years.³⁰ Froben was also responsible for negotiating for permission to print the Talmud in Basel and to hire a competent censor who would work in Basel itself. Initially Froben hired Immanuel Tremellius to serve as censor, and later his student Pierre Chevalier of Geneva.³¹

Fausto Parente's recent research in the newly opened Vatican archive of the Congregation of the Index has shed important new light upon the actual Talmud text that Froben was to print.³² The contract itself stated that the Talmud text would be from the Venice 1547 Talmud printing of Marcus Antonius Justiniani, as censored by Marco Marino to make it conform to the requirements of the Index.³³ Parente discovered documents that indicate that the Talmud text had been purged by Marino and his assistants between 1575 and early 1578, under orders from the Congregation of the Index, led by Cardinal Guglielmo Sirleto. The legal basis for Marino's work was the decision of the Council of Trent in 1563 to classify the Talmud among those books that were "prohibited only provisionally 'until they had been expurgated.'"³⁴ Only after the election of Pope

²⁹ Bonaventura Vulcanus, an editor who worked for Froben, reported his plans to print the Talmud in a letter to Rudolf Gwalther in mid 1577. Vulcanus to Gwalther, Basel, after 12 May 1577, in *Correspondance de Bonaventura Vulcanius Pendant son Séjour à Cologne, Genève et Bâle*, ed. H. de Vries de Heekelingen (The Hague, 1923), 249–52.

³⁰ Articulirte Clag, Simon Judeus zum Gemms clager contra Herrn Ambrosius Frobenium Buchdrucker zu Basel beclagen, Frankfurt/Main, Institut für Stadtgeschichte, Sig. Judicialia F 211, ff. 50a–51a (points 1–4); summarized by Heinrich Pallmann, "Ambrosius Froben von Basel als Drucker des Talmud," *Archiv des Deutschen Buchhandels* 7 (1882): 47.

³¹ Immanuel Tremelius to Theodore Beza, [Sedan, September/October, 1579?], in *Correspondance de Théodore de Bèze*, ed. Alain Dufour, Béatrice Nicollier, and Reinhard Bodenmann, vol. 20 (1579) (Geneva, 1998), 194–99.

³² Fausto Parente, "The Index, the Holy Office," 171–72.

³³ "Articulirte Clag, Simon Judeus zum Gemms . . .," Frankfurt/Main, Institut für Stadtgeschichte, Sig. Judicialia F 211, f. 50b, quoted by Pallmann, "Ambrosius Froben," 47.

³⁴ Parente, "The Index, the Holy Office," 169–73.

Gregory XIII in 1572 did the Church itself act upon this possibility. Simon zum Gembs apparently learned of the existence of this officially expurgated Talmud text in Italy, probably from Jews in Mantua. In their initial opinion on the Talmud printing the Basel theological faculty reported that permission had been obtained (presumably by Simon zum Gembs) from the “highest rabbi in Mantua and his officials” to print the Talmud.³⁵

Froben’s efforts to produce a Talmud that could legally be sold in Catholic lands sparked a determined Catholic campaign aimed at its suppression. Ambrosius Froben and the Basel authorities were pressured by imperial and Swiss authorities no fewer than four times from late 1578 through 1579 in an effort to forbid the printing and sale of the Talmud. The emperor himself sent two letters, one dated 29 November 1578, and the other dated 25 June 1579, to the Basel city council demanding that they order Froben to stop printing the Talmud.³⁶ The papal nuncio in Switzerland also met secretly with representatives of Lucerne and Canton Fribourg, and convinced them to make the same demand of the Basel authorities at the meeting of the Swiss Confederation in July of 1579. When Froben visited the Frankfurt book fair in order to deliver an installment of the Talmud printing to Simon zum Gembs, he was summoned by the Imperial Book Commission to answer questions about his activities (10–16 September 1579).³⁷

Froben’s reaction to these efforts to stop him from printing the Talmud was, paradoxically, to seek direct negotiations with papal authorities. In violation of his contract, Froben had already begun producing a second printing of the Talmud in 1581, with the plan of selling it in Italy himself.³⁸ He traveled to Rome in late 1581 to

³⁵ “Wyl man höre, dass der fürnembste Rabi zu Mantua sampt seiner verordneten verwilligett habe.” Opinion of the Basel Theological Faculty, n. d., Basel SA, Handel und Gewebe III 13, f. 50r. See Ernst Staehelin, “Des Basler Buchdruckers Ambrosius Froben Talmudausgabe und Handel mit Rom,” BZGA 30 (1931): 9–10. Shlomo Simonsohn, *History of the Jews in the Duchy of Mantua* (Jerusalem, 1977), 415–29 discusses the Mantua Jewish community’s leading role in negotiating with the Catholic Church for permission to reprint the Talmud between 1563 and 1590, but did not mention a rabbinic authorization for a Basel Talmud printing.

³⁶ Parente noted that the emperor was pressured to intervene by Cardinal Giulio Antonio Santorio. “The Index, The Holy Office,” 172 n. 32.

³⁷ Burnett, “Regulation of Hebrew Printing,” 340–41.

