

BEYOND ‘HISTORY AND MEMORY’

Traces of Jewish Historiography in the Middle Ages*

For Johannes Fried on his sixty-fifth birthday

JOHANNES HEIL

Hochschule für Jüdische Studien, Heidelberg

1. Introduction – 2. Jewish History and the Debate about Jewish Historiography –
3. Historiography as an Apologetic Strategy – 4. The Emperor’s Jewish Saviour and other Traces
of Medieval Jewish Historiography – 5. Conclusion: Historical Consciousness and
Historiographical Practice

1. Introduction

When the citizens of Regensburg moved from merely talking about expelling the city’s Jews to actually doing so, in summer of 1518, the Jews did not react passively. They appealed to numerous authorities and followed established legal procedures to insist upon the legal guarantees that secured their place in the city. And they appealed to traditions that described how their ancestors had settled in Regensburg over eighteen hundred years earlier. Furthermore, according to a Christian tradition, they claimed, a ‘Jew from Jerusalem at the time of the Passion and death of Christ our Saviour’ (!) had written to the Jews of Regensburg ‘how a prophet had been killed [...] who had

* I am deeply grateful to my dear friend Andrew Gow, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada, for translating this article which originally appeared as *Jenseits von ‘History and Memory’*. *Spuren jüdischer Geschichtsschreibung im Mittelalter. Johannes Fried zum 65. Geburtstag gewidmet*, in: *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 55 (12.2007), pp. 989-1019. My thanks also go to the editors of ZfG (Metropol-Verlag, Berlin) for permission to publish this translation.

claimed he was the son of God.’ As the recipients of this letter, the Jews of Regensburg could not possibly have been responsible for Christ’s crucifixion. This text was no ‘Letter from Heaven’, but rather one that called on Heaven as its witness. This Jewish version of Regensburg’s history did make an impression and was the object of lasting interest on the part of the Christian community. It is mentioned only in Christian city chronicles, in the version cited here by Leonhard Widmann (1508-1557).¹ It also found favour with later writers and would prove useful to confessionalist humanistic historiography: since the Jews could thus serve as witnesses to the foundation of Regensburg at the holiest period in world history, the life of Jesus, the Carthusian Franciscus Jeremias Grienevaldt (1581-1626) felt able to give his city the honorific title *colonia Judaeorum antiquissima* (along with other such titles).²

Thus Jewish urban history at Regensburg seemed successful, but in actual fact it was of no use whatsoever, as we know very well: in 1519, during the interregnum after the death of Emperor Maximilian I, the Christian citizens of Regensburg seized the opportunity to drive the

¹ “Auch habe ein ‘Jude von Jerusalem der zeit des leidens und sterbens Christi unsers seligmachers’ den Regensburger Juden geschrieben, ‘wie man einen propheten ... getödt [...] hab, der hab sich für den son gottes ausgeben.’” Leonhard Widmann, Chronik von Regensburg, in: *Chroniken der deutschen Städte*, vol. 15, p. 31; excerpt in Raphael Straus, Friedrich Baethgen, eds., *Urkunden und Aktenstücke zur Geschichte der Juden in Regensburg 1453-1738* (Quellen und Erörterungen zur bayerischen Geschichte; Neue Folge 18), Munich 1960, no. 1044, p. 390. The legend of the great age of the Jewish community at Regensburg can also be found in arguments made by imperial officials: (no. 1053, p. 393f.; no. 1096, here p. 405), in later versions (Christopherus Ostrofrancus = Hoffmann, no. 1040, here p. 387; Laurentius Hochwart, no. 1041, p. 388) and on into modern historiography. Cf. Ulrich Ernst, *Facetten mittelalterlicher Schriftkultur. Fiktion und Illustration. Wissen und Wahrnehmung* (Euphorion; Beih. 51), Heidelberg 2006, p. 115f.

² ‘Most ancient settlement of Jews’. The author of the *Ratisbona oder Summarische Beschreibung der Uralten Nahmhafften Statt Regensburg*, I.8 (1615) was able to rhyme the high esteem in which he held the old Jewish community with the long-since completed expulsion of the Jews, namely via a secular-historiographical rewriting of the traditional theology of supersession: Peter Wolf, *Bilder und Vorstellungen vom Mittelalter. Regensburger Stadtchroniken der frühen Neuzeit* (Frühe Neuzeit; 49), Tübingen 1999, p. 105, 189-191.

Jews out entirely.³ The Jews are said to have taken with them all their possessions and sacred objects, including a piece of the tablets Moses brought down from Mt. Sinai – and one notes a sarcastic undertone in the writings of a Protestant author regarding the loss of such fabulous objects for a city once so enamoured of its own relics.⁴

The actions of the Jewish inhabitants of Regensburg in seeking refuge and justification in history – not for the first time⁵ – provides insight well beyond this particular failed attempt to defend themselves. This insight is structural in nature: the Jews of northern Europe described their cultural world as *Ashkenaz*, reflecting a legendary origin that retrospectively inscribed their culture into the world of the Bible by referring to Noah's grandson Ashkenaz (Gen. 10,3) and the northern kingdom of Ashkenaz mentioned by Jeremiah (Jer. 51,27).⁶ Stories of this kind that legitimated contemporary phenomena by reference to earlier ones with constantly changing names, details and places could be presented as often as needed. The Jewish version of Regensburg's early history is thus a typical one, but not typical merely of Jewish stories of origin. Many other old stories that legitimated the present were

³ Further references in Straus-Baethgen, *Urkunden* [see note 1]. This action followed a long-lasting conflict between the city and the Jewish community and entered its decisive phase in June of 1518 with the submission of the grievances of Regensburg's tradesmen (no. 979, p. 348-353); cf. Wilhelm Volkert, *Die Regensburger Juden im Spätmittelalter und das Ende der Judengemeinde*, in: Edelgard E. Du Bruck, ed., *Crossroads of Civilization. The City of Regensburg and its Intellectual Milieu*, Detroit 1984, pp. 139-171.

⁴ According to the Lutheran 'Kantor' of the Regensburg *Neupfarrkirche*, the composer and chronicler Andreas Raselius (died 1602) in his 'Donauer Stadtbeschreibung und Chronik' (ms.), cf. Wolf, p. 190 and note 114.

⁵ The Jews of Regensburg had already advanced the argument to Emperor Frederick III that they had already settled in the area before the foundation of the city as part of their defence against a 1476 accusation of ritual murder: 'Anonymi Ratisbonensis Farrago Historica rerum Ratisponensium'; printed in Straus-Baethgen, *Urkunden*, no. 368, p. 126 [see note 1]; cf. Moritz Stern, *Der Regensburger Judenprozeß*, Berlin 1935.

⁶ Shlomo Eidelberg, *The Origins of Germanic Jewry. Reality and Legend*, in: Gertrude Hirshler, ed., *Ashkenaz. The German Jewish Heritage*, New York 1988, pp. 3-10; cf. also Israel Ta-Schema, *Ashkenazi Jewry in the Eleventh Century. Life and Literature*, in: *ibid.*, pp. 23-56; also Ivan G. Marcus, *The Foundation Legend of Ashkenazic Judaism*, in: Jodi Magness et al., eds., *Hesed ve-Emet. Studies in Honor of Ernest S. Frerichs*, Atlanta 1998, pp. 409-418.

in circulation, for instance the letters of Julius Caesar or the Emperor Nero confirming the privileges of the Austrian dukes⁷ or the very lucrative tax exemption of the University of Cambridge, issued by none other than King Arthur himself.⁸

When and where the version of the city's history advanced by the Regensburg Jews came from does not matter, nor whether and by whom it was 'believed' at the time. Such questions are the product of an enlightened naïveté and in no way do justice to medieval ideas about history. For there is little to be learned by way of facts in such cases, except perhaps about concepts of history and historical constructs, and about (competing) 'modulations of memory' (*Gedächtnismodulationen*, Johannes Fried), and thus finally about how history functions in a given context or society.⁹ And it is precisely such questions that will occupy us here. If one sees, with Horst Fuhrmann, forgeries and fictions as reflecting historical change that has already happened¹⁰ and thus recognizes the difference between 'real' and 'true' history,¹¹ then

⁷ Cf. Peter Moraw, Das 'Privilegium maius' und die Reichsverfassung, in: Fälschungen im Mittelalter, in: *Internationaler Kongreß der Monumenta Germaniae Historica* (MGH Schriften; 33.1-5), Munich 1988, vol. 3, pp. 201-224.

⁸ Cf. Frank Rexroth, König Artus und die Professoren. Gründungsfiktionen an mittelalterlichen englischen Universitäten, in: *Jahrbuch für Universitätsgeschichte* 1 (1998), pp. 13-48; also Gina Fasoli, Il falso privilegio di Teodosio II per lo studio di Bologna, in: *Fälschungen im Mittelalter*, vol. 1, pp. 627-641 [see note 7].

⁹ Johannes Fried, *Der Schleier der Erinnerung. Grundzüge einer historischen Memorik*, Munich 2004, p. 244, and esp. 267f., 289f.; cf. Yitzhak Hen and Matthew Innes, eds., *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages*, Cambridge 2000; Karl Schnith, Mittelalterliche Augsburger Gründungslegenden, in: *Fälschungen im Mittelalter*, vol. 1, here pp. 499-501 [see note 7]; Fritz-Peter Knapp et al., eds., *Historisches und fiktionales Erzählen im Mittelalter* (Schriften zur Literaturwissenschaft; 19), Berlin 2002; Johannes Laudage, ed., *Von Fakten und Fiktionen. Mittelalterliche Geschichtsdarstellungen und ihre kritische Aufarbeitung*, Cologne 2003; Hans-Werner Goetz, Textualität, Fiktionalität, Konzeptionalität: Geschichtswissenschaftliche Anmerkungen zur Vorstellungswelt mittelalterlicher Geschichtsschreiber und zur Konstruktion ihrer Texte, in: *Mittellateinisches Jahrbuch* 41 (2006), pp. 1-21; Elizabeth M. Tyler et al., eds., *Narrative and History in the Early Medieval West* (Studies in the Early Middle Ages; 16), Turnhout 2006.

¹⁰ Horst Fuhrmann, Von der Wahrheit der Fälscher, in: *Fälschungen im Mittelalter* vol. 1, p. 83-98 [see note 7].

¹¹ Johannes Fried, Erinnerung und Vergessen, Die Gegenwart stiftet die Einheit der Vergangenheit, in: *Historische Zeitschrift* 273 (2001), pp. 563-593, 575; also *idem*, Le passé à la merci de l'oralité et du souvenir. Le baptême de Clovis et la vie de Benoît de Nur-

the relevant change, for the Regensburg Jews, consisted of the growing threat to their formerly secure and legally guaranteed place in the city. Thus, in their version of the past, they eloquently wrote themselves into a history they were being excluded from, placing a footnote that was supposed to put everything back in its proper place and proportion.

The Jews of Regensburg understood exactly how such urban and other traditions functioned, for it was precisely such traditions that justified the hostility they were then experiencing.¹² Thus the Jews of Regensburg took their place in a boat that, according to Christian Regensburgers' versions of history, also came from a distant mythical past, not from Troy with Aeneas, in this case, but steered by Hercules' son Norix.¹³

But one more thing is worth noting: this counter-history was aimed entirely at dealing with one particular situation. The Jews of Regensburg did not present a general work of history, say, a chronicle of the

sie, in: Jean Claude Schmitt – Otto Gerhard Oexle, eds., *Les tendances actuelles de l'Histoire du Moyen Âge en France et en Allemagne*, Paris 2002, pp. 71-104, esp. 85, 95.

¹² Cf. the accumulation of anti-Jewish historical constructs in the chronicle *Annales ducum Baioariae*, which the humanist Johannes Aventinus (1477-1534), who came from Abensberg, near Regensburg, began to write in the same year the Jews were expelled from Regensburg: Johannes Aventinus, *Baierische Chronik*, ed. Georg Leidinger (1926), Munich 1988, esp. p. 232f.; cf. Johannes Heil, *Gottesfeinde – Menschenfeinde. Die Vorstellung von jüdischer Weltverschwörung, 13.-16. Jb.* (Antisemitismus: Geschichte und Strukturen; 3) Essen 2006, p. 523f.

