The Rite to Be Reckless: On the Perpetration and Interpretation of Purim Violence

Elliott Horowitz

Poetics Today, Vol. 15, No. 1, Purim and the Cultural Poetics of Judaism. (Spring, 1994), pp. 9-54.

Stable URL:
http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0333-5372%28199421%2915%3A1%3C9%3ATRTBRO%3E2.0.CO%3B2-V

Poetics Today is currently published by Duke University Press.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at http://www.jstor.org/about/terms.html. JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Please contact the publisher regarding any further use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at http://www.jstor.org/journals/duke.html.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

JSTOR is an independent not-for-profit organization dedicated to and preserving a digital archive of scholarly journals. For more information regarding JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

http://www.jstor.org
Mon Feb 26 17:02:54 2007

The Rite to Be Reckless: On the Perpetration and Interpretation of Purim Violence

Elliott Horowitz
Jewish History, Bar-Ilan

Abstract This essay deals both with Purim's character over several centuries as a holiday combining ritual reversal, joy, and hostility and with the attempts in nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholarship to come to grips with Purim's complex character. The first section, showing how scholars have often been confounded by the tensions between the evidence of past Purim practices they encountered and their own preferences concerning what shape it should take in the present, focuses on historians of recent times and their various depictions of what one of them (Israel Abrahams) called "lost Purim joys." Discussion then shifts to the actual Purim practices that began to appear in early medieval times, focusing on the festival's more violent anti-Christian undertones, before moving on to address the continuation (and even resurgence) of various violent forms of Purim festivity in the early modern era, side by side with efforts to subdue and delegitimize them. The epilogue deals with Purim during the Hitler years and the Holocaust. The emphasis throughout is on the fact that the history of cultural practices cannot be sundered from the history of efforts to reconstruct and understand (or, alternately, to suppress the memory of) those practices.

1

> The people, being solemnly assembled at this feast [of Haman], committed a thousand extravagancies; for as they read the history of this enemy of their religion, the men and women made a frightful noise . . . as often as the name of Haman was pronounced. After the devotion followed the de-

Poetics Today 15:1 (Spring 1994). Copyright © 1994 by The Porter Institute for Poetics and Semiotics. CCC 0333-5372/94/$2.50.

bauch; as is the custom of all feasts celebrated for some deliverance. The Christians took little notice of these follies. (Basnage 1708: 550)

In this manner the French Protestant clergyman and historian Jacques Christian Basnage described, early in the eighteenth century, the celebration of Purim among fifth-century Jews of the Byzantine Empire. In his pioneering, multivolume work, *The History of the Jews from the Time of Jesus Christ to the Present*, Basnage also drew attention, although it is not clear on precisely what basis, to the practice then of making "frightful" noises at the mention of Haman's name during public readings of the Book of Esther, as well as to the heady 3–D combination of deliverance, devotion, and debauch (the alliteration also occurs in the French original) which characterized, he believed, the Jewish manner of celebrating Purim. Basnage went on to add, however, that if these relatively innocent "follies" of the festival did not attract much attention from contemporary Christians, there were other Purim practices, of a somewhat more menacing variety, which clearly did.

> But they [the Jews] . . . used to set up a great gallows, and to hang up Haman's effigies, and 'twas imagined they designed to insult the Christians upon the death of Jesus Christ. . . . *And perhaps this was true enough; for indeed they changed the gibbet into a cross, and afterwards burnt the cross, with the figure fastened to it; which was not done without maledictions, which reflected upon the Messiah we adore.* Theodosius II, having notice of it, forbid the raising and burning of these sorts of gibbets [in 408] . . . because it was not fit they should insult the mysteries of Christianity.[1] (Ibid. [my emphases])

Basnage's balanced treatment of the question of Jewish anti-Christian behavior on Purim, whether part and parcel of the holiday's jocular festivities or concealed beneath its innocent mask, goes to the heart of the dark issue, pointing to the tension that arises between truth and imagination in evaluating the "extravagancies" which characterized Purim observances over the centuries. Imagination may sometimes impede perception of the truth, but it is no less often vital to the process of capturing the truth, and Purim joys of the past, as we shall see throughout this essay, cannot be perceived until they are imagined. Moreover, we must imagine not only what Jews were doing, but also both what they imagined themselves to be doing and what they imagined others to be making of their deeds.

1. I have modernized the spelling of the Taylor translation. For the French original, see Basnage (1706–7: IV, 1276). See, however, Basnage (1708: 453 [bk. 5, ch. 15]), where he seems to suggest more strongly that Christian accusations of the Jews representing the hanged Haman as the Christ crucified were without foundation in fact. On this matter, see also Edgar Wind (1937) and T. C. G. Thornton (1986), which was brought to my attention by Oded Irsai, as well as my more extended discussion of the Theodosian law of 408, below. On Basnage's *History of the Jews*, see Lester Segal (1983) and the studies cited there.

Like Basnage, the great nineteenth-century Jewish historian Heinrich Graetz was able to imagine more than one explanation for the Theodosian law of 408 that prohibited Jewish mockery of Christianity and its symbols on Purim. "On this day," Graetz wrote, "the merry youths [*die lustige Jugend*] were accustomed to hang in effigy the arch-enemy of the Jews, Haman, on a gallows, and this gallows, which it was the custom to burn, had, *by design or by accident*, the form of a cross" (Graetz 1853: 454; 1873: 296 [my emphases]).[2] His contemporary, however, Ferdinand Gregorovius, the eminent historian of Rome, addressed the issue in a somewhat more one-sided way. Gregorovius, in sharp contrast to Graetz, belonged to the school that tended to regard the Jews as being themselves "responsible for the contempt" in which they were held. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that he described the Theodosian law as forbidding Jews in the Roman provinces "to celebrate a certain festival [Purim] at which they were *accustomed to give sly expression to their hatred for the crucified Savior*." According to Gregorovius, the Jews "represented Haman as crucified and on that day burned him in effigy amidst shouts and revelry *as if he were Christ*" (Gregorovius 1878: 72–73; 1948: 43–45 [my emphases]).[3]

As he saw (and heard) it in his imagination, there were no two ways about it. The Jews hated the crucified Messiah and gave "sly expression" to their hatred in "shouts and revelry" on the day of Purim, imagining the effigy of Haman to be that of Christ. Yet there were to be other scholars who would express an equally one-sided view. These were the Jewish historians of our own century, writing in the decade after Hitler's rise to power, who regarded the accusations that led to the Theodosian law of 408 as having been based on Christian misunderstanding or even slander.[4] It was not the most convenient time for even serious scholars to admit that annually venting their hatred of Christianity and its most potent symbols might have been, however far back in the distant past, one of the Jews' principal Purim joys.

Nevertheless, in the synagogues, especially those of Europe, many Jews were at that same time rediscovering forgotten forms of Purim festivity that, although once considered indecorous, were suddenly taking on new meaning. Joachim Prinz (1970: 235), the former Berlin rabbi, recalled how, in the years after 1933, "people came by the thousands to the synagogue to listen to the story of Haman and Esther," which "became the story of our own lives." To those relatively assimilated German Jews, the *Megilla*, read in Hebrew and then translated,

2. On changes in later editions and translations of Graetz's work, see note 37.

3. Gregorovius's essay was written in 1853, the same year in which Graetz's fourth volume, discussing the background to the Theodosian law, first appeared.

4. See, for example, N. S. Doniach (1933: 173); Hayyim Schauss (1938: 267); Joshua Trachtenberg (1943: 127), and my more extended discussion, below.

"suddenly made sense," for "it was quite clear that Haman meant Hitler." And not only did the long repressed spirit of vengeance reassert itself in the synagogue, but also the "frightful noises" of which Basnage and others had written. "Never had I heard such applause in a synagogue when the names of the ten sons of Haman were read, describing their hanging from the gallows," recalled Rabbi Prinz. "Every time we read 'Haman' the people heard Hitler, and the noise was deafening."

2

> It was once the custom among the Jews, during the feast of Purim, for unruly boys and silly men to show their reprobation of Haman's conduct by loudly knocking against the Synagogue benches during the celebration of the service. This absurd and irreverent usage had ever been opposed by the congregational authorities. (Picciotto 1956 [1875]: 195)

So wrote James Picciotto in his 1875 *Sketches of Anglo-Jewish History* by way of introduction to the "Purim riot," which had erupted in 1783 when fourteen members of London's (Spanish-Portuguese) Bevis Marks Synagogue refused to honor the "strict orders forbidding such puerile manifestations" that had been issued by synagogue authorities in March of that year. His striking, if perhaps vintage Victorian, language reflects the tensions often evident in the work of Jewish historians (and not only those of the late nineteenth century) when the evidence they presented of Jewish life in the past clashed with the impression they wished to convey of its nature in the present. At the turn of the century, Moses Gaster, *Haham* of the English Sephardic community, omitted the incident entirely from the "authorized version" of the synagogue's history he published in the very year of Victoria's death (Gaster 1901a).[5] A half-century later, however, in the freer postwar atmosphere, another historian of Anglo-Jewry was able to describe the background to the 1783 riot in rather different terms than Picciotto's:

> To express their execration of Haman . . . it was the custom on the part of the more religiously exuberant section of the Congregation to create such a din at every mention of Haman's name as to shock and annoy the more moderate members. The Mahamad decided in 1783 to keep these manifestations of exuberant Judaism within some limits. (Hyamson 1951: 196)

What were for one historian "puerile manifestations" of "absurd and irreverent" conduct could be regarded by another, later historian

5. His son, Theodor Herzl Gaster, however, did note the incident (but not his father's omission of it) in his own short study of Purim (Gaster 1950: 50). After mentioning the Mahamad's decision to call in the police, Gaster the younger saw fit to comment: "Repressive measures of this sort, however, have been generally regarded as contrary to the spirit of the day, which is one of almost unbridled merriment."

as legitimate "manifestations of exuberant Judaism," just as what had been seen by Gregorovius as "sly" expressions of Jewish "hatred for the crucified" Christ could be dismissed by Jewish historians during the Hitler years as innocent pranks that were misunderstood by hypersensitive Christians. Purim has been the sort of subject which, true to its nature, has often confounded scholars (whether Jewish or Christian) who have sought to hide behind, rather than to acknowledge, their mask of objectivity. Upon entering the world of Purim scholarship, one quickly acquires the awareness—characteristic, as Bakhtin (1984 [1965]: 256) noted, of the world of Carnival in general—that "established authority and truth are relative."

Evidence concerning the pleasures and practices of Purim in the past has often clashed with the impression that Jewish historians wished to convey of Jewish life in the present. Some attempted, out of genteel embarrassment, to suppress its more exuberant elements and to present a decidedly tame picture of past Purim observances, while others, especially in the post-Victorian era, were more willing to acknowledge the sometimes raucous pleasures of the past, even to the extent of lamenting the holiday's devolution from relaxed amusement to stiff solemnity. If their attitudes toward the extravagant follies of Purim have varied considerably among scholars, their treatment of the violent undertones of its celebration (including expressions of anti-Christian sentiment) have been even more problematic, and suppression of this aspect of Purim observance has been both more common and more flagrant. By recognizing, however, that Jews sometimes did give raw expression on Purim, as part of its characteristic ritual reversal, to their hostility toward the symbols of what they saw as an oppressively threatening Christian environment, and by recognizing the extent to which this oppositional aspect of the holiday persisted into modern times, we can see Purim more fully in the light of Bakhtin's view of Carnival, namely, as "a temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order" (ibid.: 10).

This essay first attempts to show how the general subject of Purim has often confounded scholars, specifically by highlighting the tension between the evidence they encountered as to how the holiday was observed in the past and their own preferences as to what shape it ought to take in the present. In the next section, I will focus on historians of recent times and their various depictions of what one of them called "lost Purim joys." My discussion will then shift to actual Purim practices that began to appear in early medieval times, focusing on the more violent anti-Christian undertones of the festival. The concluding sections of this essay will address the persistence (including specific resurgences) of various violent Purim practices in the modern era, side by side with efforts to suppress and delegitimize them. Throughout, however, it is recognized that the history of cultural practices and

the history of efforts to reconstruct and understand them (or, alternatively, to suppress their memory) cannot be sundered, just as barriers between premodern and modern historiographical discourse should not be erected.

3

Just over a decade after Picciotto penned his comments concerning the "absurd and irreverent usage" of synagogue noisemaking on Purim, the Viennese rabbi and historian Moritz Güdemann, in the third and final volume of his monumental (if sometimes eccentric) survey of medieval Jewish Ashkenazic culture, described Purim as "die jüdische Fastnacht," which was characteristically celebrated with much food and drink, as well as masquerade (Güdemann 1888: 134–35).[6] This was, as we shall see, a largely accurate description, although it should be noted that Güdemann was hardly the first to equate Purim with the carnivalesque "Fastnacht" of German-speaking Europe.[7] It was also a description, however, that seems to have caused the Viennese rabbi no small degree of discomfort. After briefly mentioning the robust pleasures that characterized Purim's observance, he abruptly shifted course and sought rather to demonstrate that Jews, unlike their Christian neighbors, had not exceeded the bounds of good taste in their pursuit of Purim amusements—especially that of drink.[8] Rather than quoting from Hebrew sources that referred to drunkenness and cross-dressing, Güdemann preferred to cite one author (Maharil) who advocated relative sobriety, contrasting his account to the numerous German sources (from whom he *did* quote liberally) describing the drunken carousing of Christians during Fastnacht. Purim, for Güdemann, may have been "die jüdische Fastnacht," but it was a decidedly more dignified version thereof.

6. The original reads: "erlustigte man sich durch Mummenschanz und Speise und Trank."
7. According to one seventeenth-century (Christian) source, contemporary Jews had already made the connection. See Wilhelm Schickard's *Purim, sive Bacchanalia Judaeorum* (Tübingen, 1633), as quoted by Paul de Lagarde (1887: 17). For some reason, G. E. Silverman (1972) refers to Schickard's work as "quaintly titled," but, as we shall see, his title reflects more truth than some later scholars cared to admit. On the equation of Purim with Fastnacht, see also Johann Schudt (1714–18: II, 377 ["Es gehet daher wie bei unartigen Christen auf die Fastnacht"]); Johann Bodenschatz (1748–49: II, 252 ["Von Purims—oder Fastnachtsfeste"]); and G. W. Fink (1846: 315). On the German Fastnacht festival held just before Lent, see S. L. Sumberg (1941) as well as Samuel Kinser (1986).
8. Güdemann's tendency to treat the Jews more leniently than their Christian contemporaries, stressing sources that highlighted the ignorance and immorality of the latter while underplaying those that pointed to similar flaws among the Jews, was quickly noted by Güdemann's contemporary Ludwig Geiger (1889: 379–86). See also Alexander Marx (1922).