³⁸ Bernhard Prijs and Hermann Süß, “Neues vom Basler Talmuddruck. 2 Nachträge zu J. und B. Prijs, ‘Die Basler Hebräischen Drucke’ Olten/Freiburg i. Br. 1964,” BZGA 82 (1982): 205–12.

negotiate for permission to sell his new Talmud printing in Italy, and converted to Catholicism on 31 January 1582, in order to better represent his own interests.³⁹ On 1 June 1582, Pope Gregory XIII dashed Froben's hopes by condemning Froben's expurgated edition of the Talmud and ordering canonical punishments for Marco Marino. By Froben's account, Marino had not personally censored the entire Talmud text, but only the "most dangerous parts." Marino's assistants censored the rest of the Talmudic text.⁴⁰ In 1596, Pope Clement VIII would order the wording of the Talmud entry in the *Index of Prohibited Books* changed to prohibit its printing outright.⁴¹

While Froben lost the opportunity for Talmud sales in Italy, Simon zum Gembs lost much of his investment because of the poor quality of the Talmud tractates that Froben delivered to him. According to the terms of the contract Simon zum Gembs would pay Froben a third of the printing costs at the beginning of the contract, and would then pay off the balance in six payments as Froben delivered printed tractates to the Frankfurt book fair.⁴² After receiving these shipments, Simon discovered the Talmud text had suffered greatly at the hands of the censors, and the individual gatherings had been printed poorly by Froben himself. Froben's assistants had then packed them helter skelter into barrels for shipment, mixing gatherings from different tractates together. After receiving delivery, Simon then had to have the gatherings arranged in their proper order so that he would have complete copies of the Talmud to sell. Therefore Simon zum Gembs revoked his contract with Froben on 21 October 1580, and filed a lawsuit against him in Frankfurt am Main, seeking to receive 9,000 Reichsthaler in damages.⁴³ In the end neither Simon nor his heirs and backers were able to conclude their lawsuit because Froben retired from the printing business and never traveled to Frankfurt to stand trial.

Since Froben had acquired enough Hebrew type and he had hired experienced Jewish printers, he produced other Hebrew books for

³⁹ Parente, "The Index, the Holy Office," 173.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 193.

⁴² "Articulirte Clag, Simon Judeus zum Gemms . . .," Frankfurt/Main, Institut für Stadtgeschichte, Sig. Judicialia F 211, f. 50b, quoted by Pallmann, "Ambrosius Froben," 47.

⁴³ "Articulirte Clag, Simon Judeus zum Gemms . . .," Frankfurt/Main, Institut für Stadtgeschichte, Sig. Judicialia F 211, f. 56a.

Jewish and Christian customers in addition to the Talmud. In 1580 Froben printed Marco Marino's Hebrew grammar *Gan Eden*. Three years later the three sons of Aaron of Pesaro brought his manuscript book *Toledot Aharon* from Italy to Freiburg im Breisgau to have it printed by Israel Zifroni by the Froben press.⁴⁴

Conrad Waldkirch's experience as a Jewish printer was far more peaceful and profitable than Froben's had been. He was a well-established printer who sent new books to the Frankfurt book fair almost every year between 1583 and his death in 1616 (134 books in Latin and German). In addition, he served as the semi-official printer of Basel University, and printed 780 disputations, posters and other university-related items over the course of his career.⁴⁵ A third of his overall book production consisted of Hebrew works, whether for Christians (14 books) or for Jews (48 books). Waldkirch's Jewish printers lived in Alschwyl, a village in the Bishopric of Basel, just outside of the city itself. His censor and Hebrew correspondence secretary was Johannes Buxtorf the Elder, professor of Hebrew at Basel University. Waldkirch apparently produced Jewish books under contract. When a Jewish author or patron wished to have a book printed they would pay the production costs and then receive delivery of the entire production run. Waldkirch never listed his Jewish imprints in the Frankfurt book fair catalogues. When Buxtorf mentioned one of Waldkirch's Jewish books, *Megillat Sefer* (1610), a guide to Jewish letter-writing, he noted that it was available for sale "from Jews in Frankfurt."⁴⁶

The final German Jewish press which was active during the Reformation era was the "oriental press" of Hanau. It was founded in 1609 and received an elaborately written concession from Count Philipp Ludwig of Hanau-Münzenburg. The press was financed by Isaac zum Krebs, Abraham zum gulden Schaff, and Samuel zum weissen Rosen, three Frankfurt Jews. The Christian press owner was Hans Jacob Henne, an experienced Christian printer of Hebraica who had previously worked in Basel, and his chief assistant was Seligman Ulma, the Jewish corrector.⁴⁷ During its first three to four

⁴⁴ Prijs, *Drucke*, 219–20 and 233–34.

⁴⁵ Production figures for Waldkirch have been drawn from the *Basler Drucker Katalog*, Basel UB.

⁴⁶ Burnett, *From Christian Hebraism*, 44.

⁴⁷ Printing Privilege, 1 May 1609, Marburg SA, Best 81 BI 81 no. 23, ff. 20a.

years the press produced an impressive array of works including three Hebrew Bible printings, one of which (a Hebrew Bible) was intended also for Christian readers, three responsa collections, and Jacob b. Asher's legal compendium *Arba'a Turim*. After 1614, production slowed to a crawl, usually averaging no more than one to two books a year.⁴⁸

The press had production difficulties for a variety of reasons. There were constantly personnel problems. Seligman Ulma proved to be incapable of correcting very complicated Hebrew books, such as the Bible edition of 1611–14, as Henne complained in a letter of August 1611.⁴⁹ Henne himself died on 17 March 1613. During 1619 the press lay idle, perhaps because two of its experienced Jewish printers, Eliyahu ben Yehuda Ulma and Abraham ben Eliezer Braunschweig, had been hired by Ludwig König to work on the Basel *Biblia rabbinica* (1618–19).