¹³ Matthias Widmann (Matthew of Kemnat), *Chronik Friedrichs I.*; cf. Birgit Studt: *Fürstenhof und Geschichte. Legitimation durch Überlieferung.* (= Norm und Struktur vol. 2), Cologne 1992, p. 116, 386f.; Peter Wolf, *Bilder und Vorstellungen vom Mittelalter*, pp. 180-197; cf. on the Biblical age of Augsburg according to Sigmund Meisterlins OSB (1456): Karl Schnith, "Mittelalterliche Augsburger Gründungslegenden", in: *Fälschungen im Mittelalter*, vol. 1, pp. 497-517 [see note 7]; Joachim Schneider, Anfänge in der Stadtgeschichte. Über Legenden in der mittelalterlichen Nürnberger Stadtchronistik und ihren historischen Auskunftswert, in: *Mitteilungen des Vereins für Geschichte der Stadt Nürnberg* 87 (2000), pp. 5–46; Matthew Innes, 'Teutons or Trojans? The Carolingians and the Germanic Past', in: Hen – Innes, eds., *The Uses of the Past*, pp. 227-249 [see note 9]; Ram Ben-Shalom, The Myths of Troy and Hercules as Reflected in the Writings of Some Jewish Exiles From Spain, in: Harvey J. Hames, ed., *Jews, Muslims and Christians in and around the Crown of Aragon*, Leiden 2004, pp. 229-254; Magali Coumert, *Origines des peuples. Les récits du Haut Moyen Âge occidental, 550-850* (Collection d'Études Augustiniennes. Moyen Âge et Temps Modernes; 42), Leiden 2007.

rich history of their community from the earliest beginnings down to their own day. And it seems as though no-one ever tried to write such a thing either.¹⁴

2. Jewish History and the Debate about Jewish Historiography

And thus we find ourselves in the middle of the question: why do we not know of any Jewish histories written in *Ashkenaz* (the general area of Jewish settlement and culture in the north of Latin Christian Europe) parallel to the annals and chronicles written by Christians, and which we might expect to have been formed and constituted in the same way as Christian histories? If all of history was contained within God and the individual moment counted for little, then why were there no Jewish histories in the manner of Otto of Freising's that wrote the past forward all the way into the future (though the exception proves the rule¹⁵)? And even if there was no such thing, then why do we not possess some *gesta*, some version of the deeds of the great scholars in the *yeshivot* of the Rhineland and of other cities? Naturally one answer is that small communities do not need the grander genres

¹⁴ And with the exception of some anti-Semitic versions (Gemeiner 1821; Grau 1934), their complete history has been written only in a cursory fashion: Andreas Angerstorfer *et al.*, *Stadt und Mutter in Israel' – Geschichte und Kultur der Juden in Regensburg*, Regensburg 1990; entry 'Regensburg', in: *Germania Judaica* III.2, ed. Arye Maimon *et al.*, pp. 1178-1230; Siegfried Wittmer, *Jüdisches Leben in Regensburg vom frühen Mittelalter bis 1519*, Regensburg 2001.

¹⁵ On this, more in the following example; here the reference to the relevant literature will have to suffice: Adolph Neubauer, *Medieval Jewish Chronicles*, 2 vols., Oxford 1887-1895; overview: Moritz Steinschneider, *Die Geschichtsliteratur der Juden*, Frankfurt am Main 1905; Salo W. Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, vol. 6, Philadelphia 1958, pp. 188-234; Hirsch J. Zimmels, Historiography, in: Cecil Roth, ed., *The World History of the Jewish People*, vol. 2: *The Dark Ages*, Tel Aviv 1966, pp. 274-281; Günter Stemberger, *Geschichte der jüdischen Literatur. Eine Einführung*, Munich 1977, pp. 139-145; Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor. Jewish History and Jewish Memory*, Seattle 1982 (1983²), pp. 31-40; also Eleazar Gutwirth, Historians in Context. Jewish Historiography in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries, in: *Frankfurter Judaistische Beiträge* 30 (2003), pp. 147-168; Mark R. Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross. The Jews in the Middle Ages*, Princeton 1994, pp. 177-180.

of historiography and that other modes of memorialization and textual genres are enough for them.¹⁶

Suggestions of this kind have not been able to stop a debate that began with such questions and has been raging for some years now. I will now address that debate in two stages: first by sketching the architecture of the controversies, following the positions laid out by central participants in this debate, and second by introducing a number of paradigmatic texts, readings of which will, I hope, open up the discussion and lead to a better understanding of the historical writing practices of early modern Jews—with the further possibility that that practice and the debates surrounding it can serve to illuminate the historical writing practices of other cultures as well.¹⁷

In his masterful style, Leopold Zunz, in 1865, explained the absence of medieval Jewish history-writing:

That we find no researchers and writers of history in the Jewish Middle Ages [sic!] is hardly surprising: a scattered nation [sic!] accomplishes no [historical] deeds, their sufferings can produce chroniclers and poets, but no historians. They simply lacked the scholarly attitude necessary for historical research, indeed they had no need of it. The history of Israel, which came to an end with the Jewish state, weighed down by the dispersal of its people, was complete and visible to the eye of the believer: what was left to study was the spirit of the Word [of God] handed down from generation to generation so as to order one's life in accordance with it, and such that hope should remain and salvation should become possible.¹⁸

¹⁶ On the meaning of group formation in regard to specific textual genres and contents, see Gundula Grebner, *Zum Zusammenhang zwischen Sozialformation und Wissensform. Naturwissen am staufischen Hof in Südtalien*, in: Werner Paravicini *et al.*, eds., *Erziehung und Bildung bei Hofe* (Residenzenforschung; 13), Stuttgart 2002, pp. 193-213.

¹⁷ Cf., for example, *Indo-Muslim und Hindu historical thought*: Stephan Conermann, ed., *Die muslimische Sicht. 13.-18. Jahrhundert.* (= Jörn Rüsen and Sebastian Manhart, eds., *Geschichtsdenken der Kulturen – eine kommentierte Dokumentation* (Southeast Asia: vol. 2), Frankfurt am Main 2002, 11f., 84f.

¹⁸ “Wenn das jüdische Mittelalter keine Geschichtsschreiber und Geschichtsforscher aufzuweisen hat, darf uns das nicht wundern: Eine Nation *in partibus* verrichtet keine Taten, ihre Leiden können Chronisten und Dichter, aber nicht Geschichtsschreiber hervorbringen. Zur Geschichtsforschung mangelte der wissenschaftliche Sinn, ja das Bedürfnis. Israels Geschichte, abgeschlossen mit dem Untergange des jüdischen

Zunz, the founding father of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* [scholarly study of Jewish history, culture and religion], thereby managed only to establish his own distance from the past and thus to establish the future object of his research. That “a scattered nation accomplishes no [historical] deeds” was and is a question of perspective. In the decades before the founding of the Second Reich, such perspectives were represented by Herder, Ranke, Giesebrecht or by the source-heavy *Jahrbücher für deutsche Geschichte*. Most of all, Zunz was confronted by the example set by the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, the sum of which – in folio – was to make the entirety of German history accessible. It elevated even the most hastily-written notes to the status of monuments of German antiquity, to witnesses to German history between the august Arminius, the great Charles, and the still-awaited Wilhelm.¹⁹

The methodological changes of the past few decades have attempted to open many new perspectives for historical reading practice vis-à-vis older, more hermetic conceptions of history.²⁰ Aside from finally dismissing the idea that history consists merely of ‘archiving the past’, these developments have emphasized the difference between history

Staates, durch die Zerstreung des Volkes erschwert, lag fertig da dem Auge der Gläubigen erkennbar: zu erforschen war nur noch der Geist des überlieferten Wortes, um danach das Leben einzurichten, damit die Hoffnungen aufrecht bleiben und die Erlösung möglich werde.” Leopold Zunz, *Zur Literaturgeschichte der synagogalen Poesie*, Berlin 1865 (repr. Hildesheim 1966), p. 1; cf. Leon Wieseltier, Etwas über die jüdische Historik. Leopold Zunz and the Inception of Modern Jewish Historiography, in: *History and Theory* 20.2 (1981), pp. 135-149; Michael Meyer, *The Origins of the Modern Jewish Identity and European Culture in Germany, 1749-1824*, Detroit 1967, p. 144 ff., 158 ff.

¹⁹ Zunz had said nothing about Jewish history writing as such – only about its (almost non-existent) expression or trace. Cf. Wieseltier, Etwas über die jüdische Historik, p. 141 [see note 18]; Giuseppe Veltri, Altertumswissenschaft und Wissenschaft des Judentums: Leopold Zunz und seine Lehrer F.A. Wolf und A. Böckh, in: Reinhard Markner *et al.*, eds., *Friedrich August Wolf. Studien, Dokumente, Bibliographie*, Stuttgart 1999, pp. 32-47; Ismar Schorsch, Das erste Jahrhundert der Wissenschaft des Judentums (1818-1919), in: Michael Brenner *et al.*, eds., *Wissenschaft vom Judentum. Annäherungen nach dem Holocaust*, Göttingen 2000, pp. 11-24.

²⁰ See, for merely one example among many, Hayden White, *Tropics of Discourse. Essays in Cultural Criticism*, Baltimore 2003¹⁰; Alessandro Barberi, *Clio verwunde(r)t. Hayden White, Carlo Ginzburg und das Sprachproblem in der Geschichte*, Vienna 2000.

and memory, and equally between history and historiography. This has done nothing to simplify matters, of course, including work on pre-modern Jewish history and pre-modern Jewish practices of history-writing.²¹ This field is just as disjointed today as ever: utterly contradictory perspectives, or perhaps needs, clash with each other – some carefully thought through, some not. At the root of it all is a paradox: the Biblical books contain mainly historical narratives and thus historical thought is to be found in the origins of Judaism, whereas the tradition that then followed would seem to have been pointedly ahistorical or post-historical. Post-biblical Jewish historical narratives – if we leave out the medieval Hebrew Josephus-Yosippon complex, a kind of parody based on a counter-reading and appropriation of Jewish history²² – generally confined themselves to listing genealogies that proved the uncorrupted chain of succession in handing down and interpreting the Torah²³ and to reports of persecution that were in-

²¹ See Patricia Skinner, Confronting the 'Medieval' in Medieval History, in: *Past and Present* 181 (2003), pp. 219-247; Jeffrey A. Barash, German Historiography, 19th Century German National Identity and the Jews, in: Ilana Y. Zinguer *et al.*, eds., *L'antisémitisme éclairé. Inclusion et exclusion depuis l'Époque des Lumières jusqu'à l'affaire Dreyfus*, Leiden 2003, pp. 351-367; Israel J. Yuval, Was tun Historiker und Schriftsteller der Geschichte an? Zwei Testfälle – Medina und Mainz, in: *Kleine Schriften des Arye Maimon-Instituts* 6 (2004), pp. 63-77; Gerald Lamprecht, Geschichtsschreibung als konstitutives Element jüdischer Identität, in: Klaus Hödl, ed., *Historisches Bewusstsein im jüdischen Kontext. Strategien – Aspekte – Diskurse*, Innsbruck 2004, pp. 133-149; Louise Hecht, The Beginning of Modern Jewish Historiography. Prague - A Center on the Periphery, in: *Jewish History* 19 (2005), pp. 347-373.

²² See David Flusser, 'Josippon'. A Medieval Hebrew Version of Josephus, in: Louis H. Feldman – Gohei Hata, eds., *Josephus, Judaism, and Christianity*, Detroit 1987, pp. 386-397; Nadia Zeldes, 'Sefer Josippon' and Judeo-Christian Cultural Encounters in Late Medieval Sicily, in: Giancarlo Lacerenza, ed., *Hebraica hereditas. Studi in onore di Cesare Colafemmina*, Naples 2005, pp. 387-406; Michael Brenner, *Propheten des Vergangenen. Jüdische Geschichtsschreibung im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Munich 2006.

²³ For instance, the 'letter' of Rav Sherira Gaon (tenth century.): Nosson D. Rabinowich, ed., *The Iggeres of Rav Sherira Gaon*, Jerusalem 1988, Introduction [unpaginated]; see also Stemberger, *Jüdische Literatur*, p. 111, p. 139f. [see note 15]; Ivan G. Marcus, History, Story and Collective Memory. Narrativity in Early Ashkenazic Culture, in: *Prooftexts* 10,3 (1990), pp. 365-388, 379f.; on Abraham ibn Daoud see *infra*, note 87.

tended not so much to document the events themselves as to call the names of the victims to God's attention.²⁴

Thus, in the words of Michael Meyer, there was no Jewish history-writing between Josephus and Isaak Markus Jost, that is between the first and the nineteenth century.²⁵ This does appear to have been deliberately overstated, and ignores important counter-examples, such as the south Italian chronicle (*Megillat Ahimaaʕ*) of Ahimaaʕ ben Paltiel (died at Oria in 1060),²⁶ a stylistically innovative work intended as a family history; the notably chronological and analytical *Sefer ha'Qabbalah* (Book of the Tradition, 1161), which was written a century later by the Spanish Jew Abraham ibn Daoud;²⁷ or the humanist-inspired *Zemach David* of David Gans of Prague (1592);²⁸ but also the narrative reworkings of the experience of persecution among the Ash-

²⁴ *Das Martyriologium des Nürnberger Memorbuches*, ed. Siegmund Salfeld (Quellen zur Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland; vol. 3), Berlin 1898; *Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Hebräische Texte aus dem mittelalterlichen Deutschland*, vol. 1: Hebräische Berichte über die Judenverfolgungen während des Ersten Kreuzzugs, ed. Eva Haverkamp, Hannover 2005; cf. Susan Einbinder, *Beautiful Death. Jewish Poetry and Martyrdom in Medieval France*, Princeton/Oxford 2002; Shmuel Shepkaru, 'To Die for God: Martyr's Heaven in Hebrew and Latin Crusade Narratives', in: *Speculum* 77 (2002), pp. 311-341; David Nirenberg, 'The Rhineland Massacres of Jews in the First Crusade. Memories – Medieval and Modern', in: Gerd Althoff, Johannes Fried, Patrick Geary, eds., *Medieval Concepts of the Past. Ritual, Memory, Historiography*, Cambridge UK 2002, pp. 279-294.

²⁵ Michael A. Meyer, *Judaism within Modernity. Essays on Jewish History and Religion*, Detroit 2001, p. 22; see also *idem*, *Ideas of Jewish History*, New York 1974, Introduction, p. 18f.