Güdemann's apologetic tendency became (perhaps understandably) more pronounced in the appendix to the 1888 volume on "Purim und Fastnacht" (ibid.: 270–74), in which he polemicized against the anti-Semitic Orientalist Paul de Lagarde, who had just published a study entitled *Purim: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Religion* (Lagarde 1887).[9] This learned work was ostensibly devoted to the common origins in ancient Persia of the Jewish Purim and the Christian All Saints Day. Yet Lagarde saw fit to extend his discussion of Purim practices, which he characterized as equally marked by carnal excess and hostility to adherents of other religions (a feature prudently omitted by Güdemann), up to the late nineteenth century, even drawing on an 1862 *Purimspiel* that had appeared in Breslau under the title "Haman der grosser Judenfresser." Lagarde concluded that the festival had become one of gluttonous revelry, including obligatory drunkenness, conducted in an atmosphere of hateful and arrogant preaching ("den Hass und Hochmuth predigenden Schlemmerei" [ibid.: 56–57]). His alliterating stress upon the combination of "Hass und Hochmuth" in the celebration of Purim was intended to sting harder (and ultimately did) than Basnage's earlier playful alliteration on the festival's twin qualities of "devotion" and "debauch."

A historian of Güdemann's stripe could hardly ignore such words, especially since they had a more than indirect bearing on the perception of European Jewry during his own day.[10] He therefore challenged Lagarde to visit such Jewish communities as that of his native Göttingen to see whether "Schlemmerei" was practiced there on Purim, asserting further (although not very honestly) that the talmudic injunction to become heavily intoxicated on that day had always been regarded as hyperbolic. In response to Lagarde's negative comments concerning the custom of cross-dressing on Purim, Güdemann cited a fifteenth-century work which suggested that this had been practiced only by young men.[11] And in response to Lagarde's claim that Purim celebrations had been characterized by hatred and arrogance, Güdemann was willing to concede that perhaps some animosity had lurked beneath the surface, but he could not imagine, he said, whence medi-

9. Lagarde has been aptly described by Jacob Katz (1980: 305–6) as a scholar who "combined devastating criticism of traditional Christianity . . . with deap-seated animosity not only toward Judaism as a religion, but also toward Jews as a group." Curiously, Lagarde is not listed in the index of Edward Said's (1978) *Orientalism*, although his Columbia University colleague Fritz Stern devoted an entire chapter to Lagarde in his classic (and beautifully titled) study, *The Politics of Cultural Despair* (Stern 1965: 25–128).

10. See Marx's (1922) brief but penetrating necrological essay on Güdemann. See also the more extended essay by Ismar Schorsch (1966: esp. 55, on Güdemann and Lagarde).

11. On this apologetic strategy, cf. note 37.

eval Jews could have drawn any sense of arrogance (Güdemann 1888: 271).[12] Güdemann's reply to Lagarde, despite its sometimes polemical language, was nevertheless a concession in some degree to the latter's anti-Semitic agenda. Rather than acknowledging that Jews of the past could get boisterously drunk and even arrogantly angry once a year, he sought to demonstrate that his coreligionists had always adhered to bourgeois standards of decorous conduct during their Purim celebrations.[13]

4

In 1888, the same year in which, on the Continent, Güdemann published his reply to Lagarde, there was also some spirited discussion in England on Purim's meaning and manner of observance. Just as the holiday was approaching, Claude Goldsmid Montefiore, the thirty-year-old aristocrat and Balliol alumnus who had been invited (by the legendary Benjamin Jowett) to deliver that year's prestigious Hibbert lectures at Oxford, and who would soon emerge as Anglo-Jewry's leading (and most controversial) liberal theologian, contributed an article entitled "Purim Difficulties" to the London *Jewish Chronicle*. Montefiore's article opened with the statement that "for those who regard Judaism as a religion pure and simple, and the Jews as merely the members of a religious brotherhood, any festival which . . . lacks an inward and essential religious justification presents serious difficulties and objections. Such a festival is Purim" (Montefiore 1888: 8). In the view of Montefiore, whose Oxford education had been leavened by his exposure to German *Wissenschaft* (although his private tutor in matters Jewish had been Solomon Schechter),[14] it was "surely of

12. The original reads: "Woher den Juden im Mittelalter der 'Hochmuth' hätte kommen sollen, ist mir unbegreiflich." It is noteworthy that Güdemann's translator, A. S. Friedberg, chose not to include the polemical appendix in his Hebrew translation of the work. It was Friedberg's opinion that polemics against enemies of the Jews "have already filled our sinews and souls with their bitterness" and that there was no point in pursuing them any further (see Güdemann 1899: 204–5).

13. Compare Picciotto (1956 [1875]: 171, 197), who made a point of stating that "Jews have rarely been guilty of deeds of violence" and that indulging in "fiery liquors" was "contrary to Jewish habits." See also Israel Abrahams (1896: 103, 137). Historians in the latter half of our century, however, have been more candid about liquor consumption by Jews in the past. For example, on early modern Poland, see the comments of H. H. Ben-Sasson (1962: 152ff.), and note also the warning by S. D. Goiten (1988: 38–41), who found in his wide-ranging study of Jewish life under medieval Islam that "alcohol was not a negligible factor in the life of the Geniza person": "The proverbial sobriety of East European Jewish immigrants to the United States should not be taken as inherent in the genes of the race."

14. On Montefiore's life and thought, see Lucy Cohen (1940) and, more recently, Edward Kessler (1989), including his bibliography. Montefiore's letters to Schechter have recently been edited by J. B. Stein (1988).

doubtful propriety to give public thanks to God for a triumph which probably never existed . . . or which, if it be a fact, is yet not lifted up out of the religion of crude vengeance by any grand and signal religious issue" (ibid.). For a Jewish "gentleman of culture," as one of his respondents described him, any observance smacking of "crude vengeance" was undoubtedly of "doubtful propriety," especially when influential Christian biblical scholars were asserting that the book behind that observance was "further removed from the spirit of the gospel" than any other book of the Hebrew Bible.[15] And so, the young Claude Montefiore, who had written to Schechter the previous summer that he was "meditating all [the] while upon the effect of Biblical Criticism upon our conception of Judaism" (Stein 1988: 6), made it publicly known shortly before Purim that, for his part, he would "not be sorry" if a festival celebrating events that were probably fictitious, a holiday "which bereft of its historic background loses any particle of religious importance, and which . . . while merely representative of the national element in Judaism represents even that in its most unpleasing aspect, were gradually to lose its place in our religious calendar" (Montefiore 1888: 8).[16]

Although Montefiore had been careful to stop short of explicitly calling for the abolishment of Purim, some readers of the *Jewish Chronicle* reacted strongly to his words. Samuel Montagu (the

15. See S. R. Driver (1892: 456), who wrote: "Much fault has been found with the temper displayed in the Book of Esther; it is said, for instance, to breathe a spirit of vengeance and hatred, without any redeeming feature; and to be further removed from the spirit of the gospel than any other Book of the OT." Driver, who was Regius Professor of Hebrew at Oxford (as well as Canon of Christ Church), added that "it seems . . . impossible to acquit Mordecai of permitting, and the Jews of engaging in, an *unprovoked* massacre" (ibid. [his emphasis]). Driver stressed the radical distinction between the religious and national character of Purim (which was the focus of Montefiore's essay): "The feast of Purim . . . had no religious character. . . . [It] was the expression of a purely national interest" (ibid.: 457). Protestant criticism of the Book of Esther had been launched by Luther's famous remark: "I am so hostile to the book and to Esther that I wish they did not exist at all; for they Judaize too much and have much heathen perverseness" (quoted from his *Tischreden* by R. H. Pfeiffer [1941: 747]). As recently as 1908, L. B. Paton, of Hartford Theological Seminary, could still assert that "the verdict of Luther is not too severe" (Paton 1908: 96). Shemaryahu Talmon (1963: 428) more recently noted the influence of Luther's "harsh dictum" in causing the book to be "blacklisted" at times among theologians and Bible scholars.

16. Although Montefiore did not refer to it explicitly, it is possible that his remarks were prompted in part by Lagarde's (1887) study. The latter's work was highly respected in England. In March 1889, Driver published (in *The Contemporary Review*) a review essay on recent Old Testament scholarship, in which he wrote of Lagarde: "Whatever be the subject under discussion . . . he illustrates it from every source and every side with a brilliancy, an acuteness, and an originality which may truly be said to be unsurpassed" (quoted from the excerpt in Stern 1965: 47).

future first Baron Swaythling, then the Liberal M.P. for Whitechapel, who was widely known for his orthodoxy) wrote that he had read them "with painful feelings, almost approaching disgust," and Oswald Simon, a contemporary of Montefiore's at Balliol, protested that Jews had always observed their national triumphs "religiously and not otherwise." Simon, who would become one of the founders of the reformist Jewish Religious Union, claimed (not entirely accurately) that "Jews have never gone about the streets on the fourteenth of Adar with an effigy of Haman," but rather, following the injunction of the psalmist, "have gone into the House of God with prayer and entered his courts with thanksgiving."[17]

Those who cherished this rather naive conception of Purim were not the only ones to have had a stake in upholding its observance. An editorial in the *Jewish Chronicle* of March 7 (15 Adar), 1890, ruefully observed that "Purim has unhappily lost most of its good rolicking humours. The modern world is quite as pleasure-seeking as ever, but our amusements are sadder than in the past." Looking back somewhat nostalgically, the anonymous editorializer reminded readers of the "flavor of delightful abandon and child-like enjoyment in the medieval carnival of which Purim was the Jewish copy. Its pleasures were perhaps rough, but they were real, and they were picturesque."

The picturesque pleasures of past Purims were soon to be paraded before English readers in the inimitable style of Anglo-Jewish historian Israel Abrahams, then of London's Jews College, who appears, on the basis of both its style and its content, to have played a major role in drafting the 1890 *Jewish Chronicle* editorial (if he was not in fact its sole author). Abrahams, who was the same age as his friend Claude Montefiore, with whom he had founded the *Jewish Quarterly Review* in 1889, had undoubtedly seen Montefiore's provocative Purim piece of 1888. In fact, one can discern a dialogue between the two friends emerging first in the pages of the *Jewish Chronicle* and then extending into publications of a more scholarly sort. To the claim made by Montefiore that Purim celebrations were of "doubtful propriety," the 1890 editorial responded with the implicit reminder that Christians, too, had enjoyed their "rough pleasures" during the Carnival of which Purim was a Jewish version.[18] And rather than alleging its "crude ven-

17. Both letters were published in the *Jewish Chronicle* (March 9, 1988). On Montagu, see V. D. Lipman (1972: 64) and, more recently, Eugene Black (1987–88: 200–204). On Simon, see Norman Bentwich (1959–61: 53) and Kessler (1989: 9).
18. Whether or not Abrahams did write the 1890 *Jewish Chronicle* editorial, he certainly connected Purim with the medieval Christian Carnival (see Abrahams 1896: 260). For evidence that early modern European Jews had already made this connection, see Thomas Cohen (1988: 210, 218–19) and René Moulinas (1981: 195).

geance," the holiday's "delightful abandon" was stressed. The matter of vengeance was taken up more explicitly a year later in another *Jewish Chronicle* editorial (March 20, 1891) that, in a similar tone, discussed the once-vigorous but nearly forgotten custom of noise-making in the synagogue at the mention of Haman's name: "No doubt there was much that was reprehensible in these customs; they looked ugly to an outsider, they were indecorous in the extreme, and their gradual abolition is a fact on which we must rejoice. But they were really not altogether so ugly as they seemed."

This nostalgically revisionist posture toward past Purim practices was to be given wider play some five years later in Abraham's (1896) pathbreaking *Jewish Life in the Middle Ages*, where the holiday was described as the "carnival of the European Jews" on the grounds of its "uproarious fun" and "joyous licence," as well as its frequent temporal proximity to Lent. As Abrahams saw it, "On Purim everything, or almost everything, was lawful; so the common people argued. They laughed at their Rabbis, they wore grotesque masks, the men attired themselves in women's clothes and the women went clad as men." The latter practice was, of course, technically an infringement of Jewish law, but, according to Abrahams, "on Purim the frolicsomeness of the Jew would not be denied," and the rabbis learned to turn a more or less blind eye "towards such innocent and mirth-provoking gambols" (ibid.: 260–62).

The frolicsome Jew enjoying "uproarious fun" on his day of Carnival, as described by Abrahams, was, of course, a far cry from the repressed Jew (incapable of even momentary arrogance) described by Güdemann. Abrahams's joyful celebrant was also relatively (and deliberately) distanced from the crudely vengeful Jew of Purim evoked, in their different ways, by both Lagarde and Montefiore, and by the tradition of biblical scholarship to which they were heirs. If Güdemann's account of medieval Purim festivities is unmistakably informed by an apologetic sensibility, that of Abrahams, while more adroitly parrying the accusations of various improprieties, nevertheless betrays a powerful sense of nostalgia for a former age when Jews (he believed) still knew how to have fun.

Although he wrote barely two decades after his countryman and coreligionist James Picciotto, whose work he admired,[19] the tone is unmistakably different. In 1824, more than three decades before Abrahams and Montefiore were born, the New Synagogue in Lon-

---

See also the seventeenth-century apostate Giulio Morosini, quoted by Riccardo Calimani (1987 [1985]: 196) and Abraham Mears (1738: 43).

19. See editor Israel Finestein's introduction to Picciotto (1956 [1875]: xxi).

don began prohibiting children from interrupting the reading of the Scroll of Esther with "Hamman Clappers," and in 1827 the Hambro Synagogue followed suit.[20] In 1888, as reported by the *Jewish Chronicle* (March 2), the 400 pupils in the Birmingham Hebrew schools were entertained, in good Victorian fashion, at "the third annual Purim Tea." Abrahams's passionate portrayal of Purim in the Middle Ages as a day of uproarious fun, when "much joyous licence was permitted even within the walls of the synagogue," must undoubtedly be seen against this Victorian background. His writing on medieval Purim festivities, a subject to which he was to return more than once, sometimes betrays the overly enthusiastic (yet quasi-voyeuristic) tone one might expect of a virgin writing about sex, just as Montefiore's priggish note on "Purim Difficulties" betrays an exaggerated aversion to something imagined and read about, but never really known. In contrast to both Güdemann's overly guarded depiction of Purim observances in the past and Montefiore's expressed hope that a holiday of such "doubtful propriety" would disappear in the future, we can sometimes hear in Abrahams's measured cadences the faint echo of Shylock's ringing words: "Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions?" (*The Merchant of Venice* III, 1).[21]

5

In 1896, the same year in which Abrahams nostalgically evoked past Purim celebrations in his *Jewish Life in the Middle Ages*, the *Jewish Messenger* in New York was reminding its readers of "the good times fashionable Israel in the large cities used to enjoy" at the brilliant masquerade balls held on Purim. Its editors also felt that they knew precisely where to lay the blame for the holiday's unfortunate decline. For in many of those cities, the forces of Reform had been gaining ground and calling, as in the case of the famous Charleston "Memorial" of 1824, not only for the prohibition of "see-sawing" during the prayers and the use of "profane tunes," but also for "most strictly" prohibiting "the ceremony of striking the impious Haman at the festival of Purim."[22] "No wonder," commented the *Jewish Messenger* in 1896,

20. See Todd Endelman (1979: 162). For earlier steps taken in this direction by the Bevis Marks Synagogue, see Moses Gaster (1901a: 58).
21. For a more explicit example of his use of Shakespeare as a subtext, see Abrahams (1896: 307).
22. The 1824 document, submitted by its 47 signators to the president and board of Kaal Kadosh Beth Elohim of Charleston, South Carolina, is considered the earliest expression of the Reform movement in American Judaism (see Schappes 1971: 176–77). The earliest effort in Reform circles to do away with the noisemaking on Purim was the ban imposed by the 1810 regulations for the synagogues of Westphalia. On this subject, see the recent history by Michael Meyer (1988: 36, 158).