The three Frankfurt Jews who operated the press had far more serious problems to overcome. On 2 September 1614, they and the rest of the Frankfurt Jewish community were driven from the city by Vincent Fettmilch and his followers. Only two years later were they allowed to return.⁵⁰ The press had already run up debts of 2,000 Reichsthaler by 1616.⁵¹ Between 1621 and 1632, both Hanau and nearby Frankfurt were embroiled in the Thirty Years War, which further complicated the business prospects of the press.⁵² If they were to print books, could they find enough customers to recoup their costs?

Both the number of books that were produced by the Hanau printers and how long they remained in business have long remained unanswered questions. The final dated archival record related specifically to the press was Walter Keuchen's censorship report on

On the three Jewish partners see Alexander Dietz, *Stammbuch der Frankfurter Juden: geschichtliche Mitteilungen über die Frankfurter jüdischen Familien von 1349–1849* (Frankfurt am Main, 1907), 458, no. 95 (Isaac zum Krebs [Langenbach]), 469, no. 56 (Abraham zum gulden Schaff), and 468, no. 149 (Samuel zum weissen Rosen [Gelhäuser IV]).

⁴⁸ Yeshayahu Vinograd, *Thesaurus of the Hebrew Book*, vol. 2: *Places of Print* (Jerusalem, 1993), 162 [Hebrew].

⁴⁹ Hans Jacob Henne to Count Philipp Ludwig, n. p., August 1611, Marburg SA Best. 81 BI 81, no. 23, ff. 25a–b.

⁵⁰ Salo W. Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, vol. XVI: *Catholic Restoration and Wars of Religion* (New York, 1969), 195–96.

⁵¹ Petition from Abraham zum gulden Schaf and Isaac zum Krebs, July 30, 1616. Marburg SA Best. 81 BI 81, no. 23, f. 36a.

⁵² See Manfred Agethen, *Judenpolitik in der Grafschaft Hanau* (forthcoming).

Talmud tractate *Hullin*, dated 3 May 1622.⁵³ Steinschneider, Vinograd, and other bibliographers have attributed to the Hanau press a number of Jewish books produced between 1622 and 1630 which bore no place of publication, or gave an obviously false one.⁵⁴ Zafren questioned the attribution of these later imprints to Hanau through a rigorous typographical analysis of a selection of Hanau imprints produced between 1610 and 1630.⁵⁵ He concluded that the only demonstrable connection between the pre-1622 Hanau imprints and the later ones were the names of a few of the same printers that appeared in colophons, and that very little of the type or decorative borders of the early press appeared in the later imprints.⁵⁶

My own analysis of the imprints and of the surviving archival material suggests that the Hanau press continued to operate after 1622. The sequence of worker names that appear in the colophons of later “Hanau” imprints indicates at least the continuity of the Hanau printing firm, whether located in Hanau or elsewhere. The two most important workers were Eliyahu ben Yehuda Ulma (named in colophons in imprints dated 1614, 1623, 1625–26, 1628, and 1630) and Abraham ben Yequiel ha-Cohen Burgau (1610, 1623, 1627–28, and 1630).⁵⁷ Other workers active in the later press included Mordechai ben Yaakov of Prossnitz (1623 and 1625), and Isaac b. R. Shimon Shmuel Ha-Levi (1623).⁵⁸ The final five “Hanau” imprints (dating from 1627–30), Jacob b. Jekutiel Kofmann, *Edut Yaacov* (1627), a *Siddur* (1628), Jacob Levi ben Moses Moelln, *Sefer Maharil* (1628), Moses b. Israel Isserles, *Torat he-Hata* (1628), and Eleazar ben Judah

⁵³ Marburg SA Best. 81 B81 3/4 no. 5, fol. 79.

⁵⁴ For example, see his entries for the following prayerbooks: *Siddur*: StCB p. 321/2124, p. 322/2126, 2127, and 2130; *Machzor*: StCB 378/2474, *Selichot*: StCB 435/2850. Vinograd, *Thesaurus of the Hebrew Book*, 2:163, Hanau numbers, 36, 37, 43, and 50; *Machzor*: 42; *Selichot*, 44.

⁵⁵ Zafren, “Probe into Hebrew Printing in Hanau,” 273–85. He reiterated his position recently in Zafren, “Hebrew Printing by and for Frankfurt Jews,” 235.

⁵⁶ Zafren, “Probe into Hebrew Printing in Hanau,” 281–82.

⁵⁷ Eliyahu ben Yehuda Ulma, see Vinograd, *Thesaurus*, 2:163, Hanau imprints nos. 15, 16, 42–44, 47, 48, 51, 53, and 58 (1614–30); Abraham ben Yequiel ha-Cohen Burgau: Vinograd, *Thesaurus*, 2:163, Hanau imprints 10, 47, 48, 49, 51, 53, 58, and *Bibliography of the Hebrew Book* record imprints 184632 (1610) and 306750 (1623).