²⁶ Marcus Salzman, ed., *The Chronicle of Ahimaaʕ*, New York 1924 (repr. 1966); also *Megillat Ahimaaʕ. The Book of Ahimaaʕ. Text, Concordance and Lexical Analysis*, Jerusalem 1966 [Ivrit]; Cesare Colafemmina, ed., *Sefer Yubasin. Libro delle discendenze. Vicende di una famiglia ebraica di Oria nei secoli IX-XI (Ahimaaʕ Ben Paltiel)*, Cassano delle Murge 2001; cf. David Kaufmann, 'Die Chronik des Ahimaaʕ von Oria', in: *idem*, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 3, Frankfurt am Main 1915, pp. 1-55; Wolfram Drews, 'Koordinaten eines historischen Bewusstseins in der mittelalterlichen jüdischen Historiographie. Das Beispiel des Ahimaaʕ von Oria', in: Hödl, ed., *Historisches Bewusstsein*, p. 13-28.

²⁷ Abraham ibn Daoud, *Sefer ha-Kabbalah. A Critical Edition with a Translation and Notes of the Book of Tradition*, ed. Gerson D. Cohen, London 1969; cf. in response Cedric Ginsberg, 'How Shall we Measure Time? The Chronicle of Abraham Ibn Daud', in: *Jewish Affairs* 47.2 (1992), pp. 54-57; also Stemberger, *Jüdische Literatur*, pp. 139-145 [see note 15]; Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, p. 39f. [see note 15].

²⁸ David Gans, *Sefer Zemach David*, ed. Mordechai Breuer, Jerusalem 1983; cf. André Nehen, *Jewish Thought and the Scientific Revolution of the Sixteenth Century. David Gans (1541-1613)*, Oxford 1986.

kenazim (which are not limited to reports of the horrors of the Crusade pogroms of 1096).²⁹ And yet Meyer's statement might seem correct in view of the small number of properly historical works³⁰ – at least so long as one judges by the rather one-sided yardstick of Latin-Christian historiography, or takes the verdict of the Orthodox rabbis of the eighteenth century, directed against the taste of the *Maskilim* ['enlighteners'] for profane history, as a timeless and consensus-based Jewish position on the correct practice of history. 'God's historical nature' is often adduced to answer the question why there seemed to be so little historiographical interest among Jews for such a long time: God's deeds were recorded in Scripture and made all further historical interest otiose. The history of the Jew[s] "had already been written," according to Lionel Kochan.³¹ Yosef Yerushalmi expresses much the same idea: "For the rabbis the Bible was not only a repository of past history, but a revealed pattern of the whole of history."³² In 1982, Yerushalmi substantially expanded the medieval field in *Zakhor*, and building on the work of Maurice Halbwachs, he worked out the rites and means of Jewish reference to history in much more precise detail. He argued that not texts by specific authors, but other texts, rites and

²⁹ On 1096, cf. note 24 and M. Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross*, p. 174f. [see note 15]; also Kenneth Stow, 'The "1007 Anonymous" and Papal Sovereignty. Jewish Perceptions of the Papacy and Papal Policy in the High Middle Ages', in: *Hebrew Union College Annual Supplement 4*, Cincinnati 1984; Ivan G. Marcus, 'Kiddush ha-Shem in Ashkenas and the Story of Rabbi Amnon of Mainz', in: Isaiah M. Gafni *et al.*, eds., *Sanctity of Life and Martyrdom: Studies in Memory of Amir Yekutiel*, Jerusalem 1992, pp. 131-147 [Ivrit]; *idem.*, 'History, Story and Collective Memory' [see note 23], in: *Prooftexts* 10,3 (1990) pp. 365-388.

³⁰ Admittedly, this brief list is cursory and utterly incomplete; it leaves out the entire Judeo-Italian literature of the Renaissance, for example. And there were three depictions of Islamic history by Jewish authors of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Eliayhu Capsali, Josef ha'Cohen und Josef Sambari); for an analysis of these texts, see Martin Jacobs, *Islamische Geschichte in jüdischen Chroniken* (Texts and Studies in Medieval and Early Modern Judaism; 18), Tübingen 2004.

³¹ Lionel Kochan, *The Jew and his History*, New York 1977, p. 11, 19ff.; cf. also Dan Diner, 'Ubiquitär in Zeit und Raum – Annotationen zum jüdischen Geschichtsbewusstsein', in: *idem.*, ed., *Synchrone Welten. Zeiträume jüdischer Geschichte* (toldot. Essays zur jüdischen Geschichte und Kultur, vol. 1), Göttingen 2005, pp. 13-34.

³² Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, p. 21 [see note 15]; cf. Fried, *Schleier der Erinnerung*, p. 302f. [see note 9].

acts constituted Jewish collective memory. These forms of expression allowed more room and above all more pathways of transmission for memory, which the modern historical profession, with its fixation on canonical sources, had not yet been able to recognize.³³

To express it another way: the fast day declared by Jacob Tam (Rabenu Tam) for the 20th of Sivan in memory of the pogrom of Blois in the distant year 1171, as well as the the lamentations (*selichot/s'liches*) that were composed in the wake of that catastrophe, in turn provided a pattern for the identification and construction of the memory, in Poland and Lithuania, of the Chmielnitzky pogroms of 1648.³⁴ When the circumstances of events suspend the normal timescale for determining the significance of such events, such processes of (re-)memorialization can be found again and again, precisely in the area of liturgical practices that recall and replay the past for sacral purposes. Such memories migrated with those who held them and were introduced to new commemorative contexts in other places, as we see in the *Makhsor Saloniki*, which was composed around a kernel consisting of a report of the Frankfurt pogrom of 1241.³⁵ In the year 2002, Yerushalmi retrospectively described the intention of *Zakhor* as an attempt to show not that Jewish historians were the custodians and transmitters of Jewish collective memory, but that such memories had found “other channels” than those of historiography and were situated in the midst of Jewish society.³⁶

³³ Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, p. xv and following, pp. 45ff. [see note 15]. Yerushalmi early on explained the lack of ‘proper’ historical sources for Jewish history by reference to other modes of tradition and memory: the phenomenon that he describes, however, is not necessarily a specifically Jewish one: cf. Fried, *Schleier der Erinnerung*, p. 69, 104f., 218ff. [see note 9].

³⁴ Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, p. 48ff. [see note 15]; cf. also David Nirenberg, *The Rhineland Massacres*, esp. pp. 294-299 [see note 24].

³⁵ Printed in an appendix of the list of martyrs in the *Nürnberger Memorbuch*, ed. Salfeld, p. 126f., 329ff.

³⁶ Yosef H. Yerushalmi, *Jüdische Historiographie und Post-Modernismus. Eine abweichende Meinung*, in: Michael Brenner – David N. Myers, eds., *Jüdische Geschichtsschreibung heute; Themen, Positionen, Kontroversen*, Munich 2002, pp. 75-94, 76.

Jakob Neusner has repeatedly argued the opposite position,³⁷ the clearest version of which he published in 2002 in *Halakha: Historical and Religious Perspectives*, which he then developed in 2004 in *The Idea of History in Judaism*.³⁸ His question “Why no history in rabbinic Judaism?” already contains a thesis, or rather an axiom: namely that rabbinic Judaism articulates no historical thought in the traditional (historicist) sense, and the only task facing the scholar is to explain why this should be so. In contrast to his version of Jewish thought, Neusner begins with Jacques Le Goff’s definition of historical thought, according to which merely the act of distinguishing between past and present, using a linear concept of time, constitutes history-writing. Neusner also adds to this the futurist-eschatological element and concludes that rabbinic understandings of time completely lack these characteristics.³⁹ Their understanding of time, he claims, is the ‘ahistorical’ legacy – in other words, they had no interest in history – of the historical scriptures of ancient Israel.” Israel lives in accord with an enduring paradigm that knows neither past, present nor future.”⁴⁰ Neusner’s arguments concern rabbinic Judaism. But the perspective manifest here has also been applied to other periods of Jewish history, most recently by Jacob Lassner, regarding the entire history of pre-modern Jewish history in the lands under Muslim rule.⁴¹ Neusner is not the only one to hold this position: the historian Arnaldo Momigliani formulated much the same thought (perhaps in a more elegant Italian form); “The Greeks never lost interest in history and

³⁷ Jacob Neusner, *Judaism in Society. The Evidence of the Yerushalmi – Toward the Natural History of Religion*, Chicago 1983, p. 15f.; in the chapter “The Talmud in its Age” he writes: “A document so reticent about events in its own day clearly wishes to claim that it be read as if composed in a vacuum.”

³⁸ Jacob Neusner, *Halakha: Historical and Religious Perspectives*, Leiden – Köln 2002; *idem.*, *Toldot. The Idea of History in Judaism* (second, revised edition) Leiden 2004 (2003¹).

³⁹ Neusner, *Halakha*, p. 126, 134; cf. Jacques Le Goff, *History and Memory*, New York 1992.

⁴⁰ Neusner, *Halakha*, p. 141.

⁴¹ Jacob Lassner, Time, Historiography and Historical Consciousness: The Dialectic of Jewish-Muslim Relations, in: Benjamin H. Hary, ed., *Judaism and Islam. Boundaries, Communication and Interaction. Festschrift William M. Briner*, Leiden 2000, pp. 1-25, esp. 4f.

transmitted this interest as part of their cultural inheritance. The Jews, to whom history meant so much more, abandoned the practice of historiography almost entirely from the second to the sixteenth century and returned to historical study only under the impact of the Italian Renaissance.”⁴² However, it is worth mentioning briefly that in 1976, Ephraïm Urbach, in an article that anticipated Neusner’s title nearly word-for-word, came to the opposite conclusion, finding precisely in midrash the Jewish form of Jewish historical narrative.⁴³

Robert Bonfil’s extensive critique of Yerushalmi’s division of history, or rather of history-writing, from memory (which does not even refer to Neusner’s position) has introduced a bridging argument into the debate, drawing on the work of Moshe Shulvass: the small number of medieval Jewish historiographical works we know of need not be an accurate reflection of the volume of writing at that time.⁴⁴ There could well have been suppressed, destroyed or otherwise lost traditions and texts witnessing to medieval Jewish history-writing.⁴⁵ Bonfil’s claim that if there was non-Jewish history-writing, there must also have been Jewish history-writing,⁴⁶ optimistic and sympathetic as it is, remains a hypothesis, because his proof consists of rereading those known sources that have hitherto been treated as exceptions to the rule and used to prove the opposite. Yet Bonfil could appeal to the indirect

⁴² Arnaldo Momigliano, Persian, Greek, and Jewish Historiography [1961], in: *idem, The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography* (Sather Classical Lectures; 54), Berkeley 1990, p. 20; the author repeated this position shortly before his death with only a cursory reference to Yerushalmi’s *Zakhor* [see note 15]; *idem, Prophecy and Historiography* (1986), in: *idem, Essays on Ancient and Modern Judaism*, ed. Silvia Berti, Chicago 1994, pp. 101-108.

⁴³ Ephraïm Urbach, Halakha and History, in: Robert Hamerton-Kelley, ed., *Jews, Greeks, and Christians. Essays in Honour of W. D. Davies*, Leiden 1976, pp. 112-128.

⁴⁴ Robert Bonfil, Jewish Attitudes Toward History and Historical Writing in Pre-Modern Times, in: *Jewish History* 11 (1997), pp. 5-40, esp. 9; cf. also Roberto Bonfil, *Tra due mondi. Cultura ebraica e cultura cristiana nel medioevo* (Nuevo Medioevo; 47), Naples 1996, pp. 205-225.

⁴⁵ Bonfil, Jewish Attitudes, p. 8, 21; also Moshe A. Shulvass, Knowledge of history and of historical literature among the Ashkenazic Jews of the Middle Ages, in: *Festschrift Chanoch Albeck*, Jerusalem 1962/63, pp. 465-495 [Ivrit].

⁴⁶ Bonfil, *Tra due mondi*, p. 208 [see note 44].

proof of an uninterrupted and lively Jewish interest in works of history by referring to statements by medieval Jewish scholars condemning the reading of vernacular books, whether as Shabbat reading or in general, including the quite profane 'War Books' (*sifrei milchamot*): such strictures prove the wide appeal of such books among Jews.⁴⁷

On close examination, it is hard to deny that Neusner has powerful arguments, specifically an endless series of relevant references drawn from rabbinic literature, on his side; the others, such as Bonfil and Yerushalmi – but also Chazan, Marcus and Yuval, who have quite different perspectives but all share assumptions as to the historiographical activities of medieval Jews – seem to be able to produce only conjectures and 'snapshot' evidence drawn from particular situations.⁴⁸ For the historian, this situation is not at all satisfactory. It would mean that the people whose history he or she was working on would themselves have had almost no sense of that history, and their voice and the world of their thoughts would remain forever inaccessible. Thus the historian would have to continue to write Jewish history as history *about* Jews and not as history *of* the Jews. The Jews of Regensburg – as we saw above – however, did in fact present their own history in 1518. They certainly were conscious of this history and of its possible uses. There is, therefore, no reason to adopt Neusner's hermetic view without testing it first.

It should also be noted that Neusner's line of argument itself appears to be inconsistent in a number of ways. For one, he does not address the possibility that the project, visible in the entire rabbinic tradition, of over-writing pre-rabbinic culture and its traditions can be read as a

⁴⁷ Bonfil, *Jewish Attitudes*, pp. 12-15 [see note 44].