> it has fallen into disuse when modern rabbis try to drive it out of the calendar, make no provision for its celebration in the revised prayer book, and ridicule the good old story of Mordecai as an exploded myth. The new Judaism gives us little compensation for the ceremonies and feasts that have been discarded. . . . Better one night of Purim than a dozen revised and dreary services.[23] (Quoted in Goodman 1950: 160)

One of those who would be responsible for the new crop of revised, if not necessarily dreary, services instituted on the other side of the Atlantic was Israel Abrahams, the intellectual leader of England's Jewish Religious Union (founded in 1902) and the major architect of its liturgical reform (see Meyer 1988: 219–20; Montefiore 1927: lxii–lxvi; Dalin 1985). Abrahams seems nevertheless to have sensed in the depths of his heart the inevitable rift that would sunder the vital Judaism of the past from the "new Judaism," whose proponents' professed aim was to meet the needs of Jews in the present. In 1900, four years after the publication of his *Jewish Life in the Middle Ages*, Abrahams returned (but not for the last time) to the subject of Purim festivities in the past when he published a letter in Hebrew which he believed had been written in London on Purim, 1389, by the Spanish Jew Solomon Levi of Burgos.

Following his conversion to Christianity in 1390, Solomon Levi became better known as Bishop of Burgos under the name Pablo de Santa Maria. In that letter, Solomon (who was abroad on a diplomatic mission) bemoaned his fate of having to spend the festive holiday in such inhospitable surroundings (a fate with which Abrahams himself, in the staid London of some five hundred years later, would seem to have had considerable sympathy): "Today I am unable to drink deep, as one ought to do on Purim. . . . I can bless Mordecai and curse Haman. My senses retain their nicety. . . . Alas for such a Purim!" (Abrahams 1900: 257, 259).[24] In contrast to Graetz, who regarded the poetic composition to which this letter was appended as merely satirical, Abrahams saw Solomon's remarks as "a genuine expression of medieval Judaism." In his view, "its exaggeration of the virtue of wine-drinking on Purim . . . its warm love of the ceremonies, its quaint association of piety with the joys of the table . . . its total lack of overstrained asceticism, its playful seriousness, its sane humour—all these qualities stamp the letter as the work of a man still imbued with the sentiments of the medieval [!] Rabbis" (ibid.: 258).[25] And Abra-

23. Earlier, in 1861, an editorial in the *Jewish Messenger* had called for a full-scale Purim ball at which there could be "a few hours of real pleasure" (quoted in Goodman 1950: 138).

24. I quote directly from Abrahams's characteristically elegant translation.

25. On Solomon/Pablo, see Yitzhak Baer (1961: II, 139–50), who argued that the 1389 letter was sent by Solomon from Aquitaine (then under English rule), not

hams's own "scholarly" article, although published in a learned journal, lacked neither "playful seriousness" nor "sane humour." Rather, it seems to have served Abrahams as a vehicle for expressing his profound sense of loss over being unable in the London of his own day "to drink deep, as one ought to do on Purim," and as, he knew, earlier generations had done.

This sense of "lost Purim joys" surfaces more clearly and with even greater poignance in an essay so entitled that Abrahams contributed to a special Purim supplement of the *Jewish Chronicle* in March of 1905, midway into the Edwardian era and some three years after he had become formally involved in Jewish religious reform.[26] "It is unquestionable," observed Abrahams, "that Purim used to be a merrier anniversary than it is now." The explanation for this shift was, to his mind, "simple," but his own feelings about it were considerably more complex. "In part," he wrote,

> the change has arisen through a laudable disinclination from pranks that may be misconstrued as tokens of vindictiveness against an ancient foe or his modern reincarnations. As a second cause may be assigned the growing and regrettable propensity of Jews to draw a rigid line of separation between life and religion, and wherever this occurs, religious feasts tend toward a solemnity that cannot, and dare not, relax into amusement.[27] (Abrahams 1912 [1905]: 271)

On the positive side, Abrahams welcomed the decline of Purim pranks "that may be misconstrued" (presumably by Christians) "as tokens of vindictiveness" against the enemies of the Jews. By this he seemed to suggest both that the Purim mischief of the past (centering on the figure of Haman) was not truly vindictive and that vindictiveness, or even the appearance of it, had no place in the good, clean fun that he favored.[28] Here, Abrahams had more in common with

---

from London (ibid.: 140). What is more pertinent to our discussion, however, is that Abrahams, who was writing in London, *thought* that his historical subject had been writing from that city as well.

26. The nostalgic sense of loss was not unique to Abrahams. It was also reflected in a *Jewish Chronicle* editorial of that same week's regular issue (March 17, 1905): "Time was when Purim was welcomed in the Jewish home as the brightest of the minor feasts; today it is relegated to the cold shade of neglect." In a fictional vignette, "Purim in a Ghetto Chevra," contributed to that week's Purim supplement by one "G. S. C.," the author said of an old Esther scroll brought into the synagogue: "Could it but speak, what stories it would tell of the Purim of past-days, of Bacchanalian revels, of masked revellers, and of whole-hearted merrymaking."

27. This tendency, continued Abrahams (1912 [1905]: 271), was "eating at the very heart of Jewish life, and ought to be resisted by all who truly understand the genius of Judaism."

28. Contrast his (presumably non-Jewish) Cambridge colleague C. H. W. Johns (1902: 3976), who wrote more sympathetically of the sometimes raucous Purim festivities as "the embodiment of a national feeling of intense joy at some deliv-

Güdemann's apologetic stance than he might have cared to admit. On the negative side, however, which was the one stressed in his essay, Abrahams regretted that in the observance of Jewish holidays a wedge had been driven between life and religion so that relaxed amusement had given way to stiff solemnity. For the medieval Jew, things had been quite otherwise, for he "drew no severe line between sacred and profane" (ibid.: 269).

Abrahams did not specify precisely when the Jews had begun to sever the sacred from the profane, but in some recent works by historians of Christian Europe such a tendency has been identified with the transition from medieval to early modern times, that is, the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[29] Abrahams's point of reference, however, was not the Counter-Reformation but a roughly parallel period he called "the era of the Ghetto," and he wished to show that these "lost Purim joys" were at most only marginally linked to the Ghetto,[30] having originated either well before its inception or during the period of its demise. By freeing Purim practices from the opprobrium of their association with Ghetto Judaism, Abrahams sought to legitimize his post-Victorian longing for such Purim joys, which had been lost, he thought, "because Jews [had] lost their character, their disposition for innocent, unanimous joyousness" (ibid.: 266, 272).

6

In his 1905 essay Abrahams asserted that "probably the oldest of Purim pranks was the bonfire and burning of an effigy [of Haman]," mentioned, as he noted, in a Geonic responsum which had recently been published by Louis Ginzberg. He discussed the efforts of J. G. Frazer (whose colleague at Cambridge he had recently become), in his influential *Golden Bough*, to link the Purim bonfire with primitive spring-tide conflagrations and with sympathetic magic, connections that Abrahams did not find entirely convincing (ibid.: 266–68).[31] Sig-

---

erance and a bitter, if veiled, resentment against some specific oppressors." The Jews, he noted, "had but too good a reason to perpetuate a feeling of resentment, changing the people aimed at, from time to time."

29. See, for example, Robert Muchembled (1985: 138), who writes that "before the Counter-Reformation men in Western Europe made no clear distinction between the sacred and the secular" (see also p. 174; Bossy 1970: 61; Burke 1978: 211–12). On the Jewish dimension of this shift, see Horowitz (1989).

30. "Purim festivities do not deserve to be tarred with the Ghetto brush" (Abrahams 1912 [1905]: 271). Compare Leopold Zunz, some years earlier, on the need for the "redemption of the science of Judaism from the Ghetto" (quoted by Baron 1964: 279).

31. For the Geonic responsum, see Ginzberg (1904: 650–52; 1909: II, 1–3). It has since been republished by B. M. Levin (1932: 75) and B. Z. Dinur (1961–72: I, IV, 123), among others. On Frazer and his influence on his contemporaries, see further discussion, below.

nificantly, however, Abrahams neglected to mention the earliest, and perhaps most famous, evidence for the practice of burning an effigy of Haman, namely, the "Purim law" promulgated in 408 by Emperor Theodosius II and discussed in the same (second) edition of Frazer's *Golden Bough* to which he explicitly referred in his essay.[32] Frazer had, moreover, not only mentioned the Theodosian law and the custom of Jews "from an early time . . . to burn or otherwise destroy effigies of Haman" as part of their Purim rites, but had suggested, rather controversially, that there were even "some positive grounds for thinking" that the Jews "may at one time have burned, hanged, or crucified *a real man* in the character of Haman" (Frazer 1900: III, 173–74 [my emphasis]). Perhaps most controversially of all (for Christians as well as Jews), Frazer had then gone on to suggest that Jesus himself may have perished while doing time on the cross "in the character of Haman" (ibid.: 188–98).[33]

Abrahams, however, would have been familiar in 1905 not only with Frazer's theories concerning the possibly living, human character of past Purim effigies (and their implications, which Frazer himself discussed [ibid.: 174–75], for the history of ritual-murder accusations against the Jews), but with the hostile, even apoplectic, reactions that these theories had provoked in some quarters. Rabbi Moses Gaster, the Sephardic Haham who had omitted from his history of the Bevis Marks Synagogue any reference to the embarrassing "Purim riot" there in 1783, was also an eminent folklorist; in 1901, the same year in which his *History of the Ancient Synagogue* appeared, he joined several of his colleagues in reviewing Frazer's second edition for the journal *Folklore*. Not surprisingly, Gaster zeroed in on Frazer's Crucifixion theory, chiding the latter for his "promiscuous use of late and recent facts in juxtaposition with the oldest on record" in suggesting that Jews in ancient Jerusalem had practiced a Purim custom "thus far known to the imagination of the author alone." Furthermore, and more importantly for our purposes, Gaster asserted (not very honestly), in response to Frazer's suggestions concerning Jewish ritual violence on

32. See Frazer (1900: III, 172). (I wish to thank Jeremy Maule of Trinity College, Cambridge, for providing me with a photocopy of the relevant sections from Frazer's second edition, which was unavailable in Israel.) On the possible link between the practice described in Ginzberg's Geonic text and the one outlawed earlier by Theodosius, see A. M. Rabello (1975: 180–81).

33. See also the discussions of these pages by Robert Ackerman (1987: 168–69) and Robert Fraser (1990: 151–54). Frazer himself had commented in a letter to Solomon Schechter shortly before completing the second edition that "there are things in it which are likely to give offense both to Jews and Christians" (Ackerman 1987: 169). The generally negative reception of Frazer's Crucifixion theory among scholars led to his decision, in the *Scapegoat* volume (6) of the third edition, to relegate it to a supplementary note (ibid: 170–71, 248–50).

Purim, that "to drink, to feast, and to offer gifts is all that has been enjoined *and carried out* throughout the ages" (Gaster 1901b: 226–29 [my emphases]).[34]

Gaster's heated denials in response to Frazer's imaginative excesses (reminiscent of Güdemann's response to the excesses, not only imaginative, of Lagarde) was matched, then, by Abrahams's apparently deliberate omission of the Theodosian edict from his *Jewish Chronicle* essay on "Lost Purim Joys," despite its direct relevance to the custom of effigy burning discussed there. The edict, as we have seen above, had been explicitly mentioned by Basnage, Graetz, and Gregorovius (each according to his fashion) and had also been cited by a number of other scholars with whose work Abrahams would have been quite familiar.[35] The omission, then, could hardly have been other than apologetically motivated, for the law, as we recall, accused the Jews of "contempt of the Christian faith," a subject with which Abrahams was never particularly comfortable and whose association with Purim, especially after the publication of Frazer's second edition, had become a bit too hot to handle.

The Theodosian law (promulgated on May 29, 408) instructed the governors of the provinces to "prohibit the Jews from setting fire to Aman in memory of his past punishment, in a certain ceremony of their festival, and from burning with sacrilegious intent a form made to resemble the saint cross in contempt of the Christian faith, lest they mingle the sign of our faith with their jests" (Linder 1987 [1983]: 237).[36] Graetz, who had been generally less reticent in his *History of the Jews* about the extent of Jewish hostility toward Christianity (an atti-

34. The characterization of Gaster's reaction as one of "apoplexy" is Ackerman's (1987: 170).

35. Although the Theodosian Codex was only properly published for the first time (by Theodor Mommsen) in the same year that Abrahams penned his essay (see Mommsen 1905: 16:8:18, p. 891), the law of 408 would have been known to him from the work of such Jewish scholars as Selig Cassel (1850: 79) and Julius Aronius (1902: 149), in addition to that of Graetz, on whose *History of the Jews* Abrahams (1892) had written with great admiration.

36. In addition to this recent translation by Amnon Linder, see also the one by T. C. G. Thornton (1986: 423 n. 18), who, among others, has called attention to the fact that both the Septuagint and the Vulgate understand Haman to have been crucified. He suggests that for many Jews with limited access to the Hebrew original of Esther, "Haman would . . . be the best-known figure associated with death by crucifixion" (ibid.: 420–23). It is possible, however, as others have suggested (e.g., Wind 1937), that these biblical translations had more influence on Christian perceptions of Purim behavior than on the forms taken by the Jewish festivities themselves. Note also the view of Marianne Haraszti-Takács (1989: 25) that, in light of these translations, "it is not impossible that in performances at court" staged by fifteenth-century Italian Jewish actors for Christian audiences, as well as "in synagogue performances, Haman was crucified."

tude that provoked the anger of Treitschke and led to a famous controversy between the two), did not, of course, skip over this edict, but he did flinch a bit when drawing historical conclusions. He described the effigy burning as having been the custom only among "merry youths" [*die lustige Jugend*], although no such indication is given in the original text, and he was unwilling to commit himself on the burning question of whether the gallows from which Haman was hung by the Jews had, "by design or by accident, the form of a cross" (Graetz 1853: 454; 1873: 296).[37]

Jean Juster, however, in his pathbreaking study on the status of the Jews in the Roman Empire, concluded unequivocally that Jews had been burning a cross with an effigy of Haman during their Purim celebrations, a conclusion that his own Jewishness evidently did not preclude (Juster 1914: II, 207). He also advanced the even bolder argument that this practice must have predated the Christianization of the empire, that is, when Jews and pagans could more freely indulge themselves in mockeries of Christ. In contrast to Juster, however, Jewish scholars of the 1930s and 1940s (responding, evidently, to intensifying anti-Semitism in Europe) chose to regard the Theodosian accusation of anti-Christian behavior on Purim as probably resulting from Christian slander or misunderstanding.

