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Pesher, ha-Zonah, and Teshuvah in Solomon's Apocalypse: Text and Context of The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson

Natalie E. Latteri

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***Pesher, ha-Zonah, and Teshuvah in Solomon's Apocalypse:
Text and Context of The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson***

By

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DISSERTATION

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Dedication

For my mother, Suzanna,
my partner, Nathan,
and our children, Jonas and Amalie

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation analyzes the text and context of a mid-twelfth-century Hebrew narrative composed by a Northern European Jew writing pseudonymously as Solomon bar Samson. The so-called *Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson* treats the perceived reasons for and Jewish responses to the Rhineland pogroms of 1096 C.E., which were carried out by burghers, peasants, and crusaders traveling to the Holy Land. The reasons expressed range from divine retribution for Jewish transgression to Christian vengeance for Christ's crucifixion while responses range from voluntary conversion aimed at preserving life to suicidal and homicidal martyrdom enacted in the hopes of securing atonement and redemption. Though it depicts historical events, employs elements of contemporary historical methodology, and scholars have designated it as a chronicle which lauds the victimized Jewish community as exemplars of piety, this dissertation contends that Solomon's narrative neither represents a history nor an homage. A comparison of Jewish literary genres reveals, instead, that Solomon's narrative bears similarities to and most likely was intended to function as an apocalypse. This emerges in Solomon's employment

of *peshar* biblical exegesis, in which apocalypticists commonly conflated periods of persecution in Israel's history; the well-known Jewish trope of Israel as a promiscuous woman, and the related trope of Israel's seduction by a promiscuous woman, a *zonah*; and the doctrine of reform, *teshuvah*. Through these, Solomon critiqued what he perceived to be religious leniency, both among the generation of 1096 C.E. as well as his own contemporary society, in the manner of a Jewish apocalypse. Namely, he suggested that all past moments of potential messianic redemption, including 1096 C.E., had not come to fruition because of over-familiarity with or assimilation to the dominant Christian culture. And, like all apocalypticists, he called for reform as a means of securing messianic redemption and ushering in the new and final era.

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Introduction

At the Council of Clermont in November of 1095 C.E., Pope Urban II (1088-99 C.E.) called upon Western European Christian warriors to cease fighting among themselves and to unite against a common religio-political and ethnic enemy—the Dar al’Islam—in a Holy War that would come to be known as the First Crusade. Tensions had been mounting against Muslims whom Christians commonly, if less than accurately, had recognized as both *Turci*, “Turks,”¹ and *gens Persica*, “a race of Persians,” over the course of the previous century.² Animosity was owing, in no small part, to the Church’s aggressive program of evangelism and religious reform,³ the attending trends in penance and pilgrimage, and the territorial conflict over sacred sites associated with these practices.⁴ Each of these elements reflected and contributed to piqued eschatological anticipation throughout the Levantine and Mediterranean regions, Continental Europe,

¹ Frutolf of Michelsberg, *Chronica*, in *Frutolfi et Ekkehardi Chronica necnon Anonymi Chronica Imperatorum. Frutolfs und Ekkehards Chroniken, und die anonyme Kaiserchronik*, ed. Franz-Josef Schmale and Irene Schmale-Ott (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1972), 106.

² Fulcher of Chartres, *Historia Hierosolymitana*, in *Recueil des historiens des croisades: historiens occidentaux*, vol. 3, ed. A. Beignet (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1844), 321, 323. For an English translation of Fulcher’s *History*, see Edward Peters, ed., *The First Crusade: The Chronicle of Fulcher of Chartres and Other Source Materials*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), 49, 52.

³ For discussions associating medieval religious reform and apocalypticism, see Bernard McGinn, “Apocalypticism and Church Reform, 1100-1500,” in *The Continuum History of Apocalypticism*, ed. Bernard McGinn, John J. Collins, and Stephen J. Stein (New York: Continuum, 2003), 273-95; Michael Frassetto, “Heretics and Jews in the Early Eleventh Century: The Writings of Rodulfus Glaber and Ademar of Chabannes,” in *Christian Attitudes toward the Jews in the Middle Ages: A Casebook*, ed. Michael Frassetto (New York: Routledge, 2007), 43-59; and Brett Edward Whalen, *Dominion of God: Christendom and the Apocalypse in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 9-41.

⁴ For a discussion regarding the popularization of pilgrimage and territorial conflict over relics, see Patrick J. Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages*, 2nd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990). For an edited collection of essays devoted to the relationship between pilgrimage and crusade, see Barbara N. Sargent-Baur, *Journeys toward God: Pilgrimage and Crusade* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1992).

and even the far reaches of the British Isles by the time of Urban's battle cry.⁵ For it was in these regions where ideas had developed and spread that the existing corrupt world order would be quashed once and for all through epic warfare between the forces of good and evil before the Christian Messiah, Jesus, would usher in a new and everlasting era of the saints.

In Northern Europe, the combination of the above ideologies imparted a new sense of identity, predicated on self-definition through a fluid opposition to religious and ethnic alterity. Heightened persecution of Northern European Christian pilgrims traveling to Jesus's tomb at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and various other cherished sites connected to Christ and the saints in the Levant only reinforced the perception that non-Christians and non-Western Europeans posed a threat that needed to be snuffed out so that Christians might worship freely. Notable ecclesiastical and political leaders of Christendom further inflamed xenophobia by insisting that attacks had been perpetrated not only by a conglomeration of Muslims of Turkish or Persian descent but also by homegrown heretics and Jews. There was little evidence to substantiate these claims but, as ever, difference was enough to incite fear and loathing. Because each of these groups either practiced another religion, wore what appeared to be exotic costumes while dining on unknown dishes, or had darker skin and features, Northern European Christians were sure that they were evil. In time, ecclesiastics would also come to believe—and to

⁵ For discussions of eschatological anticipations in the various regions noted above, see Bernard McGinn, *Visions of the End: Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages*, 2nd ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998); and Richard Landes, Andrew Gow, and David C. Van Meter, eds., *The Apocalyptic Year 1000: Religious Expectation and Social Change, 950-1050* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). For a discussion of less explored, regional Levantine eschatology, see Kevork Bardakjan and Sergio La Porta, eds., *The Armenian Apocalyptic Tradition* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

propagate to the laity—that this unholy collective had a two-part mission: to undermine and destroy Christ, his Church, and the Christian way of life so that they could establish their own dominance under an oppositional leader—an Antichrist.⁶

This transference of blame would have dire consequences for the Jews of Jerusalem when crusaders conquered the city in 1099 C.E. Indeed, all residents of Jerusalem suffered when crusaders were finally able to storm the city's walls and began killing Muslims, Jews, and even Eastern Christians. For the crusaders did not pause to collect or assess statements of faith, nor did they show any regard for women, children, the elderly, or the ill, but slaughtered indiscriminately in a massacre that produced, according to Latin sources, ankle-, calf-, or knee-high rivulets of blood that flowed throughout the city and baptized the Temple Mount.⁷ Among the dead, it is estimated that crusaders incinerated the majority of the Jewish population by burning down the city's main synagogue where they had congregated, perhaps in the hope that they might be spared the same fate as neighbors they had fought alongside or perhaps in preparation for martyrdom after realizing hope for temporal salvation was in vain.⁸ There had been some precedent for anti-Jewish violence. Centuries earlier, Christian forces under the command

⁶ See Robert Chazan, "1007-1012: Initial Crisis for Northern European Jewry," *Proceedings of the Academy for Jewish Research*, 38/39 (1970-71): 108-13; Johannes Fried, "Awaiting the End of Time around the Turn of the Year 1000," in Landes, Gow, and Van Meter, *The Apocalyptic Year 1000*, 60; Frassetto, "Heretics and Jews," in Frassetto, *Christian Attitudes toward the Jews*, 49-51; Daniel F. Callahan, "Al-Hākim, Charlemagne, and the Destruction of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem in the Writings of Ademar of Chabannes," in *The Legend of Charlemagne in the Middle Ages: Power, Faith, and Crusade*, ed. Matthew Gabriele and Jace Stuckey (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 45; Whalen, *Dominion of God*, 48; and Jay Rubenstein, *Armies of Heaven: The First Crusade and the Quest for Apocalypse* (New York: Basic Books, 2011), 285.

⁷ Benjamin Z. Kedar, "The Jerusalem Massacre of 1099 in the Western Historiography of the Crusades," *Crusades* 3 (2004): 15-75, provides the most thorough discussion of medieval Latin, early modern, and modern accounts of the 1099 C.E. siege of Jerusalem.

⁸ Joshua Prawer, *The History of the Jews in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 9-14, 21-5.

of the Roman emperor Heraclius (610-41 C.E.) had also punished the Jews of Jerusalem through murder, expulsion, and forced conversion in the aftermath of his reconquest of the city in 629 C.E. because he believed they had been working against Christ's Church and the Roman Empire and had acted instead as "friends of the Persians."⁹

Seemingly less explicable was the 1096 C.E. extortion of and aggression directed towards Northern European Jews, also known as Ashkenazim, by itinerant preachers and the marauding peasants who hung on their words and followed along in the ragtag, so-called, People's Crusade.¹⁰ Confounding too was that knights and nobles who made up the vanguard of the First Crusade proper would carry out a calculated and far more devastating attack against European Jews en route to Levantine enemies.¹¹ Or that eventually even established ecclesiastics charged with protecting the Ashkenazim, and their Christian neighbors who knew them and who had reaped rewards with them in times of plenty and endured hardships together in times of plight, would join the fray against

⁹ Stefan Leder, "The Attitude of the Population, Especially the Jews, toward the Arab-Islamic Conquest of Bilād al-Shām and the Question of Their Role Therein," *Die Welt des Orients* 18 (1987): 65.

¹⁰ See, for example, the extortion allegedly carried out by Peter the Hermit and his followers in Trier, in Eva Haverkamp, ed., *Salomo bar Simson (Chronik I, Hs. E)*, in *Hebräische Berichte über die Judenverfolgungen während des ersten Kreuzzugs*, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Hebräische Texte aus dem mittelalterlichen Deutschland 1 (Hanover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 2005), 471 (hereafter, Haverkamp); for the most recent English translation, see Lena Roos, ed., *The Chronicle of Solomon ben R. Samson*, in 'God Wants It!' *The Ideology of Martyrdom in the Hebrew Crusade Chronicles and Its Jewish and Christian Background*, Medieval Church Studies 6 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), Appendix, 113 (hereafter, Roos). In addition to Solomon's narrative, Haverkamp's text provides a new critical edition based on extant Hebrew manuscripts as well as a German translation of each of the three surviving Hebrew narratives of the First Crusade. Roos's text provides an English translation of each narrative based on her own examination of the surviving Hebrew manuscripts. I have employed Roos's translation unless otherwise noted. Earlier translations of the Hebrew narratives will be discussed further in Chapter Two.

¹¹ David Malkiel has written at length on crusader vengeance against Jews and how this sometimes informed a policy whose primary aim was Jewish murder: "Destruction or Conversion, Intention and Reaction, Crusaders and Jews, in 1096," *Jewish History* 15 (2001): 257-80; idem, "Vestiges of Conflict in the Hebrew Crusade Chronicles," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 52, no. 2 (2001): 323-40. See also Robert Chazan, "'Let Not a Remnant or a Residue Escape': Millenarian Enthusiasm in the First Crusade," *Speculum* 84 (2009): 289-313.

them.¹² Perhaps even more surprising to Jews as much as Christians for decades—in fact, centuries—to come was that a faction among the Ashkenazim would respond to their persecutors by committing suicide and/or homicide in a manner some modern commentators have interpreted as contrary to *Halakhah*, or Jewish law, regarding the sanctity of human life, but which medieval and modern sympathizers present as martyrdom performed as acts of all-consuming love in *kiddush ha-Shem*, “sanctification of the Name [of God].”¹³ Or that the same sympathetic authors sometimes cast the Ashkenazim who had perished in the pogroms as crusader-like warriors who were willing to fight and die in Holy War, despite the fact that the majority did not engage in combat with Christian foes.¹⁴

¹² For an account of Christian townspeople killing their Jewish neighbors in Trier see, for example, *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 471; Roos, A113. For events in Speyer, see *Mainzer Anonymus (Chronik III. Hs. D)*, in Haverkamp, 325; *The Anonymous Chronicle of Mainz*, in Roos, A17-18. Hereafter I refer to this text as *The Mainz Anonymous*.

¹³ Accounts of Jewish martyrological responses are ubiquitous throughout Hebrew and Latin narratives describing the Rhineland pogroms of 1096 C.E., many of which will be discussed further below. For a discussion of the illegality of such responses, and how they may have caught medieval Ashkenazim and later commentators off guard, see Haym Soloveitchik, “Religious Law and Change: The Medieval Ashkenazic Example,” *Association for Jewish Studies Review* 12 (1987): 209-10, who argues that the 1096 C.E. martyrs transgressed *Halakhah* and deserved ignominy rather than praise. See also Soloveitchik’s two-part article: “Halakhah, Hermeneutics, and Martyrdom in Medieval Ashkenaz (Part I of II),” *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 94, no. 1 (2004): 77-108; and “Halakhah, Hermeneutics, and Martyrdom in Medieval Ashkenaz (Part II of II),” *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 94, no. 2 (2004): 278-99. For a somewhat more moderate position, see Jeremy Cohen, *Sanctifying the Name of God: Jewish Martyrs and Jewish Memories of the First Crusade* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 6, 21-2.

¹⁴ For notable exceptions—examples of Jewish martyrs behaving as warriors—see the martyrological vignette of Simcha the Priest in *The Chronicle of Eliezer bar Nathan* and in *The Mainz Anonymous*, and that of the Jewish community of Sla in *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson: Mainzer Anonymus (Chronik III, Hs. D)*, in Haverkamp, 267, 287; *The Anonymous Chronicle of Mainz, The Chronicle of Eliezer ben R. Nathan*, in Roos, A21-2, *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 483; Roos, 119. Shmuel Shepkaru has argued that the twelfth-century C.E. Jewish authors of accounts of the Rhineland pogroms were especially influenced by the idea of crusaders as holy martyrs and so styled Jewish martyrs and their rewards after Christian examples. See Shmuel Shepkaru, “From after Death to Afterlife: Martyrdom and Its Recompense,” *Association for Jewish Studies Review* 24, no. 1 (1999): 1-44; idem, “To Die for God: Martyrs’ Heaven in Hebrew and Latin Crusade Narratives,” *Speculum* 77, no. 2 (2002): 311-41; idem, *Jewish Martyrs in the Pagan and Christian Worlds* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 191-98; idem, “Christian Resurrection and Jewish Immortality during the First Crusade,” *Speculum* 89, no. 1 (2014): 1-34.

The acts of suicide and homicide among the Ashkenazim of 1096 C.E., as well as the contemporary and slightly later Hebrew sources treating them, reflect elements of eschatological anticipation and religious reform among members of the Jewish community that were related to those fermenting in eleventh- and twelfth-century C.E. Christian society.¹⁵ For at least a segment of the Ashkenazim had also felt that their religious identity as God's "Chosen People" set them at odds with all others in a simplistic duality of good versus evil that was finally playing out in what members of the Jewish community perceived as the eschatological conflict of total war.¹⁶ The similar ideological manifestations found among Jews and Christians in Northern Europe help to illustrate a simultaneously porous and repressive milieu,¹⁷ teeming with the type of inter-

¹⁵ See A. H. Silver, *A History of Messianic Speculation in Israel* (New York: Macmillan, 1927), 59-60; Praver, *The History of the Jews in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*, 7-15; Israel Yuval, "Vengeance and Damnation, Blood and Defamation. From the Act of Martyrdom to the Blood Libel Accusation" [Hebrew], *Zion* 58 (1993): 33-90; idem, *Two Nations in Your Womb: Perceptions of Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, trans. Barbara Harshav and Jonathan Chipman (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), especially 91-134; Roos, 'God Wants It!', 215-20; Chazan, "'Let not a Remnant,'" 292, 310-13.

¹⁶ See, for example, the rhetorical flourishes found in Solomon bar Samson's and Eliezer bar Nathan's accounts of the Ashkenazim of 1096 C.E. as "chosen" by God compared to Solomon's depiction of the Pope as Satan and Christians as his followers. The latter will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter One. *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 256, 299; *Elieser bar Nathan (Chronik II)*, in Haverkamp, 256, 299; Roos, A11-12, A30. For an excellent discussion regarding the tendency of Jewish apocalypticists to perpetuate this binary from antiquity through the modern era, see Joel Marcus, "Modern and Ancient Jewish Apocalypticism," *The Journal of Religion* 76, no. 1 (1996): 1-27.

¹⁷ Over the past two decades, scholars have increasingly begun to emphasize a shared inter-confessional European milieu as opposed to the older, segregationist model. Examples of this concept in relation to the events of 1096 C.E. and the Hebrew accounts of them include the work of Shmuel Shepkaru and Israel Yuval, noted above, as well as in the scholarship of Robert Chazan, "The Deeds of the Jewish Community of Cologne," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 35 (1984): 184-95; idem, "The Facticity of Medieval Narrative: A Case Study of the Hebrew First Crusade Narratives," *Association for Jewish Studies Review* 16, nos. 1/2 (1991): 31-56; idem, *European Jewry and the First Crusade* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), especially 43-5 and 308-09 n. 21; idem, *In the Year 1096: The First Crusade and the Jews* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1996), 171-73; idem, "The Mainz Anonymous: Historiographic Perspectives," in *Jewish History and Jewish Memory: Essays in Honor of Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi*, ed. Elisheva Carlebach, John M. Ephron, and David N. Meyers (Hanover, NH: Brandeis University Press, 1998), 54-69; idem, *God, Humanity, and History: The Hebrew First Crusade Narratives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 7, 112-39; Susan L. Einbinder, "Jewish Women Martyrs: Changing Models of Representation," *Exemplaria* 12 (2000): 105-27; Cohen, *Sanctifying the Name of God*; and Roos, 'God Wants It!' The concept of a shared Jewish-Christian culture will be discussed in greater detail below, especially in Chapter One.

confessional contact and conflict foundational to the compositional context of Jewish apocalyptic literature,¹⁸ including the so-called *Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*.¹⁹

This dissertation analyzes the historical and literary context of a mid-twelfth-century C.E. Hebrew narrative that would come to be known as *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*. It aims to elucidate the sometimes cryptic portrayal of the events of 1096 C.E. and to suggest that a pseudonymous author intended his text to function as an interpretation rather than an accounting of these events.²⁰ Solomon's text is the longest of the three extant narratives of its kind and provides the most in-depth treatment of the perceived reasons for and Jewish responses to the Rhineland pogroms of 1096 C.E.²¹ The motivations for anti-Jewish persecution expressed by Solomon are manifold. They include: revenge for Christ's crucifixion that many Christians believed first-century C.E. Jews had clamored for;²² desire to usher in a messianic era that Christians thought

¹⁸ For a discussion of the impact of cross-cultural encounters on late antique and early medieval apocalyptic, see John C. Reeves, introduction to *Trajectories in Near Eastern Apocalyptic: A Postrabbinic Jewish Apocalypse Reader* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), 1-25, especially 17-19.

¹⁹ *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson* has many variant titles. These include, among others: *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Simson*, *The Chronicle of Shlomo bar Shimshon*, *The Chronicle of Solomon ben R. Simson*, as well as *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*. The spelling of the name of the author in the title is inconsistent in scholarship because the original composition was written in Hebrew characters, without vowel pointing. The names Solomon bar Simson, Shlomo bar Shimshon, and Solomon ben R. Simson are more or less interchangeable in the Hebrew. I employ Solomon bar Samson because Solomon and Samson are how the Hebrew spellings of these names are typically translated into English.

²⁰ For scholarly consensus regarding the mid-twelfth-century C.E. dating, see Roos, 'God Wants It!', 11-16. For the lack of a historical record for Solomon bar Samson, see Ivan G. Marcus, "The Representations of Reality in the Narratives of 1096," *Jewish History* 13, no. 2 (1999): 38; Roos, 'God Wants It!', 11. Chapter One further develops the idea that the lack of a historical record for Solomon bar Samson may suggest pseudonymity.

²¹ See Abraham David's review of the manuscripts containing the Hebrew narratives of the First Crusade, "Historical Records of the Persecutions during the First Crusade in Hebrew Printed Works and Hebrew Manuscripts," [Hebrew] in *Facing the Cross: The Persecutions of 1096 in History and Historiography*, ed. Yom Tov Assis et al. (Jerusalem: Magnes, 2000), 193-205.

²² See, for example, *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 253, 295-97; Roos, A8, A30.

attainable through the mass conversion or annihilation of the Jewish populace;²³ local socio-economic anxiety Christians directed towards their Jewish neighbors;²⁴ and the need to secure capital to cover travel expenses to Jerusalem that Christians surmised was accessible through the extortion of Jews.²⁵ Solomon also included one motivational factor that had little to do with Christians *per se*, and which most definitely did not consider Christians as autonomous beings who may have sought to settle a score, or who harbored hope for redemption, or who required sustenance and protection from the elements. Rather, this last motivational factor cast Christians as mere implements of divine retribution—they were nothing but God’s scourge, sent to punish Jews for their transgressions.²⁶

Solomon’s presentation of Jewish responses to their Christian aggressors are equally manifold. They include: attempts by the Ashkenazim to secure safety through begging and usually bribing their Christian neighbors, nobles, and ecclesiastics to hide and protect them;²⁷ undergoing physically forced or voluntary, albeit coerced,²⁸ conversion aimed at preserving either their own life, or that of friends and family;²⁹ and

²³ See, for example, *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 301; Roos, A32.

²⁴ See, for example, *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 471; Roos, A113.

²⁵ See, for example, *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 471, 295-97; Roos, A30, A113.

²⁶ See, for example, *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 315, 481; Roos, A38, A40, A118.

²⁷ See, for example, *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 269, 293; Roos, A16, A28.

²⁸ Soloveitchik, “Halakhah, Hermeneutics, and Martyrdom in Medieval Ashkenaz,” 80, explains how conversion may be both voluntary and coerced by drawing a distinction between absolute and relative coercion: “‘Absolute coercion’ means someone throws me down in front of an idol; ‘relative coercion’ means I choose to bow down to the idol because I fear otherwise being murdered. In the former, the individual’s body is the object of another’s action; in the latter, the person’s will is the object of coercion, for in relative coercion the individual must freely choose to actively abjure his religion to avoid death.” Both forms of coercion are illustrated in Solomon’s account.

²⁹ See, for example, *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 275-77, 379; Roos, A25, A69.

suicidal and homicidal martyrdom enacted in the hopes of securing atonement for past, present, and future transgressions, that some Ashkenazim believed would incite God to avenge and ultimately redeem His people.³⁰

Because *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson* depicts historical events, employs elements of contemporary historical methodology, and emphasizes Jewish martyrological responses while minimizing references to conversion, scholars have traditionally designated it as a fact-based account³¹ intended to positively commemorate members of the victimized Jewish community as exemplars of piety.³² In contrast to traditional interpretations, this dissertation contends that Solomon's narrative represents neither a history nor an homage but a Jewish apocalypse. Derived from the Greek word for "revelation," the literary genre known as apocalypse, or apocalyptic, refers to writings that reveal esoteric knowledge regarding mysteries of the natural world, the cosmos, angels and demons, heaven and hell, and more.³³ Yet, perhaps the most commonly recognized sub-genre of apocalyptic literature is that of historical apocalypses, such as the book of Daniel, found in the Hebrew Bible, and the Apocalypse of St. John, found in the Christian New Testament. These texts, and the other historical apocalypses they are representative of, have been included in this category because a number of the

³⁰ See, for example, *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 399, 461, 467-69; Roos, A80-1, A107, A111-12.