⁴⁸ Cf., for example, Robert Chazan, 'The Timebound and the Timeless. Medieval Jewish Narration of Events', in: *History and Memory* 6,1 (1994), pp. 5-34; Ivan G. Marcus, 'The Representation of Reality in the Narratives of 1096', in: *Jewish History* 13,2 (1999), pp. 37-48; Israel J. Yuval, 'Christliche Symbolik und jüdische Martyrologie zur Zeit der Kreuzzüge', in: Alfred Haverkamp, ed., *Juden und Christen zur Zeit der Kreuzzüge* (Vorträge und Forschungen; 47), Sigmaringen 1999, pp. 87-106.

unified and ambitious counter-history.⁴⁹ Furthermore, Neusner recognizes the paradigmatic understanding of history not only in rabbinic Judaism, but also in the Christian tradition.⁵⁰ Leaving aside the question of his comparison, which tends to elide differences, this part of his work reveals, as is well known, a very different – namely, a much more linear – way of dealing with the past and with the future. In the course of his narrative, Neusner silently papers over this internal contradiction.⁵¹

Analogies and differences between Jewish and Christian history-writing are an ancillary topic that requires our attention to the extent that it can help us to understand Jewish history-writing. According to Neusner and his intellectual ancestor Zunz, Jewish history was simply there, done, and ‘visible to the eye of the believer’ – such that there was no reason to write down what happened from day to day. But that sort of comprehensive vision was not limited to Jewish observers.⁵² Historians such as Julius Africanus (died after 240)⁵³ or Eusebius (died ca. 340)⁵⁴ sought to justify the precedence of Christianity using an entirely classical approach, and sought to discover in history, no less, a source of piety. The most marked version of this approach on the Christian side is Augustine’s: history sublates time, covering and including everything in the world, from its origins to its perfection in the

⁴⁹ See Peter Schäfer, *Studien zur Geschichte und Theologie des rabbinischen Judentums* (Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums, 15), Leiden 1978.

⁵⁰ Neusner, *Halakha*, p. 136 [see note 38]

⁵¹ In a similar fashion, Bonfil (*Jewish Attitudes*, p. 9f. [see note 44]) attacked Momigliano’s axiom that historiography is essentially divided into Greek and Jewish history-writing (with the latter uniting history and religion), as this kind of unity is also found in Christianity – alongside Greek ideas about history.

⁵² On this topic, in reference to Momigliano’s work, see Bonfil, *Jewish Attitudes*, p. 11 [see note 44].

⁵³ William Adler, *Julius Africanus and the Judaism in the Third Century*, in: Benjamin Wright, ed., *A Multifform Heritage. Studies in Early Judaism and Christianity in Honour of Robert A. Kraft*, Atlanta 1999, pp. 123-138; Umberto Roberto, *Julius Africanus und die Tradition der hellenistischen Universalgeschichte*, in: Martin Wallraff, ed., *Julius Africanus und die christliche Weltchronik* (Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur; 157), Berlin 2006, pp. 3-16.

⁵⁴ See Basil Studer, *Die historische Theologie des Eusebius von Caesarea*, in: *idem, Durch Geschichte zum Glauben* (Studia Anselmiana; 141), Rome 2006, pp. 205-251.

'City of God'. It is hardly surprising that this church father, as conscious of history as he was – yet unconcerned about historical detail⁵⁵ – never wrote a chronicle of particular events.⁵⁶ And yet some hundred years later, Otto of Freising, relying on Orosius, used the Augustinian model of two states in order to dress not only the past, but also the future in the minute detail typical of the chronicle.⁵⁷ His conceptual boldness was probably unique, but a certain consciousness of the perceptible sublation of the individual moment – its sublation in a time that was created by a timeless deity – is a common element in the many otherwise quite distinct world chronicles dating from the seventh through the thirteenth century.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ See, for example, Christof Müller, *Geschichtsbewusstsein bei Augustinus. Ontologische, anthropologische und universalgeschichtlich/heilsgeschichtliche Elemente einer augustianischen „Geschichtstheorie“*, in: *Cassiciacum* 39.2 (1993), pp. 163-191; furthermore Anthony Kenny, *A New History of Western Philosophy, vol 2: Medieval Philosophy*, Oxford 2005, pp. 4-11.

⁵⁶ He left this task for Orosius: Hans-Werner Goetz, *Die Geschichtstheologie des Orosius* (= *Impulse der Forschung*, vol. 32), Darmstadt 1980, p. 9f., 148-165; Dorothea Koch-Peters, *Ansichten des Orosius zur Geschichte seiner Zeit*, in: *Studien zur klassischen Philologie* 9 (1984), pp. 17-23; Josep Vilella, *Biografía crítica de Orosio*, in: *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 43 (2000), pp. 94-121, 118f.; Anna-Dorothee von den Brincken, *Beobachtungen zum geographischen Berichtshorizont der lateinischen Weltchronistik*, in: Wallraff, *Julius Africanus* [see note 53], pp. 161-178, esp. p. 165; Basil Studer, *Geschichte und Glaube bei Origenes und Augustinus*, in: *idem, Durch Geschichte zum Glauben* [see note 54], pp. 177-203, here 184f., 194f.; Johannes Fried *emphasizes Orosius' independence vis-à-vis his teacher: Römische Erinnerung. Zu den Anfängen und frühen Wirkungen des christlichen Rommythos*, in: Matthias Thumser *et al.*, eds., *Studien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters. Festschrift Jürgen Petersohn*, Stuttgart 2000, pp. 1-41, esp. 20f.

⁵⁷ Anna-Dorothee von den Brincken, *Studien zur lateinischen Weltchronistik bis in das Zeitalter Ottos von Freising*, Düsseldorf 1957; Amos Funkenstein, *Heilsplan und natürliche Entwicklung. Formen der Gegenwartsbestimmung im Geschichtsdenken des hohen Mittelalters*, Munich 1965, pp. 36ff., 93ff., 97.

⁵⁸ See Gert Melville, *Der Weg der Zeit zum Heil. Beobachtungen zu mittelalterlichen Deutungen der Menschheitsgeschichte anhand der Weltchronik des Rudolf von Ems*, in: Hanna-Barbara Gerl-Falkovitz, ed., *Zeitenwende – Wendezeiten* (Dresdner Hefte für Philosophie, vol. 3), Dresden 2001, pp. 159-179; also Anna-Dorothea von den Brincken, *Contemporaritas regnorum – Beobachtungen zum Versuch des Sigebert von Gembloux, die Chronik des Hieronymus fortzusetzen*, in: Dieter Berg *et al.*, eds., *Historiographia mediaevalis. Studien zur Geschichtsschreibung und Quellenkunde des Mittelalters – Festschrift Franz-Josef Schmale*, Darmstadt 1988, pp. 199-211; Hans-Werner Goetz, *Der Umgang mit der Geschichte in der lateinischen Weltchronistik des hohen Mittelalters*, in: Wallraff, *Julius Africanus* [see note 53], pp. 179-197, 182f.

Therefore, other factors – probably external rather than internal ones – must have been responsible for the Jewish approach to history. As both Funkenstein and Bonfil have argued, the connection between history-writing and power and the visible discrepancy between Christian and Jewish access to power produced quite different ways of dealing with history;⁵⁹ and thus Jews in a period of exile might not have understood themselves as exercising historical agency the way such parallel constructs such as *christianitas* or *al-umma al-islamiyya* did.⁶⁰ This might suffice in part to explain some things, but certainly not in any general sense.⁶¹ For historical time itself has allowed space for the creation of alternative and oppositional identities and entities.⁶² And on the non-Jewish side, we find descriptions of defeat and oppression as well as triumph. True, holding power encourages the writing of history, but the experience of suppression may generate the same stimulus.⁶³

⁵⁹ Amos Funkenstein, *Collective Memory and Historical Consciousness*, in: *idem, Perceptions of Jewish History*, Berkeley 1993, p. 3f.; see also Meyer, *Ideas of Jewish History*, introduction, pp. 12-15 [see note 25].

⁶⁰ Franz Rosenthal provides an overview of Islamic historiography in *A History of Muslim Historiography*, Leiden 1968²; see also Tarif Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period*, Cambridge 1995; Conermann, ed., *Die muslimische Sicht*, pp. 45-57.

⁶¹ And Jews did indeed make such attempts in the Middle Ages; for example, the family chronicle of Ahimaaz of Oria (cf. note 26, *supra*).

⁶² Visible, for instance, in the remarkably early lay-communal historiography of the Lombard and Ligurian cities of the high Middle Ages; see Jörg W. Busch, *Die Mailänder Geschichtsschreibung zwischen Arnulf und Galvanus Flamma. Die Beschäftigung mit der Vergangenheit im Umfeld einer oberitalienischen Kommune vom späten 11. bis zum frühen 14. Jahrhundert* (Münstersche Mittelalter-Schriften; 72), Munich 1997, esp. pp. 88ff., 239f.; cf. also Walther Pohl, *Memory, Identity and Power in Lombard Italy*, in: Hen – Innes, eds., *Uses of the Past*, p. 9-28 [see note 9].

⁶³ As in the case of the depiction of defeat and foreign occupation in Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum. The History of the English People*, Diana Greenway, ed./trans. (Oxford Medieval Texts), Oxford 1996, pp. 14f., 272f., 304f., 310-315; cf. Bernd Roling, *Der Historiker als Apologet der Weltverachtung. Die 'Historia Anglorum' des Heinrich von Huntingdon*, in: *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 33 (1999), pp. 125f., 148f.; Heil, *Gottesfeinde*, pp. 108f. [see note 12]; and on this topic also the examples of the Bavavian duke Tassilo and the order of succession established by Charlemagne in the more broadly based study by Fried, *Erinnerung und Vergessen*, here 573-585 [see note 11]; cf. also Momigliano, *Persian, Greek, and Jewish Historiography*, pp. 22f. [see note 42].

An examination of the functions and conditions of history-writing nonetheless would seem to be useful for attempts to survey Jewish historiography, as long as one defines its goals somewhat differently. Verena Epp has recently noted, in a totally different context, an asymmetry at the root of postmodern readings – by Hayden White and others – of history: such authors have attributed the writing of history entirely to the field of rhetoric and have sought to understand historical texts purely as literary artefacts. This is to impose a new grid on texts of the past – a grid that definitely is useful as a tool for determining to what extent we can, in the present, understand the making of such texts – but which does not necessarily help us to understand their content. She claims that when such Christian texts were written, history-writing was an ancillary of theology, and thus a function of exegesis in both historical and presentist perspectives.⁶⁴

Even if Epp's approach seems, on its own, quite apodictic, it does draw our attention in one specific spot to pre-existing commonalities regarding the function of historical thought, but also to noteworthy (if hard to measure) differences between Christian and Jewish history-writing. These differences can be seen equally in the means and in the goals: both developed in Hellenistic environments, the former inclusively as a Christianized continuation of late Hellenistic universal history, the latter, however, as a result of rabbinic self-renewal, in an exclusive way, at least regarding the surface of the texts – that is, as a deliberate attempt to distance themselves from Greek tradition. The Christian New Testament tradition is relatively sparse but always oriented in a progressive-linear fashion towards the Eschaton (End Time) in its mode of debate – and for that reason alone always favours concretizing interpretation of 'the signs of the times' in the present. It co-existed with the 'shared' Biblical-historical tradition (shared, that is, claimed by both sides and interpreted in different and mutually

⁶⁴ Verena Epp, *Von Spurensuchern und Zeichendeutern. Zum Selbstverständnis mittelalterlicher Geschichtsschreiber*, in: Johannes Laudage, ed., *Von Fakten und Fiktionen* [see note 9], pp. 43-62, 50f.

exclusive ways), and it stood in opposition to the opulent and complex canon of Mishnah and Gemara on the Jewish side, as well as the rabbinic extension of Mishnah-Gemara in post-Talmudic times. While Christian history-writing was not to be put off even by occasional shocks occasioned by its own discoveries,⁶⁵ or could not be, Jewish practice aimed to make the authority of a teaching credible via the consistently atemporal character of the illustrative examples adduced in its support, and thus to raise a fence around the Torah. It was not in the least disposed to establish discursive means of differentiating between various ages of the world.

The historical practices the Rabbis thereby established – whether one calls their approach paradigmatic, trans-temporal or circular – *allowed for* linear historiography devoted to particular moments in time, but did not *require* it. This allows us to conclude that Jewish and Christian concepts of history did not overlap completely, but can nonetheless be compared. Therefore, the cause of their difference, which we must in the first instance simply accept, but which requires careful further examination, lies not in specific perspectives, but in the function of historical thought, in the ritual-cultural location of such thought and in the very different contours of each body of sacred reference-texts. Seen in this way, Neusner's position appears to be quite vulnerable: the general discussion of history-writing and historical consciousness cannot be limited to the question of the presence or absence of history in the form of historiography; rather, it must address the quality, the conditions and the obligations, i.e., the components of each concept of history.