Thus in N. S. Doniach's (1933) history of Purim, published in the year of Hitler's rise to power, we read that in the early fifth century "the Jews *are said* to have gone beyond the bounds of behavior of good citizens. Haman was strung up on a *gibbet* and treated with every indignity. Meanwhile their Christian fellow subjects could *see* in this nothing more than an insult to their religion" (ibid.: 173 [my emphases]). And, in 1938, the year of the Kristallnacht, Hayyim Schauss (1938: 276) referred to the fifth-century charge that "Jews burned a cross and a figure of Jesus" on Purim as nothing short of "slander."[38] At around the same time, Simon Dubnov, writing not only under the shadow of Nazism, but also after some brushes with the censor, addressed the implications of the Theodosian law in the final and definitive edition

37. Graetz's somewhat apologetic attribution of the custom to "merry youths" was omitted from the later, better-known English translation (Graetz 1892–98: II, 620–21), perhaps by the author himself, who corrected the proofs (Abrahams 1892: 193). Nevertheless, this description of the custom continued to appear in German editions through the fourth one of Leipzig, in 1908 (p. 362). On Treitschke's accusing Graetz of being filled with an "insatiable hatred of Christianity," and on Graetz's reaction, see Abrahams (1892: 188–90); Ettinger (1972: 847); Schorsch (1975: 58–59), and the discussion below.

38. Schauss's work was based on a Yiddish original published in 1933 (Schauss 1938: ix). See also Wind (1937: 247): "It is understandable that the more fanatic among the faithful in Christ . . . *mistook* the [Jewish] survival of the vanquished [spring] ritual for a conscious parody of their own" (my emphasis).

of his multivolume history of the Jews, where he wrote that "it was customary on the festive day of Purim to set fire to a wooden figure of . . . Haman, which *perhaps* resembled a cross in *some* localities" (Dubnov 1968 [1934–38]: 191 [my emphases]). In 1943, Joshua Trachtenberg, writing during the Holocaust in which Dubnov lost his life and, as the title of his own work, *The Devil and the Jews*, suggested, himself keenly aware of the specter of modern anti-Semitism, interpreted the 408 law in equally cautious terms: "The execrations traditionally heaped upon the head of Haman *in jest* and the carnival aspect of the Purim celebration," he wrote, "could have easily led to imprudent and offensive remarks and gestures, and might just as easily have been *misinterpreted* by *hypersensitive* Christians" (Trachtenberg 1943: 127 [my emphases]).[39]

In recent years, however, it has become less common to interpret the Theodosian edict by recourse to the ideological baggage of either the nineteenth century or the Hitler years. Jewish historians may now be more inclined to acknowledge the antagonism of ancient Jews toward Christianity than to accuse ancient Christians of hypersensitivity. Whatever the case, a contemporary Israeli scholar such as Amnon Linder (1987 [1983]: 236) can now be as unapologetic as Juster was in speaking of "the customary burning of Haman's effigy on a cross" during the holiday of Purim.[40] And Christian scholars who "allow that the celebration of Purim could occasionally evolve into a demonstration of anti-Christian feeling, where the cursing of the crucified Haman might lead on to the cursing of the crucified Jesus" (Thornton 1986: 425), are no longer automatically suspected of sharing the view of Gregorovius (and others) that the Jews themselves have been responsible for anti-Semitism. We are thus in a better position to understand how the carnivalesque aspects of Purim cele-

39. It is worth noting that the 1936 illustrated *Megilla* published by Otto Geismar in Berlin omitted the gallows scenes, "probably for political reasons," as Rachel Wischnitzer (1949: 243) observed in her fine article "The Esther Story in Art."

40. Note the subtle but significant trend toward open-mindedness on this issue that was already evident by 1946 when Avi-Yonah wrote that the law "was directed against the Purim festivities, which were *alleged* to include matters offensive to Christianity" (Avi-Yonah 1946: 156; 1984: 218 [author's translation, my emphasis]). On the greater objectivity evident in studies of Jewish-Christian relations after Hitler's defeat, see Gavin Langmuir (1985: 121). For a perhaps classic example of postwar frankness about Jewish hostility to Christianity, see Jacob Katz (1961), who observed that during the (high) Middle Ages "the symbols of Christianity . . . could be relied upon to repel every unconverted Jew. . . . Throughout the literature of the time we find the rejection of Christianity expressed in the form of the repudiation of one of its visible symbols, more particularly that of the crucified Christ" (ibid.: 22–23). The initial discomfort caused in some circles by the publication of this book is noted in the author's recent autobiography (Katz 1989: 127).

brations could include, as early as the fifth century, elements of both reckless hostility and joyous festivity.

The survival of the latter throughout the Middle Ages, as repeatedly stressed by Abrahams, is by now well known. Less attention, however, has been devoted by scholars to its more problematic twin theme of reckless hostility—yet this aspect also endured not only during medieval times, but, as we shall see, well into the modern era. Just as it was necessary for Abrahams, a century ago, to demonstrate to those who had forgotten that Jews really did have fun on Purim, so it is appropriate now to emphasize that Jews really did vent their hostility, whether long-standing or recently acquired, on that annual holiday. It is only by looking at the story over time that we can see the pattern most clearly and discern the limited perspectives of those scholars who chose not to go the distance.

In the decade following the Theodosian edict of 408, Jews in the small Syrian town of Inmestar were reported (by the historian Socrates) to have erected a gallows in the form of a cross and to have scourged a Christian child to death upon it after becoming drunk and scoffing at Christ. Although neither Purim nor Haman is explicitly mentioned in the account, historians (including Graetz) have tended to assume that the incident occurred on Purim.[41] Even those Jewish scholars who (perhaps apologetically motivated) denied that a Christian child was actually killed in Inmestar did acknowledge that Jews there engaged in some form of public anti-Christian behavior on Purim early in the fifth century.[42]

The continuity of such forms of behavior would seem to explain why, some centuries later, Jewish converts to Christianity in the Byzantine Empire were required not only to generally renounce "every Hebrew law, custom, and ceremony," but to specifically "curse those who keep the festival of the so-called Mordecai . . . nailing Haman to wood, and then mixing with him the emblem of a cross and burning them together, subjecting Christians to all kinds of imprecations and a curse" (Thornton 1986: 424).[43] Such a pre-Baptismal oath, dating

41. The incident reported by Socrates in his *Historia Ecclesiastica* (vol. 7, p. 16) apparently occurred between 415 and 419. It is discussed by Basnage (1708: 550); Graetz (1853: 454; 1873: 296); Augustus Jessop and M. R. James (1896: lxiii–iv); Frazer 1900: III, 173–74; 1913: 394–95); Cecil Roth (1933: 522); James Parkes (1934: 234), and many others. For English translations of the passage from Socrates, see Jessop and James (1896), Roth (1933), and Thornton (1986: 424). For a masterly discussion of the (unconvincing) efforts by historians to link the fifth-century Inmestar incident to the twelfth-century ritual-murder accusation stemming from the death of William of Norwich, see Langmuir (1985: 120–26).

42. See, e.g., Dubnov (1968 [1934–38]: 191) and, especially, Rabello (1975: 183–88).

43. For other English translations of the text, see Joshua Starr (1939: 173–74) and

from some time between the eighth and eleventh centuries, has come down to us from the Byzantine East. The link made there between Haman and the crucified Jesus has also been preserved in Jewish liturgical sources.[44] The symbolism of Haman's effigy, it should be noted, could also be applied internally (especially in those countries where Christianity was no longer dominant), that is, as a means of expressing hostility toward figures within the Jewish community. Early in the eleventh century, a rumor spread among the Rabbanite Jews in Jerusalem that on Purim the Karaites had burned the effigies of three Rabbanite leaders (see Goiten 1988: 369).[45] Whether or not such effigy burning actually occurred on that occasion, the utilization of Purim as an opportunity to settle accounts that perhaps could not be settled otherwise under the cover of jocular festivity is a phenomenon which recurred in the Middle Ages with greater frequency than has been realized.

7

> And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we shall resemble you in that. (*The Merchant of Venice* III, 1)
>
> It is not long since . . . public festivals of the more magnificent kind were unthinkable without executions. (Nietzsche 1967 [1887]: 66)

Early in the last decade of the twelfth century, as we learn from both Jewish and Christian sources, a Jew was murdered in a northern French town (either Bray-sur-Seine or Brie[-Comte-Robert]) by a Christian who happened to be a dependent of Philip Augustus, King of France. The Jew's relatives bribed a local countess to have the assassin put to death, "and," in the ambiguous words of the Hebrew chronicler R. Ephraim of Bonn, "they hung him on Purim" (see Haberman 1945: 120).[46] Upon hearing of this act of revenge, the king ordered the

---

Frazer (1913: 393). Starr (1939: 179) dated the oath to the early eleventh century, but Thornton (1986) has claimed more recently that it probably dates from the eighth century. See also the earlier discussion by Juster (1914: I, 115–19).

44. See the Palestinian poem from the Geniza published by Yahalom and Sokoloff (1994), where Jesus speaks to Haman as his partner in suffering (I thank Professor Yahalom for graciously sharing this with me before publication). The link made by the Jews between the hanged Haman and the crucified Jesus may be reflected in some of the penitential liturgies written for the fast of Esther, such as that by R. Meshullam b. Kalonymos (died c. 1010), beginning with the words "bimtei mispar" (Davidson 1970 [1929]: II, no. 833). I hope to discuss these elsewhere.

45. On the political tone of the effigies in the European Carnival, cf. Bossy (1985: 44).

46. See also Dinur (1961–72: II:1, 93–94), and, for an English translation of the passage, see Robert Chazan (1980: 304–5). On the precise location of the incident, see Bernhard Blumenkranz (1972) and the sources he cites, and, more recently, W. C. Jordan (1989: 36, 271), who argues convincingly for Brie over Bray. The

mass burning of the town's Jews, which resulted in as many as eighty (or even possibly closer to one hundred) deaths. The higher figure was the one cited by Leopold Zunz in his essay on Jewish suffering in the Middle Ages that originally appeared in 1855 as a chapter in his learned, but also somewhat lachrymose, survey of medieval Hebrew liturgical poetry. According to Zunz, moreover, not only was the number of martyrs great, but their Purim behavior had been thoroughly innocent. In his rather sterile version of the tragic events which had occurred there, no Christian murderer had been executed in Bray/Brie—the local Jews had "simply gibbeted a figure of Haman" (Zunz 1855: 26; 1907: 43).[47]

A very different treatment of the incident was rendered some six years later by the younger historian Heinrich Graetz, who was generally less apologetic about the Jewish past than Zunz and certainly more personally engaged with it in his historical writing—for better or for worse.[48] In his initial treatment of the Bray/Brie incident, Graetz wrote that "*by malignant design or accident* the execution [of the Christian] took place on the Purim festival, and this circumstance reminded the people of Haman's gallows, *and perhaps of something else*" (Graetz 1861: 249 [my emphases]).[49] This rich and rather engaged historical

---

date of the incident (whether 1191, as Ephraim reports, or 1192, as reported by the Latin chronicler Rigord) has also been a subject of debate. The later date is favored by Chazan (1969: 2–3) and Jordan (1989: 36). See Jordan as well on the precise nature of the relationship between the murderer and Philip Augustus (ibid.: 270 n. 77).

47. For a critique of Zunz's tendency to see the mere existence of the Jews as their only real crime, see Baron (1972 [1942]: 261). See also Baron (1964: 64, 88, 96) on what he so famously called the "lachrymose conception of Jewish history."

48. Noteworthy here is the exchange which reportedly took place between Graetz and Zunz when the two were first introduced: "'Another history of the Jews!' sighed Zunz. 'Yes,' retorted Graetz unperturbed. 'But this time a Jewish history!'" (Schorsch 1975: 49). Graetz's strong personal identification with the Jewish past, especially its tragic elements, has often been noted by scholars (see Abrahams 1892: 172–73; Baron 1964: 274–75; Schorsch 1975: 51–52). Baron has written perceptively that, for Graetz, "the reconstruction of the history of his people had become a personal experience fraught with deep emotion. In every line of his *History* we sense his pulsating heart which cries out over the sufferings of his people, just as it rejoices at the description of its few happy days. This subjectivity . . . is a major weakness of Graetz the historian, but one of the strongest aspects of Graetz the writer" (Baron 1964: 274–75).

49. In the German original, what I have emphasized reads: "Aus boshafter Absicht oder zufällig geschah . . . und vielleicht an etwas Anderes." For the English translation from which I quote here, see the London edition of 1891–92, "edited and in part translated by B. Löwy" and "specially revised . . . by the author" (Graetz 1891–92: III, 416). In the American edition of 1892–98, however, the important word "malignant" was dropped, apparently for apologetic reasons (see Graetz 1892–98: III, 404). Its German equivalent ("boshafter"), however, was retained by Graetz

rhetoric invites further examination. Graetz's artful though provocative hedging on the question of "malignant design or accident" in the choice of Purim as the day of the Christian's execution clearly echoes his earlier hedging on the related question of whether, in the fifth century, the gallows from which the Jews hung Haman had, "by design or by accident, the form of a cross." One wonders whether Graetz's consistent ambiguity was itself a matter of "design" or "accident." I suspect that, as a Jew who identified with his people's history, Graetz leaned toward the "intentionalist" position, but as a responsible scholar he exercised (and not only for scholarly reasons) greater caution. Nevertheless, his attempt to reconstruct the mentality of the twelfth-century Jews of Bray/Brie and to imagine what they might have thought when they witnessed the hanging of the despised Christian murderer on Purim is quite tantalizing. Graetz was apparently certain that they were reminded of Haman on his gallows, but he suggested that in their memories and imaginations an image may also have been conjured of Christ crucified.

Graetz's Hebrew translator, S. P. Rabinowitz, however, committed a curious act of misreading here (by malignant design or by accident?) and rendered Graetz as suggesting, far less ambiguously (and less offensively to some), that besides Haman and the gallows upon which he was hung, the Jews of Bray/Brie "might have been reminded of King Philip Augustus, a king as tough as Haman" (Graetz 1895: 271). Rabinowitz, however, was not the only one to introduce a significant change into Graetz's problematic passage—so, eventually, did the author himself, in what appears to have been a loss of nerve on his part. Although the 1871 second edition of the relevant volume (six) contained the sentence unaltered, by the third edition of 1894 Graetz's dark hint about "something else" in the minds of the Jews witnessing the hanging of a Christian on Purim evidently seemed to him inappropriate. The once brazenly suggestive sentence was toned down to read merely that the Jews of Bray/Brie "were reminded then perhaps of Haman's gallows," with no other possibilities dangled before the historical imagination (Graetz 1871: 231; 1894: 210–11).[50]

One must suspect that the discreet deletion and the corresponding failure of nerve that it suggests were at least partly due to Heinrich von Treitschke's vehement and much-publicized criticism of Graetz and his *History of the Jews* in 1879, in which Graetz was accused of

in the second and third editions of 1871 and 1894, although, as we shall see, other changes were eventually made in that very loaded sentence. With regard to "etwas Anderes" ("something else"), note the possible allusion to the Hebrew euphemism "davar aher," concerning which, see Eliezer Ben-Yehudah (1960 [1924–59]: 876).