³¹ Historiographical interpretations of Solomon's narrative are discussed at length below, especially in Chapter Two.

³² A fuller discussion of interpretations of the Ashkenazim of 1096 C.E. as exceedingly pious is found below, especially in Chapter Four.

³³ See Natalie E. Latteri, "Jewish Apocalypticism: An Historiography," in *A Companion to the Apocalypse*, ed. Michael A. Ryan (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 77-8. For the best representation of the variety of sub-genres in Jewish apocalyptic literature, see Martha Himmelfarb, *The Apocalypse: A Brief History* (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010).

“revelations” they contain incorporate distant and recently past events which impacted their authors’ contemporary reality rather than prophecy of the future. Indeed, many historical apocalypses are believed to include references to specific scenarios which, and personae who, were instrumental in bringing about a violent eschaton, or “end,” of an era of Jewish vitality.³⁴ They also provide suggestions for how to return to, or reestablish, a lost era of vitality through religious reform and, in this regard, they share much in the way of function with prophetic literature.³⁵

The widespread, interrelated nature of the pogroms of 1096 C.E. and the notoriety of the martyrological responses to them, in some sense, marked an end of an era in which religious toleration—if not tolerance—had been expected and the beginning of a period in which open hostility and religious persecution against the Jewish minority became

³⁴ A. K. Grayson and W. G. Lambert, “Akkadian Prophecies,” *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 18 (1964): 7-30, have identified *ex eventu* prophecy, or alleged “prophecy,” which occurred after the event it describes, as a characteristic of historical apocalypses. This feature will be discussed further in Chapter Two. See also Reeves, *Trajectories*, 3-4.

³⁵ Paul D. Hanson, *The Dawn of the Apocalyptic: The Historical and Sociological Roots of Jewish Apocalyptic Eschatology*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 22-7, has suggested that the element of reform present in the prophetic literature of the Hebrew Bible is absent from the apocalyptic, which he, and many others, perceive as deterministic. I have disagreed with Hanson previously and continue to do so now: see Latteri, “Jewish Apocalypticism,” 76-7. A fuller discussion of both the prophetic and apocalyptic genres is found below, in Chapter Two.

increasingly banal.³⁶ It was neither the first nor the last end of its kind. Jewish history includes several epochs flanked by transitional periods that often included anti-Jewish measures and widespread persecution carried out by a dominant culture which sought to impose hegemony through assimilative legislation, forced conversion, expulsion, or annihilation of the Jewish minority. In every age, some Jews responded by conceding, adopting predominant mores, and assimilating. Others met such impositions by passively accepting martyrdom or, far less commonly, by actively pursuing martyrdom through

³⁶ There has been much debate regarding whether or not the pogroms of 1096 C.E. amounted to a “watershed” moment in Jewish-Christian relations. Recently, scholars have shown that interpretations in this vein were most prominent among German-Jewish scholars of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries C.E. and reflect attempts to understand the onslaught of worsening Jewish-Christian relationships in Europe. After the Holocaust, German-Jewish and Israeli scholars, in particular, continued to emphasize *la longue durée* of Jewish victimization beginning with the Rhineland pogroms of 1096 C.E. See, for example, Nils Roemer, “Turning Defeat into Victory: ‘*Wissenschaft des Judentums*’ and the Martyrs of 1096,” *Jewish History* 13, no. 2 (1999): 65-80; and Ivan G. Marcus, “Israeli Medieval Jewish Historiography: From Nationalist Positivism to New Cultural and Social Histories,” *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 17 (2010): 250-55, especially. Challenges to this dominant position were initially posed by Salo Baron in the mid-twentieth century C.E. and thereafter became a more or less consistent feature of British and American historiography of Jewish-Christian relations in Europe during the Middle Ages, which emphasized an integrated society and mutually beneficial business dealings among Jews and Christians both before and after 1096 C.E. See Michael Brenner, *Prophets of the Past: Interpreters of Jewish History*, trans. Steven Rendall (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 121-55. Two of the most vocal American scholars to maintain that the events did not amount to a watershed moment because of the affected communities’ quick socio-economic rebound are Chazan, *European Jewry and the First Crusade*, 8, 148; and Jonathan Elukin, *Living Together, Living Apart: Rethinking Jewish-Christian Relations in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 76-84. While inter-confessional relations were renewed or forged in the aftermath of the First Crusade, and will be discussed further in Chapter One, scholars such as Eva Haverkamp, “What Did the Christians Know? Latin Reports on the Persecution of Jews in 1096,” *Crusades* 7 (2008): 59, show that the pogroms of 1096 C.E. did mark a shifting point in terms of the murderous form of anti-Jewish persecution that would not only be repeated, but was noted as novel by medieval chroniclers. Others, such as Ivan G. Marcus, “From Politics to Martyrdom: Shifting Paradigms in the Hebrew Narratives of the 1096 Crusade Riots,” *Prooftexts* 2, no. 1 (1982): 40-52; and Simḥa Goldin, “The Socialisation for *Kiddush ha-Shem* among Medieval Jews,” *Journal of Medieval History* 23, no. 2 (1997): 117-38, have also illustrated a shift in how Jews responded to Christians in times of persecution following 1096 C.E.

murder and suicide.³⁷

In the Jewish apocalyptic tradition, as in Solomon's narrative, authors attempted to understand and give meaning to why eras of relative prosperity, stability, and religious toleration had subsided by imposing similarities beyond the shared characteristic of decline. Most often apocalyptic literature reflects the overarching doctrine of theodicy found throughout Hebrew Scripture in which periods of ascendancy and vitality were presented as God's affirmation of human conduct and periods of persecution and devastation were recognized as divine retribution for sinfulness.³⁸ In addition to these shared elements, when authors depicted the events leading up to each eschaton, they emphasized or constructed similar narratives and characters to create something of an apocalyptic language or system.³⁹ For instance, historical apocalypses tend to be set in a context of perceived religious laxity and rampant immorality. The loss of propriety is followed by a period of severe persecution for those who resist the corrupt rule of the day and attempt to remain righteous. Battle lines are inevitably drawn between zealots and assimilationists as much as between adherents of different religions, Holy War erupts,

³⁷ See Avraham Grossman, "The Roots of *Kiddush ha-Shem* in Early Ashkenaz" [Hebrew], in *The Sanctification of Life and Self-Sacrifice. A Collection of Articles in Memory of Aamir Yequtiel* [Hebrew], ed. I. Gafni and A. Ravitzky (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar, 1992), 99-131; David Goodblatt, "Suicide in the Sanctuary: Traditions on Priestly Martyrdom," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 46 (1995): 10-29; Daniel Boyarin, *Dying for God: Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999); Cohen, *Sanctifying the Name of God*, 16-22; and Roos, 'God Wants It!', 87-111. Shepkaru's *Jewish Martyrs in the Pagan and Christian Worlds*, cited above, is the most comprehensive study of both passive and active martyrdom in Jewish tradition and how it relates to, and reflects, elements of a multicultural milieu. Specific examples of passive and active martyrdom will be discussed further below, especially in Chapter Four.

³⁸ See N. R. M. de Lange, "Jewish Attitudes to the Roman Empire," in *Imperialism in the Ancient World*, ed. P. D. A. Grannny and C. R. Whittaker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 258, 260, 264-65, 273, 280; Marcus, "Modern and Ancient Jewish Apocalypticism," 4, 8, 14-15.

³⁹ Reeves, *Trajectories*, 17-24.

and, in the end, the faithful remnant are victoriously redeemed.⁴⁰

In antique and medieval Jewish communities that produced apocalyptic literature, the ideological justification and practical application of assimilation were owing to a variety of factors, but they tended to be undergirded by recognition that a relaxation of religious law was pragmatic. At the very least, assimilation provided greater possibility for the establishment and maintenance of subsistence living either as a subjugated population in Israel or as a minority population in the Diaspora. One can only assume that apocalypticists understood this appeal. Nevertheless, they cast such temporal concerns hyperbolically as snares of temptation for exorbitant wealth, unbridled power, and debauchery that could potentially lead the faithful astray in the cosmic struggle of good versus evil. To drive the point home even further, apocalypticists often incorporated recurring personae and locales to reflect these vices of the flesh, including: an Antichrist, or anti-Messiah, figure who epitomized the antithesis of Israelite religion articulated in Mosaic Law by promoting a deviant doctrine of idolatry and leading followers into perpetual bondage and suffering rather than redemption; a feminine object of lustful desire who lured the faithful into unwittingly accepting Antichrist's rule and taking part in idolatrous activities; and an all-encompassing evil empire in which these two had free rein to act against Israel.⁴¹

Apocalypticists also presented personae and locales which positively reflect

⁴⁰ Marcus, "Modern and Ancient Jewish Apocalypticism," 1-27, illustrates the repetitiveness of this motif in ancient through modern Jewish apocalyptic writing.

⁴¹ Apocalypses including some or all of these personae as well as the concept of an evil empire include Daniel, the Apocalypse of St. John, and the *Sefer Zerubbabel*; they will be discussed in greater detail in each of the chapters below. Many other apocalypses include one or more of these personae.

resistance to assimilation and idyllic redemption, including references to saintly *hasidim*, “pious ones,” or *kedushim*, “holy ones,” or *bnei ha-or*, “the sons of light,”⁴² and a Messiah—or sometimes multiple messiahs⁴³—who would come to rescue the faithful and either return them to *gan Eden*, “the Garden of Eden” before the Fall, or lead them to a heavenly paradise in *ha-olam ha-ba*, “the World to Come,” or reestablish a theocracy in a reconstituted *eretz ha-tzvi*, “the beautiful land,” also known as *eretz Israel*, “the land of Israel.”⁴⁴ The *hasidim* are characterized by their adherence to religious regulation—their righteousness—even under duress, or by proving it with their deaths when confronted with the option of apostasy or martyrdom.

The valorized martyrological ideology embodied by the *hasidim* was made more appealing by indicating that those who were willing to kill or be killed for their religious beliefs held a special status among the redeemed of Israel. For instance, the patriarch Abraham who, according to the book of Genesis, was willing to sacrifice his son Isaac to prove his obedience to God, was not only rewarded immediately with personal redemption when his son was saved by an angel of the Lord, but was also promised redemption for all future generations of Israelites.⁴⁵ In the antique *Apocalypse of Abraham*, the patriarch’s boon was enhanced: he was accorded the status of a prophet and a priest and was considered equal to the angels. Not only was he granted a vision of the

⁴² See Lawrence H. Schiffman, “Purity and Perfection: Exclusion from the Council of the Community in the *Serekh ha-‘Edah*,” in *Biblical Archaeology Today: Proceedings of the International Congress on Biblical Archaeology, Jerusalem, April 1984*, ed. Janet Amitai (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1985), 373-89.

⁴³ Latteri, “Jewish Apocalypticism,” 70.

⁴⁴ Shepkaru, “To Die for God,” 323-25.

⁴⁵ Gn. 22:12-18. The redemptive value of Abraham and Isaac’s sacrifice is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Four.

struggle between the forces of good and evil culminating in messianic redemption, he was further honored by his ability—like that of Psalmist David—to minister to God with his song.⁴⁶ Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, who, according to the book of Daniel, were willing to brave the lion’s den and the fiery furnace rather than commit idolatry by worshipping their foreign ruler as a god, were rewarded with personal redemption as well as visionary experience and the ability to interpret dreams, in the case of Daniel, and political power in the case of all of the above.⁴⁷ And the unnamed martyrs in the Apocalypse of St. John who were slain for their adherence to “the word of God and the testimony they had given” as well as for their refusal to commit idolatry by worshipping “the beast or its image”—an Antichrist persona—or to mark their bodies to identify themselves as the beast’s followers, were rewarded with crowns, gleaming robes, and the assurance that they would be the conquerors soon enough.⁴⁸

Apocalyptic literature often also mentions or alludes to non-canonical and post-biblical martyrs who might epitomize the *hasidim* during various periods of eschaton who, like the patriarchs Abraham and Isaac, the captive Israelites in the book of Daniel, and John’s martyrs, would also inform Solomon’s presentation of the martyrs of 1096

⁴⁶ Himmelfarb, *The Apocalypse*, 79.

⁴⁷ See Dn. chaps. 6 and 3. Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah are discussed in greater detail in Chapter Two.

⁴⁸ Apoc. 2:10, 2:26, 3:4-5, 6:9, 20:4. These martyrological accouterments are discussed in greater detail in Chapter One.

C.E.⁴⁹ *The Apocalypse of Baruch* and the Babylonian Talmud, for example, both depict priests who leapt to their deaths inside the First Temple as it burned (587/6 B.C.E.) to atone for their inadequate stewardship of God's sanctuary.⁵⁰ The second-century B.C.E. apocryphal book of II Maccabees and the Babylonian Talmud also present the tale of an unnamed mother who witnessed the cruel torture and execution of her seven sons for their refusal to break with religious dietary restrictions and eat pork at the command of the Seleucid emperor Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-164 B.C.E.) before committing martyrological suicide herself by plummeting from a rooftop.⁵¹ While explicit mention of transgression is absent, two of the sons affirm that they had failed to fulfill religious regulations when they declared to their captors, "Do not deceive yourself in vain. For we are suffering these things on our own account, because of our sins against our God" (II Mc. 7:18), and "We are suffering because of our own sins. And if our living Lord is angry for a little while, to rebuke and discipline us, He will again be reconciled with His own servants" (II Mc. 7:32-3).

Rebel warrior martyrs also figure as types within the apocalyptic system, such as

⁴⁹ Marcus, "From Politics to Martyrdom," 40-52; idem, "Representations of Reality," 37-48; Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1982), 37-9; Alan Mintz, *Hurban: Responses to Catastrophe in Hebrew Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 90-1; David G. Roskies, ed., *The Literature of Destruction: Jewish Responses to Catastrophe* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1988), 71-3; Shoshanna Gershenzon and Jane Litman, "The Bloody 'Hands of Compassionate Women': Portrayals of Heroic Women in the Hebrew Crusade Chronicles," *Studies in Jewish Civilization* 6 (1995): 73-91; Shepkaru, "From after Death to Afterlife," 1-44; idem, "To Die for God," 311-41; idem, *Jewish Martyrs*, 191-98; idem, "Christian Resurrection and Jewish Immortality," 1-34; Boyarin, *Dying for God*, 105-6; Cohen, *Sanctifying the Name of God*, 16-22, 113-29, 144-54; and Roos, 'God Wants It!', 87-111. Solomon's use of martyrological models will be discussed in greater detail throughout the remainder of the text.

⁵⁰ Goodblatt, "Suicide in the Sanctuary," 15-18.

⁵¹ Mention of the Maccabean Mother's suicide is not included in the apocryphal II Maccabees 7, which only indicates that "the mother died, after her sons" (II Mc. 7:41). Rather, this additional detail is found in the talmudic discussion of the mother and her sons in the Babylonian Talmud and would be embellished even further in subsequent rabbinic literature: see Shepkaru, *Jewish Martyrs*, 70-3.

the radical sect of *sicarii* active during the First Jewish War (66-73 C.E.) who the antique historians Josephus (37-100 C.E.) and Cassius Dio (155-235 C.E.) wrote of. The *sicarii* refused to abide the Roman orthopraxy of recognizing the divinity of the emperor and so fought an impossible battle against imperial forces before either impaling or burning themselves and their coreligionists when they saw that their conquest was inevitable.⁵² There were rabbi martyrs, too. Rabbi Akiba (c. 50-132 C.E.) and his rabbinic companions, known collectively to posterity as the Ten Martyrs, willingly accepted death and were executed in an exceptionally painful manner in which their flesh was raked from their bodies with hot iron combs before they were set ablaze by their captors rather than relinquish the study or practice of Torah. So intent were these rabbis on avoiding transgression and keeping the positive commandments to prove their unequivocal ardor for God that they perished during the time for prayer while reciting what would become the standard declaration of Jewish faith for all subsequent martyrs⁵³—the *Shema*—and affirming the singularity of their God: *Shema yisrael Adonai eloheinu Adonai echad*, “Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord is one.”⁵⁴ And there were the legendary four hundred Israelite girls and boys who drowned themselves rather than be sold into slavery, forced to convert, and have their bodies used for immoral sex acts in Roman bordellos.⁵⁵

⁵² Goodblatt, “Suicide in the Sanctuary,” 12-14, 20-3.

⁵³ Boyarin, *Dying for God*, 106.

⁵⁴ Babylonian Talmud, tractate *Berakoth* 61b, in *Seder Zera'im*, ed. I. Epstein (London: Soncino Press, 1935), 384-87.

⁵⁵ Babylonian Talmud, tractate *Gittin* 57b, in vol. 4 of *Seder Nashim*, ed. I. Epstein (London: Soncino Press, 1935), 266-67.

This martyrological cohort offered a spectrum of righteousness for men, women, and children from various walks of life who sought an example of pious living to emulate. At one extreme, it includes those who appear to have never faltered in their faith and whose martyrdom was the crowning reflection of their religious zeal. At the other, it includes those repentant martyrs who recognized their own culpability in either personal or communal devastation as divine retribution and so willingly accepted or actively sought martyrdom based on the belief that their deaths might somehow serve as atonement for their transgressions, the transgressions of Israelites who had come before, or those who would follow, and so, somehow aid in collective redemption. Though this latter category of martyrs affirms the spiritual threat of a shared milieu and illustrates the effectiveness of the forms of temptation to assimilate, all who perished in *kiddush ha-Shem*, whether consistently righteous or repentant sinners, were ultimately on the right side of the eschatological struggle between the forces of good and evil. Even so, a sacrificial sin offering differs from a thanksgiving or love offering, and recognition of distinction reinforces the divide between the faithfulness *hasidim* should have initially displayed to merit redemption in the present and the forgiveness repentant martyrs sought so that they might merit redemption in the future.

These apocalyptic personae and locales, antagonistic and protagonistic, were malleable enough to conflate with the people and places from the authors' own societal contexts but typical enough to conform to preexisting expectations in the apocalyptic system. Through each, apocalypticists conveyed eschatological synonymity. At the same time, they employed typological reminders of the quality of religious observance that

initiated the dawning of every new era of restoration, even while calling for more comprehensive measures.⁵⁶

Like apocalyptic literature from earlier epochs, *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, though based on historical events, deviated from factual narration of the end of an era. Its fundamental functions, like those of every historical apocalypse, were to critique the perceived moral laxity of the generation of Jews the author wrote about—the victims of 1096 C.E., in this case—as well as to provide a reproof of the author’s own later generation of Ashkenazim. To illustrate why Solomon may have been inclined to perceive both generations as less than righteous, Chapter One outlines the cultural and social context that the events of 1096 C.E. and Solomon’s later account of them were born out of. It notes the sometimes amicable but increasingly tenuous relationship between Jews and Christians living as neighbors in the shared milieu of Northern Europe during the High Middle Ages, when adherents of both religious traditions self-identified as *verus Israel*, the true spiritual heirs of Israel, God’s Chosen People.

Although apocalypticism had long existed in Judaism and Christianity in the Levantine and Mediterranean regions, this doctrine only became pervasive in Northern Europe from around the turn of the second millennium C.E. on. It developed out of a symbiotic matrix of religious reform that would inform art, architecture, preaching, penance, and pilgrimage, and an influx of martyrological and apocalyptic literature from the Levant. Political upheaval and natural disaster further added to the sense of apprehension and excitement among medieval people who were sure that the end of the

⁵⁶ See the discussion of the book of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St. John in Chapter Two.

world as they knew it was fast approaching. And, as a result, religious zealots took the meaningful but comparatively moderate self-identity as God's Chosen People and extended it to the more severe apocalyptic binary of good versus evil. In the process, they fractured the uneasy peace that had only been attainable through compromise and a relaxation of religious regulations among both Christians and Jews, and worked to replace it with demonizing rhetoric that erupted into murderous and martyrological activity in 1096 C.E.

When Solomon composed his narrative in the 1140s C.E., he did so in a context of economic renewal, but one still beleaguered by inter-confessional suspicions and perched on yet another eve of destruction, just prior to the Second Crusade and the series of Northern European pogroms and homicidal and suicidal sacrifices that attended it.⁵⁷ Whether he was an authentic prophet of the past, able to recognize what was likely to happen in the future based on what was known to have already transpired, is not for me to judge. What is clear is that his account of the Rhineland pogroms of the First Crusade employs many elements of the apocalyptic system within the Judaic tradition which work to remind readers of historical patterns—namely, the similarity among bygone eschatons as well as periods of renewal. It provides an explanation of why final redemption had not yet been fully realized, despite the many periods of revitalization Jews had enjoyed; and it suggests the reform measures necessary to take so that it might be.

Chapter Two moves from a discussion of context to one of genre. As noted above, Solomon's account has long been characterized as a fact-based account of events. More

⁵⁷ Shlomo Eidelberg, *The Jews and the Crusaders: The Hebrew Chronicles of the First and Second Crusades* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1977), 7-8.

recently, scholars have begun to challenge this position by illustrating Solomon's reliance on biblical and post-biblical models within the Jewish tradition to inform his presentation of people, places, and events in Northern Europe in 1096 C.E. Building on these findings, this chapter provides a comparative analysis of the historical, prophetic, and apocalyptic Jewish literary genres found in the biblical corpus to argue that instead of a fact-based "chronicle," Solomon's narrative most resembles a Jewish historical apocalypse. Like other apocalyptic authors, Solomon employed genre-specific chronographic, exegetical, linguistic, and formal techniques to convey the similarity among periods of cultural, social, and political decline—or eschatons.

Chapter Three focuses on the similarities between Jewish apocalypses and Solomon's narrative in regard to feminine apocalyptic personae. As noted above and discussed in greater detail in Chapters Two and Three, many historical apocalypses employ female personae or feminized personifications of institutions as objects of both lust and loathing—whores—who attempt to lure the faithful astray into idolatrous worship of an Antichrist. An exploration of the role of *femmes fatales* in Jewish apocalypses and popular anti-Christian polemical literature of the high Middle Ages indicates that the Virgin Mary occupied such a role for the Ashkenazim. Solomon's narrative reflects this sentiment through explicit references to the Virgin as a whore, to Jesus as the product of whoredom, and to Christianity as a religion of whoredom.⁵⁸ When and where these expressions are found in Solomon's narrative suggests that the dominant Christian culture and the matriarch of Christianity had been successful in tempting Jews

⁵⁸ See, for example, *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 246-56, 295; Roos, A30, 46-7.

to stray, however briefly, from strict adherence to the religious rigors of Judaism through an escalating scale of transgressive behavior ranging from minor acts of assimilation to apostasy.