The internal logic of Neusner's position raises other problems, to be sure. He uses and perpetuates questionable understandings of history, and it is irrelevant whether this is deliberate or unintended. It's not

⁶⁵ Johannes Fried, Endzeiterwartung um die Jahrtausendwende, in: *Deutsches Archiv* 45 (1989), pp. 381-473; Wolfram Brandes, „Tempora periculosa sunt“. Eschatologisches im Vorfeld der Kaiserkrönung Karls des Großen, in: Rainer Berndt, ed., *Das Frankfurter Konzil von 794. Kristallisationspunkt karolingischer Kultur*, Mainz 1997, vol. 1, pp. 49-79.

only that he more or less wraps up Jewish history and thereby disconnects it from its changing socio-cultural context; that alone would seem quite dubious, because without the protective cover of its context, any point in history can be reduced to a mere cipher. This is how the historical reality – however it might be construed – of Biblical Judaism has been challenged most recently using the approaches of religious studies and archaeology. Such methods gain plausibility by denying that the narrative, constitutive of tradition, could contain an authentic content that shaped history. This is to distort the content of the narrative or entirely dismiss it. It suffices to refer to the work of Philip Davies and Israel Finkelstein on the walls of the Temple and other walls,⁶⁶ as well as to Jan Assmann's strenuously revisionist work on the life of Moses.⁶⁷

So there were 'no trumpets before Jericho' – and precisely this kind of naïve, positivistic reading is supposed to produce the sound-waves that will break down the walls of tradition! Biblical history, in this reading, is reduced to pure text, and as we know, texts can be so utterly deconstructed that they become unrecognizable.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Philip Davies, *In Search of Ancient Israel*, Sheffield, 1991; Israel Finkelstein et al., eds., *The Bible Unearthed. Archaeology's New Vision of Ancient Israel and the Origin of its Sacred Book*, New York 2001; cf. Sarah Japhet, 'In Search of Ancient Israel' – Revisionism at all Costs, in: David N. Myers et al., eds., *The Jewish Past Revisited. Reflections on Modern Jewish Historians*, New Haven 1998, pp. 212-233; cf. also J.P. Dessel, *In Search of the Good Book. A Critical Survey of Handbooks on Biblical Archaeology*, in: Milton C. Moreland, ed., *Between Text and Artifact. Integrating Archaeology in Biblical Studies Teaching*, Leiden 2004, pp. 67-98.

⁶⁷ Jan Assmann, *Moses the Egyptian. The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism*, Cambridge, Mass. 1997; cf. Yosef H. Yerushalmi, *Freud's Moses. Judaism Terminable and Interminable*, New Haven 1991; Richard B. Bernstein, *Freud und das Vermächtnis des Moses*, Berlin 2003; and the critique in Peter Schäfer, *Der Triumph der reinen Geistigkeit. Sigmund Freuds 'Der Mann Moses und die monotheistische Religion'* (Ha'Atelier; 7), Berlin 2003; Raphaël Draï, *Égyptologues ou biblioclastes? Christian Jacq, Christiane Desroches-Noblecourt, Jan Assmann*, in: *Pardès* 38 (2005), pp. 153-169.

⁶⁸ See the concise critique levelled by Amos Funkenstein, *L'histoire d'Israël parmi les chardons: l'histoire face aux autres disciplines*, in: Florence Heymann et al., eds., *L'historiographie israélienne aujourd'hui*, Paris 1998, p. 46; also Fried, *Schleier der Erinnerung*, pp. 308-311 [see note 9].

Neusner's conception of history also lends credence to that ancient and stubborn point of view that denies history and historicity to post-Biblical Jews and Judaism; his view allows contact with that axiom according to which the Jews were stripped of their history and their creative abilities as a result of their sins, whether in Christian form⁶⁹ or in the tradition of Wagner's dictum that Jews are incapable of artistic creation (in the context of his crazed ideas about salvation and of his antisemitic soteriology).⁷⁰

Thus Yerushalmi's desire to return historicity to Jews in the form of memory, even if he had other motivations, is easy to understand. However, it is possible that Neusner's entire approach is wrong from the beginning, and that even Yerushalmi has been champing at the wrong bit, at least in part: even if we cannot find a thoroughgoing linear concept of history in the rabbinical corpus, we cannot conclude that such ideas had no place in their mental universe. Neusner, at least, treats the rabbinic writings as a monolithic bloc, bases his judgements on the finished redaction and not on the long, dynamic and, to us, largely invisible process of their development. For that reason, another of his axioms seems problematic: the idea that rabbinic literature and rabbinic Judaism are identical.⁷¹ When the Rabbis tried to deal with the present by reference to the future, they were capable of loud silences about historical events; but for that reason, they did not need to fear, when they looked back, that they would turn into pillars of salt.⁷²

⁶⁹ Jeremy Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law. Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christianity*, Berkeley 1999, pp. 24f., 30ff., 52 ff.

⁷⁰ Jens Malte Fischer, *Richard Wagners „Das Judentum in der Musik“. Eine kritische Dokumentation zur Geschichte des Antisemitismus*, Frankfurt am Main 2000, pp. 40f., 48ff.; also Kalman P. Bland, *The Artless Jew. Medieval and Modern Affirmations and Denials of the Visual*, Princeton 2000.

⁷¹ Neusner, *Halakha*, p. 136 [see note 38].

⁷² Cf. Günter Stemberger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land. Palestine in the Fourth Century*, Edinburgh 2000, pp. 230ff.

3. Historiography as an Apologetic Strategy

It is precisely in this context that it becomes clear that considering the question of medieval Jewish history-writing in isolation leads to unnecessarily narrow results; and in comparative context, the differences between Jewish and Christian interpretations of history are perhaps much less marked than might appear at first glance.⁷³ The differences are rather in scope (so far as it is known) and the method of execution, but the concepts and the quality are much less different: on the Christian side, there clearly was a 'concept of history oriented towards the past', but which can also be read as a 'concept of the past oriented towards the present', which "did not dig up the past for its own sake or for the sake of historical knowledge, but linked it to quite concrete, contemporary interests and used history as an argument".⁷⁴ 'History as an argument' or 'History according to the standards of the present'⁷⁵ – exactly what as we find in the Regensburg Jews' story of their ancient origin.

Amos Funkenstein – whom we must now allow to enter this debate – introduced a third term between history and memory, namely historical consciousness, which connects the other first two to each other.⁷⁶ He thereby contributed a fruitful perspective to the debate about history, long before Neusner began to critique Yerushalmi's work. Funkenstein recognized that "a modicum of historical awareness existed nonetheless", even in the core of Judaism: in halachic dis-

⁷³ See Bonfil's plaidoyer to the same effect in *Tra due mondi*, p. 208f. [see note 44].

⁷⁴ Goetz, *Der Umgang mit der Geschichte in der lateinischen Weltchronistik*, p. 194 [see note 58].

⁷⁵ Cf. Bernd Schneidmüller, *Constructing the Past by Means of the Present*, in: Gerd Althoff *et al.*, eds., *Medieval Concepts of the Past*, pp. 167-192, 191f.; cf. Fried, *Erinnerung und Vergessen*, p. 593 [see note 11].

⁷⁶ Amos Funkenstein, *Collective Memory and Historical Consciousness* [see note 59]; cf. Samuel Moyn, *Amos Funkenstein on the Theological Origins of Historicism*, in: *Journal of the History of Ideas* 64,4 (2003), pp. 639-657; as well as M. Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross*, p. 177f. [see note 29].

course.⁷⁷ Thus Neusner's axiomatic question 'why no history in rabbinic Judaism?' should have been formulated "why is history different in Judaism?". Or to turn our gaze to Maimonides, with Kenneth Seeskin: "Although it is often said that Maimonides lacked a sense of history, the truth is that he lacked *our* sense of history."⁷⁸

Rabbinical Judaism and subsequent Jewish cultures of the Middle Ages in any case left behind more than just the well-known rabbinic writings and their interpretation. These definitely were central to all their work, but in order to determine in more detail what the Jewish concept of history was, we can also start with sources other than the canonical ones. For this purpose, Yerushalmi and especially Funkenstein (whose work Neusner utterly ignores⁷⁹) have shown the way by analyzing the play and counter-play of 'history and counter-history'.⁸⁰

Funkenstein was thinking less of a counter-history of the sort that Gerschom Scholem opposed to the historicism of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*⁸¹ than of sallies like the Regensburg legend of ancient origins.⁸²

Counter-histories raise objections; in that sense they are partial and participatory histories. They can be read on their own, but can be understood completely only when we read them in the context of complementary dialogues with other narratives. It is hard to say if counter-

⁷⁷ Funkenstein, *Collective Memory and Historical Consciousness* [see note 59], pp. 16f.; cf. Myers, *Selbstreflexion im modernen Erinnerungsdiskurs*, in: Brenner/Myers, eds., *Jüdische Geschichtsschreibung heute* [see note 36], p. 64.

⁷⁸ Kenneth Seeskin, *Maimonides' Sense of History*, in: *Jewish History* 18 (2004), pp. 129-145, 129 (author's emphasis).

⁷⁹ See the sharp repique to Neusner in Funkenstein's posthumously published "L'histoire d'Israël parmi les chardons" [see note 68], esp. p. 30 and p. 39.

⁸⁰ Amos Funkenstein, *History, Counterhistory, and Narrative: idem, Perceptions of Jewish History* [see note 59], esp. p. 36 ff.

⁸¹ Gerschom Scholem, *Überlegungen zur Wissenschaft des Judentums. Vorwort für eine Jubiläumsrede, die nicht gehalten wird (1944)*, in: *idem, Judaica* 6, Frankfurt am Main 1997, pp. 7-52; cf. David Biale, *Gerschom Scholem: Kabbalah and Counter-History*, Cambridge 1982², p. 52ff., 189ff.

⁸² Mark Cohen (*Under Crescent and Cross*, pp. 5-14 [see note 29]), has recently emphasized the meaning of such stories even in the modern discipline of history, using the example of the contrary readings found in Jewish-Islamic history.

histories always seek to colour over and replace their predecessors; at the very least, they want to parody them and contest their absolute truth-claims, to suggest that things could also have gone the other way! Our Regensburg version is much more ambitious: it attempted to confront contemporary events with a corrective (counter-) narrative. Funkenstein was right to understand counter-history as a distinct narrative form.⁸³ The following examples are adduced in response to this idea, and are meant to furnish criteria to allow us to sift out such Jewish counter-narratives not merely from Jewish narratives, but also from the broad stream of non-Jewish sources.

The genre of the Jewish Regensburg story of ancient origins exists in multiple examples. For Ulm, the same thing happened in the Christian tradition, though it too is clearly based on a Jewish narrative, in the middle of the fourteenth century: a letter from the Jews of Jerusalem on the execution of Jesus is said to have surfaced while anti-Jewish pogroms in response to the Black Death were raging there. Something similar can be found, a bit later, for Worms.⁸⁴ In Prague, we hear of the discovery of the foundations of a synagogue dating from the time of the Second Temple, and this too, according to its narrative logic, would seem to have been rooted in a Jewish story.⁸⁵ In contrast to the Regensburg Jews, who pushed the origin of their community back before the beginning of the Christian era, the Jews of Bordeaux, Arles and Lyon, in stories dating from the early thirteenth century, located their ancestors on boats that Vespasian supposedly set adrift without rudders on the Mediterranean, after the destruction of Jerusalem. Here too, the fixed point of origin is determined by the function of the story: these communities wanted to prove that their forefathers de-

⁸³ Funkenstein, *History, Counterhistory, and Narrative*, p. 36 [see note 80].

⁸⁴ For references (esp. to J. Schudt, *Jüdische Merckwürdigkeiten*, vol. 1, Frankfurt 1714, pp. 397-403), see František Graus, *Historische Traditionen über Juden im Spätmittelalter*, in: Alfred Haverkamp, ed., *Zur Geschichte der Juden im Deutschland des späten Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit* (Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters; 24), Stuttgart 1981, p. 14f.

⁸⁵ See the article 'Prag' (Haim Tykocinski), in: *Germania Judaica I* (henceforth GJ), ed. Ismar Elbogen *et al.* [1934], Tübingen 1963, p. 273.

scended, in as direct a line as possible, from the scholars of Eretz Israel (i.e., only at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem could such distinguished people be imagined to have left; anyone who settled outside Eretz Israel before that time could not, by this logic, have been an important scholar). And at the same time, the Christian concept of exile, understood as punishment in theologically grounded anti-Jewish terms, could also be reinterpreted in a positive manner and used to ennoble one's lineage.⁸⁶ A story of this type can be found in the *Sefer ha'Qabbalah* by the Toledan Abraham ibn Daoud (died 1180), in the legends of the four scholars who were taken prisoner and the transition of authentic teaching from Eretz Israel to northern Africa, Italy and Spain⁸⁷ and in the report of a fragment from the same context regarding that Rabbi Makhir, supposedly "from the royal line of David," whom the 'King of Babylon' sent, at the request of 'King Charles', from Mesopotamia to Narbonne.⁸⁸

Such stories were cobbled together from both historical knowledge and contemporary concerns. The versions of ibn Daoud follow the well known narrative model of the *translatio*.⁸⁹ Here it is not a question of the 'translation' [rehousing/reburial] of holy relics or of a *translatio imperii* [succession of empire], but of a *translatio doctrinae* [doctrinal suc-

⁸⁶ Abraham ben Nathan of Lunel, *Sefer ha-Manhig*, ed. Yitzchak Raphael, Jerusalem 1978; *Chronik des Abimaaz*, ed. Salzman, p. 61/2f.; also Israel J. Yuval, Christliche Zeit und jüdische Zeit. Das Paradox einer Übereinstimmung, in: Christoph Cluse, ed., *Jüdische Gemeinden und ihr christlicher Kontext in kulturträumlich vergleichender Betrachtung* (Forschungen zur Geschichte der Juden; A13), Hannover 2003, p. 46.

⁸⁷ Abraham ibn Daoud, *Sefer ha'Qabbalah*, pp. 63-66 [esp. 46ff.]; cf. Gerson D. Cohen, 'The Story of the Four Captives', in: *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 29 (1960/61), pp. 55-131; Aryeh Grabois, L'expansion de l'influence séfarade dans les pays transpyrenéens aux xi^e-xiii^e siècles, in: *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma, Serie III, Medieval*, 6 (1993), pp. 31-56, esp. 34 and 44.