50. Although the third edition of volume six appeared after his death, there is no evidence that it was revised by anyone other than Graetz.

expressing a savage or even deadly hatred [*Todhass*] of Christianity.[51] Although Graetz valiantly defended himself, it would not be surprising if he subsequently became a bit gun-shy about the question of Jewish antagonism toward Christianity and its symbols. He may have become even more cautious with regard to the specific question of anti-Christian behavior on Purim after the appearance of Lagarde's rather hostile 1887 study, which, as we saw above, had so exercised Graetz's younger Viennese colleague, Moritz Güdemann.[52]

Even in his initial treatment of the Bray/Brie incident, however, Graetz did not explicitly address the question of who had actually executed the Christian murderer. On the other hand, Cecil Roth (1933: 522), to whose study we shall return, did face the issue, inferring from R. Ephraim's account that the French Jews had obtained permission "to execute the murderer *with their own hands*" (my emphases) on the day of Purim. By contrast, Robert Chazan (1969: 6) argued that the relevant passage in the Hebrew chronicle is "vexingly ambiguous," since it is not clear whether the execution was conducted by the Jews or by those who were normally charged with such responsibilities. The major Latin chronicle of the event, as Chazan noted, specifies that the Christian assassin was *crucified* by the Jews, which would seem to strengthen Roth's claim that the Jews themselves carried out the execution,[53] as well as answering Graetz's rhetorical query as to whether it occurred on Purim by accident or "by malignant design."

In that same chronicle (by Rigord) the date on which the Jews were punished for their rash act is given as March 18, which would place it, as Chazan also noted, some two weeks after Purim—at the end of the normally merry month of Adar. In Chazan's estimation, therefore, "Ephraim's suggestion that the hanging took place on Purim day seems questionable," for that "would mean a fifteen day delay between the execution and Philip Augustus's peremptory punishment" (ibid.: 4, 7).[54] Against such cautious skepticism, however, one might

51. See Abrahams (1892: 188–90); Schorsch (1975: 58–59); and the polemical exchanges between Graetz and Treitschke from 1879 to 1880, collected in Boehlich (1965: esp. 9, 28, 39, 47). See also Ettinger (1969: 213, 216, 224, 229).
52. Graetz, it might be added, had been a lecturer at the Jewish Theological Seminary of Breslau in 1862 when the *Purimspiel* ("Haman der grosser Judenfresser"), which Lagarde (1887: 56–57) singled out for mention, appeared.
53. It is possible, therefore, that "va-yitluhu," in R. Ephraim's Hebrew chronicle, also means "they crucified him." Cf. Haberman (1945: 27, 189); see also Ben-Yehudah (1960 [1924–59]: VIII, 7772, s.v. "teliah"). On "ha-taluy" as a term for Jesus, see also Joseph Shatzmiller (1980: 159). On abusing the cross (at the expense of one's life), see R. Ephraim's account (Haberman 1945: 118–19), as well as the instances of cross desecration by Jews cited in Shatzmiller (1980).
54. Baron (1957: 129), who is quoted by Chazan (1969: 2), was even more skepti-

argue that on no day other than Purim would the Jews of medieval Europe have dared to commit a recklessly violent act (especially one of crucifixion), and on no other day would their recklessness have been fueled by a presumed state of at least mild intoxication.[55] Was this not the same day of festive revelry and reversal on which the Jews of the Byzantine Empire had dared, over more than half a millennium, to mock Christianity by doing violence to an effigy hung on a cross?

Purim, like its younger half-sister, the European Carnival, was often characterized by an attitude of "creative disrespect" and, also like Carnival, provided an occasion when "the collective expression of envy, anger, and enmity"[56] could be considered (at least by the Jews) legitimate. If they had little hope that Christians would recognize their right to such a collective expression, they could perhaps hope that their follies would simply be overlooked as the "legitimate" consequences of excessive inebriation. Sometimes the gamble, as in the case of Bray/Brie, would result in dozens of Jewish deaths, but this, I submit, was a calculated risk of the Purim rite to be reckless. "I sometimes think," the cultural anthropologist Melvin Konner (1990: 139) recently wrote, that "the more reckless among us may have something to teach the careful about the sort of immortality that comes from living fully every day"—or, we might add, even one day.

8

In 1933, the Anglo-Jewish historian Cecil Roth sought to illuminate the Bray/Brie incident from a new perspective. Roth, who rightly saw the Purim season as "the sole occasion for a certain degree of licensed libertinism in the Jewish calendar," suggested that the twelfth-century

---

cal, asserting that all that could be determined by comparing R. Ephraim's account with Rigord's was that "sometime during the Third Crusade there occurred a persecution of the Jews in the small community of Bray." According to Baron, it is not even clear (despite R. Ephraim's testimony) that the Jews did anything to provoke this "persecution." His interpretation is thus surprisingly close to that of Zunz, whose approach Baron criticized (see my note 47). Cf. Simon Schwarzfuchs (1975: 56), who, like Roth (1933), substantially favors R. Ephraim's account.

55. On the prevalence of intoxication on Purim, see the twelfth-century testimony of R. Abraham b. Isaac of Narbonne (quoted by Dinur 1961–72: II, 5, 218). With regard to the festive atmosphere in which Jewish martyrdom could sometimes take place, see the striking documents published by Dinur (ibid.: II, 2, 644–45). For twelfth-century testimony that the Jews had "an annual practice of reviling Christ" during which they would crucify a wax image of Jesus, see the quotation from Helmhold in Doniach (1933: 175–76).

56. On the "creative disrespect" of Carnival, see Peter Stallybrass and Allon White (1986: 19), quoting Robert Stamm; on its providing an occasion for "the collective expression of envy, anger, and enmity," see Bossy (1985: 43), quoting Julio Caro Baroja (1979). See also Bossy's (1985: 42) claim that no evidence for the existence of the European Carnival can be found "much before 1200."

incident represented a stage in the development of a Purim rite of symbolic mockery in which the effigy of Haman was replaced by "the person of a human being—generally Jewish, exceptionally Christian" (Roth 1933: 522, 525).[57] In advancing this argument Roth, as he himself acknowledged, was following in the footsteps of the person he respectfully, but not without a tinge of irony, called "the omniscient Frazer," whose *Scapegoat* volume in the mammoth third edition of the *Golden Bough* had by then been out for two decades.[58] There, Frazer (1913: 394) repeated one of the controversial suggestions regarding Purim that he had made thirteen years earlier in the second edition, namely, that "there are some positive grounds for thinking" that Jews in former times "may at one time have burned, hanged, or crucified a real man in the character of Haman."

Unlike Abrahams, in his 1905 essay for the *Jewish Chronicle*, Roth, writing in an international journal of medieval studies, was not in a position either to ignore or to summarily dismiss this assertion, coming as it did from the pen of one of the most formidable figures in the intellectual world of the time, a cultural hero who came to dominate "the whole horizon of thoughts about man and his nature . . . within which the widest literary efforts were engaged" (Douglas 1978: 151).[59] Roth chose, therefore, to meet the great Sir James halfway rather than head-on, acknowledging that Jews had "on occasion" done violence to a real man rather than an effigy on Purim, but asserting that effigy burning was the more ancient custom, whose literalization was a later, unfortunate development. He also stated pointedly, though on little evidence, that the human victims of Purim violence were "generally Jewish, exceptionally Christian." This was, after all, 1933, which also helps to explain why Roth (1933: 525) made the apologetic gesture of referring to the entire custom as a "contemptuous formality."

Roth's treatment of the Bray/Brie incident nevertheless shows that he was open-minded enough to realize that it belonged, somehow, to a larger pattern and that medieval Jews might have traditionally engaged in various forms of outrageous behavior on Purim, behav-

57. Cf. Chazan (1969: 10 n. 34), who believes that it is "unwise to proceed from Ephraim's stereotyped rendition of events to conclusions concerning actual Jewish Purim practice."
58. On *The Golden Bough*, see, among recent studies, Ackerman (1987: esp. chaps. 14–15) and Fraser (1990). On Frazer's own cultivation of the ironic mode, see Ackerman (1987: 26, 66).
59. See also Mary Beard (1990: 7), who notes that Jesse Owens was even brought to meet Frazer on his way home from the 1936 Berlin Olympics. Beard also quotes from a 1937 article in the popular press that hailed Frazer for having "changed the world . . . by altering the chemical composition of the cultural air that all men breathe" (see also Beard 1992: 212ff.).

ior which could have caused them some regret (individually or collectively) on the morning after. However, *before* discussing the late twelfth-century execution in Bray/Brie, Roth introduced a significant, though to his mind "harmless," incident that had occurred in early fourteenth-century Provence and had escaped Frazer's notice (ibid.: 521). In 1306, the Jews of Manosque had been accused, according to archival documents, of insulting the Christian faith on Purim while bringing some of their coreligionists to justice. In one instance, a Jew was said to have been flogged while being dragged naked through the Jewish quarter after having been found with "a certain woman"; in another, a man was reportedly led through the streets dressed in women's clothing [*ad modum mulieris*] during that same "holiday called Purim." Camille Arnaud (1879: 48–49), who had already published the court testimony (of Jews) on which the accusations were based, found it appropriate to add: "C'est ainsi que procéda la justice Juive. Mais les auteurs de cette exhibition malhonnête durent rendre compte de leur conduite devant la justice chrétienne" (Thus proceeded Jewish justice. But the perpetrators of this rude exhibition were required to account for their conduct before Christian justice as well). Roth, however, argued that the "justice" executed by the Jews of Manosque must be seen within the carnivalesque context of Purim, hence as a continuation of the tradition of inflicting punishment on an effigy of Haman—who, in this case, was represented by a fellow Jew. He suggested, further, that the flogging of a naked Jew may have been perceived by Christians as a "blasphemous parody of the Passion" (Roth 1933: 521).[60]

Four decades later, Joseph Shatzmiller (1973), in his meticulous study of the Manosque Jewish community during the later Middle Ages, returned to the Purim incident of 1306, publishing additional documentary material concerning the trial and concluding, contra Arnaud, that the punishments carried out by the Jews were not actual ones, but rather performances staged as part of a Purim parody of a trial (ibid.: 127–28).[61] Citing the Theodosian law of 408 in this regard, Shatzmiller saw the hostile reaction in Manosque as testifying to the "remarkable continuity" between Christian perceptions of Purim practices in late antiquity and in late medieval Europe. With regard to

60. It would appear that Roth discussed the 1306 Manosque incidents prior to the chronologically earlier Bray/Brie incident in order to lend greater credence to his claim that Jewish victims of this "contemptuous formality" were more common than Christian ones.

61. The original reads: "Une parodie humoristique de procès, faite dans le cadre de la fête du Purim." Shatzmiller (1973: 129 n. 3) has also supported Roth's suggestion that the flogging may have been perceived by Christians as a "blasphemous parody of the Passion."

the validity of the various accusations of anti-Christian conduct made against the Jews during that long period, Shatzmiller took the rather cautious position that the question could not yet be settled due to the paucity of extant documentation (ibid.: 130–31).[62]

Influenced, perhaps, by the recklessness traditionally shown by the Jews on Purim, my own, less cautious position is that the "remarkable continuity" to be noted here applies no less, and probably more, to Jewish patterns of behavior on that festive day than to Christian perceptions (or misperceptions) thereof. Furthermore, the documentation is less sparse than one might imagine. The period between the fifth century and the twelfth has been discussed above. Jean Régné (1978 [1910–24]: 446) long ago cited the charges brought against the Jews in Villafranca (near Barcelona) pertaining to Purim, 1291, and Shatzmiller (1973: 130 n. 3) himself noted a responsum by R. Solomon ibn Adret, dating from approximately the same time, that reported an apparently similar incident in Marseilles.[63] Accusations against the Jews of Lunel in 1319 and of Hyères in 1343 of insulting the Christian faith, as Shatzmiller suggested, seem to have been related to their Purim antics (ibid.: 129–30; see also Kriegel 1979: 35–36).

These antics may well have been, like festive license in general, polysemous, so a verifiable "internal" Jewish meaning would not exclude an additional (hostile) message directed toward the Christian environment. This would appear to have been the case in Manosque, where the Jews chose the day of Purim, 1306, for publicly flogging a man found with "a certain woman" and for grotesquely representing a couple found in flagrante delicto. We may perhaps compare Purim license with that of "misrule" in the late-medieval French countryside, which, as Natalie Davis (1975: 107) has noted, was not merely rebellious, but rather "very much in the service of the . . . community." The exercise of justice, whether applied to a Christian murderer in Bray/Brie or a Jewish adulterer in Manosque, could be a festive occasion, especially when normal circumstances prevented such justice from being done. But not only then, for "in punishment," as Nietzsche

62. On the Manosque incidents of Purim, 1306, see also Rodrigue Lavoie (1987: 580–82), who finds Roth's hypothesis less persuasive than did Shatzmiller and who suggests, rather, that the lashing meted out by the Jews to one of their own was seen by Christians as a mockery of the relatively lenient punishment administered by Christian courts to adulterers, in contrast to the stoning mandated by Jewish law. It is far from clear that the Jews in the Middle Ages actually regarded stoning as the appropriate punishment for adultery; on the lashing of adulterers, see, e.g., Simha Assaf (1922: 45, 87).

63. Two Jews, visiting friends in a house near that of the local bishop, engaged in Purim "amusements" which were seen by the Christians of Marseilles as an affront to their religion (see Adret 1959: III, no. 389, excerpted by Dinur 1961–72: II:2, 78).

(1967 [1887]: 67) wrote, "there is so much that is festive," and indeed the European Carnival would sometimes feature public punishments, even executions.[64] The carnivalesque character of Purim thus went hand in hand with its being chosen by Jews as a day for exercising (sometimes rough) justice.

This tradition was apparently alluded to in Manosque by the representation, in drag, of the female member of the adulterous couple, while her male partner was not merely paraded dramatically in the Jewish quarter,[65] but was also flogged as he was being dragged naked through its streets. The cross-dressing and the nude flogging were not conducted at cross-purposes, but rather represented the two sides of the festive inversion characteristic of Purim—partying and punishment. In addition to the settling of accounts within the community, there was, in Manosque, the larger Jewish account traditionally settled with Christianity and its symbols on that holiday. The Jews by openly and unabashedly flogging one of their own, may well have been suggesting that they had another Person in mind as well—the same Person who, as Graetz once suggested, may have been in the thoughts of the Jews of Bray/Brie on Purim, 1191/1192. The Manosque authorities, who accused the local Jews of having, "in their audacity, put aside their fear of God," could perhaps more accurately have accused them of putting aside (for one day), in their (traditional Purim) audacity, their fear of Christianity. We must take more seriously the full implications of the likelihood that Purim represented for the Jews of Europe, as did Carnival for Christians, a time not only of revelry and masquerade but, as noted above, "of temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order" (Bakhtin 1984 [1965]: 10).