Chapter Four provides further evidence that Solomon sought to chastise rather than unanimously praise the Ashkenazim of 1096 C.E. Although he certainly acknowledged the piety of several among the persecuted, Solomon intimated that communal suffering at large was divine retribution for transgressive behavior. Through a discussion of rabbinic doctrines regarding the purpose of human sacrifice and poetic representations of medieval martyrological acts, this chapter notes the extent to which rabbis promoted the idea that Abraham's binding of Isaac merited God's forgiveness and promise of redemption in perpetuity—much as their Christian neighbors believed Jesus's crucifixion did for them—as well as the idea that the medieval martyrs were equivalent to the patriarchs and other laudable martyrs who had been able to remind God of His promise and to secure communal renewal, if not final redemption. In contrast to this prevailing glorification of the generation of 1096 C.E., Solomon incorporated several martyrological vignettes that appear less than laudatory. Indeed, he took pains to illustrate how dissimilar the martyrs of 1096 C.E. who perished in *kiddush ha-Shem* as atonement were to past martyrs who had been willing to sacrifice themselves wholeheartedly for their faith. In sum, this dissertation argues that *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson* was intended as a revelation—an apocalypse—of culpability.

Chapter One

Prelude to an Apocalypse:

Compositional Context of *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*

You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and fourth generation of those who reject me. . . .

—Exodus 20:4-5

‘*And Satan also came,*’ the Pope [Urban II] of wicked Rome, and he declared among all the nations who believed in the offshoot of adultery [i.e., Jesus]—*they* [Christians] *are the children of Seir*—that they should gather together and go up to Jerusalem and conquer the city for themselves . . . and that they should travel to the tomb <of their idol> [i.e., Jesus’s tomb] whom they had accepted as a deity over them. Satan came and mingled with the nations, and they all gathered as one man to follow the order.

—*The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*¹

These [Franks] are not however unequal to those Israelites or Maccabees . . . indeed in whose very lands, we ourselves actually saw, or heard, how [the Franks], for the love of Christ, were dismembered, crucified, excoriated, shot with arrows, cut to pieces, and consumed by diverse means of martyrdom . . . [For Urban II] had beseechingly exhorted them all, with renewed faith, to spur themselves in great earnestness to overcome the Devil’s devices and to try to restore the Holy Church, most unmercifully weakened by the wicked, to its former honorable status.

¹ ויבא גם השטן, הפפיוס של רומי הרשעה, ויעבר קול בכל הגוים אשר האמינו בנצר נאפוף, הם בני שעיר, שיתקבצו יחד ויעלו לירושלים ויכבשו העיר לידם . . . שילכו לקבר <תרפותם> אשר קבלוהו לאלוה עליהם. ויבא השטן ויתערב בין האומות, ויאספו כולם כאיש אחר יחד לקיים הציווי: *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 299; Roos, A30. Roos translates תרפותם as “their idolatry”; I have translated this term as “their idol.” Italicized terms and phrases within quotations from the cited Hebrew crusade narratives are biblical or talmudic references. Many, but not all, of these references are discussed in the body of this study. Haverkamp’s edition of the Hebrew narratives of the First Crusade provides the most thorough accounting of biblical and talmudic references in the narratives. Angle brackets used within all passages indicate words that have been scraped or damaged in the manuscript. Reconstruction is based on both remnants of letters as well as similarities with one or more of the other extant Hebrew narratives of the First Crusade.

A commandment and explanations. Within the explanations, classifications. Categorizations. Of idolatry. And of the unique relationship between God and Israel reflecting the stipulations of the commandment. But who were the idolaters and who was *verus Israel*?

Since the Church's early formation, New Testament and patristic authors had maintained a supersessionist doctrine toward Pharisaic and, later, Rabbinic Jews while self-identifying as the spiritual heirs of *verus Israel*.³ Rabbis, for their part, claimed this title for their own and labeled Christ-followers *minim*, or heretics, as a means of imposing an invidious delineation between sects that would eventually evolve into the distinct religions of Judaism and Christianity.⁴ Beginning in the eighth century C.E., Carolingian monarchs would go on to establish a European precedent by fusing spiritual supersessionism with proto-nationalism, emphasizing the perceived similarities between their rule and that of the Israelite kings and their subjects—the Franks—with the religio-

² “Autem nec Israeliticae plebis nec Machabaeorum . . . quos quidem vidimus in regionibus eorum saepe apud nos, aut audivimus longe a nobis positos, pro amore Christi emembrari, crucifigi, excoriari, sagittari, secari, et diverso martyrii genere consummari . . . Deinceps, rogitatu supplicii cunctus exhortatus est, ut resumptis fidei viribus, cum ingenti sollicitatione ad expugnandas Diaboli machinationes viriliter se animareut, et Ecclesiae Sanctae statum, crudelissime a nefandis debilitatem, in honorem pristinum competenter erigere conarentur”: Fulcher of Chartres, *Historia Hierosolymitana*, Beignet, 319, 321; Peters, 50.

³ For the classic study on the subject, see Marcel Simon, *Verus Israel: A Study of the Relations between Christians and Jews in the Roman Empire, 135-425*, trans. H. McKeating (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986). See also Rosemary Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1997).

⁴ Gideon Bohak, “Magical Means for Handling *Minim* in Rabbinic Literature,” in *The Image of the Judaeo-Christians in Ancient Jewish and Christian Literature*, ed. Peter J. Tomson and Doris Lambers-Petry (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 272-75; Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 53-68; and Peter Schäfer, *Jesus in the Talmud* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 53-5, have each treated *minim* (singular: *min*) as a rabbinic designation of a Christian heretic. Ruth Langer, *Cursing the Christians? A History of the Birkat HaMinim* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 16-39, by contrast, contends that this term was not used exclusively for Christians but as a catch-all for a variety of heretics.

ethnic and political Nation of Israel, God's chosen people.⁵ Their Jewish neighbors, though living as a minority diasporic population, continued to stake their own claim based on the belief that only Jews had accepted the written and oral laws, codified in the biblical corpus and Talmud, which God had offered to all of the nations. Rabbinic Jews held that these texts had been inherited from the patriarchs of Israel and that abiding by the precepts in them helped to distinguish Jews from *ha-goyim*, or "the nations"—all non-Israelite peoples.⁶ Jews alone chose to be chosen.

These opposing claims to the title of *verus Israel* elicited a variety of responses from secular rulers, ecclesiastics, and rabbis, each of whom had an eye to heaven with feet firmly planted on the ground, where the demands—and desires—of daily life sometimes necessitated a loose interpretation, or slackening, of biblical precepts as well as conservative canonical or talmudic understandings of them. But the pendulum always swings. And reactionaries who were sure that intra-communal strife, geo-political conflict, and natural disaster rampant during the High Middle Ages reflected divine retribution that signaled an eschaton were keen to propagate fears of Antichrist and his minions, and to call for a tightening of the reins through xenophobic reform measures and Holy War. One result was nothing short of catastrophic—a series of bloody pogroms in 1096 C.E. that would redefine Ashkenazic identity and Jewish-Christian relations for centuries to come. Another was a haunting apocalypse that resounded with the laments of

⁵ Lester K. Little, "Romanesque Christianity in Germanic Europe," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 23, no. 3 (1993): 461. See also Rosamond McKitterick, *Charlemagne: The Formation of a European Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 292-380.

⁶ Jews often affirmed their chosen status through liturgical prayers, poetry, and exegesis, a sampling of which will be discussed further below. One of many classic claims of chosenness is found in the Babylonian Talmud, tractate *'Avodah Zarah*, 2b, in vol. 4 of *Seder Neziḳin*, ed. I. Epstein (London: Soncino Press, 1935), 2-5.

redemption lost and an aching sense that the victims of the pogroms were somehow responsible for the horrors that befell them.

The commandment above is one that *verus Israel*, whoever that might be, should have known well. It is the Second of the Ten Commandments which, according to the biblical narrative, God gave to Moses on Mount Sinai to govern the Israelites in right conduct towards their fellow human beings and acceptable worship of the supreme being once redeemed from bondage in Egypt. It was only the beginning of admonitions against idolatry for a liberated Israel charged with establishing a “holy nation” and a “kingdom of priests.”⁷ For immediately following the Ten Commandments, God further addressed idol worship as a practice that was not only misguided or ill-advised, but one that was inherently evil. He admonished that the Israelites not make, house, or invoke gods in addition to or in lieu of Him, or even to imitate the idolatry of their neighbors through similar architectural design or decoration of places of worship.⁸ Economic contracts and social integration with foreigners were also prohibited as a precaution against the temptation Israelites might feel to commit idolatry due to extended exposure.⁹

Before the proverbial ink was dry, Israel had broken the Second Commandment. While Moses was gone, receiving instruction on the mountaintop, the people had grown impatient. Thinking their leader dead or that he tarried in vain for a God that had forgotten and abandoned them, they begged Aaron to fashion gods for them to worship in

⁷ Ex. 19:6.

⁸ Ex. 20:3-5, 20:23-6, 23:13.

⁹ Ex. 23:32-3.

the mean time.¹⁰ When Moses descended from the mountain, saw the Golden Calf Aaron had made them, and realized the people's transgression, he called for a massacre of the offenders.¹¹ God took care of those who had been overlooked through a plague.¹² Despite the heavy penalty, which was intended as much as a warning to the remnant as a rebuke of the guilty, the biblical text relates that for generation after generation Israel would succumb to the temptation to commit idolatry and to face punishment as a result of it, much in the same way as Israelite forebears had as they languished in the desert.

The second quotation above is an excerpt from Solomon bar Samson's narrative of the Rhineland pogroms of 1096 C.E. In sum, it provides an explanation of how the First Crusade began as a result of Pope Urban II's call to arms at Clermont that reiterates the biblical classification of non-Israelite religion as both evil and idolatrous. Like the Second Commandment, it alludes to the temptation foreign religion held while also affirming the close relationship between Jews and Christians in medieval Europe, as well as their common origins. These ideas are suggested by Solomon's depiction of crusaders who travelled to the Holy Sepulcher as the "children of Seir" who were seeking after the "tomb of their idol,"¹³ and both the pontiff and the evil desire that had spread far and wide among *ha-goyim*, "the nations," to capture Jerusalem as "Satan."¹⁴

Seir is a reference to the descendants of Esau, also known as Edom.¹⁵ The biblical

¹⁰ Ex. 32:1-8.

¹¹ Ex. 32:27.

¹² Ex. 32: 35.

¹³ "לקבר <תרפותם>" , "בני שעיר": *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 299; Roos, A30.

¹⁴ "השטן" , "הגוים": *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 299; Roos, A30.

¹⁵ See Gn. 25:30, 36:8.

narrative indicates that Esau/Edom had settled in the land of Seir with his foreign wives and facilitated their idol worship¹⁶ after his younger twin brother Jacob, patriarch of Israel, had successfully tricked him into relinquishing his birthright.¹⁷ From thenceforth Esau/Edom would be a bane to Israel and the two would continue to struggle for religio-political dominance. In Talmudic literature, rabbis commonly associated Edom and Seir with the Roman Empire under the pretext that Judaea and Rome, like Jacob and Esau, would never be at peace. Many even began to present Rome as the final evil empire, foretold of in the book of Daniel and several other Jewish apocalypses influenced by it, that would persecute Israel before the awaited era of messianic redemption.¹⁸ Once Rome became the champion of Christianity under Constantine (306-37 C.E.) and throughout the Middle Ages, Jews used Esau, Edom, and Seir more or less interchangeably when referring to Christians, the institutional Church, and the amorphous religio-political territory of Christendom, the descendant of Rome.¹⁹ Solomon's use of Seir, then, implies the shared origins of Judaism and Christianity as "sibling" religions as well as the perpetual struggle between the two that Jews had long believed would come to a head in

¹⁶ See Gn. 32:3, 33:16, 36:8-4; Dt. 2:4-5, 2:8, 2:12, 2:22, 2:29.

¹⁷ Gn. 27.

¹⁸ The motif of the evil empire within apocalyptic literature will be discussed further in Chapter Two, especially. The idea that Rome represented the evil empire for Jews from late antiquity on is not contested. What event or series of events this ideology initially responded to, however, is. De Lange, "Jewish Attitudes to the Roman Empire," 260, 269-71, considers significant anti-Roman sentiment among Jews to have emerged around the time of Herod's death in 4 B.C.E., but adds that the idea of Rome as the evil empire truly began to emerge during the rule of Hadrian (117-138 C.E.) and in response to the execution of rabbis who supported the Bar Kokhba Revolt (132 C.E.). Yuval, *Two Nations*, 9-12, by contrast, considers the Jewish identification of Rome as evil empire to have emerged earlier, with the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 C.E. And Philip S. Alexander, "The Evil Empire: The Qumran Eschatological War Cycle and the Origins of Jewish Opposition to Rome," in *Emanuel: Studies in the Hebrew Bible, Septuagint and Dead Sea Scrolls, in Honor of Emanuel Tov*, ed. Shalom M. Paul, et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 17-18.

¹⁹ Jacob Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance: Studies in Jewish-Gentile Relations in Medieval and Modern Times* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 16.

the final eschatological battle.

Solomon's reference to Satan conveys a related sentiment. The opening line of the above excerpt is a biblical quotation from Job 2:1 ("and Satan also came"). This verse begins a chapter in which God permits Satan to torture Job. Though Job's suffering is commonly interpreted as a test that God sanctioned as a means of proving His servant's unwillingness to blaspheme under any circumstance, and so, his faithfulness, this was not the case among medieval Ashkenazic rabbis. There, the consensus was that Job was responsible for his suffering, either as punishment for imperfect faith, displayed in the course of his responses to his companions, or his ignorance regarding the nature of God and the immeasurable difference between the Creator and created beings, evident in his dialogue with Elihu. The trials of Job merely serve to prove this point.²⁰

Thus, when the Pope, presented as none other than the most ancient and potent of adversaries in the biblical text, *ha-Satan*, "The Accuser," proffered the crusades—a war which, according to Solomon, aimed to facilitate Christian idolatry²¹—it was a test of those who, in effect, had already been proven guilty of transgressing the Second Commandment. To be sure, the willingness of Christians to crusade so that they might reconquer Jerusalem and freely worship at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher—a location Solomon bar Samson explicitly described as the "grave <of their idol>"²²—after having destroyed the trappings of Israelite religion en route, served as an undisputed witness to

²⁰ Jason Kalman, "Medieval Jewish Biblical Commentaries and the state of Parshanut Studies," *Religion Compass* 2 (2008): 13-15.

²¹ *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 299; Roos, A30.

²² <תּרפּוּתם> קבר: *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 299; Roos, A30.

the lengths that Christians had already gone to in their rejection of biblical prohibitions like that found in the Second Commandment and not a first offense. Still, the passage is ambiguous and may also imply that Jews, the group most persecuted in the Rhineland pogroms of 1096 C.E., had been tested through suffering, like Job, to execute exaggerated versions of idolatrous transgressions they had already committed—apostasy where there had previously only been assimilation.

The notions of moral laxity—succumbing to temptation—as a contributing factor to the First Crusade and religio-ethnic self-definition through opposition also informs the final opening quotation. Taken from a chronicle composed by the priest Fulcher of Chartres (1059-1127 C.E.) who was present at Urban’s Clermont call to Holy War, traveled to Jerusalem with French nobles in 1096 C.E., and participated in the First Crusade, it explicitly identifies the crusading Franks with ancient Israelites and some of the most renowned Jewish martyrs—the Maccabees—who apocryphal tradition maintains fought to purify the Temple and the cultic rite from the taint of idolatry during the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanies.²³ Unlike Solomon, who had cast the pope as Satan, Fulcher propagated the idea that Urban had been the one who headed the charge against the synonymous “Devil.” To the priest’s mind, this evil entity worked to undermine God’s chosen people, the Franks qua *verus Israel*, by corrupting the Church and laity alike through excess, infighting, a lack of respect for fellow humans and the divine, and a rash of wickedness spread through all opposed to orthodox Christianity. Indeed, Fulcher believed that “manifold evils were growing in all parts of Europe because of wavering

²³ Michael D. Coogan, et al., ed., introduction to I and II Maccabees, in *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 201-02, 245-47.

faith.”²⁴ As will be discussed further below, Fulcher’s fellow ecclesiastics had claimed, and would continue to claim in increasingly incendiary rhetoric, that Jews had been especially instrumental in this spiritual crisis in Europe and abroad, specifically because they occupied a shared milieu with Christian neighbors.

The ideas reflected in these quotations—those of an inter-confessional community with beliefs and practices in common, and a recognition that foreign religion posed a temptation to members of an opposite faith group, have gained traction in scholarship of the last few decades. Previously, the predominant position expressed by nineteenth- and early twentieth-century C.E. scholars was that Jews and Christians in antiquity as well as in medieval Europe lived in isolation from each other. They rarely interacted but when they did, Jews were persecuted.²⁵ Jacob Katz’s mid-twentieth-century C.E. pioneering work in the social history of Northern Europe during the Middle Ages has contributed much to overturning these notions. By examining the writings of medieval Ashkenazic rabbis as a means of determining the prescribed communal mode of life, Katz showed that Jews and Christians in Northern Europe regularly engaged in business relations which frequently led to social interactions.²⁶ While rabbis and ecclesiastics attempted to regulate the types of interactions as much as possible, their existence contributed to the creation of a single society. More recently Ivan G. Marcus, Simḥa Goldin, Elisheva Baumgarten, Shmuel Shepkaru, Ilia Rodov, Jeremy Cohen, Susan L. Einbinder,

²⁴ “In universis Europae partibus mala multimoda vacillante fide inolescerent . . .”: Fulcher of Chartres, *Historia Hierosolymitana*, Beignet, 321; Peters, 49.

²⁵ See Ivan G. Marcus, “A Jewish-Christian Symbiosis: The Culture of Early Ashkenaz,” in *Cultures of the Jews*, ed. David Biale (New York: Schocken, 2002), 147-50.

²⁶ Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance*, 34-5.

Alexandra Cuffel, and Lena Roos, among others, have shown that inter-confessional interaction was also reflected in specific religious rituals, concepts of heaven and the afterlife, religious art and architecture, literary production, fashion, polemic, and more.²⁷

Heightened contact among Jews and Christians in Northern Europe during the High Middle Ages led to a common culture as well as an uptick in conflict as religious groups continued the age-old practice of self-definition through opposition. The combination was—and remains—a typical occurrence among monotheistic religious-based societies whose more liberal members of the minority culture display a willingness to relax traditional regulations and to assimilate to some aspects of the law of the land, and for liberal members of the dominant culture to tolerate—if not necessarily welcome—some of the mores of minorities. In either case, whether a product of pragmatism or opportunism, such relaxation amounted to disregard of the Second Commandment that *verus Israel* was charged with keeping. And more conservative members of both religious groups believed that transgressing the commandments had led to divine displeasure manifest in religious schism, persecution, natural disaster, and political instability, such as the initial Islamic conquest of much of the Levant—including the capital city of Israel, Jerusalem, that had long figured as the site of eschatological transition and messianic redemption for Jews and, more recently, for Christians²⁸—in the seventh century C.E. and

²⁷ Works by these scholars are referenced throughout this dissertation and can be found in the bibliography.

²⁸ Avraham Grossman, “Jerusalem in Jewish Apocalyptic Literature,” in *The History of Jerusalem: The Early Muslim Period, 638-1099*, ed. Joshua Prawer and Haggai Ben-Shammai (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1996), 295-310.

the later conquests by the Seljuk Turks in the 1070s C.E.²⁹ This chapter explores how Jewish and Christian ideologies of identity, reform, and apocalypticism, evolved and expanded, reflecting as much as affecting this shared milieu that gave rise to both the pogroms of 1096 C.E. as well as Solomon's mid-twelfth-century C.E. narrative treating them.

Reform and a Rallying Cry (I): A Christian Response to a Shared Milieu

Eschatons and the apocalypses written about them do not appear out of nowhere; there is always a period of gestation. Significant components of our story began to formulate roughly three centuries before the Rhineland pogroms of 1096 C.E., during the ninth-century C.E. era of Carolingian reforms, when the Northern European Christian populace was increasingly made aware, and thereafter incessantly reminded, of their own spiritual shortcomings and the threat that insincere Christians, heretics, and practitioners of other religions posed to the wellbeing of their souls. Severe indoctrination was something of a continuation of the violent, expedited manner of cultural hegemony reflected in the practice of conversion by conquest that many pagans in Saxony and in Avar territory, as well as Visigothic Christians living along the Spanish March, had experienced under the Carolingian rulers.³⁰ But blunt teachings also reflect efforts by the Church to establish

²⁹ See Praver, *The History of the Jews in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*, 7; Whalen, *Dominion of God*, 47-8; James T. Palmer, "Apocalyptic Outsiders and their uses in the Early Medieval West," in *Peoples of the Apocalypse: Eschatological Beliefs and Political Scenarios*, ed. Wolfram Brandes, Felicitas Schmieder, Rebekka Voß (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2016), 307-20.

³⁰ See, for example, Cullen J. Chandler, "Heresy and Empire: The Role of the Adoptionist Controversy in Charlemagne's Conquest of the Spanish March," *The International History Review* 24, no. 3 (2002): 505-27.

and maintain influence despite a limited number of competent theologians and preachers available who might educate their charges and, in turn, the laity regarding the finer aspects of Christianity and how it differed from competing belief systems—especially that of Judaism and the ecclesiastical heresies that shared elements with it. For, while the Carolingians and their descendants seemed to have few qualms about a policy of “kill or convert” in regard to native pagans, rulers beginning with Charlemagne (768-814 C.E.)³¹ developed a unique relationship with Jews.

Charlemagne and his son, Louis the Pious (813-40 C.E.),³² were particularly solicitous of Jews and invited them to their realm—primarily from Northern Italy—under the auspices of cultural and economic benefits they might provide the Frankish Empire.³³ The Carolingians were also interested in Judaism, which they viewed as the “parent” rather than “sibling” religion to Christianity, especially honoring it for the stories of King David, the messianic monarch who was chosen by God to unify the Nation of Israel; King Josiah, the reformer of Israelite religion; and Israel’s righteous warriors, such as the Maccabees, who were willing to fight and die for their faith.³⁴

Jewish immigration was also initially encouraged and thereafter met favorably by ecclesiastics interested in learning Hebrew from rabbis as well as the philological or

³¹ Charlemagne ruled as King of the Franks from 768-814 C.E. and as Holy Roman Emperor from 800-14 C.E.

³² Different regnal dates could be used for Louis, who reigned as King of Aquitaine from 781-814 C.E., Holy Roman Emperor from 813-40 C.E., and King of the Franks from 814-40 C.E.

³³ Aryeh Grabois, “The *Hebraica Veritas* and Jewish-Christian Intellectual Relations in the Twelfth Century,” *Speculum* 50, no. 4 (1975): 615-16; Jonathan Elukin, *Living Together, Living Apart*, 47.

³⁴ Little, “Romanesque Christianity,” 461; James T. Palmer, *The Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 132.

literal-historical mode of Jewish exegesis.³⁵ This was spurred by the efforts of Carolingian ecclesiastics to correct inconsistencies within various recensions of the Vulgate's Old Testament through the use of Jerome's biblical translation, originally created under the influence of Palestinian rabbis and known as the *Hebraica veritas*, or Hebrew Truth. Carolingian ecclesiastics, such as Alcuin of York (735-804 C.E.), and later Cistercian monks under the direction of the abbot of Cîteaux, Stephen Harding (ca. 1050-1134 C.E.), Victorine monks under Hugh of St. Victor (1096-1141 C.E.), and other twelfth-century C.E. Christian exegetes interested in philological and historical or contextual explanations of the biblical text consulted rabbis to compare their translations with that of the Hebrew Bible.³⁶

In their biblical exegesis, these same ecclesiastics attempted to convey the interpretations of rabbis who also emphasized the philological-contextual, or historical-literal, meaning in an exegetical mode known as *peshat*.³⁷ And they began to label their own exegetical collaboration with local Jewish masters as the *Hebraica veritas* rather than applying the designation to Jerome's translation alone.³⁸ In this process of naming—defining and categorizing—ecclesiastical exegetes erroneously conveyed the existence of only one mode of Jewish biblical interpretation and, by labeling this the Hebrew Truth, made it easier for their xenophobic peers to deem Jews *en masse* as literalists who were incapable of grasping what they perceived as the allegorical, homiletic, spiritual, and

³⁵ Grabois, "*Hebraica Veritas*," 615-16.