⁸⁸ For the fragment belonging to the *Sefer ha'Qabbalah*, in an Oxford ms., see Adolf Neubauer, ed., *Medieval Jewish Chronicles and Chronological Notes* (Anecdota Oxoniensia; I.4), Oxford 1887, p. 82f.; also Aryeh Grabois, Le souvenir de la légende de Charlemagne dans les textes hébraïques médiévaux, in: *Moyen Age* 72 (1966), pp. 5-41; 12ff.; and Jeremy Cohen, The Nasi of Narbonne: A Problem in Medieval Historiography, in: *American Jewish Studies Review* 2 (1977), pp. 45-76.

⁸⁹ Cf. Yuval, Christliche Zeit, p. 46f. [see note 86].

cession].⁹⁰ Similar things are also to be found in the short Hebrew report on the founding of the Jewish community at Speyer in 1084. The story is a function of the relationship of the new Speyer community with the re-founding of the mother community at Mainz: “In the beginning [!] we came to set up our tents – let no-one pull out our tent pegs now and forever – here in Speyer, and that happened on account of the fire that the city of Mainz experienced. The city of Mainz is our home, the place of our fathers, the oldest, most famous and finest of all the [Jewish] communities of the Empire [...]” This piece of historical narrative [I have left out a few lines] is noteworthy in many respects. It reads as though it really were the beginning – note the resonance of the incipit *be’reshit* (Gen. 1,1) – of a Jewish local history, a history that was then crushed only a few years later by the events of the first crusade, such that the narrative remained a fragment and survived only in the memorial tradition concerning the pogroms of 1096.⁹¹ Whether or not other, similar stories of origin and community chronicles also disappeared in this and later periods of destruction can only be imagined on the basis of this slim evidence. However, this fragment also contains a piece of real counter-history, an alternative to the version found in Bishop Rüdiger’s 1084 Privilege conceded to the Jews of Speyer, which was written entirely from the perspective of the episcopal lord of the city, and which communicates nothing of the desperation of the Jews who fled to Speyer at that time.⁹²

⁹⁰ That a concern about the intact transmission of doctrine was in no way a specifically Jewish affair is shown, for example, by Rexroth, “König Artus und die Professoren,” esp. p. 23f. [see note 8].

⁹¹ MGH Hebräische Texte, vol. 1: *Hebräische Berichte*, p. 490f.; cf. Franz-Josef Ziwes, *Studien zur Geschichte der Juden im mittleren Rheingebiet während des hohen Mittelalters* (Forschungen zur Geschichte der Juden; A1), Hannover 1995, p. 21; see Robert Chazan, *God, Humanity, and History. The Hebrew First Crusade Narratives*, Berkeley 2000; Jeremy Cohen, *Sanctifying the Name of God: Jewish Martyrs and Jewish Memories of the First Crusade*, Philadelphia 2004; see also Rainer Barzen, „Kehillot Shum“: Zur Eigenart der Verbindungen zwischen den jüdischen Gemeinden Mainz, Worms und Speyer bis zur Mitte des 13. Jahrhunderts, in: Cluse, *Jüdische Gemeinden und christlicher Kontext* [see note 86], p. 391.

⁹² Alfred Hilgard, *Urkunden zur Geschichte der Stadt Speyer*, Straßburg 1885, no. 11, pp. 11–12.

Conversely, another Jewish narrative from Regensburg concerns a *translatio* of human remains. Lucia Raspe has discussed this text in detail. The story is traceable in written form to 1470 and claims that the city's patron saint, Emmeram – in the spelling of the time 'Haymram' – was really called Amram and was buried in the Regensburg Jewish cemetery. Clearly the Jewish authors knew the corresponding Christian saint's life quite well and transformed it according to their own needs. A version of the story has also survived for Mainz, and Mainz also had a church of St. Emmeram. Fundamentally different motifs and elements are interwoven here in an ironic counterpoint: to start with, the story tells of a certain Amram of Mainz, who founded the yeshiva of Cologne, but after his death he wanted to be buried with his forefathers in Mainz. And indeed, after his death at Cologne, his body miraculously floated up the Rhine in a boat. Consequently the Christians tried (and failed) to appropriate the visibly holy man for themselves as a wonder-working saint. But they were unable to move the corpse and therefore immediately built a church over the landing spot. The Jews then secretly substituted another body for Amram's and laid the holy man to rest with his ancestors.⁹³ The constructive element is the similarity of the name Amram to Emmeram. The miraculous journey up the Rhine was, at its origin, a Regensburg tradition. The body of that city's Emmeram, according to his *Life* by Arbeo of Freising, when it was being taken to its first burial place at Aschheim, near Munich, after going down the Isar on a raft, miracu-

⁹³ First published in the *Schalschelet ha-qabbalah* ('Chain of Tradition', Venice 1587) of the Imolan Gedaliah ibn Jachja (1515-1587); in German and Hebrew in the 'Maasebuch' (Ulf Diederichs, ed., *Das Ma'assebuch. Altjiddische Erzählkunst*, München 2003, pp. 769-772); cf. Lucia Raspe, Emmeram von Regensburg, Amram von Mainz. Ein christlicher Heiliger in der jüdischen Überlieferung, in: Michael Brocke *et al.*, eds., *Neuer Anbruch. Zur deutsch-jüdischen Geschichte und Kultur*, Berlin 2001, pp. 221-241; also Abraham David, R. Gedalya Ibn Yahya's 'Shalshet Hakabbalah'. A Chapter in Medieval Jewish Historiography, in: *Immanuel* 12 (1981) 60-76; Astrid Starck, Erzählstrukturen in der frühen jiddischen Prosa, in: Walter Röhl, ed., *Jiddische Philologie. Festschrift Erika Timm*, Tübingen 1999, pp. 157-173.

lously turned and floated up the Danube to Regensburg.⁹⁴ The Jewish version probably originated in exchanges between Christians and Jews regarding the story. One needs only adduce, as a parallel example, the tradition regarding a theological disputation that is said to have taken place between Christians and Jews at Regensburg in the time of Bishop Michael (942-972), regarding the miraculous powers of the body of St. Emmeram.⁹⁵

The version of the story contained in the *Maase-Book* (first printed at Basel in 1602),⁹⁶ which brought together older collections of Ashkenazi stories, denies the Regensburg community's ownership of the legend because it is geographically impossible to reach Regensburg by ship from the Rhine. In sum, this story and its variants tell us a great deal about competition in the realm of the sacred, imitation, about the rise of new cult sites, and all the while they reassure the Jews that God is on their side – and probably even more important – that Christians do not even need to know it.⁹⁷

Both blessed ignorance and (unpublicized) contestation regarding such holy places return, interwoven with other motifs, but much the same as regards the functional orientation of the story, in a description furnished by Benjamin of Tudela in 1173. The description is embedded in a piece whose genre is ideal for seamless transitions from ex-

⁹⁴ See, most recently, Carl I. Hammer, Arbo of Freising's 'Life and passion' of St Emmeram, in: *Revue d'Histoire Ecclesiastique* 101 (2006), pp. 5-36; on the context, see also Michael Borgolte, Fiktive Gräber in der Historiographie. Hugo von Flavigny und die Sepultur der Bischöfe von Verdun, in: *Fälschungen im Mittelalter* [see note 7], vol. 1, pp. 205-240, esp. p. 235f.

⁹⁵ Arnoldus of St. Emmeram, *De miraculis et memoria beati Emmerammi*, c.15, in: Migne, *Patrologia Latina* 141, cols. 1013B-1014D; Andreas Angerstorfer, Die Disputation zwischen Juden und Christen in Regensburg zur Zeit Bischofs Michael (942-972), in: *Stadt und Mutter in Israel*, pp. 145-153.

⁹⁶ The word *maises* = *ma'asim* (in Biblical Hebrew), means stories; literally, deeds.

⁹⁷ See Jakob Meitlis, *Das Ma'assebuch. Seine Entstehung und Quellengeschichte*, Berlin 1933 (reprint Hildesheim 1987); Erika Timm, Zur Frühgeschichte der jiddischen Erzählprosa: eine neu aufgefundene Maise-Handschrift, in: *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Deutschen Sprache und Literatur* 117 (1995), pp. 243-280.

perienced space to constructed space: the travelogue.⁹⁸ The story of the grave of David at Jerusalem, on Mount Zion, has been the subject of much discussion. It is a particular irony that Benjamin's counter-history, which contests Christian knowledge and thus also ownership of the sacred place, is the oldest explicit evidence of this tradition.⁹⁹ Even more noteworthy is another example of textual over-writing of spaces in Benjamin's report of his visit to Rome. He writes¹⁰⁰ that in the Lateran basilica there were "two copper columns that stood in the Temple, built by King Solomon, may he rest in peace."¹⁰¹ On each column one reads the engraved words 'Shelomo ben David'. And the Jews of Rome reported that year for year on the anniversary of the destruction of the Temple, on the ninth of Av, drops of moisture ran off the columns like water (there is a similar 'Sweating Column' in the Hagia Sophia at Constantinople). Benjamin also claims to have seen in

⁹⁸ See, for example, Joachim Knape, Fiktionalität und Faktizität als Erkenntnisproblem am Beispiel mittelalterlicher Reiseerzählungen, in: *Künstliche Paradiese, virtuelle Realitäten*, Munich 1997, pp. 47-62. Cf. Iain Macleod Higgins, *Writing East: the 'travels' of Sir John Mandeville*, Philadelphia 1997; Roxanne L. Euben, *Journeys to the other shore. Muslim and Western travelers in search of knowledge*, Princeton 2006.

⁹⁹ *The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela. Travel in the Middle Ages*, 2nd. ed., Malibu/CA 1987, pp. 84-86; on editions and translations, see *ibid.*, pp. 33-6, and in the German edition ed. Stefan Schreiner, *Jüdische Reisen im Mittelalter*, Cologne 1998, pp. 165-169; cf. Ora Limor, The Origins of a Tradition: King David's Tomb on Mount Zion, in: *Traditio* 44 (1988), pp. 453-462; also Yosef Levanon, The Holy Place in Jewish Piety. Evidence of two Twelfth-Century Jewish Itineraries, in: *Annual of Rabbinic Judaism* 1 (1998), S. 103-118; Joseph Shatzmiller, Jews, Pilgrimage, and the Christian Cult of Saints: Benjamin of Tudela and his Contemporaries, in: Alexander C. Murray, ed., *After Rome's Fall. Narrators and Sources of Early Medieval History. Essays presented to Walter Goffart*, Toronto 1998, p. 338 and note 4.

¹⁰⁰ Benjamin, *Itinerary*, p. 64.; cf. Shatzmiller, Jews, Pilgrimage, and the Christian Cult of Saints, pp. 337-347; Annelies Kuyt, Die Welt aus sefardischer und ashkenazischer Sicht: Die mittelalterlichen hebräischen Reiseberichte des Benjamin von Tudela und des Petachja von Regensburg, in: Xenja von Ertzdorff, ed., *Zur Poetik der Reise- und Länderberichte*, Gießen (Daphnis; suppl. 34), Amsterdam 2003, pp. 211-231.

¹⁰¹ And indeed the holy relics in the Lateran included two copper columns, first mentioned in the eleventh century, that possibly dated from the second century and according to one tradition came from the Temple at Jerusalem. See Ursula Nilgen, Das Fastigium in der Basilica Constantiniana und vier Bronzesäulen des Lateran, in: *Römische Quartalschrift* 72 (1977), pp. 1-31; Jack Freiberg, *The Lateran in 1600. Christian Concord in Counter-Reformation Rome*, Cambridge 1995, p. 134, 243; also Levanon, "Holy Place," p. 104 [see note 99].

front of the basilica a marble statue of Samson with a lance in his hand, also a statute of 'Absalom ben David', and one of a 'King Constantine the Great'. It is worth noting that Benjamin abstained from making any negative remarks in his description of the papal basilica, and that the Jews of Rome, according to his account, naturally knew what went on inside the church.¹⁰² The naming of the statues makes the papal church sound like a Jewish Areopagos, though the sequence Samson-Absalom-Constantine strikes a rather ironic note.¹⁰³ Christian interpretations of these objects did not need to be mentioned, because for Benjamin their true reality was manifested in the Weeping Columns at the core of the papal center of power. It almost seems as if the communication of such counter-histories were a central function of Benjamin's travelogue, because when he arrives at the chapters for Rome, Constantinople or Jerusalem, he substitutes colorful stories for his typical listing of city names, distances, names of important people and the size of the Jewish community. These stories do not always mention the Christian version, but they always provide us with a counter-version.

The travelogue of Petachia of Regensburg also contains such counter-histories. He left for Eretz Israel at the beginning of the thirteenth century and then dictated a report "to announce to his people, the children of Israel, the power and might of the Holy One, blessed be He, who daily works wonders and signs for us." One episode in particular is worth noting here. Near Baghdad, at the mountains of Ararat, he came to some mountains between which Noah's ark came to rest after the Flood. He remarks laconically "The ark can no longer be seen, as it has already rotted away." Naturally, how could it be otherwise? The report then continues "The mountains are covered in

¹⁰² The relics of the Holy Land, Jerusalem and the Temple in the Lateran basilica included the Holy Steps, a container holding manna [*man*], the ark of the covenant, and Moses' and Aaron's rods. Cf. Freiberg, *The Lateran in 1600*, pp. 22, 30, 112, 121f. [see note 101].