64. The Carnival festivities in Renaissance Rome, as has been noted, "were generally attended by the cudgelling of minor offenders . . . and by the execution of criminals in the Piazza del Popolo, the hangman and his assistants donning the costume of harlequins and punchinellos. The minor offenders were mostly vulgar women . . . but the victims of the hangman were selected with greater care among the nobility and the clergy" (Lanciani 1906: 36). See, more recently, Boiteux (1977: 365): "Mort et fustigations ne sont pas seulement representées . . . mais aussi réeles, vécues, tandis qu'alentour on danse et un boit" (Execution and flogging were not merely represented . . . but also real and experienced, while one danced about and drank). On Carnival as an opportunity for festive, violent punishment, see also the comment of a Mantuan jurist in 1569, quoted by Shlomo Simonsohn (1977 [1962–64]: 115 n. 49). On the link between festivals and public executions in Jewish tradition, see *Mishnah Sanhedrin* 11:4 and Moses Maimonides *Mishneh Torah Mamrim* 3:8.

65. On "comic pairs" in carnivalesque festivity, compare Bakhtin (1984 [1965]: 201), and, on the convention of publicizing scandals during Carnival (without necessarily naming the persons involved), see Baroja (1979: 89, 96).

9

The violent undertone of medieval Purim festivities, which surfaced vividly in Bray/Brie and Manosque, but which has been only weakly acknowledged in Jewish scholarship, parallels a similar strain in the European tradition of Carnival celebrations. Carnival, as Peter Burke (1987: 186) has recently noted, "was a time of licence . . . not only to overeat and drink and indulge sexually . . . but also to engage in acts of ritualized aggression." This dimension of Purim is also evident in the aforementioned fourteenth-century letter by the Spanish Jew Solomon Levi, written shortly before he converted and became Pablo de Santa Maria. In London, the author recalled "those merry throngs who are today joyously celebrating the feast in Burgos," at which wine flows freely, "all tongues are loosed, incoherence prevails, and a wild scene of mingled love and rage ensues" (Abrahams 1900: 257, 260).

Although couched in the elegant, restrained phrases of Abrahams's translation, "incoherence" could just as well have been rendered "obscenity" (cf. Isaiah 9:16), and Abrahams's "love and rage" might today be translated, in our own idiom, "sex and violence." Solomon's letter alludes to those who, on Purim, give free reign to "their loves, their hates, their jealousies" (cf. Eccles. 9:6) and to those "who make their way about the city reeling and staggering [cf. Ps. 107:27] as they go, gashing themselves with knives and spears, according to their practice, until blood streams over them." The last passage is a striking instance of the strategy of intertextuality, for it is lifted directly from the verse in First Kings (18:28) describing the attempts of the prophets of Baal to bring down fire from on high in response to Elijah's repeated taunts, and it therefore artfully captures the tone of ritualized violence which became characteristic of Purim. If, for the biblical author, such cultic violence was something to be mocked, for lonely Solomon Levi of Burgos, whose "warm love of the ceremonies" and "total lack of overstrained asceticism" have been adduced by Abrahams (1900: 258) as proof of his continued identification with "the sentiments of the medieval Rabbis," the rites of violence on Purim were recalled as longingly as the freely flowing Spanish wine. They were not, of course, recalled as longingly by Jewish historians, even those who, like Abrahams, allowed themselves to wax nostalgic about "lost Purim joys."

Yet it must be acknowledged that, like the days of Purim themselves (cf. Esther 9:28), these violent rites were never entirely abandoned by the Jews, even in relatively modern times. Abrahams's "Lost Purim Joys" of 1905, which omitted, as we have seen, any reference to the behavior prohibited by the Theodosian edict of 408, would certainly have also omitted (even if its author could have read Polish) the behavior described in a 1743 edict by the Bishop of Przemsyl, which Moses

Schorr had published just two years earlier. There, reference is made to a serious crime of which the local Jews were accused, namely, of hiring a Christian on Purim to take the place of the historical Haman, "whom, conducting amid great triumph, clamor, and shouting, they beat, prod, and shove . . . and torment with vituperation, insults, abuse and cruelty regarding the great inferiority of the Christian nation" (Schorr 1903: 220–21).[66] This is evidently the sort of thing to which Abrahams had vaguely alluded in his essay as "pranks that may be misconstrued as tokens of vindictiveness against an ancient foe or his modern reincarnations," although the *reincarnated* foe may be different from the one Abrahams (consciously) had in mind.

Considering the earlier history of Purim, one suspects that the 1743 accusation was not based entirely on slander or misunderstanding. Seven years later, Frederick the Great of Prussia, in his charter of 1750, conditioned the privileges of the Jews under his rule upon their refraining from prayers (e.g., "Aleinu") that could give offense to Christians and "from all improper excesses in their festivals, particularly during the so-called Feast of Haman, or Purim."[67] Although this reference to "improper excesses" [*ungebührlichen Ausschweifungen*] was viewed by J. R. Marcus (1969 [1938]: 95) as an allusion to the custom of hanging Haman in effigy, it is likely that King Frederick had a number of different amusements in mind.[68] Jews offended Christian sensibilities on Purim, especially when the latter occurred during Lent or Holy Week, by their loud and lusty behavior no less than by their inferred mockery of Christ's Passion and Crucifixion.[69]

In 1756, the Jews of Sugenheim, in Franconia, stipulated in their

66. This edict is also mentioned by Yom-Tow Lewinski (1947: 17), back to back with the Theodosian edict (my thanks to Moshe Rosman for providing me with a translation from the Polish of the 1743 edict). It may be compared, incidentally, with the 1739 claim by the Bishop of Alessandria (Italy) that the local Jews were in the habit of reciting curses against Christians as part of their Purim celebrations (see Segre 1990: 1605–6). I have also been informed by Dr. Hanna Wegrzynek of Warsaw that in 1556 the Jews of Sochaczew, Poland, were accused on the basis of testimony by several citizens of engaging in anti-Christian activities during Lent similar to those of which the Jews of Przemsyl were accused in 1743.

67. See Ismar Freund (1912: 51) and the translation (with commentary) by J. R. Marcus (1969 [1938]: 94–95).

68. See the fascinating document of April 1705 preserved in the Berlin State Archive and published by Selma Stern (1925: 246–48), in which Jewish celebrations of Purim during Holy Week with masquerade, merry music, and the hanging of Haman are seen as being "per indirectum in contumeliam Salavatoris."

69. Compare the 1751 testimony by the Bishop of Alessandria (in Segre 1990: 1728–29) concerning the arrest of some local Jews for performing a Purim play during Lent despite the prohibition on doing so. On the use of Purim reversal "against the outside world," see also Davis (1990: 18).

communal statutes (approved by the local barons) that "no one shall dare mask himself or run around in clown's garb or with candles or torches on Purim under penalty of a florin to be paid the civil authorities" (see Freudenthal 1929: 49, 67; for the translation, see Marcus 1969 [1938]: 220).[70] Such behavior, which evidently would otherwise have occurred, was deemed improper, although again not necessarily for the reason given by Marcus, namely, that "such hilarity often ended in a row." Rather, the same motive would appear to have underlain both this prohibition and another one in these statutes against throwing fruits and candies to the parading children on Simhat Torah (Freudenthal 1929: 67; Marcus 1969 [1938]: 220): to suppress popular forms of festivity in which sacred and profane elements intermingled in ways that, by the eighteenth century, had become increasingly problematic. If the medieval Jew, as Abrahams had asserted, "drew no severe line between sacred and profane," things were quite otherwise by the end of the early modern period, and not only for Jews. This had important implications for the way that Purim came to be observed or, rather, for the ways in which those in positions of power (rabbinic or communal) sought to refashion the festival.

The tendency to delegitimize forms of festivity that had previously been acceptable may be seen, for example, among the leaders of the Portuguese-Jewish community of Amsterdam, who decided, two weeks before Purim of 1640, to prohibit hammering in the synagogue during the reading of the *Megilla*, a custom they considered more appropriate to barbarians than to civilized individuals. The prohibition seems to have had no more than a limited effect, however, for three decades later it was deemed necessary not only to repeat it, but to increase the fine twentyfold (Kaplan 1986: 181).[71] As Shakespeare understood: "The brain may devise laws for the blood, but a hot temper leaps o'er a cold decree" (*The Merchant of Venice* I, 2).

On Shakespeare's own island, the aforementioned 1783 "Purim riot" broke out in London's Bevis Marks Synagogue when fourteen members refused to honor the "cold decree" of the Mahamad against noise-making during the *Megilla* reading. Constables appeared in the synagogue after a complaint was made to the city marshal, and the

70. On efforts among Jews in eighteenth-century Italy to prohibit masquerade, see Simonsohn (1977 [1962–64]: 542–43); Attilio Milano (1932–33: 179); and Assaf (1925–42: II, 200).

71. The noise-making prohibition was later adopted by the Spanish-Portuguese congregation of London (see M. Gaster 1901a: 58). That the prohibition was no mere formality is evident from John Greenhalgh's account of his visit to the first London synagogue in 1662: "My Rabbi invited me afterwards to come and see the feast of Purim . . . in which they use great knocking and stamping when Haman is named" (Hyamson 1951: 19).

offenders were removed.[72] One of these, Isaac Mendes Furtado, refused to explain himself and not long afterwards broke with the congregation. One suspects that in his case Purim provided a pretext for challenging the Mahamad's rather rigid authoritarianism, in line with the carnivalesque tradition of fusing festivity with protest. However, in the case of at least one other offender, twenty-one-year-old Joshua Montefiore (who did recant), it would appear that another carnivalesque tradition, that of the temporary triumph of fun over form, had simply reasserted itself (cf. Malcolmson 1973: 13, 50).

Just over a century later, Joshua's great-grandnephew, Claude Montefiore, expressed, as we have noted, the hope that this holiday, whose very essence was of "doubtful propriety," would one day disappear from the Jewish religious calendar. In expressing this hope, he took a strong position not only against Maimonides, who had asserted that "the days of Purim shall never be revoked," but more obviously (and perhaps recklessly) against the formal resolution recorded in the Book of Esther (9:28) that "these days of Purim should never fall into disuse among the Jews, nor should the commemoration of these days cease among their descendants."[73] If Montefiore felt that Purim lacked "an inward and essential religious justification," it was undoubtedly due in no small part to the hostility expressed toward the Book of Esther in Protestant biblical scholarship, which began with Luther (who felt that it "Judaized" too much and was full of "heathen perverseness") and did not cease among his descendants.[74] Montefiore, as noted above, was not only a learned scholar, but also a refined (if not overrefined) gentleman.[75] His refinement, however, may have made

72. On this incident, which has not yet received the full treatment it deserves, see the brief remarks of Picciotto (1956 [1875]: 195–96); Doniach (1933: 59); Lewinski (1947: 33); Goodman (1949: 41–42); Hyamson (1951: 196–97); and E. R. Samuel (1951–52: 133, 144).

73. See the concluding paragraph in *Mishneh Torah*, "Laws of Megillah" (2:18). These words were quoted by Paton (1908: 97) as evidence of "the high esteem of this book [Esther] in later Judaism," and he added, "With this verdict of late Judaism modern Christians cannot agree. The book is so conspicuously lacking in religion that it should never have been included in the Canon of the O.T." For a Jewish example of what might be called Esther-bashing, see Morris Jastrow (1918: 506), who spoke of the "somewhat cruel and vicious spirit of the book."

74. See note 73 and, especially, note 15, above. The Rev. J. A. M'clymont (1911: 174), of Aberdeen, dismissed the suggestion that "the feast of the Jews" referred to in John (5:1) was identical to Purim, observing that "the latter . . . was not likely, as actually celebrated, to be very attractive to the Saviour." This comment was judiciously deleted by the author of the (shorter) article on Purim in Grant and Rowley (1963).

75. See, for example, his comment, quoted by Lucy Cohen (1940: 44), about his tutor, Solomon Schechter: "He's a dear creature, but we have to remind him sometimes to wash his hands."

him less sensitive to how the sometimes raw expression of hostility toward the symbols of an oppressive Christian environment could become part of the holiday's carnivalesque essence, part of what, again quoting Bakhtin, might be called its "temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order."

This process had begun, as we have seen, among the Jews of the later Roman Empire, but it did not cease among their descendants. In 1853, five years before Claude Montefiore and Israel Abrahams were born, their country's consul in Jerusalem, James Finn, warned a local Christian missionary not to attempt to win souls among the Jews on Purim, a day on which, he said, they were mostly drunk. When two missionaries insisted on entering the Jewish quarter nevertheless, they were pelted by its residents with dead cats, mud, and offal.[76] This, of course, was not the way that Christians bringing the "good news" were normally greeted by the Jews, for only on Purim was there a rite to be reckless.

A century later, a South African rabbi who had been on a "mission" among the Jews of Cochin, on India's Malabar Coast, recorded in his memoir a "shocking incident which happened one Purim when the Cochin Jews got uproariously drunk." A group of young men, it turns out, had "invaded a Church, seized a statue of the Virgin Mary, and burnt it as an effigy of Haman" (Rabinowitz 1952: 137).[77] Their distance from major centers of Jewish culture would perhaps explain why the custom became somewhat garbled in its transmission to the Cochin Jews and was transformed (via the traditional Purim male/female inversion) into violence against a representation of the Virgin Mother rather than the crucified Son. The local priest, we are told, "passed off the incident with an understanding joke," but one wonders how much he, or the rabbi who recorded the incident, actually understood.

Postscript

In 1934, a year after Hitler's rise to power, the German scholar Otto Eissfeldt, in line with what had by then become received (academic) wisdom, wrote that the Book of Esther's admission into the biblical canon, despite its objectionable characteristics, was to be explained by "the close connection between Jewish religion and the Jewish national spirit [*jüdischen Volkstum*]." Christianity, by contrast, had in his opin-

76. On this incident, see Beth-Zion Lask Abrahams (1978–80: 44–45) and Arnold Blumberg (1980: 125). On this use of dead cats, cf. Baroja (1979: 95); Malcolmson (1973: 79); and, of course, Robert Darnton (1984: 75–104). At the end of the century, the American consul wrote that, among the Jews of Jerusalem, "the feast of Purim is still kept vigorously" (Wallace 1898: 305).
77. I thank Professor Daniel Sperber for this valuable reference.

ion "neither occasion nor justification for holding on to it." Eissfeldt, therefore, chose to conclude the treatment of Esther in his scholarly introduction to the Old Testament with Luther's harshly negative evaluation, which, he felt, should be considered decisive (Eissfeldt 1934: 566–67).[78] In those years, however, Eissfeldt's Jewish compatriots, for reasons related less to the workings of the Jewish "national spirit" than to those of the German one, were expressing an increasing interest in and identification with the book and its story. The Berlin rabbi Joachim Prinz, as mentioned above, later testified eloquently in his memoir of the years 1933–37 that people were coming to the synagogue by the thousands to listen to the Book of Esther story, which "suddenly made sense" since it had become the story of their lives.