³⁶ Grabois, "*Hebraica Veritas*," 613-34.

³⁷ Rebecca Moore, *Jews and Christians in the Life and Thought of Hugh of St. Victor*, South Florida Studies in the History of Judaism 138, ed. Jacob Neusner, et al. (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), 63-8.

³⁸ Grabois, "*Hebraica Veritas*," 618-19.

mystical meanings of Scripture which enabled Christian recognition of Jesus as the awaited Messiah.³⁹

The new Jewish presence also led to outcry among less tolerant Church leaders who were concerned that Jewish influence at court and among the populace might undermine Christian dogma and doctrine,⁴⁰ and so called for political and ecclesiastical reform specifically in regard to Jews. The ninth-century C.E. archbishop of Lyons, Agobard (816-34 C.E.), for example, wrote several anti-Jewish treatises—*De baptismo Judaicorum mancipiorum*, On the Baptism of the Slaves of Jews (823 C.E.), *Contra praeceptum impium*, Against Impious Rule (c. 826 C.E.), *De insolentia Judeorum*, On the Insolence of Jews (827 C.E.), *De Judaicis superstitionibus*, On the Superstitions of Jews (827 C.E.), and *De cavendo convictu et societate Judaica*, On Avoiding the Fellowship and Society of Jews (827 C.E.). In these, he delivered unrestrained critique of Louis's penchant for privileging Jews above Christian subjects by offering them special protection, exemption from taxes and feudal services, license to employ Christian servants, and the prerogative to appeal directly to the imperial rather than local courts when charged with legal offenses. Agobard was further inflamed that Jewish circumcision and conversion of slaves was seemingly tolerated in the realm, and that Jews were at liberty to refuse their slaves baptism and the ability to convert to Christianity—acts in direct defiance of canon law.⁴¹ He also voiced what were

³⁹ Moore, *Jews and Christians*, 67-8.

⁴⁰ See Elukin, *Living Together, Living Apart*, 46-7.

⁴¹ J. Allen Cabaniss, "Agobard of Lyons," *Speculum* 26, no. 1 (1951): 59; Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance*, 41-2; Peter Schäfer, "Agobard's and Amulo's *Toledot Yeshu*," in *Toledot Yeshu ("The Life Story of Jesus") Revisited: A Princeton Conference*, ed. Peter Schäfer, Michael Meerson, and Yaacov Deutsch, *Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism* 143 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 42-3.

presumably the complaints of many—namely, that Jews in Louis’s realm had grown proud and vicious, flaunting their connections with the imperial court by parading about in costumes gifted by the royal family and their entourage, illegally erecting new synagogues, and selling Christians contaminated wine and “Christian meat” that they would not deign to eat.⁴²

In these same treatises, Agobard lambasted Jewish blasphemies which he believed further contributed to unholy governance and threatened the soul of Christian society. In *De Judaicis superstitionibus*, for instance, he added to the oft repeated claims of Jewish blindness to the truth of Hebrew Scripture as prophecy foretelling Jesus as the son of God and the Messiah who would redeem *verus Israel* by relating that Jews had composed and taught an alternative, polemical account of Jesus’s birth, life, and death.⁴³ According to this tradition that would come to be recognized as one of several recensions⁴⁴ of popular Jewish folklore known as the *Toledot Yeshu*, or “The Life Story of Jesus,” Christ was a disciple of John the Baptist and, rather than the son of God, was able to perform miracles and amass a following only because he was a skilled magician and an effective conman. Eventually Jesus was jailed by the emperor Tiberius for charges of disturbing the peace and, when he attempted to prove himself a holy man by claiming he could impregnate the emperor’s daughter without the aid of any man and that she would give birth to a son, he

⁴² Cabaniss, “Agobard of Lyons,” 61.

⁴³ There are antique references to a polemical Jewish folklore tradition about Jesus. Agobard’s claim is the first by a Christian that Jews had a textual tradition. See Peter Schäfer, introduction to Schäfer, Meerson, and Deutsch, *Toledot Yeshu Revisited*, 3; Michael Meerson and Peter Schäfer, introduction to *Toledot Yeshu: The Life Story of Jesus*, vol. 1, ed. Michael Meerson and Peter Schäfer (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 4-9.

⁴⁴ See Meerson and Schäfer, introduction to *Toledot Yeshu*, 3-9, for a discussion of Agobard’s *Toledot* and its relation to Aramaic, or “Oriental,” recensions.

failed—she gave birth to a stone. As punishment, Tiberius called for the execution of the charlatan. Jesus was hung, stoned, and buried near an aqueduct. That same evening, the Jewish governor, Pilate, ordered the aqueduct flooded and Jesus’s body disappeared.⁴⁵

Neither this story, nor any of Agobard’s treatises, had much effect on Louis’s treatment of Jews in his realm, but they did most likely contribute to the king’s deposing of the archbishop in 834 C.E.⁴⁶ And they certainly impacted how Agobard’s fellow ecclesiastics increasingly perceived Jews and Judaism as “vessels of the Devil” who threatened Christian society and the Church itself “far more than infidels, unbelievers, and heretics.”⁴⁷ This view was only reinforced by the fact that, little more than a decade after Agobard composed *De Judaicis superstitionibus*, a deacon from Louis’s court converted to Judaism. A chronicle entry for the year 839 C.E. relates how the young deacon Bodo (814-76 C.E.), while returning from a pilgrimage to Rome, suddenly abandoned his destination and religion. Disillusioned by corruption at court and in the Church, Bodo emigrated instead to the Spanish March where he converted to Judaism and adopted the name Eleazar. He went on to marry a Jewish woman of Saragossa where he became an effective proselyte, and, purportedly, incited violence against his onetime coreligionists. Eleazar’s conversion troubled his contemporaries, including Agobard, who could not understand why either Bodo or a handful of other prominent Carolingian ecclesiastics would become Jews—a choice commonly perceived as intellectually,

⁴⁵ Meerson and Schäfer, introduction to *Toledot Yeshu*, 3.

⁴⁶ Schäfer, “Agobard’s and Amulo’s *Toledot Yeshu*,” in Schäfer, Meerson, and Deutsch, *Toledot Yeshu*, 29.

⁴⁷ Cabaniss, “Agobard of Lyons,” 61-2.

morally, socially, and politically inferior.⁴⁸ When they wrote about his conversion, they hinted that Bodo had been “led astray by Satan, the enemy of the Church, or was seduced by Jews.”⁴⁹

Agobard’s successor to the bishopric of Lyons, Amulo (841-52 C.E.), picked up where he had left off by inveighing against Jewish sociopolitical and economic prominence in the realm. Amulo too complained of what appears to have been an even fuller version of the pernicious Jewish anti-Gospel in his treatise, *Contra Judaeos*, Against the Jews. According to his account, Jews were so confident of their position in the Frankish Empire that, beyond denying Jesus’s messiahship, they openly spread rumors and recited every time they prayed⁵⁰ that Mary had not been impregnated by the Holy Spirit, given birth to the son of God, Jesus, and raised him with his foster father, Joseph, but that she had been *adulteratam*, “defiled,” by an “impious man, that is, I know not what pagan/heathen, whom they [Jews] call Pandera,” and had thus conceived Jesus.⁵¹ Plainly put, this version of *Toledot Yeshu* suggests that Mary had been raped by a man who was not her Jewish husband, Joseph, but a pagan/heathen named Pandera in a manner that potentially delegitimized Jesus as a *goy* bastard.⁵² Moreover, this

⁴⁸ Schäfer, “Agobard’s and Amulo’s *Toledot Yeshu*,” 43.

⁴⁹ Heinrich Graetz, *Popular History of the Jews*, vol. 3 (New York: The Hebrew Publishing Company, 1919), 64-5; see also Ryan Szpiech, *Conversion and Narrative: Reading and Religious Authority in Medieval Polemic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 93.

⁵⁰ Meerson and Schäfer, introduction to *Toledot Yeshu*, 47.

⁵¹ “Confitentem eum esse impium et filium impii, id est, nescio cuius ethnici, quem nominant Pandera: a quo dicunt matrem Domini adulteratam, et inde eum in quem nos credimus, natum”: Amulo Lugdunensis, *Liber Contra Judaeos*, in *Patrologia Latina*, 116:169D (Ateliers Catholiques: Paris, 1844-55). The idea of Mary as active or passive participant in the conception of Jesus in the *Toledot Yeshu* tradition will be discussed further in Chapter Three.

⁵² *Goy* is the singular of *goyim*. As noted above, this term indicates foreign, non-Israelite, status.

presentation of Jesus's conception coincided with, and perhaps reinforced, some element of the Adoptionist heresy—the belief that Jesus was in fact the product of sexual relations between two human parents but had been “adopted” as a son by God—which Carolingian ecclesiastics, including Agobard, had vigorously combatted.⁵³

A similar story of a Jewish anti-Gospel and the antipathy it fueled against Jews and Judaism occurred outside of Lyons as well. Hrabanus Maurus, abbot of Fulda (822-42 C.E.) and archbishop of Mainz (847-56 C.E.)—the locale of the most severe of the pogroms of 1096 C.E.—was another outspoken critic of imperial favor for the Jews. Like Agobard and Amulo, he expressed knowledge of a Jewish anti-Gospel in his own treatise *Contra Judaeos*.⁵⁴ And, like many of his Carolingian counterparts, Hrabanus claimed that contemporary Jews willfully “remained in perfidity” by disavowing the Church's doctrines of the dual nature of Christ as human and divine, his conception by the Holy Spirit, the redemptive quality of his death, or the validity of his resurrection. Hrabanus and his like-minded peers believed that it was because of these “perfidities” that Jews had been punished with the loss of the right to claim the title *verus Israel* and their ancestral territory in *eretz Israel*, and that they should have lost freedom and privilege in the Frankish Empire.⁵⁵ Others would claim that it was the Jews' idolatrous attitude towards texts—literalism and legalism—that resulted in their loss of land and

⁵³ Edward Peters, ed., *Heresy and Authority in Medieval Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980), 50-6; Cabaniss, “Agobard of Lyons,” 54.

⁵⁴ Meerson and Schäfer, introduction to *Toledot Yeshu*, 10.

⁵⁵ Owen M. Phelan, *The Formation of Christian Europe: The Carolingians, Baptism, and the Imperium Christianum* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 81-2.

identity.⁵⁶

The ideas expressed by Agobard, Amulo, Hrabanus, and their cohort laid the foundation for another period of fermenting anti-Jewish and anti-Judaic⁵⁷ sentiment around the turn of the millennium. As in the Carolingian era, later Christian antipathy towards Jews was encompassed in a more comprehensive reform movement, manifestations of which would resurface intermittently throughout the remainder of the medieval period and well into the early modern era. Unlike heresies addressed by the ecclesiastical reforms during the Carolingian era—such as the above-noted Adoptionism—or beliefs and practices that were characterized by historical-literal interpretation of Scripture coupled with “Judaizing” adherence to biblical dietary restrictions, observance of Saturday sabbath, and dating Easter to coincide with Passover, as in the Quartodeciman controversy rampant in the late-antique Levant as well as in seventh-century C.E. Ireland⁵⁸—heresies emerging around the turn of the millennium went beyond internal clerical and theological disputes.⁵⁹ While sharing some ideas and practices in common with Adoptionism and Quartodecimanism, heresies that developed during the millennium included a mistrust and disbelief of Catholic Christianity at large, coupled with widespread heterodox religious practice that went beyond the cloister and infiltrated the laity.

⁵⁶ Szpiech, *Conversion and Narrative*, 96.

⁵⁷ For a discussion regarding the distinction between Antisemitism/Antisemitic and anti-Judaism/anti-Judaic, see Gavin I. Langmuir, *Toward a Definition of Antisemitism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 4-6, 8, 62, 317.

⁵⁸ For a discussion of papal accusations of Quartodecimanism against Irish monks, see Dáibhí O’Crónín, “‘New Heresy for Old’: Pelagianism in Ireland and the Papal Letter of 640,” *Speculum* 60 (1985): 505-16. For mention of Quartodecimanism in antiquity, see Boyarin, *Dying for God*, 13-14.

⁵⁹ Palmer, *The Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages*, 218.

Millennial heresies appear to have had ancient antecedents as well—especially that of Manichaean dualism. Whether this was due to an authentic similarity in specific heretical beliefs and practices across space and time, a similarity in how ecclesiastics labeled and described heresies based on their reading of patristic authors, or some combination of these is rarely clear.⁶⁰ Bearing this caveat in mind, ecclesiastical letters and treatises from the first few decades of the eleventh century C.E. on indicate pronounced apprehension regarding what appears to have been an upswing in heretical teachings that shared much with the older heresies as well as with long-held Jewish critiques of Christianity. Some similarities include challenges posed to Church teachings concerning the efficacy of the sacraments, the rational possibility of a monotheistic Trinity, a Messiah that was both fully human and fully divine, and the simultaneous belief in the significance of representations of the cross and the censuring of images considered idolatrous.⁶¹

A monk of St. Martial of Limoges, Adémar of Chabannes (989-1034 C.E.), and a Burgundian monk, Rodulfus Glaber (985-1047 C.E.), among others, wrote extensively about heresies in the region formerly known as the Carolingian Empire during the first decades of the eleventh century C.E. Adémar included information about disbelief and disparagement of orthodox Christianity in Aquitaine in 1018 C.E. In what was most likely a case of modeling his ideas of heresy on patristic sources, the monk equated the spread of false doctrine throughout the Frankish realm with tenets that had plagued the

⁶⁰ See Peters, *Heresy and Authority*, 57-64.

⁶¹ Langmuir, *Toward a Definition of Antisemitism*, 127-28; Frassetto, “Heretics and Jews,” 44-7, 50-1; Palmer, *The Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages*, 218-19.

early Church, including Arian, Sabellian, and Manichaeian beliefs.⁶² According to Adémar, “throughout Aquitaine, Manichaeians were leading the people astray. They denied baptism and the cross, the Church and the Redeemer of the world, the honor of the saints of God, legitimate marriage and every sane doctrine.”⁶³ In his sermons delivered throughout the 1020s C.E., Adémar continued to rail against heresies spread by wandering preachers throughout Périgord, Toulouse, Châlons-sur-Marne, Arras, Cambrai, Monteforte, and elsewhere. The monk appears eager to convey the relationship between the type of anti-sacerdotalism noted above and adherence to evil—in this case, the Antichrist—when preaching: “It is our wish to speak about other matters which pertain to the synod and are regarding the heretics who have secretly risen up among us, those who deny baptism, the mass, the cross, the Church, they are the precursors to Antichrist.”⁶⁴ Elsewhere he repeated his claim and added to it: heretics were messengers of Antichrist, minions of the Devil.⁶⁵

The synod Adémar referred to was probably the Synod of Orléans in 1022 C.E., which convened to address and stamp out what appears to have been a similar collection of heretical opposition to dogma as that found at Aquitaine and resulted in the execution of those who refused to recant. Another of the chroniclers of the synod, a monk, Paul of

⁶² Michael Frassetto, “Reaction and Reform: Reception of Heresy in Arras and Aquitaine in the Early Eleventh Century,” *The Catholic Historical Review* 83, no. 3 (1997): 386.

⁶³ Adémar of Chabannes, *Chronique*, 3.49, ed. Jules Chavanon (Paris: A. Picard, 1897), 173, 210: “. . . per Aquitaniam Manichaei, seducentes promiscuum plebem. Negabant baptismum et crucem, Ecclesiam et ipsum Redemptorem seculi, honorem sanctorum Dei, conjugia legitima et quidquid sanae doctrinae est.” For an English translation, see Adémar of Chabannes, *Chronique*, in Peters, *Heresy and Authority*, 61.

⁶⁴ Adémar of Chabannes, quoted in Frassetto, “Reaction and Reform,” 392n38: “Dicere habemus vobis de aliis rebus quae pertinent ad sinodum et de haereticis qui modo latenter inter nos surgunt qui negant baptismum, missam, crucem, Ecclesiam, qui praecursores Antichristi sunt.”

⁶⁵ Frassetto, “Heretics and Jews,” 45; see also Palmer, *The Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages*, 220.

St. Père of Chartres, reported that a knight, Aréfast, a relative of the counts of Normandy, testified that he had been led astray from the Church's truth by false preachers who taught that the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist were meaningless because these were not based on Scripture and, moreover, that, even if they were divine imperatives, priests were hardly worthy or able to perform them due to their corruption. Aréfast further testified that the heretics had taught him that Christ was not born of a virgin, executed for humankind, buried, or resurrected, as the Gospel accounts claim. And, perhaps most damningly, that these heretics invoked demons and, under the approving eye of Satan—who appeared as a beast—engaged in a rapists' orgy, burned the child conceived of it, and collected the child's ashes to incorporate into a diabolical parody of the Eucharist.⁶⁶

Paul's presentation of a combination of anti-clericalism, anti-sacerdotalism, and demonic ritual is consistent not only with Adémar's reports and sermons, but also with those of Gerard I (1013-1048 C.E.), bishop of Arras-Cambrai, regarding heresy believed to have originated in Châlons-sur-Marne that had spread to Arras by 1025 C.E., and those of Rudolphus regarding the spread of heresy in Orléans (1022 C.E.) and in Monteforte (1028 C.E.).⁶⁷ In addition to drawing connections between heresy and demon worship, or between heresy and the aiding and abetting of Antichrist, Adémar and Rudolphus also explicitly linked heretics with Jews. The former did so in a sermon in which he defended the sacraments, claiming that heretics who refused the Eucharist were like Jews who had also rejected the salvific grace wrought through Christ's flesh. The latter did so in his

⁶⁶ Paul of St. Père de Chartres, "Heretics at Orléans, 1022," in Peters, *Heresy and Authority*, 66-71.

⁶⁷ Frassetto, "Reaction and Reform," 386-89.

report on the heretics at Monteforte, claiming that they offered inept sacrifices like the Jews.⁶⁸

Attempts by Adémar, Rudolphus, and other ecclesiastics to identify and suppress the spread of heresy through writings, sermons, synods, and public executions were augmented by aesthetic efforts. From around the turn of the millennium on, Church and State alike devoted a good deal of time, industry, and capital to reinforcing the biblical and theological scholarship borne out of the reforms of the Carolingian era⁶⁹ by commissioning and creating moralizing art and artifacts that emphasized major themes that had perceptually remained under attack by heretics and Jews—including the potent symbolism of the cross, Christ’s dual nature, the significance of the saints as mediators of salvation, the power of the Church, the necessity of priests and the sacraments to implement God’s will and judgement, and more.

Manuscripts, often adorned by historiated capitals and illuminations, small carved objects, tapestries, and interior wall paintings were well suited to the contemplative activities of wealthy and politically important individuals or small groups. And the craftspeople or the commissioners responsible for their artistic programs promoted ideologies that were either already adhered to by those using the devotional objects, or ones that the creators and/or commissioners sought to advance. As scholars have shown for later, Gothic devotional illuminated manuscripts, the Psalters emerging in the Early through High Middle Ages in the Frankish Empire and the later divided Frankish and

⁶⁸ Frassetto, “Heretics and Jews,” 44-6, 54n13.

⁶⁹ Fried, “Awaiting the End of Time,” 20.

Germanic territories appear to promote Christian supersessionism of Judaism as well as an anti-Jewish sentiment by appropriating the Jews' liturgical language of Hebrew and by linking contemporary Jews with Satan as dual forces of evil who Christ—and, by extension, Christians—should suppress and slay.⁷⁰

The more accessible monumental art and Romanesque cathedrals—including the *Kaiserdome*, or imperial cathedrals, found in the cities of Speyer, Worms, and Mainz, which figure prominently in Solomon's narrative of the pogroms of 1096 C.E.—differed from personal devotional objects in that they were centrally located and designed for public consumption by the willing and the resistant alike who were made to confront exterior surfaces adorned with intricate narrative carvings. Many of the messages conveyed in both private and public art, though, were similar. Among the more popular motifs during the later-tenth through twelfth centuries were crucifixes, such as the life-size wooden one commissioned by Gero, archbishop of Cologne (c. 965 C.E.), variations of Christ Enthroned in Majesty, and, perhaps most common, the Last Judgement—a biblical theme developed in the Gospel of Matthew (Matt. 24-5) and the Johannine Apocalypse (Apoc. 21:11-15). Together, these evoke Christ's humanity, reflected in the

⁷⁰ Christian appropriation of Judaism is evident in the so-called Gallican psalters, which were popular throughout the Middle Ages in Gaul and often included Hebrew characters in the margins of an otherwise Latin text to distinguish verses in Psalms considered especially significant to Jews and labeled "Torah Psalms." For a discussion of Torah Psalms, see James Luther Mays, "The Place of the Torah-Psalms in the Psalter," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 106, no. 1 (1987): 3-12. Psalters belonging to the Utrecht and Stuttgart group, originating in the early ninth century C.E., further illustrate supersessionism by supplanting the Psalmist, King David, with Christ and, in novel iconography, show him stomping on a lion and asp simultaneously—that is, the traditional symbol of the Tribe of Judah and the traditional symbol of Satan. For anti-Judaic illuminations in later medieval manuscripts, see Richard Kenneth Emmerson, *Antichrist in the Middle Ages: A Study of Medieval Apocalypticism, Art, and Literature* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981), 108-45; Suzanne Lewis, "Tractatus adversus Judaeos in the Gulbenkian Apocalypse," *The Art Bulletin* 68 (1986): 543-66; Sara Lipton, *Images of Intolerance: The Representation of Jews and Judaism in the Bible Moralisée* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), especially 113-40; and Debra Higgs Strickland, "Antichrist and the Jews in Medieval Art and Protestant Propaganda," *Studies in Iconography* 32 (2011): 1-50.

instrument of his death, and his divinity, signaled in his position in the celestial court as a king and judge over all.

The Last Judgement was the most awe-inspiring and functioned to induce both hopes for heaven and fears for hell, thus spurring preparation for death—a personal eschaton.⁷¹ In general, this motif emphasized post-mortem eschatological scenarios by incorporating the seven virtues juxtaposed to the seven deadly sins, the divine scales of justice, and angels and demons perched and ready to take the soul to its eternal reward or punishment.⁷² Yet some cathedrals also conveyed more comprehensive, collective eschatological messages that signaled to observers that they were living during the end of one era and the beginning of the next. These included more obvious allusions to personae and scenarios from the Johannine Apocalypse, such as Antichrist's persecution of the saints, groups of pious individuals resisting idolatry, and martyrs lovingly dying for their God in anticipation of messianic redemption.⁷³ This ubiquitous symbolism functioned to suggest to observers that they confronted a moral dilemma of cosmic proportions—a choice between good and evil, God and Satan, Christ and Antichrist—with every decision they made.

Bearing the aural and visual barrage of eschatological themes in mind, it is hardly

⁷¹ Moshe Idel, "Jewish Apocalypticism 670-1670," in *The Continuum History of Apocalypticism*, ed. Bernard McGinn, John J. Collins, and Stephen J. Stein (New York: Continuum, 2003), 354-55, considers death, an end of an era of humanity, and the end of the world to be the occasions of variations of eschatological thought that sometimes intersect in apocalypticism.