¹⁰³ See Levanon, "The Holy Place," p. 104 [see note 99]; also Paul Borchardt, 'The Sculpture in Front of the Lateran as Described by Benjamin of Tudela and Magister Gregorius,' in: *Journal of Roman Studies* 26 (1936), pp. 68-70.

bushes and grasses. The dew has hardly fallen on it when the sun heats it up and it evaporates. The people gather it at night, when it is damp, but they do not eat it (immediately) the next morning. That is the custom. They collect the manna with the twigs and leaves and then cut it up into small pieces, because they are hard and very bitter. The manna is as white as snow, in small grains. When they cook the manna with the leaves, it is sweeter than honey and everything sweet. Without the leaves ... the limbs of anyone eating it would become utterly weak on account of the great sweetness. Rabbi Petachia was given some of the manna to eat; it melted in his mouth and crept into all his limbs. He could not bear the sweetness.”¹⁰⁴

Even if we disregard the strange coexistence of ark and manna, this is an extremely strange hybrid story that collapses the past into the present. Naturally Noah’s ark was no longer there, but the manna still was – or it was there again. Possibly it was a drug made from white pods that crept into all the rabbi’s limbs, but this is a secondary consideration. More important is the eschatological perspective that the traveller communicates: in his own time he was unable to bear the sweetness, and so the bread of heaven was already here, and its giver present. However this bread was not *yet* bearable now. This is the same thing that such stories always demonstrate: looking into the past confirms one’s own present. And it proved that the time was not yet ripe.¹⁰⁵ Petachia’s gaze ordered the elements of the past as a function of the future. And the fact that the present need not be a void is proven by the Emmeram/Amram story, which not only functioned as a competing counter-narrative and finally as a means of appropriating a history, but also aimed to make the immediate present meaningful.

So far we have seen three different functional types of Jewish history-writing, namely communicative, discursive and intimate. The Regens-

¹⁰⁴ Hebrew and English text in *Travels of Rabbi Petachia of Ratisbon*, ed. A. Benisch, London 1856, p. 48f. (a corrected translation is given here).

¹⁰⁵ Kuyt underestimates the travelogues’ ability to communicate such things: pp. 213f., 223 [see note 100].

burg legend was originally designed, explicitly, to be communicated to non-Jews and understood by them; it did so with surprising success, if not in the desired direction. The Regensburg and Mainz versions of the Amram and Emmeram material, however, appear as the narrative substrate of the lasting debate with the other side; they were the products of the dispute with the interlocutor, but in their existing discursive form, they were reserved for internal use only. Benjamin's and Petachia's versions were also products of a dispute with the other side and expressions of irreconcilable claims to the means of salvation. However, this competition appears here in a one-sided form: the other side was not to notice, if at all possible, anything whatsoever about this dispute and the insights and certainties it produced. Such consolations – which would have produced only diametrically opposed, hostile readings on the other side – served only to help reassure them of their own pending perfection, not yet realized but clearly legible in the signs that presaged it.

4. The Emperor's Jewish Saviour and other Traces of Medieval Jewish Historiography

As we can recognize in the Regensburg tradition, the Christian chroniclers had clearly heard the narrative message from the other side and continued it. At this point, a Jewish voice found its way into the Christian tradition and even outlived the end of the Jewish community itself in 1519. But we hear about it only when Jewish stories coincide with the interests of the Christian chroniclers and allowed continuations independent of the intentions of the original exponents. Thus, the conditions of transmission for Jewish historical narratives in the Middle Ages were generally unfavorable. Aside from the possibility of active, material destruction, the conditions of their production and their functions hardly allowed for them to be set down in writing and disseminated. As internal narratives their function was explicitly to make themselves known quietly, without leaving written traces. Only when some other use could be made of them, the open (communicative) narratives found their way into non-Jewish history-writing. And

that could have happened much more frequently than is generally assumed. I would like to furnish a few examples of this by way of conclusion.

The following example comes not from a Jewish source, but from a Latin one: the third book of the chronicle of Thietmar of Merseburg contains a legendary report of the defeat of Otto II by the Saracens at Cape Colonne and his rescue in the year 981/82. “The emperor, however, fled with Duke Otto and others to the sea; and there he saw a ship in the distance, a salandria. On the horse of the Jew Kalonymos he tried to reach it. But the ship refused to take him on board and continued on its way. On his return to the shore, he found the Jew still standing there, for he was worried and wanted to wait to see what the fate of his beloved lord would be. And when the emperor noticed the enemy approaching (cf. “*While he yet spake, behold, a multitude...*”), he asked the Jew with trepidation, what would now become of him (cf. “*O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me...*”); but then he saw a second ship coming and noticed among those on the ship a trusted confidant. So he plunged once more into the sea on the horse, reached the ship and was taken on board. Only his knight Heinrich ... knew who he was. He was laid in the bed of the ship’s captain, who also recognized him, at length, and asked, if he was the Emperor (cf. “*...and a maid came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus the Galilean*”). After denying this for a long time (“*...But he denied, saying ...*”), he finally had to admit to his identity: “I am he”, he said, “my sins have brought me, deservedly, to this disaster.” (“*...Art Thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest ...Thine own nation and the chief priests delivered thee unto me*”).¹⁰⁶

A great deal of ink has been spilled over this odd story, and some observers have even wanted to take it as a report of fact.¹⁰⁷ But none of

¹⁰⁶ Thietmar, *Chronicon* III.21, ed. Robert Holtzmann, *MGH Scriptores rer. Germ.*, N.S. 9 (1935), p. 124f.

¹⁰⁷ See Gunther Wolf, Kalonymos, der jüdische Lebensretter Kaiser Ottos II. (982), und das rheinische Judenzentrum Mainz, in: *idem*, ed., *Kaiserin Theophanu. Prinzessin aus der Fremde – des Westreichs große Kaiserin*, Cologne 1991, pp. 162-167.

the other well-informed chroniclers of the failed Italian crusade, e.g., the author of the *Annales Sangallenses* or John the Deacon, report anything of the sort. Only Thietmar's work contains the Kalonymos episode.¹⁰⁸ Even if one takes into account his critical attitude towards Otto II – and the attribution of a Jewish friend to the emperor is not to be understood as a friendly gesture – and if one recognizes the cleverly interwoven parody of the events on the Mount of Olives (cited above, in italics, from various Gospels), in which after the others had fled, only one Jew remained with his lord, it is still hard to imagine why the chronicler placed the Jew in such a prominent place and gave him an equally prominent and fraught name. It certainly is possible to conclude from this passage that there were Jews among the closest circle of advisors of the Saxon imperial house. It cannot even be disproved, because it cannot be proven; it remains a hypothesis. Instead, I will attempt to prove another hypothesis, though it is one that is capable of solving the puzzle posed by the unique and spectacularly odd story set at Cap Colonne.

For if we assume that the Jews of Merseburg were the transmitters of this story and that Thietmar was its recipient, then we have at least the kernel of a typical counter-narrative, in which a Jew becomes the main actor in the history of the other side. This seems to be at least not impossible. Even the hidden parody of the Mount of Olives story, which gives rise to no coherent meaning or context in Thietmar's version, can be read as a reference to the Jewish origin of the story.¹⁰⁹ The

¹⁰⁸ Karl Uhlirz, *Jahrbücher des deutschen Reiches unter Otto II. und Otto III.*, vol. 1: Otto II. (Jahrbücher der deutschen Geschichte; 10.1), Leipzig 1902, pp. 178f., 257-261; on a later reflection of the story in an Arab chronicle, see *infra*, note 111.

¹⁰⁹ A parody of the Gospels, here with elements of the Easter Thomas story (John 20, 24-49), can also be found in the structure of a twelfth-century story about the martyrdom and the musical legacy of Rabbi Amnon on Mainz, which seems to have helped the piyyut *Unetanne toqef* ("We will observe the mighty holiness of this day" [Rabbi Morris Silverman, *High Holiday Prayer Book*, Hartford/CT 1951, pp. 147-148], which was probably a thousand years older, cf. Simon Hirschhorn, ed. and comm., *Tora, wer wird dich nun erheben? Pijjutim mi Magenxa – Religiöse Dichtungen der Juden aus dem mittelalterlichen Mainz*, Gerlingen/Darmstadt 1995, p. 56-62), into the Ashkenazi liturgy for Rosh Ha-Shanah and Yom Kippur; cf. Israel Yuval, *Gedichte und Geschichte als Weltgericht*.

Jewish community of Merseburg along with that of Magdeburg defined the most easterly advance of the Ashkenazi cultural world in that early stage of its development. Thietmar also reported isolated details about the presence of Jews in the Ottonian residence and episcopal city,¹¹⁰ so he knew of their presence and might well have had contact with Jews himself. That does not mean that a Jewish story about Otto II would have had to originate in Merseburg, but the archetypical story about good relations between the king and the Jews would have been told there, and Thietmar heard it¹¹¹ and rewrote it for his purposes, as it were as a double counter-history, this time as an attack on the Emperor who had extinguished ‘his’ bishopric.¹¹²

Reading the Kalonymos legend this way, then, it would seem to have been part of a possibly much larger contemporary complex of Kalonymos legends that slowly eroded, a complex to which another story about a Kalonymos moving from Lucca to Mainz at the request of a King Charles would then have belonged. Scholars have puzzled long and hard, without reaching any persuasive results, about which of the four Kings Charles this one was – having made a classic historian’s

Unetanne tokef, Dies irae und Amnon von Mainz, in: *Kalonymos* 8.4 (2005), pp. 1-6; also Ivan G. Marcus, A Pious Community and Doubt. *Qiddush ha-shem* in Ashkenaz and the Story of Amnon of Mainz, in: Hochschule für Jüdische Studien Heidelberg, ed., *Studien zur jüdischen Geschichte und Soziologie. Festschrift Carlebach*, Heidelberg 1992, pp. 97-113; Elisabeth Hollender, Narrative Kreativität in Ashkenaz. Die Erzählung(en) über Amnon von Mainz, in: *Im Gespräch*, 11 (2005), pp. 63-78.

¹¹⁰ See *Germania Judaica* 1, pp. 163-67, 226f. [see note 85]; also Israel M. Ta-Shma, On the History of the Jews in Twelfth- and Thirteenth-Century Poland, in: *Polin* 10 (1997), pp. 287-317.

¹¹¹ Something similar must be assumed for the work of Ibn al-Atîr, who began writing around 1200; cf. Uhlirz, *Jahrbücher*, p. 262 [see note 108]; Wolf, Kalonymos, p. 163 [see note 107].

¹¹² Ernst-Dieter Hehl, Merseburg – eine Bistumsgründung unter Vorbehalt. Gelübde, Kirchenrecht und politischer Spielraum im 10. Jahrhundert,” in: *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 31 (1997), pp. 96-119; on the events at Merseburg and criticism of Otto II., see also Johannes Fried, Brunos Dedikationsgedicht, in: *Deutsches Archiv* 43 (1987), pp. 574-583, 580; *idem.*, *Schleier der Erinnerung*, p. 188ff. [see note 9]

mistake, namely failing to take into account the typological character of such narratives.¹¹³

The interpretation of Thietmar's Kalonymos episode thus constructed is merely speculation. Yet Christian authors also referred to Jewish materials elsewhere, namely in the world chronicles of the thirteenth century.¹¹⁴ But these are variant narratives of Biblical and other 'classical' motifs. Nonetheless, it seems worthwhile to pursue these traces further. This would at least allow us to track down remnants of Jewish narratives that were captured and recycled, as it were, in foreign contexts outside the inner-Jewish context. In order to support the assumption that Thietmar's Kalonymos episode came from a Jewish source, it is admittedly not sufficient to list merely similar stories beside each other. The question is whether patterns that link them can be found in their form or in their reception. For this purpose, Thietmar's narrative contains at least a few external characteristics worth noting: the author not only is the only Christian at the time to recount this episode, but he also tells about an event that is supposed to have taken place far away, and which he clearly did not witness. Furthermore, the content was not merely spectacular, but was also capable of fulfilling an entirely congruous narrative function in his story – and

¹¹³ Eleazer ha-Rokeah of Worms first associated this material with a King Charles in his *Mizraf le Chochmah* (early thirteenth century); see Aryeh Grabois, *Le souvenir de la légende de Charlemagne dans les textes hébraïques médiévaux*, in: *Moyen Age* 72 (1966), pp. 5-41; Marcus, *History, Story and Collective Memory*, pp. 372-374 [see note 23]; Kenneth Stow, *By Land or by Sea. The Passage of the Kalonymides to the Rhineland in the Tenth Century*, in: Michael Goodich, ed., *Cross Cultural Convergences in the Crusader Period. Essays Presented to Aryeh Grabois*, New York 1995, pp. 319-334; Elisabeth Hollender, „Und den Rabbenu Moses brachte der König Karl mit sich.“ Zum Bild Karls des Grossen in der hebräischen Literatur des Mittelalters, in: Bernd Bastert, ed., *Karl der Grosse in den europäischen Literaturen des Mittelalters. Konstruktion eines Mythos*, Tübingen 2004, pp. 183-200.