⁵⁸ Mordechai ben Yaakov of Prossnitz, see Vinograd, *Thesaurus*, 2:163, Hanau imprints 37, 39, 42, 43, and 44 (1623–25) Isaac b. R. Shimon Shmuel Ha-Levi, Vinograd, *Thesaurus*, 2:163, Hanau imprints 10, 19 and 36.

of Worms, *Sefer ha-Rokeah* (1630), all share a striking title page layout, which is framed by the heads of four cherubim.⁵⁹

The 1628 *Siddur* was edited by David ben Menahem Cohen, who also edited the “Hanau” printing of the *Shulhan ‘Aruk* (1626–28). The latter work was printed according to the colophon by Eliyahu ben Yehuda Ulma and Abraham ben Yekutiel Burgau.⁶⁰ R. David ben Menahem Cohen had strong connections with Hanau at this point in his career. His father R. Menahem ben David died and was buried there in 1627, as was his sister Gutrut in 1635.⁶¹ R. David served as Hanau’s rabbi from 1638–41, when he was called to Altona.⁶² Eliyahu ben Yehuda and R. David ben Menahem both had ties to Hanau and they collaborated in producing a printing of the *Shulhan ‘Aruk*. Each of their names appeared in one or more imprints with the distinctive four cherubim title page, a decorative element that was presumably owned and used by the same Jewish printing firm. While I agree with Zafren that a systematic analysis of all of these imprints is still a desideratum, and that perhaps some of Steinschneider’s “Hanau” imprints were in fact printed elsewhere, I believe that the Jewish press in Hanau of 1610–22 continued to produce books there between 1623 and 1630.⁶³

⁵⁹ Meir Rafeld and Yosef Tabori noted the identical title pages of the *Siddur*, *Sefer Maharil*, and *Torat he-Hata* in their facsimile reprint, *Sidur Hanau 388: Mahadurah fasimilit* (Ramat Gan, 1994), 35 and 89–90. Through the courtesy of the Special Collections departments of the Marburg UB and Freiburg/Br UB, I received photocopies of the title page of *‘Edut Yaacov* (1627) from Freiburg UB (Sig. PO 76/1), and of *Sefer ha-Roqueah* from Marburg UB (Sig. III C 71) which allowed me to make these further connections.

⁶⁰ For a description of the book, see Giulio Busi, *Libri ebraici a Mantova, Biblioteca Comunale di Mantova*, vol. 2: *Le edizioni del XVII, VIII e XIX secolo nella biblioteca della Comuna ebraica* (Fiesole, 1997), 113.

⁶¹ *Memorbuch Hanau*, Jerusalem: Jewish National and University Library Ms. Heb 8o 3222, entries 14 and 23. I consulted a transcript of it at the Steinheim Institut, Universität Duisburg. I wish to thank Frau Nathanja Hüttenmeister for her genealogical advice on Jews living in Hanau and Frankfurt am Main during this period and for translating portions of the *Memorbuch* for me.

⁶² Leopold Löwenstein, “Das Rabbinat in Hanau, nebst Beiträgen zur Geschichte der Dortigen Juden,” *Jahrbuch der Jüdisch-Literarischen Gesellschaft* 14 (1921): 9. EJ, s. v. “Altona.” His son Elia Hanau married Glückel of Hameln’s Aunt Ulk, and died there in 1653. See David Simonsen, “Eine Confrontation zwischen Glückel Hameln’s Memorien und den alten Hamburger Grabbüchern,” *MGWJ* 49 (1905): 102–03.

⁶³ A systematic examination of the type used in later (and earlier) Hanau imprints is especially desirable. Moshe Rosenfeld discovered a Jewish calendar dating from 1625–26, which he attributed to the Hanau press on the basis of its Hebrew type. “Ein jüdischen Wandkalendar für das Jahr 5386 (1625–1626),” in *Nachrichten der jüdischen Bürger Fürth* (1990), 31–32.

Business Aspects of German Jewish Printing

To consider the impact of the Reformation upon German Jewish printing we can examine three facets of the business life of these presses: the creation of printable texts, customer demand, and the financing of Jewish printing. Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin has argued forcefully that the significance of the censorship of Jewish books in the early modern period involved far more than the vetting of individual texts for their suitability to print. The nature of printing itself meant that Jewish books were subject to far greater Christian scrutiny than manuscript books had been. This new level of scrutiny resulted not only in self-censorship by authors, and pre-publication censorship, sometimes by both rabbinic and Christian authorities, but also in Jewish texts that were “explicitly authorized” for production and sale by Christian authorities.⁶⁴ The process of creating acceptable texts through both Jewish and Christian pre-publication review was central to the success of German Jewish printers in the Reformation era.