⁷² One of the more elaborate examples of this is found on the tympanum of the Cathedral of St. Lazare in Autun, France (1130-46 C.E.).

⁷³ Fried, "Awaiting the End of Time," 28-9. See also Yves Christe, "Apocalypse and Last Judgment around the Year 1000," in Landes, Gow, and Van Meter, *The Apocalyptic Year 1000*, 139-54, for a discussion of a particularly apocalyptic artistic program in the decor of the cathedral of Saint-Perry de Fleury.

surprising that medieval people were inclined to view religious persecution, political instability, and natural disaster as the very signs that they had been told would accompany the End. Understandable too was the eagerness of Christians to perform penance and pay their respects at reliquaries, shrines, and holy sites dedicated to the remembrance of saints and holy martyrs. The number of these had increased exponentially throughout the course of the eleventh and twelfth centuries C.E. and pilgrimage became popularized both as a testament of personal religious fidelity as well as an attempt to secure health, safety, a good harvest, pleasant weather, and, most importantly, viable intercessors in order that believers might be found worthy of Christ's redemption when that End should arrive.⁷⁴ The numerous localized shrines throughout Northern Europe sufficed for those of limited means and were frequented often, as were the further, destination shrines, like those of Santiago de Compostela in Spain, or those devoted to Saint Peter and Saint Paul in Rome. However, perhaps because of millennial apprehension and anticipation marking the thousandth anniversary of Christ's birth, and then again in 1033 C.E., around the anniversary of his death, Jerusalem became an increasingly popular pilgrimage site.⁷⁵ When Christ did not return in the early eleventh century C.E. as many had expected, apocalypticists adjusted by "discovering" or formulating new "prophecies," or by interpreting old ones in a new manner and thereby ensuring that pilgrimage to the holy city of Jerusalem remained vital.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium: Revolutionary Millenarians and Mystical Anarchists of the Middle Ages*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 63; Little, "Romanesque Christianity," 462-67.

⁷⁵ Fried, "Awaiting the End of Time," 58.

⁷⁶ See Rubenstein, *Armies of Heaven*, 9.

It was during such pilgrimages that a number of Christians suffered persecution at the hands of Muslim fanatics in the Levant. Among the earliest and most severe examples was the 1009 C.E. razing of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher by the Fatimid Caliph of Cairo, al-Hakim (996-1021 C.E.). Around the same time, the caliph further busied himself by devastating other churches throughout his realm and banning Christian religious ceremony. Al-Hakim's actions did more than provoke Islamophobia. They also led Christians who had been primed to think in eschatological terms to believe that the foretold period of tribulation of the saints preceding Christ's Second Coming was at hand and that the final battle between the forces of good and evil was fast approaching. Indeed, the above-noted monastic writers Rudolphus Glaber and Adémar of Chabannes had suggested that al-Hakim was an apocalyptic antagonist and, perhaps, even the arch-antagonist—Antichrist.⁷⁷ Subsequent attacks on European pilgrims by Seljuk Turks in 1065 C.E. and reports of their cruelty, greed, and diabolism that circulated upon the travelers' return served too to fan fears of, and hopes for, the eschaton.⁷⁸ And so, when entreaties reached Urban in the Spring of 1095 C.E. from the Byzantine Emperor Alexius Comnenus (1081-1118 C.E.) requesting assistance in combatting further threats of Muslim and especially Turkish dominance, the pontiff responded by conducting a preaching tour in support for Holy War framed as Christians against antiChristians.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Frassetto, "Heretics and Jews," 49; Callahan, "Al-Hākīm, Charlemagne, and the Destruction of the Holy Sepulcher," 44.

⁷⁸ Rubenstein, *Armies of Heaven*, 8-12.

⁷⁹ Rubenstein, *Armies of Heaven*, 20-8.

Urban's Call to Arms and the Eschaton that Followed

Hindsight reveals that Urban's response was socio-economically and politically savvy, but Latin accounts written by those believed to be present at Clermont convey that he rallied his audience by appealing, above all else, to their spirituality. For example, the chronicler Fulcher of Chartres wrote of the pontiff's address to the crowd some years later and remembered it cast as a two-part divine admonishment by Christ himself. First, the faithful were to redouble their reform efforts to purify Christians and Christianity by eschewing simony, lay investiture, and murderous infighting among co-religionists as preparation for Christ's return.⁸⁰ Second, as part of that reform, they were to strengthen the bond among all Christians by aiding co-religionists in the East lest a religio-ethnic other might conquer them and diminish the name of Christ in the process. As a reward for their service, the pontiff promised remission of sins and a martyr's crown in heaven.⁸¹

Fulcher's contemporary and fellow French ecclesiastical chronicler, Guibert of Nogent (1055-1124 C.E.), as well as his German counterpart, Ekkehard of Aura (1050-1126 C.E.), emphasized the eschatological significance of the First Crusade; and Guibert, even more so than Fulcher, the importance of conquering Jerusalem. He depicted Urban's call to crusade as predicated on the need to conquer the holy city as a means of meeting and combatting Antichrist in the final battle that would occur before Christ's

⁸⁰ McGinn, "Apocalypticism and Church Reform," 276.

⁸¹ Peters, *The First Crusade*, 52-3.

return.⁸² Taken together, the ecclesiastical accounts suggest that a proclaimed purpose of Holy War was preparation for both the personal and collective End: pilgrims were called to perform penance by aiding Eastern Christians and Christ himself through efforts to avenge those who had been mistreated for (or, under the pretext of) their belief in him, and by reclaiming the lost territory that was especially connected to his life, death, and resurrection in anticipation of his return.⁸³

The appearance of wandering preachers in cities and towns along pilgrimage and crusade routes intensified and probably precipitated popular perceptions that Christ's return and the end of the world were imminent. Most famously, a priest named Peter, known as the Hermit, began preaching in the Rhineland of the need to crusade in 1095 C.E. and continued throughout the first half of 1096 C.E.⁸⁴ In an affectation of *imitatio Christi*, or "imitation of Christ," he donned rags and amassed a following of the downtrodden and those of questionable character even while maintaining the wherewithal

⁸² McGinn, "Apocalypticism and Church Reform," 281; idem, *Visions of the End: Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), 89-92.

⁸³ See Jonathan Riley-Smith, who was among the most influential voices to iterate that the First Crusade was motivated primarily by spiritual concerns centered on vengeance for Christ's crucifixion and messianism: "The First Crusade and the Persecution of the Jews," in *Persecution and Toleration: Papers Read at the Twenty-Second Summer Meeting and the Twenty-Third Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*, ed. William J. Sheils, Studies in Church History 21 (Padstow, UK: T. J. Press, 1984), 51-72; and idem, *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986). Writing more than a decade later, Benjamin Z. Kedar documented the shifting paradigms within crusades scholarship regarding interpretations of the motivation for holy war and, as will be addressed below, anti-Jewish persecution. Kedar emphasized how the idea of spiritual motivation had come to be favored above interpretations emphasizing socio-political or economic reasons over the course of the twentieth century C.E., and particularly its last two decades: "Crusade Historians and the Massacres of 1096," *Jewish History* 12, no. 2 (1998): 18, 22-5. Jean Flori's more recent studies, *Pierre l'Ermitte et la première croisade* (Paris: Fayard, 1999) and *L'islam et la fin des temps: L'interprétation prophétique des invasions musulmanes dans la chrétienté médiévale* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2007); Whalen's *Dominion of God*; Chazan's, "Let Not a Remnant," 289-313; and Rubenstein's *Armies of Heaven*, noted above, indicate that the interpretation of the crusades as primarily motivated by spiritual, and especially apocalyptic, concerns continues to hold sway.

⁸⁴ Some medieval Christian chroniclers suggested Peter rather than Urban was the true originator of the First Crusade: see Whalen, *Dominion of God*, 55-6.

to ingratiate himself to burghers, the aristocracy, and the nobility. Thus it was to every segment of society that he spread word of the plight of holy sites and churches he claimed to have found in squalor and disrepair on his previous, alleged, journey to Jerusalem. He rankled listeners further by telling of the total devastation visited upon Christians by Muslims in the Holy Land—stories of chaste nuns and gentle priests raped by militant Muslims, and those of simple pilgrims robbed of what few belongings they had secured for their travels. He petitioned the faithful to join him in reclaiming Jerusalem in an effort to not only right these wrongs that had been committed against Christ, the saints, and the sacred places but, specifically, in anticipation of the Second Coming and the dawning of the final era that was sure to follow.⁸⁵

Throughout France and the Rhineland, ecclesiastics and the laity alike were receptive and contributed to the apocalyptic fervor. They interpreted an infestation of swarming insects, a comet, and an earthquake, among other unusual natural phenomena, as signs that the end of one era was at hand and the beginning of a new salvific one was nigh.⁸⁶ The devastating insects were, after all, akin to the plague of locusts visited on Egypt as part of the Hebrews' deliverance in the Exodus.⁸⁷ The comet was like the star at the Nativity which pointed the way to the newborn king of the Jews who would rescue

⁸⁵ For a discussion of renewed claims of Peter the Hermit's significance in inciting the First Crusade, see Ernest O. Blake and Colin Morris, "A Hermit Goes to War: Peter and the Origins of the First Crusade," in *Monks, Hermits and the Ascetic Tradition*, ed. William J. Sheils, Studies in Church History 22 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985), 79-107; Flori, *Pierre l'Ermite*, 19-29; Colin Morris, "Peter the Hermit and the Chroniclers," in *The First Crusade: Origins and Impact*, ed. John Phillips (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 21-34; and Rubenstein, *Armies of Heaven*, 12-14. By contrast, Whalen, *Dominion of God*, 52-3, suggests that Urban was responsible for spreading these accusations to the laity.

⁸⁶ Cohn, *Pursuit of the Millennium*, 63; McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 92-3; Rubenstein, *Armies of Heaven*, 45.

⁸⁷ See Ex. 10:12-18.

God's people from servitude and exile.⁸⁸ And the earthquake was reminiscent of how the earth shook at Golgotha after Jesus had ransomed humankind through his death.⁸⁹ Each was connected, in one way or another, to holy redemption; and it seemed reasonable to associate portents to the events they portended, sign to signified, projecting past moments of salvation history onto the future based on a symmetry of symbols.

This typological correlation—not to mention, appropriation—of sacred history proved disastrous for the Ashkenazim. Ravaging peasants traveling through the Rhineland en route to Jerusalem clamored for Jews they encountered along the way to convert to Christianity, claiming the occurrence of miraculous signs was undeniable evidence that Christ was the awaited Jewish Messiah and that his return was fast approaching.⁹⁰ When the Ashkenazim refused, the *pauperes Christi*, or “poor of Christ,” as they were known, sometimes settled for bribes to offset the expense of traveling to Jerusalem.⁹¹ Members of the petty aristocracy, joined by their knights, sometimes priests, and local townsfolk were not always so easily appeased. For, despite Urban's south-easterly directive, some crusaders interpreted his message of righteous vengeance as pertaining to all perceived enemies of Christ, Christianity, and Christians, both foreign and domestic. And, by the spring of 1096 C.E., they began to question the logic of

⁸⁸ See Matt. 2:2; 27:37.

⁸⁹ See Matt. 27:51.

⁹⁰ Cohn, *Pursuit of the Millennium*, 69-73; Chazan, “Let Not a Remnant or a Residue Escape,” 303; Rubenstein, *Armies of Heaven*, 45-7.

⁹¹ Eidelberg, *Jews and the Crusaders*, 4, states that Jewish bribery of Christians and the safety it bought was not uncommon. Riley-Smith, “The First Crusade,” 56-7, contends that the bishops are depicted as more susceptible to bribes than the *pauperes*, and that when there are instances of the poor as pacified by profit it was out of economic hardship. That bribery was resorted to and was, at times, effective is attested to in the Hebrew crusade narratives. See, for example, *The Mainz Anonymous*, in Haverkamp, 259-61; Roos, A10.

traveling so far to reclaim the territory where Christ lived and died when the presumed descendants of first-century C.E. Jews they held responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus—those who had committed the paramount affront in need of avenging—were permitted to remain unmolested in their midst. To ease their consciences on two fronts, some swore to kill at least one representative of the ancient Jewish enemy before rushing into the general melee of battle against the newer Muslim foe.⁹²

Truth be told, ecclesiastics had mulled over the idea of Jews as significant actors in the eschaton for some time before it took hold in Northern Europe through the writings and sermons of the above-mentioned reformers or crusaders seeking revenge. Early patristic authors Bishop Irenaeus of Lyon (d. 202 C.E.), Hippolytus of Rome (d. 235 C.E.), and Cyril of Jerusalem (d. 386 C.E.), among others, had each promoted the idea that the chief persecutor of Christians and enemy of Christ, Antichrist, was of Jewish descent. He was a bane to Christ, Christianity, and Christians because of his successes in leading others (all non-Christians, but particularly Jews) astray through false interpretation of the Hebrew Bible—that is, interpretation which did not validate the messiahship of Jesus.⁹³ These associations between Jews and adherence to Antichrist and

⁹² For the ubiquitous medieval use of “Christ killers” as a referent to medieval Jews, see Jeremy Cohen, “The Jews as the Killers of Christ in the Latin Tradition, from Augustine to the Friars,” *Traditio* 39 (1983): 1-27; idem, *Sanctifying the Name of God*, 2. The historical interpretation that crusaders were motivated to avenge Jesus’s crucifixion by harming or converting medieval Jews has been common among scholars who view the crusades as primarily motivated by religious or spiritual reasons: see Benjamin Z. Kedar, “Crusade Historians and the Massacres of 1096,” *Jewish History* 12, no. 2 (1998): 16-18, 22-5; Rubenstein, *Armies of Heaven*, 50. Malkiel, “Destruction or Conversion,” 257-80, and Chazan, “‘Let Not a Remnant or a Residue Escape,’” 289-313, especially 291-300, have extended this argument by showing that the Hebrew crusade narratives, in addition to their Latin counterparts, suggest that avenging the crucifixion of Jesus specifically through the slaughter of Jews rather than through conversion was foremost on the minds of at least a faction of crusaders.

⁹³ For a discussion of the development of the idea that Antichrist was a Jew, see Emerson, *Antichrist in the Middle Ages*, 8, 46, 79-83, especially; and C. E. Hill, “Antichrist from the Tribe of Dan,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 46, no. 1 (1995): 99-117.

his teachings became increasingly common over the course of the Middle Ages. They figured prominently, for instance, in the eleventh-century C.E. Latin redaction of the third-century C.E. *Tiburtine Sibylline Oracle* and the late seventh-century C.E. *Revelations of Pseudo-Methodius*. These two Christian apocalypses found their way to Northern Europe from the Levant along the trade and pilgrimage routes of the High Middle Ages and would become especially significant to the intelligentsia and the laity alike in the years leading up to and throughout the crusading era as prophecies of their own time. A Jewish Antichrist also appears in the tenth-century C.E. biography *Libellus de Antichristo*, or Book of the Antichrist, by Abbot Adso of Montier-en-Der (c. 910-92 C.E.). And the trope was common in the standard biblical exegesis of twelfth-century C.E. Latin Christendom, the *Glossa ordinaria*, or Ordinary Gloss, as well as in the sermons, art, and literature produced throughout the remainder of the European Middle Ages. In each of these media Jews were regularly represented as cohorts of, or symbolically equivalent to, well-known apocalyptic antagonists drawn from the Johannine Apocalypse, such as: the False Prophet; the Whore, Babylon the Great; the Beast; or any number of other unsavory animals and insects.⁹⁴

As the writings and sermons of Agobard, Amulo, Hrabanus, Adémar, and Rudolphus attest, the association between Jews and the spread of false doctrine readily morphed into an association between Jews and all threats to Christianity. Indeed, this

⁹⁴ See Cohn, *Pursuit of the Millennium*, 32; Bernard McGinn, ed., *Apocalyptic Spirituality: Treatises and Letters of Lactantius, Adso of Montier-en-Der, Joachim of Fiore, the Franciscan Spirituals, Savonarola* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1979), 81; Emerson, *Antichrist in the Middle Ages*, 46-9, 74-83; Lipton, *Images of Intolerance*, especially 113-40; Strickland, "Antichrist and the Jews in Medieval Art," 1-50; and Natalie E. Latteri, "A Dialogue on Disaster: Antichrists in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses and their Medieval Recensions," *Quidditas* 38 (forthcoming).

heavy-handed categorization of Christians against all others—the presumed followers of Antichrist—colored mid-eleventh-century C.E. reports of al-Hakim’s persecution of Christian Europeans in the Levant by Adémar and Rudolphus. Both claimed that French Jews had colluded with the distant Muslim ruler to hasten the demise of Christian morale and the devastation of the Christian populace by writing to him warning that Christians sought to invade and conquer his territory and advising the caliph to destroy the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. The presumed Jewish association with Antichrist is also believed to have informed the earliest known medieval pogroms in the European cities of Rouen (1007 C.E.), Limoges (1010 C.E.), Mainz (1012 C.E.), and Rome (1020 C.E.), where Jews were forced to convert or face expulsion and, in some cases, execution.⁹⁵ Diabolical associations went hand in hand with accusations of Jews practicing witchcraft too in Trier (1060s C.E.), where Archbishop Everard unsuccessfully attempted to convert or expel those charged based on trumped-up accusations.⁹⁶ It is not surprising that each violent outbreak occurred in conjunction with reports of heresy or diabolism. Agobard’s, Amulo’s, and Hrabanus Maurus’s ninth-century C.E. depiction of *Toledot Yeshu* and anti-Judaic treatises, and the late tenth- and eleventh-century C.E. sermons and treatises of Adémar, Rudolphus, and others, worked to normalize anti-Jewish sentiment and to justify it through accusations that Jews were the group most responsible for spreading false doctrine, anti-sacerdotalism, and biblical literalism among an easily seduced and

⁹⁵ Robert Chazan, “1007-1012: Initial Crisis,” 108-13; Fried, “Awaiting the End of Time,” 60; Frassetto, “Heretics and Jews,” 44-50; Callahan, “Al-Hākīm, Charlemagne, and the Destruction of the Holy Sepulcher,” 48; idem, “The Cross, the Jews, and the Destruction of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in the Writings of Ademar of Chabannes,” in Frassetto, *Christian Attitudes toward the Jews*, 15-23; Palmer, *Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages*, 219; Rubenstein, *Armies of Heaven*, 5-8.

⁹⁶ Riley-Smith, “The First Crusade,” 53n13; Roos, ‘*God Wants It!*’, 39.

heretically “Judaizing” laity.

The Rhineland pogroms of 1096 C.E. were part of this developing ideology of Jews as demonic apocalyptic antagonists who threatened Christendom.⁹⁷ Taking place between May and July, the interrelated series of persecutions are believed to have originated some time earlier, in December of 1095 C.E. in Rouen, not long after Urban’s November address at Clermont. Though suffering some casualties, the majority of the Jewish community there was able to secure safety by pleading sanctuary of their neighbors and bribing the growing mob. Those who survived warned their coreligionists living along the Rhine, Mosel, and Danube, writing to the leaders of the community in the capital city of the Ashkenazic Jewry at Mainz to alert them of the impending danger. Yet, their admonitions went unheeded and, by the time the Rhenish communities acknowledged the incendiary rhetoric of Peter and other itinerant preachers who had begun rousing the masses that April, were of little effect.⁹⁸

The most prominent communities of Ashkenazic Jews, and those struck early on, were in the bustling imperial cities of Speyer, Worms, and Mainz, which were located on popular trade and pilgrimage routes. Known collectively to Ashkenazic Jews by the acronym ShUM—Sh(Speyer)U(Worms)M(Mainz)—these three cities housed the largest population and served as the cultural center of Northern European Jews at the time.⁹⁹ The academy of Jewish law, or *yeshivah*, at Mainz was chief among those in Northern Europe

⁹⁷ See Chazan, “‘Let Not a Remnant or a Residue Escape,’” 302; Rubenstein, *Armies of Heaven*, 49-52.

⁹⁸ Eidelberg, introduction to *Jews and the Crusaders*, 4-5; Riley-Smith, “The First Crusade,” 51-3; Chazan, *In the Year 1096*, 21.

⁹⁹ The acronym “ShUM” is used in many texts of Judaic scholarship to denote the cities of Speyer, Worms, and Mainz, as well as the territory of these cities’ influence. The acronym is also found on the UNESCO World Heritage webpage, see <http://www.whc.unesco.org> (accessed November 20, 2014).

at the time and was closely associated with the *yeshivot* (plural of *yeshivah*) at Worms and Speyer. The leading rabbis at one typically had been trained at, and had family members, teachers, and pupils at the others, helping to form a close-knit oligarchy that adjudicated religious practice and daily life throughout the region.¹⁰⁰

The community at Speyer was the first of the three to be attacked, on May 3rd, or the 8th of Iyyar according to the Jewish lunar calendar.¹⁰¹ Neither Latin nor Hebrew sources identify a leader of this group of persecutors; they note only that it began with crusaders—sometimes depicted as exclusively French while, at others, cast as a combination of French and German forces—who, together with local townspeople, attacked Jews as they left synagogue services. The remainder of the Jewish community fled to the bishop’s palace for safety and were rescued.¹⁰² The mob, identified only ambiguously in Hebrew accounts as *oyebim*, enemies, then moved north to attack Worms,

¹⁰⁰ Ephraim Kanarfogel, *“Peering through the Lattices”: Mystical, Magical, and Pietistic Dimensions in the Tosafist Period* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2000), 40.

¹⁰¹ The Gregorian dates in the following section are based on those listed by Riley-Smith, “The First Crusade,” 53. The Hebrew dates are taken from the extant Hebrew crusade narratives.

¹⁰² Some scholars perpetuate the fiction that Emicho of Flonheim was the leader of even the earliest Rhineland massacres of Jews. See, for example, H. H. Ben-Sasson, *A History of the Jewish People* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976), 413-18; Riley-Smith, “The First Crusade,” 51-2; and idem, *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading*, 50-7. For his part, Robert Chazan vacillates, sometimes placing Emicho at the earliest attacks and, at others, noting the different treatment of the community at Mainz in the so-called Hebrew chronicles when Emicho was present in contrast to Speyer and Worms. See Chazan, “The Mainz Anonymous: Historiographic Perspectives,” 57-8, contra idem, *In the Year 1096*, 34. Kenneth Stow, “Conversion, Apostasy, and Apprehensiveness: Emicho of Flonheim and the Fear of Jews in the Twelfth Century,” *Speculum* 76, no. 4 (2001): 911, is more explicit and points out that the Hebrew crusade narratives only mention Emicho in connection to the devastation of the Mainz community and that only one Latin chronicle explicitly mentioned Emicho in both Mainz and Cologne, another site of persecution.

sometime between May 5th and May 18th through either the 20th or the 25th.¹⁰³ Shortly thereafter, Count Emicho of Flonheim (d. 1108 C.E.) joined the fray and led what would become the most documented and most severe of the anti-Jewish assaults in the Rhineland, occurring at Mainz through the 29th of May,¹⁰⁴ perhaps owing to his delusional aspirations that he was the Last Emperor foretold of in the *Tiburtine Sibylline Oracle* who would witness the conversion of all Jews before Christ's return.¹⁰⁵

During April through late May, another group, headed by a certain Peter—perhaps that self-proclaimed prophet of the Apocalypse, Peter the Hermit—descended eastward into the archbishopric of Trier and its subsidiary bishopric of Metz from France. Though the crusading horde was satisfied with Jewish bribes, the local townsfolk, described as having been whipped into a frenzy by preachers and envious of their co-religionists who had succeeded in causing Jewish suffering, called for the execution of their own Jewish neighbors. The bishop of Trier had initially tried to protect the Jews, but he gave them over to the crowd when the mob threatened him too.¹⁰⁶ Unidentified crusaders and simple folk also attacked the Jews of Regensburg, “converting” the entire community by forcing

¹⁰³ Modern scholars date the beginning of the attack on the Worms Jewry to sometime between May 18th and May 20th based on a reading of Latin and Hebrew sources. See Riley-Smith, “The First Crusade,” in Sheils, *Persecution and Toleration*, 52n5; Chazan, *In the Year 1096*, 31. The Hebrew crusade narratives, however, include two conflicting series of dates for the attack on Worms. *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson* and *The Chronicle of Eliezer bar Nathan* indicate that the attacks began on the 23rd of Iyyar, or the 18th of May, and culminated seven days later with the confrontation at the bishop's palace: Haverkamp, 269-77; Roos, A16. *The Mainz Anonymous*, by contrast, dates the beginning of the persecution at Worms to the 10th of Iyyar, or May 5th, and the final conflict at the bishop's palace to the 25th of Iyyar, or May 20th: *The Mainz Anonymous*, Haverkamp, 281-83; Roos, A19-20.