> When Haman's plot was announced, it bore a strange resemblance to Hitler's plot to wipe out the Jewish people. . . . Then the turning point came. Haman was . . . exposed to disgrace and death. Never had I heard such applause in a synagogue when the names of the ten sons of Haman were read, describing their hanging from the gallows. Every time we read "Haman" the people heard Hitler, and the noise was deafening. (Prinz 1970: 235)

And, in contrast to Picciotto, who in late Victorian England could refer disdainfully to the custom of "loudly knocking against the Synagogue benches" during the *Megilla* reading as an "absurd and irreverent usage" characteristic of "unruly boys and silly men," Rabbi Prinz, in Nazi Germany, felt rather differently about the noise being made in *his* synagogue. "The little noisemakers," he recalled, "became more than toys. They were the instruments of a demonstration in the midst of frustration" (ibid.). Whether Claude Montefiore, who lived until 1938, changed his mind during the Hitler years about the propriety of Purim and its place in the Jewish calendar is not clear. His views concerning the propriety of Christian criticism of the Book of Esther and its allegedly vindictive spirit did, however, shift perceptibly.

In the monumental *Rabbinic Anthology* published in 1938, which he edited with Herbert Loewe, Montefiore wrote with characteristic candor about the Jewish elaborations of the Esther story (in the midrash and Targum literature) as "not entirely pleasant reading." Although he acknowledged that they must be seen within their historical context, there was still, for his taste, "too much unqualified delight in the downfall and punishment of Haman, and also in the revenge of

78. I quote from the Ackroyd translation (Eissfeldt 1965) of the 1964 third, revised edition, allowing for the (disappointingly) slight change in wording introduced over the three decades. As late as 1957, Artur Weiser, of Tübingen, in his introduction to the Old Testament (Weiser 1961: 313), could assert that Luther's unequivocal condemnation of the Book of Esther "is a testimony to the *impartial* clarity of the Christian verdict" (my emphasis).

the Jews upon their enemies" (Montefiore and Loewe 1938: 97). Yet, in response to an Old Testament introduction in which W. L. Northridge, a Methodist scholar, read Esther (in 1937!) as revealing "Jewish vindictiveness at its worst" and as "setting the contrast between unworthy elements in Judaism and the Christian spirit of love to all," Montefiore modified his tone somewhat, though still without raising it above gentlemanly decibels. "There is a good deal of glass in both our houses," he noted. "We had better not throw stones at one another" (ibid.: 614–15).[79]

Montefiore's coeditor, Loewe, however, who was no less of a gentleman, if perhaps more of a scholar (he had succeeded his teacher Israel Abrahams as Reader in Rabbinics at Cambridge), was a bit more forthright, although his bluntness was tastefully relegated to a footnote. "What seems so terrible in Dr. Northridge's arguments," Loewe remarked, "is the fact that they were written in 1937, when current events should have taught him to take a different view." In the best tradition of the Oxbridge debating hall, he then posed a question: "Let us assume that the Book of Esther 'typifies Jewish vindictiveness at its worst.' . . . Shall we go on to say that Hitler's barbarity typifies 'Christian vindictiveness at its worst'?" As far as the contemporary relevance of the book was concerned, Loewe ventured to say that "if we take the description of the events narrated [in Esther] at its face value, we have a situation not very different from that which confronts the Jews in Germany today" (ibid.: 679–80).

Despite the perceived similarity between Haman and Hitler for many Jews in Europe, the view that Esther should be stricken from the Jewish canon, and Purim from the calendar, still managed to find a champion in the Jewish world, even in the dark days of 1938. In Jerusalem,[80] Schalom Ben-Chorin (a.k.a. Fritz Rosenthal), a twenty-five-year-old German Jew who had recently immigrated to Palestine, published a pamphlet entitled *Kritik des Esther-Buches: Eine Theologische Streitschrift*. Ben-Chorin (1938: 5) opened with the bald proposal that both Esther and Purim be eliminated from Jewish life since "both festival and book are unworthy of a people which is disposed to bring about its national and moral regeneration under prodigious sacrifice."

79. See also Pfeiffer (1941: 747), who observed that "Christians have written far too much in this viciously bellicose vein to be the first to 'cast a stone' at Esther." Contrast Northridge's view also to the offhand comment made by Wind (1937: 245) that same year: "Haman is described in the Old Testament with *a pardonable delight* in the details of his execution" (my emphases). The latter's affiliation with the Warburg Institute, which had recently moved from Hamburg to London, may have sharpened his awareness of what might be loosely termed the Haman-Hitler connection. On that connection, see also Flusser (1963: 25–26).

80. In 1933, the Jews of Jerusalem still observed, among other "exilic" customs, that of publicly hanging a human effigy on Purim, after which it would be festively escorted to the pyre (Ernst 1933: 16).

Although he did not cite Montefiore's "Purim Difficulties" of half a century earlier, Ben-Chorin was able to draw upon such varied sources as Martin Luther and Max Brod. And while he probably could not have marshalled the support of Joachim Prinz, Ben-Chorin did win the approbation of Hugo Bergmann, then rector of (as well as professor of philosophy at) the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Bergmann commended him for having provided a great service to Jewish religiosity. "The holiday of Purim may proceed," allowed Bergmann, "as a folk festival." As a religious festival, however, it had, in his opinion, "only negative value." Its continued observance could only be understood as a consequence of "the deep decay of our people" and in light of our psychological need for compensation (ibid.: 3). Purim thus had no legitimate place in the regeneration of the Jewish people in its land, for which these two Jerusalemites hoped and perhaps strived.[81]

During the years of the Second World War, the idea that the public observance of Purim, including the reading of the Book of Esther, was inappropriate came to be expressed from other quarters as well. In March 1941, following the Nazi occupation of Poland, Adolf Hitler not only banned the reading of Esther and noise-making at the mention of Haman, but also ordered that all synagogues be barred and closed for the day of Purim. His awareness of the holiday and its significance was made clear as well in his speech of January 30, 1944, in which he announced that if the Nazis were defeated, the Jews could celebrate "a second triumphant Purim" (Goodman 1949: 374–76).[82] Although it is unlikely that Hitler had been reading the learned Old Testament introductions by Eissfeldt or other German biblical scholars, he certainly did have access to the writings of the anti-Semitic Orientalist Paul de Lagarde.[83] The latter may also have been responsible for the fact that Julius Streicher's last words, as he was being led, like Haman, to the gallows, were "Purim Feast, 1946" (ibid.: 376).[84]

81. For a sharp and immediate rejoinder to Ben-Chorin's *Kritik*, see Yaʿakov Ashkenazi (1938). See also A. Kaminka (in Lewinski 1955: 56–60), who clearly alludes to Ben-Chorin and Bergmann, as does Flusser (1963).
82. Goodman's quotation from Hitler's speech was taken from the *New York Times* (Jan. 31, 1944).
83. Alfred Rosenberg, the chief ideologist of Nazism, considered himself a disciple of Lagarde, and he congratulated Hitler in 1934 for having "rescued from oblivion the works of Nietzsche, Wagner, Lagarde, and Dühring." In 1944, the German army distributed an anthology of Lagarde's writings to its soldiers (see Fritz Stern 1965: 93, 114, 358).
84. Goodman was quoting from the (then reputable) *New York Post* (Oct. 16, 1946). On the Nazi sense of Purim as a day on which acts of ritual violence were carried out against non-Jews, note the quotation from *Der Stuermer* in the *Jewish Chronicle* (April 7, 1937): 32: "Today everyone knows that it is the custom of the Jews at the festivals of Purim and Passover to murder non-Jews and use their blood for ritual purposes."

References

Abrahams, Beth-Zion Lask
1978–80 "James Finn: Her Britannic Majesty's Consul at Jerusalem between 1846–1863, "*Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England* 27: 40–50.
Abrahams, Israel
1892 "H. Graetz, The Jewish Historian," *Jewish Quarterly Review*, o.s., 4: 165–93.
1896 *Jewish Life in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society).
1900 "Paul of Burgos in London," *Jewish Quarterly Review*, o.s., 12: 255–63.
1912 [1905] "Lost Purim Joys," *The Book of Delight and Other Papers* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society).
Ackerman, Robert
1987 *J. G. Frazer: His Life and Work* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
Adret, Solomon ibn
1959 *Responsa*. Pt. III (Benei Berak: n.p.).
Arnaud, Camille
1879 *Essai sur la condition des Juifs en Provence au Moyen-Age* (Forcecalquier: Librairie d'Auguste Masson).
Aronius, Julius
1902 *Regesten zur Geschichte der Juden im fränkischen und deutschen Reiche* (Berlin: Leonhard Simion).
Ashkenazi, Yaʿakov
1938 *Davar be-ʿIto* (Jerusalem: n.p.).
Assaf, Simha
1922 *Ha-ʿOnashin Aharei Hatimat ha-Talmud* (Jerusalem: Sifriyya Mishpatit).
Assaf, Simha, ed.
1925–42 *Mekorot le-Toledot ha-Hinnukh be-Yisrael*, 4 vols. (Tel Aviv: Devir).
Avi-Yonah, M.
1946 *Bimei Roma u-Vizantion* (Jerusalem: Mossad Bialik).
1984 *The Jews under Roman and Byzantine Rule*. 2d ed. (Jerusalem: Magnes Press).
Baer, Yitzhak
1961 *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain*, 2 vols., translated by Louis Schoffman et al. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society).
Bakhtin, Mikhail
1984 [1965] *Rabelais and His World*, translated by Hélène Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press).
Baroja, Julio Caro
1979 *Le Carnaval* (Paris: Gallimard).
Baron, S. W.
1957 *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*. Vol. 4 (New York and Philadelphia: Columbia University Press and Jewish Publication Society).
1964 *History and Jewish Historians: Essays and Addresses*, edited by A. Hertzberg and L. A. Feldman (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society).
1972 [1942] "The Jewish Factor in Medieval Civilization," *Ancient and Medieval Jewish History* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press).
Basnage, J. C.
1706–7 *L'Histoire et la réligion des Juifs depuis Jésus Christ jusqu'à present*, 5 vols. (Rotterdam).
1708 *The History of the Jews, from Jesus Christ to the Present Time*, translated by T. Taylor (London).
Beard, Mary
1990 Review of Robert Fraser, *The Making of the Golden Bough: The Origin and Growth of an Argument*, *London Review of Books* (July 26): 7–8.

1992 "Frazer, Leach, and Virgil: The Popularity (and Unpopularity) of *The Golden Bough*," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 34: 212 ff.
Ben-Chorin, Schalom
1938 *Kritik des Esther-Buches: Eine Theologische Streitschrift* (Jerusalem: Heatid).
Ben-Sasson, H. H.
1962 *On Jewish History in the Middle Ages* (Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: Am ʿOved).
Bentwich, Norman
1959–61 "The Wanderers and Other Jewish Scholars of My Youth," *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England* 20: 51–62.
Ben-Yehuda, Eliezer
1960 [1924–59] *A Complete Dictionary of Ancient and Modern Hebrew* (Hebrew), 8 vols. (New York and London: Thomas Yoseloff).
Black, Eugene
1987–88 "Edwin Montagu," *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England* 30: 199–218.
Blumberg, Arnold
1980 *The View from Jerusalem, 1849–1858: The Consular Diary of James and Elizabeth Anne Finn* (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press).
Blumenkranz, Bernhard
1972 "Bray-sur-Seine," *Encyclopaedia Judaica* 4: 1321–22.
Bodenschatz, Johann
1748–49 *Kirchliche Verfassung der heutigen Juden* (Frankfurt: auf Kosten des Autoris).
Boehlich, Walter, ed.
1965 *Der Berliner Antisemitismusstreit* (Berlin: Sammlung Insel).
Boiteux, M.
1977 "Carnaval annexé: Essai de lecture d'une fête romaine," *Annales E.S.C.* 32: 356–77.
Bossy, John
1970 "The Counter-Reformation and the People of Catholic Europe," *Past and Present* 47: 51–70.
1985 *Christianity in the West 1400–1700* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press).
Burke, Peter
1978 *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (London: Temple Smith).
1987 *The Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Italy: Essays on Perception and Communication* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
Calimani, Riccardo
1987 [1985] *The Ghetto of Venice: A History*, translated by K. S. Wolfthal (New York: M. Evans).
Cassel, Selig
1850 "Juden (Geschichte)," in *Allgemeiner Enzyklopädie der Wissenschaften und Künste* II:27: 1–238.
Chazan, Robert
1969 "The Bray Incident of 1192: Realpolitik and Folk Slander," *Proceedings of the American Academy of Jewish Research* 37: 1–18.
Chazan, Robert, ed.
1980 *Church, State, and the Jew in the Middle Ages* (New York: Behrman).
Cohen, Lucy
1940 *Some Recollections of Claude Goldsmid Montefiore 1859–1938* (London: Faber and Faber).
Cohen, Thomas
1988 "The Case of the Mysterious Coil of Rope: Street Life and Jewish Persona

in Rome in the Middle of the Sixteenth Century," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 19: 209–21.
Dalin, D. G.
1985 "Israel Abrahams: Leader of Liturgical Reform in England," *Journal of Reform Judaism* 32: 68–83.
Darnton, Robert
1984 *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (New York: Basic Books).
Davidson, Israel
1970 [1929] *Thesaurus of Medieval Hebrew Poetry* (Hebrew), 4 vols. (New York: Ktav).
Davis, N. Z.
1975 "The Reasons of Misrule," *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press).
1990 "Rabelais among the Censors (1940s, 1540s)," *Representations* 32: 1–32.
Dinur, B. Z., ed.
1961–72 *Israel in the Diaspora* (Hebrew), 10 vols. in two parts. Rev. ed. (Tel Aviv and Jerusalem: Devir and Mossad Bialik).
Doniach, N. S.
1933 *Purim, or the Feast of Esther: An Historical Study* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society).
Douglas, Mary
1978 "Judgments on James Frazer," *Daedalus* (Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences) 107(4): 151–64.
Driver, S. R.
1892 *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament.* 2d ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons).
Dubnov, Simon
1968 [1934–38] *History of the Jews: From the Roman Empire to the Early Medieval Period.* Vol. 2, translated by M. Spiegel from the Russian 4th, rev. ed. (South Brunswick: Thomas Yoseloff).
Eissfeldt, Otto
1934 *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck]).
1965 *The Old Testament: An Introduction*, translated by P. R. Ackroyd, on the basis of the 3d German ed. of 1964 (New York and Evanston: Harper and Row).
Endelman, Todd
1979 *The Jews of Georgian England 1714–1830: Tradition and Change in a Liberal Society* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society).
Ernst, S.
1933 "The Purim Holiday in the Lives of the Jews in Various Lands" (Hebrew), *Krovetz le-Purim (5693)* 1: 12, 15–16.
Ettinger, Shmuel, ed.
1969 *Heinrich Graetz: Essays, Memoirs, Letters* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute).
1972 "Graetz, Heinrich," *Encyclopaedia Judaica* 7: 845–50.
Fink, G. W.
1846 "Feste der Juden," in *Allgemeiner Enzyklopädie der Wissenschaften und Künste* I:43: 302–18.
Flusser, David
1963 "Haman ha-Rashʿa," *Mahanayyim* 79: 22–27.
Fraser, Robert
1990 *The Making of The Golden Bough: The Origins and Growth of an Argument* (London: Macmillan).