Before 1553, German imperial law required only that Jewish printed books be censored, and there is little evidence that even this requirement was enforced. The only extant censor’s report dating from before 1553 was written by Bonifacius Wolfhart in Augsburg on a prayerbook printed by Hayim Schwarz.⁶⁵ Schwarz was aware that his books were subject to censorship, and he showed a degree of caution by leaving out some of the words of the *Alenu* prayer in his 1534 prayerbook, marking their absence with a space.⁶⁶ Paul Fagius’ freedom to print Jewish anti-Christian polemical passages indicates that “censorship” before 1553 was very much a matter of the printer’s perception of risk. In several of his works for Christian Hebrew students, the Latin version of *Liber Fidei* (Isny, 1542), and his translation of David Kimhi’s commentary on Psalms 1–10 (Constance, 1544), Fagius made available in Latin some rather bracing Jewish rejoinders to Christian claims, including Kimhi’s caustic remarks on Ps. 2:12, which did not appear in the first Bomberg *Biblia rabbinica* of 1517. Remarkably he was willing to include Kimhi’s *Response to the*

⁶⁴ Raz-Krakotzkin, “Censorship,” 133–34.

⁶⁵ Künast, “Hebräisch-jüdischer Buchdruck,” 286 and n. 32.

⁶⁶ *Tefillot* (Augsburg: Schwarz, 1534), no foliation. Basel UB call no. FA VIII 57. Burnett, *From Christian Hebraism*, 38 n. 15. The Soncinos had already removed many anti-Christian expressions from their prayerbook imprints. Raz-Krakotzkin, “Censorship,” 142.

Christians in his printing of Kimhi's Psalms commentary in 1542, a commentary that was protected from reprint by an imperial privilege!⁶⁷ After the suppression of the Talmud in Italy, such equanimity was no longer possible either for German Jewish printers or for the local authorities.

As a consequence of the Reformation the opportunities for German Jewish printers became more limited, both because of the promulgation of laws restricting where printers could practice their trade, and the papal campaign against the Talmud in Italy. To ensure that Jewish printing could continue, Jewish community authorities instituted their own pre-publication screening of texts. A rabbinical meeting in Ferrara on 21 June 1554, decreed that no Jewish book could be printed in Italy without the permission of three rabbis. An assembly of German rabbis and community leaders meeting in Frankfurt am Main passed a similar decree in 1582. "No Jew in our province shall be permitted to publish any book, new or old, at Basel or any other city in Germany, without permission of the central courts (Batai Aboth Beth Din). If anyone transgresses this law and publishes the books without permission, no man shall purchase the books under the punishment of the ban."⁶⁸ While theoretically binding on German-Jewish printers, the policy was practically speaking difficult to enforce. However, some of the approbations in early Hanau imprints contain wording suggesting that they functioned as statements of permission, allowing works to be printed.⁶⁹

After 1553, the formal requirement of pre-publication censorship was much more stringently enforced in German lands. The Basel authorities in the time of both Ambrosius Froben and later Conrad Waldkirch insisted on proper censorship of any Jewish books produced by these firms. The series of censor's reports preserved for the Hanau Hebrew press, all written between 1610–22, provide uniquely important information on actual standards applied by Christian censors to Jewish texts. Walter Keuchen, the censor, reviewed forty-two potential Jewish imprints, and only twice did he advise the council to withhold permission to print. One prayerbook contained,

⁶⁷ *Sefer Tehillim 'im Pirush Rabi David Kimhi* (Isny: Fagius, 1541). See Abraham M. Haberman, "The Printer Paul Fagius," 163.

⁶⁸ Eric Zimmer, *Jewish Synods in Germany during the Late Middle Ages (1286–1603)* (New York, 1978), 83.

⁶⁹ Burnett, "Hebrew Printing in Hanau," 214 n. 25.

in Keuchen's opinion, elements of magic and was therefore dangerous. The other book, the *Vincenzlied*, he argued against for political reasons. When the Jews of Frankfurt am Main had returned in triumph with a military escort to their old quarter in Frankfurt on 28 February 1616, after the Fettmilch uprising had been crushed, R. Elhanan Heln had written a festive song in Hebrew and Yiddish to celebrate the event. The Frankfurt Jewish publishers who underwrote the Hanau press sought to have the song printed in Hanau, but their petition was rejected. Hanau was a neighbor of Frankfurt, and the authorities were not willing to stir up political trouble with Frankfurt by allowing its printing.⁷⁰

Keuchen's reports reflect for the most part a good understanding of Jewish literature. He had a clear idea of what Jewish printers might and might not lawfully print. If a book was questionable in some way, Keuchen demanded that the printers not only submit the book for pre-publication censorship, but that each newly printed page proof should also be brought to him, so that he could satisfy himself that no unauthorized changes had been made. He demanded that the printers follow this procedure when they printed two Talmud tractates in 1618 and 1622.⁷¹

Faced with such pervasive oversight, German Jewish printers frequently followed the path of least resistance and reprinted books that had already been printed (and censored) elsewhere. The Hanau press was actually required to produce only reprinted works in its privilege, although this restriction was later loosened or ignored.⁷² Yet Jewish authors of new works also sought to have their works printed on German Jewish presses. Elijah Levita vainly sought a press in Italy to print his Aramaic dictionary *Sefer Meturgeman*, even though he had an enviable reputation as a scholar and writer. Only when Paul Fagius invited him to work in Isny did he find a printer. In 1599, Buxtorf told a colleague, "I receive many letters from Jews who live in many different countries, even Poland. But the reason is Waldkirch's press. For the same reason they are always sending me books to have printed."⁷³ Prague author Sabbatai Hurwitz had his book *Shefa Tal* (1612) printed in Hanau rather than Prague.