¹⁰⁴ These commonly accepted dates for the persecution at Mainz only work if based on the information in *The Mainz Anonymous*. It would be, presumably, at least a day or so later if based on *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson* and *The Chronicle of Eliezer bar Nathan*, which mark the ending of persecution of the Speyer community, roughly 100 kilometers to the South, to May 25th.

¹⁰⁵ See Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, 73; Chazan, “‘Let Not a Remnant or a Residue Escape’,” 305-06; Rubenstein, *Armies of Heaven*, 50-2.

¹⁰⁶ *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 471-75; Roos, A112-16.

them into the river and making the sign of the cross.¹⁰⁷ By late May, a mob including a certain Duke Godfrey progressed to Cologne and, through early June, hunted those who had fled for their lives to the city's surrounding villages of Neuss, Wevelinghoven, Eller, Xanten, Mehr, Tremonia (Dortmund), and Kerpen. Another group believed to have been led by a priest, Folcmar, similarly attacked the Jewries of Bohemia and Prague, which reportedly withstood the onslaught through knightly combat before resettling to an area across the river from their original homes.¹⁰⁸

According to some estimates, the pogroms claimed up to 8,000 souls and resulted in the devastation of many Rhenish communities.¹⁰⁹ Extant Latin and Hebrew accounts of the events suggest that the majority of victims had been slain by the mob. Most who survived had converted to Christianity, either willingly—however grudgingly—in the hopes of preserving their lives until danger had passed, or as a product of coercion.¹¹⁰ A significantly smaller group was sacrificed by coreligionists or committed suicide, as martyrs, in *kiddush ha-Shem*.

The variety of reactions reflects the lack of an accepted ideology and response

¹⁰⁷ *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 481; Roos, A118.

¹⁰⁸ *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 483; Roos, A119. Riley-Smith, "The First Crusade," 52. Duke Godfrey is believed to be Godfrey of Bouillon: see Eidelberg, *Jews and the Crusaders*, 147n39.

¹⁰⁹ Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, 69, has suggested that 4,000–8,000 Jews were slain. Other scholars, such as David Nirenberg, "The Rhineland Massacres of Jews in the First Crusade: Memories Medieval and Modern," in *Medieval Concepts of the Past: Ritual, Memory, Historiography*, ed. Gerd Althoff, Johannes Fried, and Patrick J. Geary, Publications of the German Historical Institute (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 282, do not provide a total number, but list the casualties from the three most prominent Jewries in Mainz, Speyer, and Worms. The reliability of these numbers is questionable, however, as they are based on infamously dubious chronicle accounts that were regularly inflated or minimized to suit the author's desired effect.

¹¹⁰ Of course, there is a possibility that some members of the Jewish community also converted sincerely, though neither Latin nor Hebrew accounts suggest as much. For distinctions among types of coercion, see note 27 in the Introduction above.

strategy as well as a lack of anticipation of impending danger. The latter suggests that the Rhineland Jewry had been caught off guard. Surprise is somewhat understandable for official ecclesiastical policy regarding Jews had led to hope—and, at times, overconfidence—among eleventh-century C.E. Ashkenazim that any apocalyptic or diabolical associations Christians had linked to Jews would be allayed and that any persecution that might arise would not lead to forced conversion or physical violence.¹¹¹ This uneasy doctrine of toleration is credited especially to the Church Father, Augustine of Hippo (354-430 C.E.), who had called for Christians to permit Jews to live among them and not to harm them.¹¹² His admonition was based on the belief that Christ's Second Coming would only be realized once the majority of Jews recognized the error of literalist interpretation of Scripture and finally accepted Jesus as the long-awaited

¹¹¹ For an indication that Ashkenazic Jews may have been aware of official Church policy regarding Jews and referenced it in their encounters with would-be persecutors, see Robert Chazan's discussion of *The Chronicle of Yekutiel* in "Initial Crisis," 108. It should be noted that it seems suspect that this line of reasoning would have been used by the historical Yekutiel, who had witnessed violent conversionary efforts in his own community; but the fact that a mid-eleventh-century C.E. Jewish author wrote it does indicate cognizance of the doctrine among eleventh-century Ashkenazim.

¹¹² Augustine, *The City of God*, 18.46 in *The City of God, Books XVII-XXII*, trans. Gerald G. Walsh and Daniel J. Honan, *The Fathers of the Church* 24 (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America, 1954), 164-65.

Messiah by converting to Christianity of their own accord.¹¹³ The Church would go on to reiterate the prohibition against forcibly converting Jews time and again, most notably at the Fourth Council of Toledo in 633.¹¹⁴

Reform and a Rallying Cry (II): A Jewish Response to a Shared Milieu

Probably even more significant than any ideological underpinnings for toleration, the late tenth and eleventh centuries had been a period of prosperity and relative security for the Ashkenazim in which commerce and culture thrived. Rulers—typically the emperor or an

¹¹³ There are varied schools of thought regarding the reach of Augustinian tolerance. A number of scholars have approached the topic from a materialist perspective and have pointed out that the tenet of qualified toleration did not have a major impact in terms of socio-economic and political relationships between Jews and the leaders of various communities throughout the Latin West—that is to say, Jews were permitted to reside throughout different areas because of the benefits (usually economic) they provided to the local ruler and not due to any reverence for Judaism, or in the hopes of successful proselytization. Likewise, when violence erupted against Jews, it was not an intended breach of an unrecognized or irrelevant Augustinian ideal. See, for instance, David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Elukin, *Living Together, Living Apart*; and Robert Chazan, *Reassessing Jewish Life in Medieval Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). While these texts do make some valid points, they (especially Nirenberg's) are largely reactionary, written in response to R. I. Moore's sweeping, Foucauldian generalization of the medieval emergence of a bureaucratized web of intolerance in *The Formulation of a Persecuting Society: Authority and Deviance in Western Europe, 950-1250* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987). Among those who do consider Augustinian tolerance to have had an impact on Jewish-Christian relations are Langmuir (*Toward a Definition of Antisemitism*), David E. Timmer ("Biblical Exegesis and the Jewish-Christian Controversy in the Early Twelfth Century," *Church History* 58, no. 3 [1989]: 309-21), and Anna Sapir Abulafia (*Christians and Jews in the Twelfth-Century Renaissance* [London: Routledge, 1995]), who opine that its dissipation began to emerge with the rationalist turn during the long twelfth century C.E., in which those attempting to effectively argue the supreme coherence of Christianity did so at the expense of Judaism and Jews. Jeremy Cohen has repeatedly claimed that Augustinian tolerance only truly began to dissolve in the thirteenth century via the polemics of the friars. See *The Friars and the Jews: The Evolution of Medieval Anti-Judaism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1982); idem, "Scholarship and Intolerance in the Medieval Academy: The Study and Evaluation of Judaism in European Christendom," *American Historical Review* 91 (1986): 592-613; idem, *Living Letters of the Law: Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christianity* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), 23-65. There is much to appreciate in these arguments; however, as the emergence of widespread anti-Jewish persecution witnessed in the pogroms of 1096 C.E. occurred before the majority of intellectual justifications for it, one may deduce a somewhat earlier fomentation and a motivation other than heightened rationalism and rationalization. Vengeance, as the reason given in Latin and Hebrew narratives depicting the pogroms, is not only consistent but coincides with teachings of the Church in regard to Jewish culpability for Christ's crucifixion.

¹¹⁴ See Friedrich Lotter, *Die Konzeption des Wendenkreuzzugs* (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1977), 34-8. Many thanks to Matthew Carver for providing a translation of this text.

imperial bishop—had invited Jews to settle in the same cities the pogroms of 1096 would later be waged in.¹¹⁵ As Agobard and the other reformers had complained, the Christian overlords were, in general, most amicable to the Ashkenazim and granted rights and privileges in exchange for the capital they believed Jews would provide them in the form of taxes collected or credit granted. Through such arrangements, Jews became vital members of the broader society in ways that, as noted above, disturbed some ecclesiastics who felt that their presence undermined Christianity and had led to a slackening of religious regulations in a manner that called their self-identification as *verus Israel* into question while contributing to the reign of Antichrist. The regulations they most worried about included those connected to biblical notions of idolatry—the Mosaic Law that commanded God’s chosen people not to aid in or imitate the religious practices of their neighbors, or enter into economic contracts with them, or practice social integration and/or assimilation lest the faithful be led astray.

The above-mentioned treatises and sermons of reformers from the ninth century C.E. on reflect a growing sentiment that Christians had, in fact, faltered in regard to each of these practices. Recall, the zealots had argued that studying the *Hebraica veritas* with rabbis and employing their exegesis constituted “Judaizing”—imitating the idolatrous Jews who preferred literalism over the allegorical and typological “truth” of Scripture that announced the messiahship of Jesus.¹¹⁶ They had balked at the way rulers permitted Jews to spread their blasphemous anti-Gospel unchecked, and had either allowed or

¹¹⁵ Metz was settled around 890 C.E.; Regensburg in 981 C.E.; Mainz in 1012 C.E., coinciding with the earlier, above-noted, persecution; Worms in 1034 C.E.; Trier in 1066 C.E., again coinciding with persecution; Cologne in 1040 C.E., and Prague in 1090 C.E.

¹¹⁶ See also Timmer, “Biblical Exegesis and the Jewish-Christian Controversy,” 309-21.

turned a blind eye to the construction of new synagogues. They had recognized occupying a subservient position as a domestic or laborer, or trading with Jewish merchants, or entering into business partnership with Jews—as many Christians would throughout the Middle Ages—as entering into economic contracts with idolaters, and thus facilitating their unholy religious practices. And they were suspicious of the tendency of members of court to bestow special gifts upon members of the Jewish populace for fear of sparking God’s ire in a manner that warranted divine retribution.

Contemporary Ashkenazic reformers were similarly concerned about amicable inter-communal relations that had been facilitated by the relaxation of religious regulation and how it had and would continue to impact the community and affect their own identity as *verus Israel*. For some rabbis espoused especially lenient *halakhic* interpretations in regard to relations with Christians and condoned previously forbidden economic, cultural, and social interaction to allow for further benefits and, inevitably, greater integration of Jews in society.¹¹⁷ In reality, lenient and severe interpretation of *Halakhah* had always existed side by side because the rabbis charged with governing their communities had to consider the needs of the flesh as much as those of the spirit. This balancing act is evident even in the antique codification of the Oral Law found in the Palestinian and Babylonian Talmudim (plural of Talmud). The Babylonian Talmud would gain prominence in the late tenth through twelfth centuries C.E. and supersede the Palestinian Talmud that had been favored among the Northern Italian Jews who had migrated to the Frankish Empire in the Carolingian era thanks, in part, to R. Gershom ben Judah (c. 960-1028 C.E.). Also known

¹¹⁷ Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance*, especially 24-47.

colloquially as *rabbenu*, “our rabbi,” and, alternately, by the lofty title *Me’or ha-Golah*, “The Light of Exile,” later scholars attached Gershom’s name to the first Ashkenazic commentary on the Babylonian Talmud most likely because he promoted its study in the foremost Ashkenazic *yeshivah* at Mainz that he founded.¹¹⁸

Within the Babylonian Talmud is tractate ‘*Avodah Zarah*—a compilation of rabbinic positions devoted to specifying what actions and thoughts constituted and contributed to “foreign worship,” or idolatry. The five chapters of ‘*Avodah Zarah* include prohibitions against actions readily recognized as taboo, such as the manufacturing of idols.¹¹⁹ They also include prohibitions against actions which seemingly have little if anything to do with religion at all, such as regulating the source of manure used for planting. For the manure might come from cattle belonging to an idolater who used the proceeds of the manure sales in his idolatrous ritual, or it might potentially aid foreign worship some other way.¹²⁰ Though at times disparate, this tractate represents rabbinic efforts to advise Jewish communities regarding the appropriate degrees of division from the idolatry of surrounding cultures as well as from “heretical” Jews.

Dividing lines were not always easy for the Ashkenazim to make or keep, whether out of concern for the wishes of the Christian hosts who had invited them, or because necessity demanded that they regularly interact with the majority Christian populace, or because the Jewish community was small enough without splintering it over minutiae, or

¹¹⁸ Talya Fishman, *Becoming the People of the Talmud: Oral Torah as Written Tradition in Medieval Jewish Cultures* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 126.

¹¹⁹ See, for example, Babylonian Talmud, tractate ‘*Avodah Zarah*, 52a, in Epstein, vol. 4 of *Seder Neziqin*, 261-65.

¹²⁰ See Babylonian Talmud, tractate ‘*Avodah Zarah*, 49b, in Epstein, vol. 4 of *Seder Neziqin*, 243.

because rabbis believed that there could be significant benefits should they not think too long or hard on what might contribute to or constitute idolatry. The latter factor was significant, and not always irreligious. For example, in addition to teaching Christians the *Hebraica veritas*, Ashkenazim played a substantial role in helping to finance the competing religious institutions of Christians, epitomized in the construction and maintenance of the cathedrals at Speyer, Worms, Mainz, and a great many more. While such action undeniably constituted aiding in idolatry, it also facilitated Jewish worship. Because the Ashkenazim had proven their worth to the emperor and his appointed bishops in these cities, ShUM Jews were afforded the freedom to erect their own renowned houses of worship and study.¹²¹

Even so, not all Ashkenazim believed the benefits to Judaism and the Jewish community outweighed the consequences God had promised for transgressing the Second Commandment or any of the other related biblical passages treating idolatry. Their resistance was heightened by the fact that some communities in the late eleventh and twelfth centuries C.E. began to build their synagogues to look like Christian churches. Building commissioners, architects, and builders failed to construct traditional partitions dividing men and women as *Halakhah* required, but instead created open areas upheld by pillars resembling Christian Romanesque and later Gothic chapels. In a further breach of conduct, they adorned these sanctuaries with stained glass and taboo iconography that

¹²¹ Alfred Haverkamp, "Jews in the Medieval German Kingdom," trans. Christoph Cluse, online edition http://ubt.opus.hbz-nrw.de/volltexte/2015/916/pdf/Jews_German_Kingdom.pdf (Trier University Library, 2015), 11.

had been popularized by Christians and explicitly forbidden in ‘*Avodah Zarah*.¹²²

Rabbi Eliakim ben Joseph of Mainz (d. 1150 C.E.), a communal leader and also the father-in-law of the well-known author of one of the Hebrew narratives of the First Crusade, Eliezar bar Nathan, frowned upon such imagery in his local synagogue. While he recognized that the iconographic program was probably intended by the community to be pleasing to heaven, he believed it was more likely to be found offensive, noting that similar imagery had contributed to idolatry in Israel’s past and that using it now disregarded talmudic prohibition against imitating foreign worship.¹²³ Some of his peers shared Eliakim’s opinion. They considered the Christianized synagogues corrupted houses of worship that disturbed God and sparked the divine retribution manifested in the devastation of the ShUM community during the Crusades. In time, the community’s feelings of culpability led them to alter synagogue designs as a precaution against further attack.¹²⁴

Halakhic leniency and the desire to reform it is also evident in rabbinic debate regarding economic contracts—specifically, when and what Jews should be able to buy, sell, or trade to Christians lest they inadvertently contribute to idolatry. ‘*Avodah Zarah* opens with a series of prohibitions against conducting business near the period of religious festivals, including the particularly stringent regulation that “On the three days preceding the festivities of idolaters, it is forbidden to transact business with them, to lend

¹²² See Iliia Rodov, “The Development of Medieval and Renaissance Sculptural Decoration in Ashkenazi Synagogues from Worms to the Cracow Area” (PhD dissertation, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2003), 52-74.

¹²³ Rodov, “The Development of Medieval and Renaissance Sculptural Decoration,” 43.

¹²⁴ Rodov, “The Development of Medieval and Renaissance Sculptural Decoration,” 31-33.

articles to them or borrow any from them, to advance, or receive any money from them, to repay a debt, or receive repayment from them.”¹²⁵ Evidently at least one Ashkenazic rabbi attempted to impose a literal interpretation of this stricture on his community, causing public outcry and a request for a higher authority to adjudicate.

As one of the foremost ShUM rabbis who regularly responded to the inquiries of smaller suburban communities throughout Ashkenaz, Gershom declared that business should be permitted within the period of days traditionally forbidden because it was *she‘ath ha-dehaq*, “a case of emergency,”¹²⁶ and he beseeched God to manifest His mercy rather than judgement.¹²⁷ For Jewish livelihood depended on regular business transactions and the probability of feeding, clothing, and sheltering small communities would be devastatingly limited if they were to avoid transactions during festivals in medieval Europe where, it has been estimated, nearly half of the year was engaged in religious celebration, feast, or fast.¹²⁸ To support his argument, Gershom cited a lenient position on the prohibition in question first developed by the third-century C.E. R. Johanan, who claimed that “the Gentiles outside the land [of Israel] are not idolaters; they only continue the customs of their ancestors,” and added that ““The Gentiles outside the land of Israel do not worship idols,’ even though they do worship them it does not count

¹²⁵ Babylonian Talmud, tractate *‘Avodah Zarah*, 2a, in Epstein, vol. 4 of *Seder Neziḳin*, 1.

¹²⁶ Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance*, 33.

¹²⁷ Simḥa Goldin, *Apostasy and Jewish Identity in High Middle Ages Northern Europe: ‘Are You Still My Brother?’*, trans. Jonathan Chipman (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), 10.

¹²⁸ For a generalized discussion of liturgical or sacred time versus secular time for medieval Christians, see Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, c. 1400–1580* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), 46-7.

as idolatry.”¹²⁹

This formulation is vague. According to Katz, it was an attempt to maintain the religious categorization of Christians as idolaters while softening the practical applications of the prohibition and thus creating Christians as a class apart from the idolaters mentioned in either the Bible or the Talmud.¹³⁰ Goldin interprets the rabbi’s justification of economic engagement as part of ongoing efforts to welcome apostate Jews back into the community in hopes of reverting them.¹³¹ But it had also helped to justify a wide variety of business transactions with Gentiles as well as Jewish-Christians that might traditionally be considered aiding idolatry. And as a direct result of Gershom’s decision, Ashkenazim from the eleventh century C.E. on were legitimized in practices Agobard’s ninth-century C.E. complaint suggests they had been engaged in for some time, including the selling and trading to Christians of meat and wine that was not fit for Jewish consumption according to the laws of *kashrut*, or ritual purity.¹³²

Along with changing ideas of what constituted idolatry, in time, even designations of ritually pure foodstuffs for Jews would be redefined, much to the dismay of some reform-minded members of the community. For instance, comparatively well-off Jewish employers or masters taught and then relied upon their Gentile servants and/or slaves to

¹²⁹ גויים שבחוצה לארץ לאו עובדי ע"ז אלא מנהג אבותיהם בידיהם . . . שגויים בחוץ לארץ לאו עובדי ע"ז הם מותר *Teshuvot R. Gershom Me'or ha-Golah*, ed. Shlomo Eidelberg (New York: Yeshiva University Press, 1955), 75-7; Babylonian Talmud, tractate *Hullin*, 13b, in vol. 2 of *Seder Qodashim*, ed. I. Epstein (London: Soncino Press, 1935), 61.

¹³⁰ Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance*, 33.

¹³¹ Goldin, *Apostasy and Jewish Identity*, 10.

¹³² See *Teshuvot Rashi*, ed. I. Elfenbein (New York: Defus Ha'Ahim Shulzinger, 1943), 327; Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance*, 47.

make food used in ritual meals—such as *challah* bread for the Sabbath—that talmudic prohibitions maintained should have been made by a Jewish woman.¹³³ And the eleventh-century C.E. rabbi Solomon ben Samson “argued consistently against the implementation of newly issued *halakhic* rulings” which he perceived as erring on the side of leniency, including the consumption of meat that had not been slaughtered appropriately in conformity to the laws of *kashrut*.¹³⁴

Gershom’s categorization of Christians as an idolatrous class apart from talmudic ordinances was also employed to justify allowances for the buying, selling, and pawning of clothing and ritual objects, such as vestments and chalices once used in Mass by ecclesiastics. Though these objects had, without a doubt, contributed to perceptually idolatrous non-Jewish religious services, rabbis rationalized such transactions by claiming that the priests who sought to pawn or sell the items owned them personally and that all material objects lost their spiritual significance when not in use for ritual purposes.¹³⁵ Even some rabbis opposed to the argument—including Gershom, who considered all objects ever used in religious ritual as part of idolatrous worship—permitted the practice based on perceived economic necessity.¹³⁶

These types of concessions were, perhaps, more understandable for Jews who lived in small, isolated communities and who depended on economic transactions with Gentiles to subsist. But this does not seem to have been the case for the ShUM Jewry,

¹³³ Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance*, 42.

¹³⁴ Kanarfogel, “Peering through the Lattices”, 38-40.

¹³⁵ Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance*, 44-5.

¹³⁶ *Teshuvot R. Gershom*, ed. Eidelberg, 21.

where rabbis also condoned more social interaction with Christians than was either traditionally acceptable or due to economic necessity. Jews, for instance, dined with Christian friends on occasion, received Passover gifts from Christians and, in turn, gave gifts to Christians on Purim. Each of these acts was forbidden according to even moderate *halakhic* interpretations. Yet, perhaps as a testament to the extent of lax regulation at the time, even the most renowned biblical exegete to have studied at the ShUM *yeshivot*, Rabbi Solomon ben Isaac (1040-1105 C.E.), known to posterity as Rashi, sometimes condemned such acts even while engaging in them.¹³⁷

Each of the above instances of *halakhic* leniency indicates amicable inter-confessional relations. They were so amicable, in fact, that Jewish reformers voiced concern about the deleterious effects of overfamiliarity with Christians provoking God's wrath. And the decades, years, and months leading up to the pogroms of 1096 C.E. provided ample evidence for those so inclined to interpret divine displeasure in Jewish hardships. For there had been socio-political warning signs that dangerous anti-Jewish attacks were a very real possibility, hovering just below the precarious calm of pragmatic cooperation. To be sure, hindsight reveals that the handful of instances of violent conflict that had occurred earlier in the eleventh century C.E., and the letter of warning from the community at Rouen to Mainz, should have provoked more concern. It is all the more difficult to understand why these did not when the very foundation of the Jewry at Speyer—the first of the ShUM communities to be attacked—was the result of anti-Jewish persecution in Mainz just about a decade before, around 1080 C.E., when members of the

¹³⁷ See Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance*, 43; Roos, 'God Wants It!', 40-1.