Frazer, James
1900 [1890] *The Golden Bough*. 2d ed., 3 vols. (London: Macmillan).
1913 *The Golden Bough*. Vol. 6, *The Scapegoat*. 3d ed. (London: Macmillan).
Freudenthal, Max
1929 "Die Verfassungskunde einer reichsritterlichen Judenschaft," *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland* 1: 44–68.
Freund, Ismar
1912 *Die Emanzipation der Juden in Preussen*, 2 vols. (Berlin: Poppelauer).
Gaster, Moses
1901a *History of the Ancient Synagogue of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews* (London: privately printed).
1901b Review of Frazer's *Golden Bough* (1900), *Folklore* 12: 226–30.
Gaster, Theodore Herzl
1950 *Purim and Hannukah in Custom and Tradition* (New York: Henry Schuman).
Geiger, Ludwig
1889 "Zur Kritik der neusten jüdischen Geschichtschreibung," *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland* 3: 373–91.
Ginzberg, Louis
1904 "Genizah Studies," *Jewish Quarterly Review*, o. s., 16: 650–67.
1909 *Geonica*, 2 vols. (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America).
Goiten, S. D.
1988 *A Mediterranean Society*. Vol. 5, *The Individual* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press).
Goodman, Philip
1950 "The Purim Association of the City of New York (1862–1902)," *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 40: 135–72.
Goodman, Philip, ed.
1949 *A Purim Anthology* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society).
Graetz, Heinrich
1853 *Geschichte der Juden*. Vol. 4, *Vom Untergang des jüdischen Staates bis zum Abschluss des Talmud* (Berlin: Veit).
1861 *Geschichte der Juden*. Vol. 6, *Von Aufblühen der jüdisch-spanischen Cultur (1027) bis Maimuni's Tod* (Leipzig).
1871 *Geschichte der Juden*. Vol. 6, *Von Aufblühen der jüdisch-spanischen Cultur (1027) bis Maimuni's Tod*. 2d ed. (Leipzig).
1873 *History of the Jews: From the Downfall of the Jewish State to the Conclusion of the Talmud*, translated by J. K. Gutheim. 2d rev. ed. (New York: American Jewish Publication Society).
1891–92 *History of the Jews: From the Earliest Times to the Present Day*, 5 vols., ed. Bella Löwy (London: Nutt).
1892–98 *History of the Jews*, 6 vols. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society).
1894 *Geschichte der Juden*. Vol. 6, *Von Aufblühen der jüdisch-spanischen Cultur (1027) bis Maimuni's Tod*. 3d ed. (Leipzig).
1895 *Divrei Yemei Yisrael*. Vol. 4, translated by S. P. Rabinowitz (Warsaw).
Grant, F. C., and H. H. Rowley, eds.
1963 *A Dictionary of the Bible* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark).
Gregorovius, Ferdinand
1878 "Der Ghetto und die Juden in Rom," *Wanderjahre in Italien*. 5th ed. (Leipzig).
1948 *The Ghetto and the Jews of Rome*, translated by Moses Hadas (New York: Schocken).
Güdemann, Moritz
1888 *Geschichte des Erziehungswesens und der Kultur der abendländischen Juden*, Vol. 3 (Vienna: Alfred Hölder).

1899 *Ha-Torah ve-Hayyim be-Arzot he-Maʿarav bi-Mei ha-Beinayim*, Vol. 3, translated by A. S. Friedberg (Warsaw: Ahiassaf).
Haberman, Abraham
1945 *Sefer Gezerot Ashkenaz ve-Zarfat* (Jerusalem: Tarshish).
Haraszti-Takács, Marianne
1989 "Fifteenth-Century Painted Furniture with Scenes from the Esther Story," *Jewish Art* 15: 14–25.
Horowitz, Elliott
1989 "The Eve of the Circumcision: A Chapter in the History of Jewish Nightlife," *Journal of Social History* 23: 45–69.
Hyamson, A. M.
1951 *The Sephardim of England: A History of the Spanish and Portuguese Jewish Community 1492–1951* (London: Methuen).
Jastrow, Morris
1918 "Purim," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, edited by James Hastings, 10: 506–7 (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark).
Jessop, Augustus, and M. R. James, eds. and trans.
1896 *The Life and Miracles of St. William of Norwich by Thomas of Monmouth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
Johns, C. H. W.
1902 "Purim" (pars. 1–5), in *Encyclopedia Biblica*, edited by T. K. Cheyne and J. S. Black, 3: 3976ff. (London: Adam and Charles Black).
Jordan, W. C.
1989 *The French Monarchy and the Jews: From Philip Augustus to the Last Capetians* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press).
Juster, Jean
1914 *Les Juifs dans l'empire romain, leur condition juridique, économique et sociale*, 2 vols. (Paris: Paul Geuthner).
Kaplan, Joseph
1986 "The Portuguese Community in Amsterdam in the Seventeenth Century" (Hebrew), *Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities* 7(6): 161–81.
Katz, Jacob
1961 *Exclusiveness and Tolerance: Studies in Jewish-Gentile Relations in Medieval and Modern Times* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
1980 *From Prejudice to Destruction: Anti-Semitism, 1700–1933* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press).
1989 *With My Own Eyes* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Keter).
Kessler, Edward
1989 *An English Jew: The Life and Writings of Claude Montefiore* (London: Valentine, Mitchell).
Kinser, Samuel
1986 "Presentation and Representation: Carnival at Nuremberg, 1450–1550," *Representations* 13: 1–41.
Konner, Melvin
1990 *Why the Reckless Survive . . . and Other Secrets of Human Nature* (New York: Penguin).
Kriegel, Maurice
1979 *Les Juifs à la fin du Moyen Age dans l'Europe méditerranée* (Paris: Hachette).
Lagarde, Paul de
1887 *Purim: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Religion, Abhandlungen der königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen*, Vol. 34 (Göttingen, Dieterichsche Verlags).

Lanciani, Rodolfo
1906 *The Golden Days of the Renaissance in Rome* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin).
Langmuir, Gavin
1985 "Historiographic Crucifixion," in *Les Juifs au regard de l'Histoire: Mélanges en l'honneur de Bernhard Blumenkranz*, edited by G. Dahan, 109–27 (Paris: Picard).
Lavoie, Rodrigue
1987 "La Délinquance sexuelle à Manosque: Schema général et singularités juives," *Provence Historique* 37 (fascicule 150, "La Famille juive au Moyen Age"): 571–87.
Levin, B. M.
1932 *Ozar ha-Geonim*. Vol. 5, pt. 1, *Megillah* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University Press).
Lewinski, Yom-Tow
1947 *Haman-Smiting in the Diaspora: Compilation of Purim Folklore* (Hebrew). Yedʿa-ʿAm Series 1 (Tel Aviv: Hebrew Folklore Society).
Lewinski, Yom-Tow, ed.
1955 *Sefer ha-Moʿadim*, Vol. 6 (Tel Aviv: Devir).
Linder, Amnon, ed. and trans.
1987 [1983] *The Jews in Roman Imperial Legislation* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press).
Lipman, V. D.
1972 "Montagu," in *Encyclopaedia Judaica* 12: 264–65.
M'clymont, J. A.
1911 "Purim," in *A Dictionary of the Bible*, edited by J. Hastings, 4: 174–75 (New York: Scribner's).
Malcolmson, R. W.
1973 *Popular Recreations in English Society 1700–1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
Marcus, J. R.
1969 [1938] *The Jew in the Medieval World: A Source Book: 315–1791* (New York: Atheneum).
Marx, Alexander
1922 "Moritz Güdemann" (Necrology), *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 28: 276–81.
[Mears, Abraham]
1738 *The Book of Religion, Ceremonies, and Prayers of the Jews* (London: J. Wilcox).
Meyer, Michael
1988 *Response to Modernity: A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press).
Milano, Attilio
1932–33 "La 'Pragmatica' degli Ebrei Romani del secolo XVII," *Rassegna Mensile di Israel* 7: 176–88.
Mommsen, Theodor, ed.
1905 *Theodosiani Libri XVI cum Constitutionibus Sirmondianis Edidit Adsumpto Apparatu P. Kruegeri Th. Mommsen* (Berlin: Weidmann).
Montefiore, C. G.
1888 "Purim Difficulties," *Jewish Chronicle* (2 March): 8.
1927 "Israel Abrahams and Liberal Judaism," in *Jewish Studies in Memory of Israel Abrahams*, edited by G. A. Kohut, lxii–lxvi (New York: Jewish Institute of Religion).
Montefiore, C. G., and H. Loewe, eds.
1938 *A Rabbinic Anthology* (London: Macmillan).

Moulinas, René
1981 *Les Juifs du Pape en France* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres).
Muchembled, Robert
1985 *Popular Culture and Elite Culture in France 1400–1750*, translated by Lydia Cochrane (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press).
Nietzsche, Friedrich
1967 [1887] *On the Genealogy of Morals*, translated by W. Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Random House).
Parkes, James
1934 *The Conflict of Church and Synagogue: A Study in the Origins of Anti-Semitism* (London: Soncino Press).
Paton, L. B.
1908 *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Book of Esther* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark).
Pfeiffer, R. H.
1941 *Introduction to the Old Testament*. 2d ed. (New York: Harper and Brothers).
Picciotto, James
1956 [1875] *Sketches of Anglo-Jewish History*. Rev. ed., with a prologue by Israel Finestein (London: Soncino Press).
Prinz, Joachim
1970 "A Rabbi under the Hitler Regime," in *Gegenwart in Rückblick*, edited by H. A. Strauss and K. R. Grossman, 231–38 (Heidelberg: Lothar Stiehm Verlag).
Rabello, A. M.
1975 "The First Law of the Emperor Theodosius II," in *Studies in Judaism: Presented to David Kotlar* (Hebrew), edited by A. M. Rabello, 172–92 (Tel Aviv: ʿAm Hassefer).
Rabinowitz, Louis
1952 *Far East Mission* (Johannesburg: Eagle Press).
Régné, Jean
1978 [1910–24] *History of the Jews in Aragon: Regesta and Documents 1213–1327*, edited and annotated by Yom Tov Assis (Jerusalem: Magnes Press).
Roth, Cecil
1933 "The Feast of Purim and the Origins of the Blood Accusation," *Speculum* 8: 520–26.
Said, Edward
1978 *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon).
Samuel, E. R.
1951–52 "Anglo-Jewish Notaries and Scriveners," *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England* 17: 113–59.
Schappes, Morris, ed.
1971 *A Documentary History of the Jews in the United States 1654–1875*. 3d ed. (New York: Schocken).
Schauss, Hayyim
1938 *The Jewish Festivals: From Their Beginnings to Our Own Day* (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations).
Schorr, M.
1903 *Zydzi w Przemyślu do Końca XVII Wieku* (Lvov).
Schorsch, Ismar
1966 "Moritz Güdemann: Rabbi, Historian, and Apologist," *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 11: 53–66.
Schorsch, Ismar, ed. and trans.
1975 Introduction, *Heinrich Graetz: The Structure of Jewish History and Other Essays*, 1–62 (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America).

Schudt, Johann
1714–18 *Jüdische Merkwürdigkeiten* (Frankfurt: S. T. Hocker).
Schwarzfuchs, Simon
1975 *Les Juifs de France* (Paris: A. Michel).
Segal, Lester
1983 "Jacques Basnage de Beauval's *L'Histoire des Juifs*: Christian Historiographical Perception of Jewry and Judaism on the Eve of the Enlightenment," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 54: 303–24.
Segre, Renata, ed.
1990 *The Jews in Piedmont*, Vol. 3 (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities and Tel Aviv University).
Shatzmiller, Joseph
1973 *Recherches sur la communauté juive de Manosque au Moyen Age* (Paris and The Hague: Mouton).
1980 "Desecrating the Cross: A Rare Medieval Accusation" (Hebrew), *Studies in the History of the Jewish People and the Land of Israel* 5: 159–73.
Silverman, G. E.
1972 "Schickard, Wilhelm," in *Encyclopaedia Judaica* 14: 959.
Simonsohn, Shlomo
1977 *History of the Jews in the Duchy of Mantua* (Jerusalem: Kiryat Sefer and Tel Aviv University Press).
Stallybrass, Peter, and Allon White
1986 *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press).
Starr, Joshua
1939 *The Jews in the Byzantine Empire 641–1204* (Athens: Verlag der Byzantinisch-Neugriechisten Jahrbucher).
Stein, J. B., ed.
1988 *Lieber Freund: The Letters of Claude Goldsmid Montefiore to Solomon Schechter* (Lanham: University Press of America).
Stern, Fritz
1965 *The Politics of Cultural Despair: A Study in the Rise of the Germanic Ideology* (New York: Doubleday).
Stern, Selma
1925 *Die Preussische Staat und die Juden*, 2 vols. (Berlin: Veröffentlichungen der Akademie für die Wissenschaft des Judentums).
Sumberg, S. L.
1941 *The Nuremberg Schembert Carnival* (New York: Columbia University Press).
Talmon, Shemaryahu
1963 "Wisdom in the Book of Esther," *Vetus Testamentum* 13: 419–55.
Thornton, T. C. G.
1986 "The Crucifixion of Haman and the Scandal of the Cross," *Journal of Theological Studies* 37: 419–26.
Trachtenberg, Joshua
1943 *The Devil and the Jews: The Medieval Conception of the Jew and Its Relation to Modern Anti-Semitism* (New Haven: Yale University Press).
Wallace, E. S.
1898 *Jerusalem the Holy* (Edinburgh and London).
Weiser, Artur
1961 *Introduction to the Old Testament*, translated by D. M. Barton, on the basis of the 4th German ed. of 1957 (London: Darton, Longman and Todd).
Wind, Edgar
1937 "The Crucifixion of Haman," *Journal of the Warburg Institute* 1: 245–48.
Wischnitzer, Rachel
1949 "The Esther Story in Art," in Goodman 1949: 222–49.

Yahalom, J., and M. Sokoloff, eds.
1994 *Jewish Palestinian Aramaic Poetry* (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities).
Zunz, Leopold
1855 *Die synagogale Poesie des Mittellaters* (Berlin: Verlag Julius Springer).
1907 *The Sufferings of the Jews during the Middle Ages*, translated by A. Löwy, revised and edited by G. A. Kohut (New York: Bloch).