¹¹⁴ See Rudolf of Ems (~1250) und Jan of Vienna (~1272-1284); cf. Martin Przybilski, 'di juden jehent'. Die Aufnahme jüdischer Erzählstoffe in der 'Weltchronik' des Jan von Wien, in: *Aschkenas* 14 (2004), pp. 83-99; for an example of reception in the opposite direction, see Samuel Armistead *et al.*, Una tradición épico-carolingia en el Itinerario de Benjamín de Tudela, in: *Sefarad* 47 (1987), pp. 3-7.

thus could be written into a Christian context, just like the story of ancient Jewish origins in Regensburg.

A further example with similar characteristics can be found in the events of 1287/88 in the area of Mainz after the death of ‘Good Werner’ near the town of Bacharach, a young man “of whom it was generally said that the Jews had killed him.” A geographically removed Colmar author of the time around 1300 wrote that King Rudolf had forbidden the cult of Werner under pressure from the Jews and even ordered the archbishop of Mainz to preach that “the Christians did the Jews a great injustice”.¹¹⁵ On this occasion, more than 500 armed Jews were said to have been present, “who would have cut down with their swords any Christian who had wanted to say anything to the contrary.”¹¹⁶ The goal of the story is easy to divine: the scene of the heavily armed crowd at the sermon legitimated the local cult and simultaneously condemned the distanced attitude of the prelaty.¹¹⁷ However, in its Jewish form, it would have appeared in a totally different light and seemed realistic in a quite particular way: read thus, it expressed Jewish resistance to the mounting tide of Christian recrimination and consequent violence. The image of armed Jews served to help them overcome their sense of impotence.

The motif of rising up against persecution can be found in another story of events that are supposed to have taken place at Worms and were reported in the *Sefer Ma’ase nissim* [Book of Miraculous Deeds/

¹¹⁵ ‘Chronicon Colmariense,’ ed. Philipp Jaffé, *MGH SS* 17 (1861), Sp 255 (on 1288); cf. also the ‘Annales Colmarienses Maiores,’ *ibid.*, p. 215, col. 12f.; and material from the Chronicon Colmariense, in Baronius, *Annales Ecclesiastici*, vol. 23 (1871), p. 22f.; cf the article ‘Colmarer Dominikanerchronist’, in: *Verfasserlexikon. Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters*, ed. Kurth Ruh *et al.*, vol. 1., Berlin 1978, col. 1295 f.; Erich Kleinschmidt, Die Colmarer Dominikaner-Geschichtsschreibung im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert, in: *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 28 (1972), pp. 371-438.

¹¹⁶ See Gerd Mentgen, Die Ritualmordaffäre um den „Guten Werner“ von Oberwesel und ihre Folgen, in: *Jahrbuch für westdeutsche Landesgeschichte* 21 (1995), pp. 159-198; Thomas Wetzstein, Vom „Volksheiligen“ zum „Fürstenheiligen.“ Die Wiederbelebung des Wernerkults im 15. Jahrhundert, in: *Archiv für Mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte* 51 (1999), pp. 11-68.; also Albrecht Hausmann, ‘Wernher von Bacharach’ in: *Verfasserlexikon*, vol. 10, Berlin 1999, col. 945-950.

¹¹⁷ Markus Wenninger, Von jüdischen Rittern und anderen waffentragenden Juden, in: *Aschkenas* 13.1 (2003), pp. 35-82, esp. 36f.

Stories], first printed at Amsterdam in 1696, containing stories collected some years earlier by the Worms Jew Yiftah Yosef ben Naftali Hirts Segal Manzpah, commonly known as Yuzpa Schammes (1604-1678). One of his stories tells that in 1349, when the Jews were accused of poisoning the wells in many places, the Jews of Worms took steps to defend themselves, killed the city council with weapons, then set the city on fire, before they themselves died a violent death. Almost nothing of this sort is otherwise to be found in such detail regarding the plague pogroms that took place all over Europe in 1348-1350.¹¹⁸

Once again, we must refer to the work of Lucia Raspe, who has shown that the compiler of this collection possibly employed materials from his own local tradition in rewritten form. For Yuzpa came from Fulda, which is where he found the pattern for his compilation: a tradition of the Fulda Jews tells of just such an attack perpetrated by the Jews of Fulda in the face of the threatening climate of 1349. But in this case, it is certain that it was not originally a Jewish tradition. The motif of a Jewish attack on the Christian community was first recorded in a rather marginal Christian source, a letter of the Fulda city council to the city of Würzburg, dated March 1349,¹¹⁹ telling of how the council wanted to join with the abbot to protect the Jews, but on the Sunday of mid-Lent (Laetare, 22 March, 1349), “when Mass was being said, many Jews were seen in the church, acting as though they were not Jews; and that there was a tumult and a general cry, that the Jews wanted to kill all the Christians who were in the churches.” After the abbot had prohibited the tumult, he was nonetheless attacked by a Jew in disguise. The attacker was killed by servants of the abbot, and

¹¹⁸ Some references can be found in the Christian literature regarding events at Mainz, Magdeburg and Cologne; cf. František Graus, *Pest – Geissler – Judenmorde. Das 14. Jahrhundert als Krisenzeit* (Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte; 86), Göttingen 1994³, pp. 202, 206 and 258.

¹¹⁹ This has survived in an Italian manuscript and in Salom ibn Vergas work *Schevet Jehuda*; cf. Lucia Raspe, The Black Death in Jewish Sources. A Second Look at ‘Mayse Nissim’, in: *Jewish Quarterly Review* 94,3 (2004), pp. 471-489, 486; cf. also Graus, *Pest – Geissler – Judenmorde*, p. 318f., 332f. [see note 118].

then the Jews were all “punished to such a degree that we will have no future worries from them.”¹²⁰ The extent to which the council of Fulda were presenting an apologia for their own behaviour, specifically in relation the abbot, the lord of the city, is not of particular relevance here. It is clear that the Jews of Fulda later appropriated this story and Yuzpa found it so compelling that he formulated the story of the Worms resistance in imitation of it.

Seen in this way, it is quite possible that all those late-medieval historical traditions that Graus considered to be ‘failed’ (because they are found in only one source and were not repeated) “beginnings of a historical tradition about Jews” on the Christian side might have been one-sided echoes of Jewish narratives in Christian sources.¹²¹ For example, we hear of the legendary land of ‘Judaeisapta’, in which the knight Abraham (!) of Temonaria in the year 859 after the Flood founded the lordship of Anreitim-Stockerau; or Jewish rulers, who are supposed to have ruled over Austrian cities in Biblical times; or Jewish castellans, conquered by Charlemagne, in the Tyrol, and for Graz there is a story of a Jewish head-stone on the castle mount, engraved with the year 3690 (70 B.C.E.).¹²² And the same is true for the Bohemian Rhymed Chronicle, the ‘Dalimil’ (second half of the fourteenth century): it is the result of a largely untraceable process of narrative superscription; it does not bother to explain why it notes such notorious dates as 1096; but it tells of how the Jews, with the permission of the Bohemian king, killed some two hundred German crusaders.¹²³ Again and after all not surprisingly the tradition from which Dalimil’s

¹²⁰ Hermann Hoffmann, Die Würzburger Judenverfolgung 1349, in: *Mainfränkisches Jahrbuch* 5 (1953), pp. 91-114, here 102f.

¹²¹ Graus, Historische Traditionen, pp. 23f. [see note 84].

¹²² “Christliche Überlieferung,” *Germania Judaica* 1, pp. 119, 257 and 375 [see note 85].

¹²³ ‘Dalimil, Rhymed Chronicle’ (Rýmovaná kronika česká tak řečeného Dalimila), c.86, ed. Josef Jireček, in: *Fontes rerum bohemicarum* III, Prague 1882, p. 182f. (there is a parallel German translation that deviates from the original); cf. Peter Hilsch, Di tutsch kronik von Behem lant. Der Verfasser der Dalimilübertragung und die deutschböhmischesche Identität, in: Klaus Herbers *et al.*, eds., *Ex ipsis rerum documentis – Beiträge zur Mediävistik. Festschrift Harald Zimmermann*, Sigmaringen 1991, pp. 103-115;

account originated was a Jewish one, a mid-twelfth century text, which attributes the same course of events to an otherwise unknown city named 'Sala'¹²⁴

5. Conclusion: Historical Consciousness and Historiographical Practice

It seems to me that the debate about the degree of historical consciousness in the rabbinic and later Jewish literature of the Middle Ages will never be completely worked through and brought to a close. However, it is possible, and possibly also better, to look for such consciousness outside of the normative tradition. And here we have real reasons to expect further results. Admittedly, no-one has discovered a 'res gestae ivdeorum medii aevi' [which would have been a *medieval* 'History of the Jews in the Middle Ages', after the model of normative texts – trans.], nor a 'Tol'dot ha-kehila ha-qod'sha be-Regensburg' [i.e., a *medieval Hebrew* 'Generations of the Holy Community at Regensburg' – trans.]. As Johannes Fried has recently put it regarding Jewish history, no lasting process of formation of a historiographical canon ever got underway, for lack of motive and of opportunities;¹²⁵ no general Jewish history was ever written. But we have observed individual historiographical attempts, the sum of which demonstrates the existence of a lively interest in history among the northern European Jews of the Middle Ages. They prove that the space of historical consciousness discovered by Funkenstein was not an empty cipher, but like a palimpsest offers us many written and over-written pages, of which a few are still legible. We can recognize in those pages more than just homiletic narratives designed to comfort and edify (Baron). If we look closely at the great variety and number of echoes of Jewish historical writing even in non-Jewish sources, it would appear that we can also assume that the scope of these traditions was much greater

¹²⁴ See Salomon bar Simson, *MGH Hebräische Texte*, vol. 1: 'Hebräische Berichte,' pp. 482f.

¹²⁵ Fried, *Schleier der Erinnerung*, pp. 311-313 [see note 9].

than the few remaining fragments would seem to justify at first glance. The texts and traditions to which we do have access bear witness to a historical consciousness that was expressed not merely in one genre, but could be articulated in many different ways. The Jews of Ashkenaz used such attempts again and again to write themselves into the history of the others. This was not merely a defensive mode, but a form of writing that promoted a certain self-consciousness that I would like to call *interlinear history-writing*. It rewrote or corrected, at decisive points, the version of the past presented by the other side. We can recognize narrative interjections with which Jews employed history as an argument. In this, their historiographical practice was entirely functional, and in their use of precisely these dynamic procedures, their work was comparable to that of contemporary writers of Latin chroniclers. Funkenstein made a nuanced argument about this phenomenon, one that appears in even sharper contrast when applied to Jewish narratives within non-Jewish sources: he read the repeated insistence upon their own identity and its self-conscious articulation as a sign of a continuing interest in and concern for history.¹²⁶ Or to apply in a more concrete fashion a statement of Pierre Vidal-Naquet: “Judaism ... has organized itself in history in order to survive in spite of history.”¹²⁷

Seen this way, the development of modern Jewish historiography in the nineteenth century was not a completely new invention, but a change from implicit to explicit, from writing interlinear versions to writing a single text, up to and including the genre of World History, so favoured by German-Jewish authors. With this change of paradigm, the modern conflict regarding historiography was also pre-programmed. One needs only think of Treitschke’s attack on Graetz,¹²⁸

¹²⁶ Funkenstein, *History, Counterhistory, and Narrative*, p. 32f. [see note 80].

¹²⁷ Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *The Jews. History, Memory and the Present*, New York 1996, p. 59.

¹²⁸ See Michael A. Meyer, Heinrich Graetz and Heinrich von Treitschke. A Comparison of Their Historical Images of the Modern Jew, in *Modern Judaism* 6 (1986), pp. 1-11.

whose work Susannah Heschel has defined as a counter-history opposed to the dominant historiography of the nineteenth century.¹²⁹

For Jewish Studies today, this means that the largely internal (and generally oral) transmission of historical tradition among medieval Jews cannot be reached in its entirety, and only relics and fragments (often embedded in other contexts) of it are accessible. But, to pick up on and extend Bonfil's call for comparative work, examination precisely of non-Jewish texts is a promising method of extending the catalogue of the currently known fragments of medieval Jewish historiography. An episode such as that of the Jew Kalonymos saving the life of Otto II in Thietmar's Latin version can provide a sense of the variety and richness of the Jewish historiographical traditions of the Middle Ages and their aptness for use in historical arguments.¹³⁰ If we conceive of these traditions in their disparate individual forms as elements of European historiography, we might be able to find ways of redefining, from inside and with considerable possible benefits, the 'western paradigm of history-writing'¹³¹ in such a way as to avoid the dangers of too reductionist a method. But it is worth noting in the face of this new evidence that objections of the type Neusner made simply cannot hit the target because they are aimed in a different direction altogether.

¹²⁹ Susannah Heschel, *Jewish Studies as Counterhistory*, in: David Biale, ed., *Insider/Outsider; American Jews and Multiculturalism*, Berkeley 1998, pp. 101-115; *idem*, *Revolt of the Colonized. Abraham Geiger's "Wissenschaft des Judentums" as a Challenge to Christian Hegemony in the Academy*, in: *New German Critique* 77 (1999), pp. 61-85.

¹³⁰ Regarding the example of Maimonides' letter to Yemen Lassner, see Lassner, *Time, Historiography and Historical Consciousness*, p. 11 ff. [see note 41].

¹³¹ Cf. Jörn Rüsen and Sebastian Manhart, editors' introduction, in: *Geschichtsdenken der Kulturen – eine kommentierte Dokumentation* (Südasiens), vol. 2: 'Die muslimische Sicht,' ed. Stephan Conermann, Frankfurt am Main 2002, p. 10