Mainz Jewry began searching for a fortified city to move to.

The Mainz Jewry had been prompted to migrate out of fear for their safety because of infighting between the archbishop and petty ecclesiastics. The latter had joined with local leading urban factions in the Saxon Revolt when Emperor Henry IV (1056-1105 C.E.) and his appointed bishops were demonized and their authority questioned as a result of the related Investiture Conflict. This put Jews in a precarious position as “outsiders” who had been invited by rulers whose legitimacy was suspect and, when fire broke out in the Jewish quarter of Mainz in 1084 C.E., the community became increasingly anxious about what their burgher neighbors might do to them. With an eye to the economic and cultural benefits these prominent Jews might provide, the bishop of Speyer, Rüdiger, invited not only the Mainz but also the Worms Jewry to move to Speyer.¹³⁸ He granted those who accepted the most lucrative charter throughout the Germanic realm and secured their safety behind fortified walls.¹³⁹ Those who chose not to move suffered the worst persecution in the crusade pogroms of 1096 C.E., with total casualties for the Mainz Jewry estimated at over 1,000 and those for the Worms community reaching approximately 800 in comparison to the ten or eleven reported lost at Speyer.¹⁴⁰

The apocalyptic zeitgeist of Northern Europe during the High Middle Ages also

¹³⁸ Chazan, *In the Year 1096*, 6-7.

¹³⁹ Haverkamp, “Jews in the Medieval German Kingdom,” 12-13; Robert Chazan, *The Jews of Medieval Western Christendom: 1000-1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 171; Roos, ‘*God Wants It!*’, 37.

¹⁴⁰ *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 263; Roos, A13, indicates that eleven members of the Jewish community at Speyer had been killed. By contrast, *The Chronicle of Eliezer bar Nathan*, Haverkamp, 263; Roos, A13, indicates that there were ten victims.

suggests that Jews might have anticipated, and so, been better prepared for the Rhineland pogroms—or, at the very least, more suspicious of their Christian neighbors. For the martyrological and messianic posturing, as well as the eschatological rhetoric and calculations, had Jewish counterparts. *Aggadah*, or homiletic folklore, included in the recently popularized Babylonian Talmud provided the main source for many martyrological models of resistance to assimilation that rivaled those in the Christian pantheon of saints that had become so popular during the eleventh and twelfth centuries.¹⁴¹ These included the martyr priests of the First Temple who willingly burned as an act of penitence for allowing the foreign conquest of God’s house, the Maccabean Mother who urged her sons to accept martyrdom rather than eat ritually impure food, the ten rabbis who refused to commit idolatry or to transgress the positive commandment of prayer, and the four hundred Israelite youth who drowned rather than allow their bodies and souls to be defiled.¹⁴² *The Sefer Josippon*, Book of Josippon—a version of Josephus’s *The Jewish War* that Gershom of Mainz is also attributed with having copied in the tenth century C.E.—provided further martyrological models of resistance to the evil empire that required assimilation, particularly through its depiction of the *sicarii* warrior martyrs and their standoff at Masada.¹⁴³

In addition to these validations of martyrdom as laudable examples of resistance to assimilation, what are probably the most influential texts of medieval Hebrew

¹⁴¹ See Roos, ‘*God Wants It!*’, 105-10. The homiletic/folkloric *Aggadah* or “*aggadic* literature” is found in biblical as well as post-biblical Jewish writings. In contrast to *Halakhah*, which interprets the Law and how Jewish communities should abide it, *Aggadah* serves as the basis for many religious holidays, festivals, and customs.

¹⁴² See Introduction.

¹⁴³ See Grossman, “The Roots of *Kiddush ha-Shem*,” 117-19; Roos, ‘*God Wants It!*’, 74.

apocalyptic literature—narratives of the so-called Lost Tribes of Israel who would return to *eretz Israel* in preparation for the Messiah and recensions of what would come to be known as the *Sefer Zerubbabel*—had found their way to Northern Europe by the eleventh century C.E., perhaps on the same trade and pilgrimage routes as Christian apocalyptic literature.¹⁴⁴ These may have been joined by other popular Hebrew apocalypses, such as narratives treating the *'Otot*, or “signs” of the Messiah, and the *Sefer Eliyahu*, or Book of Elijah, as these shared many of the same personae and tropes and are largely believed to have emerged from a similar antique and early medieval Levantine context. Common features of this literature share much with Christian apocalypses and include: a call to reform; prophecy of unusual portents and a period of tribulation for the saints, culminating in an epic battle between the forces of good and evil; and a final judgement followed by the meting out of divine recompense and retribution.

As with evolving trends in Christian eschatology, medieval Jewish apocalyptic literature reflects the continuance of a shared milieu that bred inter-confessional contact and conflict, manifest in appropriation and polemic. The *Sefer Zerubbabel*, for example, borrowed heavily from Christian ideas regarding a messianic mother and emphasized the trope of corrosive femininity evident in the Hebrew Bible that had flourished in Christian apocalyptic literature, most recognizably in the personae of Babylon the Great found in

¹⁴⁴ See Silver, *History of Messianic Speculation*, 49; Prawer, *The History of the Jews in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*, 12. In contrast to Silver and Prawer who base claims of the existence of a *Sefer Zerubbabel* textual rescension in Ashkenaz on references to what appear to be the same or a similar narrative, Martha Himmelfarb, *Jewish Messiahs in a Christian Empire: A History of the Book of Zerubbabel* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017), 122-24, has recently claimed that the “earliest evidence for *Sefer Zerubbabel* in Ashkenaz comes from the second half of the twelfth century.” Himmelfarb, however, is referring to extant textual remains. She has noted that there could be a number of reasons for this dearth and does not challenge that eleventh-century C.E. rabbis made reference to the *Sefer Zerubbabel*.

the Johannine Apocalypse.¹⁴⁵ Moreover the *Sefer Zerubbabel*, along with the apocalyptic literature treating the 'Otot, signs, and the 'Aggadot ha-masiah, or Legends of the Messiah, also includes a polemical response to the Christian doctrine of the Jewish Antichrist and the host of apocalyptic antagonists who began to take on decidedly “Jewish” characteristics in the Middle Ages by casting these personae predominantly as Christian *bnei beli'al*, a term that could be translated either as “sons of worthlessness” or “sons of (the demon) Belial.”¹⁴⁶ For instance, as in the *Tiburtine Sibylline Oracle*, the Jewish version of the anti-Messiah was a final emperor who represented the fusion between a diabolical religion and imperial power—a feature of the Church since the rule of Constantine. While this also harkens back to the book of Daniel and Johannine Apocalypse, the motif takes on a specifically anti-Christian resonance in later Jewish apocalyptic literature which presents the anti-Messiah as Roman, much like the Satanic pope of “wicked Rome” in Solomon’s narrative.¹⁴⁷ By constructing their own version of a Christianized Antichrist and apocalyptic antagonists, Jews gave voice to the pressure and temptation to assimilate to the dominant Christian culture by appropriating elements of it even while urging resistance.

¹⁴⁵ This trope will be discussed at length in Chapter Three. For an introduction to and the best translation of the *Sefer Zerubbabel*, see Martha Himmelfarb, “Sefer Zerubbabel,” in *Rabbinic Fantasies: Imaginative Narratives from Classical Hebrew Literature*, ed. David Stern and Mark Jay Mirsky (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1990), 67-90. I employ Himmelfarb’s published translation unless otherwise noted. For a discussion of the messianic mother as a reflection of cultural borrowing, see eadem, “The Mother of the Messiah in the Talmud Yerushalmi and *Sefer Zerubbabel*,” in *The Talmud Yerushalmi and Graeco-Roman Culture*, ed. Peter Schäfer, Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism 93 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 369-89, and Natalie E. Latteri, “On Saints, Sinners, and Sex in the Apocalypse of St. John and the *Sefer Zerubbabel*,” *Women in Judaism: A Multidisciplinary Journal* 13, no. 1 (2016): 11-19.

¹⁴⁶ Himmelfarb, *Jewish Messiahs*, 133.

¹⁴⁷ See Himmelfarb, “Sefer Zerubbabel,” 72-3. Belial, Satan, and diabolical imperial power, will be discussed further below, especially in Chapters Two and Three. *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 299; Roos, A30.

The eleventh-century C.E. Ashkenazim also shared elements of millenarianism and computistics with their Christian neighbors. Yet, rather than anticipating messianic redemption at the thousandth year anniversary of Christ's birth or death, Jewish computators staked their claim on the anniversary of the destruction of the Second Temple.¹⁴⁸ The *Sefer Zerubbabel* indicates that 990 years after the destruction of the Second Temple, the Messiah would come and initiate the series of battles fought between faithful Jews and the forces of Persians and Romans¹⁴⁹—terms, as indicated above, which Northern Europeans readily understood to symbolize Muslims and Christians.¹⁵⁰ This calculation may have informed the messianic pretender from Lyons, France, who appeared in the 1060s C.E. and climbed to heaven on moonlit nights, leaping from treetop to treetop, his followers believed, in efforts to appear as the Messiah from the most famous Jewish apocalypse, the book of Daniel—“one like the son of man, coming with the clouds” (Dn. 7:13)—as well as in talmudic messianic musings.¹⁵¹ When 1068 C.E. had come and gone, and the flying Messiah had been executed, there remained at least one other well-known messianic computation to comfort Jews at the *fin de siècle*.

¹⁴⁸ Praver, *The History of the Jews in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*, 10. The Second Temple fell in 70 C.E. but Jews traditionally consider its demise beginning in 68 C.E.

¹⁴⁹ Himmelfarb, “Sefer Zerubbabel,” 74. See Reeves, *Trajectories*, 56n118 for an indication of how this date has led some scholars to posit an eleventh-century C.E. compositional context for this apocalypse.

¹⁵⁰ One reason that scholars such as Himmelfarb date the *Sefer Zerubbabel* to the early seventh century C.E. is because “the absence of any reference to Arabs or Muslims” in the text “indicates a date before the Muslim conquest”: Himmelfarb, *Jewish Messiahs*, 6. See also eadem, “Sefer Zerubbabel,” 67-8. This reasoning is not fully convincing. The *Sefer Zerubbabel* displays a similar absence of any explicit reference to Byzantines or Christians. Moreover, the above-noted association made by Fulcher of Chartres to Seljuk Turks as a “race of Persians” and Glaber’s presentation of al-Hakim as the “King of Babylon” indicate the fluidity of apocalyptic references in which new antagonistic groups to emerge could easily be included and conflated as types of earlier apocalyptic antagonists. The dating, compositional context, and references to Persia and Rome in the *Sefer Zerubbabel* are discussed further in Chapter Two.

¹⁵¹ See Praver, *The History of the Jews in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*, 10; Harris Lenowitz, *The Jewish Messiahs: From the Galilee to Crown Heights* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 65; Babylonian Talmud, tractate *Sanhedrin* 98a, in Epstein, vol. 3 of *Seder Neziḳin*, 663.

An interpretation of Jeremiah 31:7 (“Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob, and raise shouts for the chief of the nations; proclaim, give praise, and say, ‘Save, O Lord, your people, the remnant of Israel’”) that was based on *gematria*¹⁵² indicated that redemption should come some time during the nineteen-year lunar cycle known as Ranu—that is, sometime between the years 1085 C.E. and 1104 C.E. and right around the time of the Rhineland pogroms of the First Crusade.¹⁵³

Further contributing to the apocalyptic zeitgeist, in the years, months, weeks, and days leading up to the Rhineland pogroms, Jews experienced the same natural phenomena as their Christian neighbors, and some reacted to it with a similar mixture of foreboding and anticipation. After all, Jewish lore and prophecy, composed long before the Christian New Testament, had read into times of ecological, economic, and political benevolence and malevolence God’s reaction to human behavior and a manifestation of the divine will. Eleventh- and twelfth-century C.E. Jewish exegetes and narrators of the First Crusade would continue the tradition by referencing biblical passages alluding to eschatological weather patterns and political upheavals within the biblical narrative and relating these to their own context, and thus encouraging End Times associations.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵² The practice of *gematria* assigns numerical value to letters, words, or verses in the biblical text (and sometimes in the talmudic texts and rabbinic corpus at large) and determines other points in the biblical text (or Talmud, etc.) where the numerical value corresponds in efforts to find an esoteric proof-text to provide an understanding of the original passage in question. In Hebrew, numerals are formed out of alphabet characters. The first character in the alphabet, *aleph* (א), is one, the second character, *bet* (ב), is two, and so on. Yet this practice is hardly straightforward as there are any number of terms, verses, etc., that might have the same numerical value and render far different meanings. Debate regarding interpretation is common in this mode of exegesis, as in every other.

¹⁵³ Silver, *History of Messianic Speculation*, 58; Gershom Scholem, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism and Other Essays on Jewish Spirituality* (New York: Schocken, 1972), 1-36; Eidelberg, *Jews and the Crusaders*, 142n3; Prawer, *The History of the Jews in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*, 11.

¹⁵⁴ Silver, *History of Messianic Speculation*, 59-60. Medieval Jewish associations between weather and eschatology are mentioned further below in Chapter Four.

Surely some of the victims of the 1096 C.E. pogroms had as well.¹⁵⁵ While the martyred victims of 1096 C.E. left no records of their own, it seems likely that they performed their acts of *kiddush ha-Shem* as a means of proving their own fidelity to God. Like the martyrs of the Talmud, *Josippon*, and apocalyptic literature who had resisted or repented the assimilative tendencies that had much in common with the lenient *halakhic* interpretations of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the Ashkenazim of 1096 C.E. could imagine themselves as consummate lovers of God and valiant warriors fighting in the cosmic struggle of good versus evil, hoping to usher in messianic redemption that never came.

In the decades after the Rhineland massacres some, though not all, of the ShUM's former grandeur would return. Economically and politically, the community rebounded remarkably quickly.¹⁵⁶ The fleeting return to relative peace and prosperity was owing to joint efforts by early twelfth-century C.E. rabbis and their Christian neighbors and rulers to mend former alliances and forge new ones. In part, this was achieved through Henry IV's imperial decree, which went against contemporary ecclesiastical policy and declared that forced converts residing within his realm could legally revert to Judaism.¹⁵⁷ The issuance of new charters and the construction of new synagogues and other Jewish communal structures—such as the *mikveh*, or ritual bath—also helped to alleviate fears of further attacks.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁵ See Chazan, “‘Let Not a Remnant or a Residue Escape?’” 302-05, 307-12.

¹⁵⁶ Chazan, *European Jewry and the First Crusade*, 137-47; Elukin, *Living Together, Living Apart*, 83-4.

¹⁵⁷ Stow, “Conversion, Apostasy, and Apprehensiveness,” 926.

¹⁵⁸ *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 491-93; Roos, A123-25.

But 1096 C.E. was not forgotten. The intellectual, psychological, emotional, and spiritual scars remained and altered the community's self-identity, how they were viewed by contemporary coreligionists both in Europe and abroad, and how they were viewed by members of the dominant Christian culture. The once proud principal cities could no longer boast primacy in Torah or Talmud studies, for the seat of learning had moved from the ShUM *yeshivot* to those of Northern France in the wake of the massacres. And an extremely ascetic and often divisive reform movement known as the *Hasidei Ashkenaz*, or "Pietists of Germany," sought to fill the gap that *halakhic* leniency and rationalization had helped to create by championing far stricter interpretations and implementations of intra-communal religious purity and inter-confessional boundaries. This included articulating a doctrine based on esoteric exegesis, highly ritualized prayer, and severe asceticism that promoted annihilation of the will—and, indeed, of the individual if need be—through resistance to assimilation and conversion even unto death.¹⁵⁹ They taught that such practices of self-abnegation would result in individual eschatological reward like that promised to the faithful at the time of messianic redemption, complete with crowns and gleaming robes, but not dependent on a community which was comprised of some individuals who had apostatized, and so, perceptually relinquished their religious identity as *verus Israel* and status as God's chosen out of concern for themselves or their loved ones.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁹ Haym Soloveitchik, "Catastrophe and Halakhic Creativity: Ashkenaz—1096, 1242, 1306 and 1298," *Jewish History* 12, no. 1 (1998): 76-80; Ivan G. Marcus, "Hierarchies, Religious Boundaries and Jewish Spirituality in Medieval Germany," *Jewish History* 1, no. 2 (1986): 7-26.

¹⁶⁰ See Elliot R. Wolfson, "Martyrdom, Eroticism, and Asceticism in Twelfth-Century Ashkenazi Piety," in *Jews and Christians in Twelfth-Century Europe*, ed. Michael A. Signer and John Van Engen (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 171-220.

Memories of both reactions haunted the collective consciousness. These surfaced in the suspicion or disregard that members of the community showed to sometime apostates who had momentarily converted to avoid danger.¹⁶¹ They are also reflected in the efforts to cast voluntary conversion to Christianity—increasingly found among adolescents training for the rabbinate, from the eleventh century C.E. on—as the product of some form of evil inclination, or desire of the flesh, or demonic possession rather than of sincere religious conviction.¹⁶² Yet they are most blatant in occurrences of referential acts of martyrdom. Indeed, by 1099 C.E. the distant Jewry of Jerusalem had learned of the Rhineland martyrs' sacrifices and, believing that their acts contributed to imminent messianic redemption, followed suit by setting their synagogue ablaze while they were inside in an act resembling that of the priests of the First Temple told of in the Babylonian Talmud—a burnt offering to the Lord.¹⁶³ Closer to home, ShUM Jews offered up their own martyrological responses to conversionary efforts during the persecutions accompanying the Second Crusade in 1146 C.E. in Mainz and Cologne, in Blois in 1171 C.E., in Troyes in 1288 C.E., in the Rintfleisch massacres of 1298 C.E., and in the many other pogroms occurring throughout the fourteenth century C.E.¹⁶⁴ Reminders also reverberated in the new forms of ShUM Jewish martyr cults that emerged in the

¹⁶¹ Goldin, *Apostasy and Jewish Identity*, 22-30.

¹⁶² See Grossman, “The Roots of *Kiddush ha-Shem*,” 125-26; William Chester Jordan, “Adolescence and Conversion in the Middle Ages: A Research Agenda,” in Signer and Van Engen, *Jews and Christians in Twelfth-Century Europe*, 77-93; Susan L. Einbinder, *Beautiful Death: Jewish Poetry and Martyrdom in Medieval France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 17-44.

¹⁶³ Prawer, *The History of the Jews in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*, 9-14.

¹⁶⁴ See Shalom Spiegel, *The Last Trial. On the Legends and Lore of the Command to Abraham to Offer Isaac as a Sacrifice: The Akedah*, trans. Judah Goldin (New York: Pantheon Books, 1967), 138.

aftermath of the pogroms,¹⁶⁵ in the numerous liturgical reforms,¹⁶⁶ in an efflorescence of liturgical poetry, and in lengthy prose narratives that recounted the deeds of the martyrs for later generations—one of which is the subject of this study.

Conclusion

The pogroms of 1096 C.E. and Solomon bar Samson's narrative account treating them were borne out of an apocalyptic era, characterized by the contact and conflict endemic to every shared milieu. Across Northern Europe during the ninth through twelfth century C.E.—and, indeed, much later—both Christians and Jews self-identified as *verus Israel*. Christians did so through the mechanisms of supersession and appropriation and Jews did so through a tradition that they alone had received and adhered to the written and oral Torah, Scripture and Talmud. Each touted their chosenness based in no small part on observance of God's Law, epitomized in the commandments Moses had brought down from Mount Sinai, and proclaimed the religious beliefs of the other as idolatrous. But reformers were keen to point out that members of their own religious communities had not always proven willing or able to maintain the strictures of religious regulation. And when they were not, they often laid the blame on necessity or the temptation posed by others. This resulted in the creation of a binary of good versus evil that added fodder to the eschatological apprehension and anticipation that had only intensified since the turn

¹⁶⁵ See Eva Haverkamp, "Martyrs in Rivalry: The 1096 Jewish Martyrs and the Theban Legion," *Jewish History* 23, no. 4 (2009): 319-42.

¹⁶⁶ David Shyovitz, "'You Have Saved Me from the Judgement of Gehenna': The Origin of the Mourner's Kaddish in Medieval Ashkenaz," *Association for Jewish Studies Review* 39, no. 1 (2015): 49-50.

of the second millennium C.E., rupturing the uneasy peace that had been established and maintained through liberal collaboration. It could never be fully recaptured. 1096 C.E. was one of many eschatons in Jewish history. The chapters below discuss the ways in which Solomon revealed the meaning for this end in his apocalypse.

Chapter Two

‘The End Is (and Was, and Will Be) Nigh’: *Pesher and the Apocalyptic Chronotope in The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*

I shall now give an account of how the persecution developed also in the rest of the communities that were killed for His unique Name and to what extent they held fast to the Lord God of their ancestors and testified to His unity until their dying breath. It happened in the year 4856, the year 1028 of our exile, in the eleventh year of the cycle of Ranu, when we had *hoped for salvation* and consolation according to the prophecy by the prophet Jeremiah: *Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob, and raise shouts for the chief of the nations*. It was turned into *sorrow and sighing*, crying and screaming. *Many troubles came upon us*, told of in all the admonitions. That which is written *and unwritten* afflicted our souls. In the beginning, the *grim-faced* ones rose up, *a people of strange language, the fierce and impetuous nation*, Frenchmen and Germans. They resolved to travel to the Holy City, which had been *profaned by the violent* among the peoples, in order to seek the tomb of their idol, to drive out the Ishmaelites, the inhabitants of the land, from there and to conquer the land for themselves. *They set up their emblems* and placed a defect—a cross—on their clothes [and] every man and woman’s *heart was stirred* to go to the tomb of their idol, until they were *more numerous than locusts* on the surface of the earth, men, women, and children. Concerning them, it is said: *the locusts have no king*. When they passed by the towns where Jews lived, they said to each other: “We are traveling far in order to seek out the tomb of our idol and to bring our vengeance over the Ishmaelites. But here are the Jews who are living among us. It was their ancestors who killed and crucified him for no reason. Let us first take vengeance on them. *Come, let us wipe them out as a nation; the name of Israel shall be remembered no more*, unless they become like us and acknowledge the son of the menstruant.” When the communities heard their words, they resorted to the methods of our ancestors: repentance, prayer, and charity. Then *the hands of the holy people grew feeble, their hearts melted*, and their strength dissipated. They hid in the innermost chamber from the *turning sword*. They tormented themselves with fasting. *During three consecutive days they fasted both night and day*, apart from their daily afflictions, until *their skin had shriveled on their bones; it had become dry as wood*. They cried out and raised *a great and bitter cry* but their Father [i.e., God] *did not answer them*. He *shut out their prayer*, and He *wrapped himself with a cloud, so that their prayer could not pass through*, He *rejected the tent*,

and He removed them out of His sight, because it was a decree from Him, from my day of punishment. This generation was chosen before Him to be His portion, because they had the strength and might to stand in his Temple, to do His bidding, and to sanctify His great Name in His world. Concerning them David says: *Bless the Lord, O you His angels, you mighty ones who do His bidding.*

—*The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*¹

A rendering of the past? A parable for the present? Prophecy for the future? The above excerpt is the prologue to *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson* and it could readily be employed as evidence to claim that the text functioned in each of the above capacities. In actuality, Solomon's account is something, somewhere in between.