If Jewish authors were sometimes obliged to seek printers outside

⁷⁰ Ibid. 209–10.

⁷¹ Ibid., 204–08.

⁷² Ibid., 207.

⁷³ Burnett, *From Christian Hebraism*, 43.

of their own countries, German Jewish printers also sought customers in foreign lands as well as in their own regions, because they had to in order to make a profit. Germany was not a major center of Jewish life, and German printers had no large home market to sell to as printers in Italy, Bohemia, and Poland did. The Thannhausen printers, for example, planned to sell their books in Poland and in Siebenburgen.⁷⁴ Ambrosius Froben planned to sell exemplars of the Talmud in Italy, although his contract reserved all sales for Simon zum Gembs, who planned to market them in Germany and Poland.

An analysis of the 186 books produced by German Jewish printers reveals something about Jewish customer demand in the Reformation era.⁷⁵ The overall proportions track remarkably well with Baruchson's analysis of the contents of Jewish libraries in late sixteenth century Mantua as a rough reflection of Jewish customer demand there.⁷⁶

Categories	German Imprints	Baruchson re: Mantua
Liturgy	50 = 26.9%	34.7%
Bible & Commentaries	38 = 20.4%	22.2%
Halakah (Jewish Law)	21 = 11.3%	10.7%
Mishnah/Talmud/Comm.	16 = 8.6%	3%
Ethics	15 = 8.1%	6.2%
Grammar, etc.	13 = 7%	4.2%
Kabbalah	13 = 7%	2.7%
Midrash/Aggadah	5 = 2.7%	2.6%
Belle Lettres	4 = 2.1%	1.4%
Other ⁷⁷	8 = 4.3%	3.3%
Responsa	3 = 1.6%	1.6%

⁷⁴ Burnett, "Regulation of Hebrew Printing," 336.

⁷⁵ I have created a database of German-Jewish imprints before 1650, which I assembled using Vinograd's listings as a point of departure and then verifying the existence of physical copies of all but three of the books through the use of published library catalogues and online catalogues including the *Bibliography of the Hebrew Book* for its listing of Hanau imprints. I have defined German "Jewish" imprints as books printed in Hebrew or Judeo-German, with at most a partial Latin title page. I have excluded books with Latin introductions, but have included Moses Abudiente b. Gidhon, *Gramatica Hebraica, parte i onde se mosram todas as regra* . . . (Hamburg: unknown, 1633), a Hebrew grammar written in Portuguese that was clearly intended for Sephardic Jewish customers.

⁷⁶ Shifra Baruchson Arbib, *La Culture Livresque des Juifs d'Italie a la Fin de la Renaissance*, trans. Gabriel Roth (Paris, 2001), 53.

⁷⁷ Other = Polemics (1), History (3), Calendar (1), Sermons (1), Philosophy (1), Travel (1).

Prayerbooks were a staple of Jewish printing (26.9%), yet printings of entire Bibles, parts of Bibles (20.4%), and works on Jewish law (11.3%) were also much in demand. Fully 21.5% of all German Jewish imprints (40 out of 186) were in Judeo-German and were intended primarily for Jewish women, but also as one Basel title page bluntly put it, “for men who are like women in not having much knowledge.”⁷⁸ These production figures alone are not enough to provide an accurate profile of customer tastes and demand among German Jews of the Reformation era, since Jewish books printed in Italy, Bohemia, and Poland were imported, sold, and read by them as well. However, when compared with Baruchson’s analysis, these statistics indicate which kinds of books the press owners and financial backers thought were likely to sell most briskly among their likely customers, and their calculations were probably shrewd ones.

To finance their printing activities German Jewish presses employed a variety of different strategies. Baruchson discussed four major methods of finance used by Jewish printers in Italy: self-financing through private capital, renting one’s press to another printer, entering a partnership arrangement (which could include one party borrowing money from the other), and seeking subscription purchases to finance a book’s printing.⁷⁹ The first three of these methods were used by German Jewish printers as well. Ambrosius Froben invested not only capital from Simon zum Gembs, but also his own wealth in his Jewish press since he produced other Jewish books, as well as several additional runs of Talmud tractates in 1580. The Hanau Hebrew press was a partnership between Hans Jacob Henne, his Jewish assistant Seligman Ulma, and the three Frankfurt underwriters, and all parties were named in the printing privilege. Henne also printed books for other clients, notably the monumental oriental lexicon of Valentin Schindler for Johann Jacob Ruland of Frankfurt.⁸⁰ After Henne’s death the Jewish press of Hanau was hired by Solomon Hirsch Aufhausen to print his own book, *Yudischer Theriak* in 1615.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Chava Weissler, “The Religion of Traditional Ashkenazic Women: Some Methodological Issues,” *AJS Review* 12 (1987): 78, quoting Moses b. Enoch Altschuler, *Brandspiegel* (Basel, 1602).

⁷⁹ Zipora Baruchson, “Money and Culture: Financing Sources and Methods in the Hebrew Printing Shops in Cinquecento Italy,” *La Bibliofilia* 92 (1990): 33.

⁸⁰ Valentin Schindler *Lexicon Pentaglotton*, ed. Engelbert Engels (Hanau: Hans Jacob Henne, 1612).

⁸¹ Burnett, “Hebrew Censorship in Hanau,” 208–09.

The two most significant sources of funding and customers for Jewish books in Reformation-era Germany were clearly the Jewish communities in Frankfurt am Main and the Burgau region. The major presses of Basel and Hanau and the smaller Tiengen press all had ties to Frankfurt. When Count Philipp Ludwig of Hanau refused to allow the three Jewish funders of the Hanau press to operate in Hanau unless they moved from Frankfurt to Hanau, they retorted that they could just as easily have books printed in Basel, a point that the count was forced to concede.⁸² The most prominent Burgau funder was Simon zum Gembs of the Günzburg family of Burgau, but the activities of Jewish presses in Augsburg, Ichenhausen, and Thannhausen also suggest financial support from Burgau Jews.

Jewish-Christian Cooperation in Hebrew Printing

In the regulatory and religious climate of Reformation-era Germany cooperation between Jewish and Christian printers was essential for producing Jewish books. This common effort was frequently hindered by incompetent printers, both Jewish and Christian, conflicting work calendars, and the mistrust of Jewish workers by both Christian printers and the authorities. Normally the incompetent workers in question were Christian typesetters, correctors, or shop assistants. While non-Jewish typesetters could set Hebrew or Yiddish type according to the master copy they were given, they were usually illiterate in these languages and were simply reproducing what they saw. This practice resulted in frequent errors, especially on Saturdays when Jewish correctors refused to work and Christian workers assumed the responsibility. Not infrequently Hebrew books printed in Basel and Hanau contained an apology from the Jewish corrector at the end that blamed the errors on their Christian coworkers.⁸³ Christian typesetters also had difficulties reading manuscript master copies. On two occasions Waldkirch had to have manuscripts that had been written in Hebrew cursive transcribed into a more readable Hebrew script

⁸² Marburg SA, Protokolle II (Hanau) A 2 c, Bd. 4/4, f. 467 (16 March 1609), quoted by Manfred Agethen, *Judenpolitik*.

⁸³ Abraham Yaari, "Complaints of Proofreaders about Printing by Non-Jews on the Sabbath," in idem, *Studies in Hebrew Booklore* (Jerusalem, 1958), 172–75 [Hebrew].

so that his typesetters could work from them.⁸⁴ Waldkirch was forced to use Christian rather than Jewish typesetters in part because of the strict limits that the Basel city council placed upon the number of Jewish printers allowed to work in the city. Jewish presses in Prague, Lublin, and Cracow were able to employ Jews both for typesetting and correcting.⁸⁵ Yet Jewish workers were not always capable at their tasks. Hans Jacob Henne quarreled with Seligman Ulma in 1611, when the latter had trouble correcting a Bible imprint because of his poor eyesight.⁸⁶

The differing workweeks of Jews and Christians were perpetually a source of friction between them. Jews could not work on the Sabbath, while Christian press owners such as Froben, Waldkirch, and Henne refused not only to close the press on Saturday, but also to allow work on Sundays.⁸⁷ The Jewish printers of Hanau complained frequently to the authorities about the prohibition on Sunday work. In a petition of 18 October 1611, they vainly sought to have the press moved to the Jewish street in the Hanau Neustadt to facilitate Sunday work.⁸⁸ On 26 January 1618 the princely council received another such petition which they tersely answered “Rejected. [The Jews] should observe our holiday as well.”⁸⁹

Yet the friction over workdays arose not only for religious reasons, but also out of the Christian authorities’ distrust of Jewish printers. When the Hanau princely council flatly rejected the printer’s petition to move the press in 1611, part of their reasoning was that “their wish could result in unbearable difficulties for the government and censor.”⁹⁰ They clearly believed that Jewish printers were perfectly capable of slipping last-minute changes into the censored texts

⁸⁴ Burnett, *From Christian Hebraism*, 39 and n. 19.

⁸⁵ Nosek, “Katalog,” 18–24.

⁸⁶ Hans Jacob Henne to Count Philipp Ludwig, n.p., August 1611, Marburg SA Best. 81 BI 81, no. 23, ff. 25a–b. Henne was unable to rid himself of Seligman who worked at the press until at least 1615 when he corrected for the Joseph b. Abraham Gikatilla, *Ginat Egoz*. Yaari, “Complaints,” 175.

⁸⁷ Walter Keuchen noted that the rule was sometimes quietly bent to allow Jews to perform some Sunday work. “. . . pflge ich den Sambstag, was zu corrigieren, allein zu überlesen, welches Sontags von Judischen Setzer corrigieren, und von mir und meinen lectore Montags morgens letzlich überlesen word.” Walter Keuchen to Johannes Buxtorf, n.p., January 19, 1618, Basel UB Ms G I 60: 320b.

⁸⁸ Marburg SA, Best. 86 no. 29,088, quoted by Agethen, *Judenpolitik*, n. 419.

⁸⁹ Marburg SA, Best II A no. 2c, vol. 9, part 2 (26 January 1618).

⁹⁰ Marburg SA, Best. 86 no. 29,088, quoted by Agethen, *Judenpolitik*, n. 419.

of the books they had been authorized to print, and that should such changes prove to be embarrassing or indeed blasphemous, the town government would suffer for it. In 1615, Walter Keuchen, the Hebrew censor of Hanau, reported just such a case. He discovered unauthorized changes had been made to the polemical book *Judischer Theriak*, and demanded that the council “order [the printers] to stop working and that they be fined for violating the printing concession so that they might be more obedient in the future.”⁹¹ Keuchen had worked for years with these printers, and still believed that they were capable of making unauthorized changes whenever his back was turned. The common labor of Jews and Christians in Jewish presses was not an equal partnership in the effort to make a living. The Christian presence served also to protect the reputation of both the authorities and their city from the potentially dangerous consequences of printing Jewish books.

Conclusion

The German Reformation affected German Jewish presses most directly in the form of new restrictions on printing, and in an awareness among Christian rulers of the potential political and religious dangers that allowing such printing might pose for their domains. The increasingly restrictive press control laws passed by successive German diets were imposed upon all printers, Christian and Jewish, but they affected Jewish printers disproportionately because of the tight restrictions placed upon Jewish residence throughout the cities and territories of the German empire, which predated the Reformation.⁹² Jews could only live where local authorities tolerated them, and could only print in such places as Hanau where they received explicit permission to do so. As a further consequence of residence restrictions Jewish printers frequently had a mixed work force of Jews and non-Jews producing Jewish books, resulting in books riddled with typographical errors. German Jewish presses also had to compete

⁹¹ “. . . die arbeit widerzulegen, und sie wegen obgesatzter ubergangner Concessions verschreibung, gebürlich ahnsehen, damit sie hinshüro gehorsamer wörden.” Marburg SA Best 81 BI 81 no. 23, fl. 35a.

⁹² Jonathan I. Israel, *European Jewry in the Age of Mercantilism 1550–1750*, 3rd ed. (London, 1998), 6–13 and 18–19.

with other Jewish presses in Italy, Poland, and Bohemia, which were allowed to employ a mostly or entirely Jewish work force and which could market their wares to a larger potential Jewish clientele within their own regions.

Official censorship was more a business expense and a source of delays for German Jewish printers than a serious barrier to business. In Protestant-ruled territories, censors had to approve the text for printing and on occasion demanded special procedures to ensure that the text that they had authorized was the text that was printed. Jewish editors and printers had already begun the process of quietly editing prayerbooks and other texts before 1553, and by the early seventeenth century, with the exception of the Talmud, older Jewish books could be printed and reprinted without fear of trouble.⁹³ The evidence of the Hanau press suggests that the ground rules of what could be printed were clear enough that most new books were approved with little or no controversy.

More ominous for German Jewish printers was the climate of official suspicion of their activities and fear of the consequences of permitting Jewish printing. The Hanau princely council deliberated anxiously over the propriety of allowing a Jewish press to operate there on 22 February 1609. One councilor, Dr. Philipp Bott, feared that by allowing Jewish printing Hanau would be opening itself up for attack from its Catholic and Lutheran confessional enemies.

If we give the Jews permission to open a press, the Ubiquitarians [Lutherans], Jesuits and others will say 'now we see what we are dealing with' and what Hunnius wrote in *Calvin the Judaizer* was true. Indeed (our decision) will provoke criticism, disputations, and hatred from every side.⁹⁴

The Basel city council's decision to allow Ambrosius Froben to print the Talmud in Basel resulted in a series of religiously-motivated political attacks from within the Swiss Confederation and from the German emperor in 1578–79. Walther Keuchen's insistence that he review Talmud tractates twice before allowing the Hanau printers to print them between 1618–22, and his wrathful report in 1615 that unauthorized changes had been made to an approved text illustrate official

⁹³ Raz-Krakotzkin, "Censorship," 139–42.

⁹⁴ *Extract Protocols vom 22. Febr. Ao 609*, Marburg SA Best. 81 BI 81, no. 23, ff. 6b and 5b.

fears that Jews were capable of inserting blasphemous statements into the final printed version of Jewish books. The climate of political and religious confrontation that pervaded the Reformation era meant that failure to prevent blasphemy from appearing in print would harm the reputation of the town and make it more vulnerable to political attack from confessional opponents.

That Jewish printing was possible at all in such a restrictive legal and religious climate attests to the demand for Jewish books in the Reformation era. The city of Basel was the fifth largest overall producer of Hebrew books (for both Christian and Jewish customers) during the 1590s, an indication of just how strong a demand there was for Hebrew books during this era. Apart from the justly maligned Basel Talmud, Basel Jewish presses also produced such monumental works as Nathan b. Yehiel's talmudic dictionary *Sefer ha-'Aruk* (1599), and an important printing of the Rabbinical Bible (1618–19). The Hanau press produced not only a credible number of early Yiddish imprints, but also several important kabbalistic works.⁹⁵ The golden age of German Jewish printing only began with the end of the Thirty Years War, but the often-embattled Jewish printers of this earlier era left an important mark of their own on both Jewish life and Christian Hebrew learning that should not be forgotten.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Posner and Ta-Shema, *Hebrew Book*, 101.

⁹⁶ Menahem Schmelzer, "Hebrew Printing and Publishing in Germany, 1650–1750: On Jewish Book Culture and the Emergence of Early Modern Jewry," *LBIYB* 33 (1988): 369–83.

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