In 1886 C.E., Adolf Neubauer discovered the sole manuscript of *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson* within a codex that once belonged to Asher bar Naphtali haCohen, son of a famed eighteenth-century C.E. Ashkenazic rabbi, kabbalist, author, and editor, before it passed to the possession of the Beth Din and Beth haMidrasch of London

ועתה אספר גילגול הגזירה גם משאר הקהילות הנהרגים על שמו המיוחד ועד כמה דבקו ביי אלהי אבותיהם וייחודהו עד מצוי¹ נפשם: ויהי בארבעת אלפים ושמונה מאות וחמשים ושש שנה, שנת אלף ועשרים ושמונה לגלותינו, באחת עשרה שנה למחזור רנ"ו, אשר קיוינו לישועה ולנחמה כנבואת ירמיה הנביא: רנו ליעקב שמחה וצהלו בראש הגוים וכו', ונהפוך הוא ליגון ואנחה, בכי וצווחה, ומצאונו רבות רעות, האמורות בכל התוכחות, כתוב ולא כתוב עבר על נפשינו. אשר קמו תחילה עזי פנים, עם לועז הגוי המר והנמהר, צרפתים ואשכנזים; ויתנו לבם ללכת אל עיר הקדש, אשר חיללה פריצי עמים, לבקש שמה קבר תרפותם > ולגרש משם הישמעאלים, יושבי הארץ, ולכבוש את הארץ לידם. ושמו אותותם וישומו סימן פסול על בגדיהם, שתי וערב, כל איש ואשה אשר נשאם לבם ללכת בתעות הדרך אל קרב > תרפותם >, עד כי רבו מארבה על פני האדמה, אנשים ונשים וטף, ועליהם הוא נאמר: ומלך אין לארבה וגו'. ויהי בעוברם דרך העיירות אשר שם יהודים, אמרו אחד לחבירו: הנה, אנחנו הולכין בדרך רחוקה לבקש בית התרפות ולנקום נקמתנו מן הישמעאלים, והנה היהודים היושבים בינינו אשר אבותיהם הרגוהו וצלבוהו חינם, ננקמה מהם תחילה ונכחידם מגוי ולא יזכר שם ישראל, או יהיו כמונו ויודו בכן > הנידה >. ויהי כשמעם הקהילות את דבריהם, תפשו בידם אומנות אבותינו: תשובה תפילה וצדקה. ואז רפו ידי עם קודש ונמס לבם ותשש כחם, ונטמנו חדר בחדר מפני חרב המתהפכת ועינו נפשם בצום וצמו שלשה ימים רצופים, לילה ויום, לבד שהתענו יום ויום, עד צפד עורם על עצמם יבש היה כעץ. וצעקו והשמיעו צעקה גדולה ומרה, ולא ענב אביהם וסתם תפילתם ויסד בענן לו מעבור תפילתם; ונמאס אוהל ויסירם מעל פניו, כי היית גזירה מלפניו מביום פקדי. וזה הדור הוא נבחר לפניו להיות לו למנה, כי היה בהם כח וגבורה לעמוד בהיכלו ולעשות דברו ולקדש שמו הגדול

The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson, Haverkamp, 246-56; Roos, A5-12. I employ Roos's translation with some notable exceptions. As in the opening quotation for Chapter One, I translate תרפותם > as "the tomb of their idol" rather than "the tomb of their idolatry." Roos translates באחת עשרה שנה למחזור רנ"ו as "in the eleventh year of the two hundred and fifty-sixth cycle"; I have translated this passage as "in the eleventh year of the cycle of Ranu" to preserve the messianic connotation that will be discussed further below. And where I have translated the Hebrew of Haverkamp's transcription, > הנידה >, as "son of a menstruant," Roos has "offspring of whoredom." As Roos has noted (A9n16), a term in Solomon's narrative was erased and *niddah*, menstruant, was added by a later hand. Due to this factor, and because this passage bears similarities to a corresponding one in *The Chronicle of Eliezer bar Nathan*, Roos has included the description of Mary as a whore found there.

(formerly known as Jews' College).² The codex remained in the Beth Din until it was sold at auction in 1999 C.E. Presently, a microfilmed version of the individual manuscript, as well as the entire codex, is accessible through the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts and the Department of Manuscripts of The National and University Library, Jerusalem.³ The best Hebrew transcription is found in Eva Haverkamp's edition, which is consulted throughout this dissertation.

Neubauer, in collaboration with Moritz Stern, first published a transcription of *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson* along with the other two extant accounts of the 1096 C.E. pogroms—the so-called *Chronicle of Eliezer bar Nathan*, which has survived in nine manuscripts, and the so-called *Mainz Anonymous*, which, like *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, has survived in only one manuscript.⁴ *The Chronicle of Eliezer bar Nathan* had been published previously by Adolph Jellinek in 1854 C.E., as had a German translation of *The Mainz Anonymous* by Moses Mannheim in 1877 C.E.⁵ But Neubauer and Stern provided the first collection of the three extant narratives together, accompanied by Seligman Baer's much sanitized German translation which omitted the majority of anti-Christian invectives, and transmitted them for public consumption in 1892 C.E. as *Hebräische Berichte über die Judenverfolgungen während der Kreuzzüge*,

² See London, Beth Din & Beth haMidrasch, MS 28, ff. 151a-163a, in Adolf Neubauer, *Hebrew Manuscripts in the Jews' College, London* (Oxford: H. Hart, 1886), 9-12.

³ Jerusalem, Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts, MS F 4699. See also Haverkamp, introduction to *Hebräische Berichte*, 143.

⁴ Roos, 'God Wants It!', 6. For shelf markings of the extant manuscripts of *The Mainz Anonymous* and *The Chronicle of Eliezer bar Nathan*, see Haverkamp, introduction to *Hebräische Berichte*, 153, 163, 186, 191, 205, 222-24.

⁵ Kedar, "Crusade Historians," 16.

Hebrew Reports on the Jewish Persecutions during the Crusades.⁶ When Shlomo Eidelberg first translated these three accounts and another treating the Second Crusade into English in 1977 C.E., he labeled them as *The Jews and the Crusaders: The Hebrew Chronicles of the First and Second Crusades*. Upon initial consideration, both book titles seem to convey the idea that the Hebrew narratives relate historically accurate “facts” about the people, places, and events of the 1096 C.E. pogroms. And, for most of their known existence in the modern era, these three texts have been used accordingly. Scholars have mined their contents for clues regarding the realities of Jewish life in Northern Europe during the time of the First Crusade, and how these realities might support divergent socio-political platforms of integrationism, isolationism, or Zionism.⁷

The idea of the accounts’ historical accuracy continued to dominate throughout the 1970s C.E. and into the 1980s C.E. in a manner less overtly linked to political sympathies but one profoundly marked by a recognition both that Jews in medieval Europe had contributed much to European society, and that every facet of their lives—food, customs, art, architecture, mannerisms, literature, religious practice, and theology—

⁶ Adolf Neubauer and Moritz Stern, eds., *Hebräische Berichte über die Judenverfolgungen während der Kreuzzüge*, trans. Seligman Baer, Quellen zur Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland 2 (Berlin: Leonhard Simion, 1892).

⁷ See Saul Friedlander, *Memory, History and the Extermination of the Jews of Europe* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 44; Roemer, “Turning Defeat into Victory,” 65-80; Gabrielle M. Spiegel, “Memory and History: Liturgical Time and Historical Time,” *History and Theory* 41, no. 2 (2002): 156; Cohen, *Sanctifying the Name of God*, 31-43; Marcus, “Israeli Medieval Jewish Historiography,” 244-85.

had been informed by the dominant Christian culture.⁸ Robert Chazan is one of the most prolific voices of this scholarship as it pertains to the Hebrew accounts, advocating for the texts' "facticity" by emphasizing what he perceives to be the influence of twelfth-century C.E. Christian historiographic trends on their authors. According to Chazan, Christian influence is illustrated foremost in the authors' use of prose.⁹ Poetry had long been the medium of choice within the Jewish tradition for commemorating communal catastrophe because it enabled seamless incorporation within the liturgical cycle of lamentation.¹⁰ By adopting the prose style, the authors followed the example set by Latin and vernacular chroniclers who had begun to move away from mythologizing epic poetry in their attempts to convey the uniqueness of individuals and circumstance.¹¹ Chazan contended that the authors of the Hebrew crusade accounts furthered this aim through nuanced rather than monolithic representations of inter-confessional contact, and by including specific references to people, places, and events that would have been

⁸ Many scholars have discussed the exchange of ideas, etc., between Jews and Christians in medieval Europe, and, particularly, how Jewish culture was informed by the dominant Christian one. See, for example, the collection of essays, *In and Out of the Ghetto: Jewish-Gentile Relations in Late Medieval and Early Modern Germany*, ed. R. Po-Chia Hsia and Hartmut Lehmann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Ivan G. Marcus, *Rituals of Childhood: Jewish Acculturation in Medieval Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996); idem, "From 'Deus Vult' to the 'Will of the Creator': Extremist Religious Ideologies and Historical Reality in 1096 and Hasidei Ashkenaz," [Hebrew] in Assis, *Facing the Cross*, 92–100; idem, "A Jewish-Christian Symbiosis," 449–516; Jeremy Cohen, "The Hebrew Crusade Chronicles in Their Christian Cultural Context," in *Juden und Christen zur Zeit der Kreuzzüge*, ed. Alfred Haverkamp, *Vorträge und Forschungen* 47 (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke, 1999), 17–34; Shepkaru, "From after Death to Afterlife," 1-44; idem, "Christian Resurrection and Jewish Immortality," 1-34; and Rodov, "The Development of Medieval and Renaissance Sculptural Decoration." Cultural exchange will be dealt with further below.

⁹ Chazan, "The Deeds of the Jewish Community," 184-95; idem, "The Facticity of Medieval Narrative," 31-56; idem, *European Jewry*, especially 43-5 and 308-09n21; idem, *In the Year 1096*, 171-73; idem, "The Mainz Anonymous," 54-69; idem, *God, Humanity, and History: The Hebrew First Crusade Narratives* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 7, 112-39.

¹⁰ Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, 31-52; Mintz, *Hurban*, 1-14, 90-102; Roskies, *The Literature of Destruction*, 5, 71-88; Einbinder, *Beautiful Death*, 6; Spiegel, "Memory and History," 149-62.

¹¹ Gabrielle M. Spiegel, *Romancing the Past: The Rise of Vernacular Prose Historiography in Thirteenth-Century France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 2-3.

recognizable to their readers.¹²

In response, Ivan G. Marcus emphasized that the label “chronicle” is problematic insofar as it connotes to modern audiences a function contingent on a degree of historicity that is absent in the texts and thus does not convey either what the original authors of the Hebrew crusade accounts intended or how early readers and hearers may have understood them.¹³ For him—and many others—the repeated allusions to the political machinations of the biblical Queen Esther; the sacrificial imagery of binding associated with the patriarchs Isaac and Abraham; the recurring references to the sacrificial knife, chalice, and other utensils used in sacrificial practices at the First and Second Temples; and the manifold associations between martyrs known in *aggadic* literature—such as the Maccabean Mother and her sons who refused to defy God’s law by eating impure food, the ten rabbis who were martyred by Roman officials for their failure to participate in imperial religious practices, and the four hundred captured children who drowned themselves rather than be defiled spiritually and sexually by their captors—and the late eleventh-century C.E. martyrs in Solomon’s account, do not reflect an emergent twelfth-century C.E. historical consciousness as much as they do efforts to understand contemporary events within, and as an extension of, the biblical and cultic paradigm of

¹² Robert Chazan has made this claim repeatedly. See, for example, Chazan, “The Hebrew First Crusade Chronicles: Further Reflection,” *Association for Jewish Studies Review* 3 (1978): 95-6; idem, “The Facticity of Medieval Narrative,” 45, 52; idem, *European Jewry*, 43-5; and idem, “Christian and Jewish Perceptions of 1096: A Case Study of Trier,” *Jewish History* 13, no. 2 (1999), 16, 19-20.

¹³ Marcus, “Representations of Reality,” 37-48; see also idem, “History, Story and Collective Memory: Narrativity in Early Ashkenazic Culture,” *Prooftexts* 10, no. 3 (1990): 365-88, for a discussion of scholarly presumption of historiography as regards medieval Ashkenazic writing. Marc Zvi Brettler, “Biblical History and Jewish Biblical Theology,” *The Journal of Religion* 77, no. 4 (1997): 579, likewise notes the impossibility of determining author intentionality through the interpretation and labels or titles given by later readers who assume the historicity of a text. Although he has applied this idea to the biblical canon, I believe it translates to the labeling practices of Solomon’s narrative.

ancient Israel.¹⁴ This is made all the more explicit in references to Mainz as Jerusalem and the synagogue there as the “Temple in miniature,” complete with the Ark of the Covenant.¹⁵ Moreover, while prose was not typically employed in Jewish liturgical commemoration, it was certainly employed in the budding romance and hagiographical genres of the era¹⁶ and, as will be discussed further below, had long been employed in historical apocalypses which include specific recognizable historical as well as typological personae that may have been used in conjunction with the liturgical poetry.

Marcus’s interpretation resulted in Chazan modifying his position, leading him to consider the meaning of both the “timebound” (i.e., historical/factual) segments of the text as well as their “timeless” (i.e., typologically modeled on biblical and post-biblical Jewish tradition) representation and meaning. As a result of Chazan’s and Marcus’s exchange, it is now common for scholars to explore both the reality and the ideologies the authors of each of the Hebrew crusade accounts expressed in what are currently generally referred to as “narratives” rather than “chronicles.”¹⁷

What exactly the term “chronicle” implies, though, is dependent on context. In a medieval context, the term—*chronicon*—often referred to a genre of prose containing

¹⁴ Marcus, “From Politics to Martyrdom,” 40-52; idem, “Representations of Reality,” 37-48. Marcus is not alone in this observation, but he was the most vocal about how Solomon’s modeling on biblical and post-biblical precedents negated realistic representation of events. For further claims that the Hebrew narratives fit into traditional biblical and post-biblical paradigms and that the authors modeled personae therein after martyrological heroes of yore, see the Introduction.

¹⁵ See *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 299, 315, 379; Roos, A31, A38, A69.

¹⁶ Einbinder, *Beautiful Death*, 5-6.

¹⁷ Even Chazan has conceded and begun to refer to the Hebrew crusade “chronicles” as narratives: “The Facticity of Medieval Narrative,” 32. Some, though, are less inclined to use this newer designation. See, for example, David, “Historical Records of the Persecutions during the First Crusade,” 193-205, who maintains the older historiographic tradition and consistently refers to the Hebrew crusade accounts as כרוניקות, *cronikot*, or chronicles.

“documentary historical data . . . embedded in a theological narrative framework.”¹⁸ As attested to in Latin “chronicles” contemporary to Solomon’s narrative, the “data” in this formula need not be entirely factual but might also include a combination of miracles or legends—*fabulae*—intended “to demonstrate the wonders of God or of His royal or ecclesiastical servant,” or as critiques of the latter.¹⁹ This interpretation of “chronicle” coincides with labeling practices in the early modern era as well. In the sixteenth century C.E., Martin Luther designated the biblical text known in the Hebrew canon as *Sefer Divrei ha-Yomim*, “Book of the Events of the Days,” and in the Greek and later Latin biblical translations as *Paralipomena*, “things omitted/left behind,” as I and II Chronicles.²⁰ The “things omitted,” in this context, refer to the inclusion of information on the Southern Kingdom of Judah not found in the other biblical books. The theological narrative framework is found in the pronounced concept of retributive justice and the focus on the divine rather than political history of the unique relationship between God and Israel.²¹

Perhaps it is owing to these features—accounts of otherwise omitted information and a theologizing of history—that nineteenth-century C.E. scholars of Jewish manuscripts took to naming some medieval texts that include far more *fabulae* than facts and are now considered to be historical fiction, apocryphal, or apocalyptic literature as

¹⁸ Marcus, “From Politics to Martyrdom,” 42.

¹⁹ Marcus, “From Politics to Martyrdom,” 42.

²⁰ Gary N. Knoppers and Paul B. Harvey, Jr., “Omitted and Remaining Matters: On the Names Given to the Books of Chronicles in Antiquity,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 121, no. 2 (2002): 228, 233, 242; Coogan, introduction to the Historical Books, in *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, 311.

²¹ Knoppers and Harvey, “Omitted and Remaining Matters,” 239.

“chronicles.” Indeed, the oldest surviving recension of a Hebrew crusade narrative—*The Chronicle of Eliezer bar Nathan*²²—is found in a manuscript that contains texts recognized as the “apocryphal” *Bnei Moshe*, “Sons of Moses,”²³ and *Chronicles of Jerahmeel*;²⁴ the “historical” martyrological literature treating the famed ten antique rabbis martyred by Roman persecutors for their refusal to apostatize,²⁵ the persecution of Rabbi Amnon of Mainz in 1196 C.E.,²⁶ and the *Sefer Zekhirah*, “Book of Remembrance,”²⁷ by Rabbi Ephraim of Bonn about the pogroms of the Second Crusade; and the “apocalyptic” texts known as the *Sefer Zerubbabel*, “Book of Zerubbabel,”²⁸ and *Otot ha-Qets*, “Signs of the End,”²⁹ among many others.³⁰

The fourteenth-century C.E. Ashkenazic editor and owner of the manuscript, Eleazar ben Asher HaLevi, entitled his massive anthology *Sefer ha-Zikhronot* (c. 1325 C.E.), The Book of Memory. Fortunately, he explained his editorial practice by alluding

²² Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Heb. d. 11, f. 232a-36a. Many thanks to Dr. César Merchan-Hamann, Director of the Leopold Muller Memorial Library and Curator of Hebraica and Judaica at the Bodleian Library, Oxford University, for granting me access to this restricted codex and for taking time out of his incredibly busy schedule to patiently supervise as I photographed it in its entirety over the course of two days in July of 2015.

²³ Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Heb. d. 11, 62a-4a.

²⁴ Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Heb. d. 11, f. 7a-90a.

²⁵ Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Heb. d. 11, f. 228a-31a.

²⁶ Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Heb. d. 11, f. 236a.

²⁷ Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Heb. d. 11, f. 237-46.

²⁸ Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Heb. d. 11, f. 248a-51a.

²⁹ Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Heb. d. 11, f. 247a-58a.

³⁰ See Haim Schwarzbaum, prolegomenon to *The Chronicles of Jerahmeel*, trans. Moses Gaster (1899; repr., New York: Ktav, 1971), 7-11; Eli Yassif, “Folk Narratives in the Middle Ages,” in *Encyclopedia of Jewish Folklore and Traditions*, ed. Raphael Patai and Haya Bar-Itzhak (London: Routledge, 2015), 185.

to the construction of the Tabernacle as a coupling with “loops and hooks”³¹ of *sfarim ha-hitsonim*, external books (i.e., non-canonical texts), that might appear to some as mere *mashalim*, parables,³² alongside what may be regarded as secular historical accounts—such as a version of *The Jewish War* of the ancient Roman-Jewish historian Josephus (37-100 C.E.)—and rabbinic commentary on biblical texts. Eli Yassif notes that, in this endeavor, HaLevi sometimes deconstructed the texts from which he was borrowing to arrange them in what he perceived to be a linear, chronological order of events.³³ This is observed in the opening segment of the *Sefer ha-Zikhronot* in which HaLevi included multiple sources covering topics on the creation of the world through the destruction of the Second Temple.³⁴ He borrowed freely from non-Jewish lore about the founding of Rome and incorporated it in his section on ancient Israelite oppression in Egypt based on the premise that Moses, Romulus, and Remus were contemporaries.³⁵

At other times, HaLevi grouped sources based on theme and content in an effort to illustrate typological correlation.³⁶ In the martyrological segment of his text, for instance, HaLevi juxtaposed the anti-Jewish persecutions suffered at the hands of Romans in antiquity alongside the persecutions in Northern Europe enacted by the Christian reincarnation of the Roman Empire. He also moved beyond typology.

³¹ Eli Yassif, “The Hebrew Narrative Anthology in the Middle Ages,” *Prooftexts* 17, no. 2 (1997): 157-64. See Ex. 36: 12-13.

³² Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Heb. d. 11, f. 7a.

³³ Yassif, “The Hebrew Narrative Anthology,” 160, 168.

³⁴ See a variation of the *Sefer Josippon*, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Heb. d. 11, f. 91b-197a.

³⁵ Yassif, “The Hebrew Narrative Anthology,” 161.

³⁶ Cf. Shamma Aharon Boyarin, “Diasporic Culture and the Makings of Alexander Romances” (PhD dissertation, University of California at Berkeley, 2008), 71.

According to Yassif, by following the martyrological segment with a series of apocalyptic texts which centered on the eschatological wars of Gog and Magog and Armilos—an Antichrist persona discussed at length below—and the destruction of the kingdoms of the non-Jewish nations, HaLevi conveyed a message of hope and suggested to his readers that these later persecutions anticipated messianic revenge against the nations for their persecution of the Jews and ultimate redemption for Israel.³⁷ Whether chronological or typological, HaLevi expressed his organization as intentional, done with the purpose that his readers might “comprehend, and know the truth of some of the acts committed under heaven, and some of the trials and tribulations that found our ancestors in their exile . . . lest their descendants forget.”³⁸

In light of these other “chronicles,” consideration of Solomon’s account within this genre conveys the idea that his text combines factual information with fable of the apocryphal and apocalyptic vein, embedded in a chronological-theological framework intended to demonstrate the wonders of God as the motivating force behind history, while reminding his audience of the principles of recompense and retributive justice reflexive of God’s unique relationship with Israel. This is not far from the mark, but Solomon, so far as is known, was not one for labels. The only extant version of his account is contained in a mid-fifteenth-century C.E. manuscript copied in Treviso, Italy.³⁹ Although

³⁷ Yassif, “The Hebrew Narrative Anthology,” 166-71; idem, Introduction to *The Book of Memory That is the Chronicles of Jerahme’el*, ed. Eli Yassif [Hebrew] (Tel Aviv: The Chaim Rosenberg School of Jewish Studies, 2001), 54. See also Shamma Aharon Boyarin, “Diasporic Culture and the Makings of Alexander Romances” (PhD dissertation, University of California at Berkeley, 2008), 70.

³⁸ Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Heb. d. 11, f. 7a, lines 5-7; see also Gaster, *The Chronicles of Jerahmeel*, 1.

³⁹ Eidelberg, *Jews and the Crusaders*, 19.

it does bear a title, it is obscure and the difference in handwriting between it and the body of Solomon's text suggests that the designation is the work of a scribe other than the text's copyist, and so, perhaps not modeled on the original text of Solomon's narrative.⁴⁰

The manuscript in which Solomon's narrative is found is, in its present form, incomplete.⁴¹ The one hundred eighty-eight folios that survive of it include Solomon's thirteen-folio narrative (151a-63a), composed in Ashkenazic script, four twelfth-century C.E. letters addressed to the leaders of the Jewries at Orléans, Paris, and Troyes, and one personal letter from the twelfth-century C.E. poet and exegete R. Nathan ben R. Meshullam to the leading French halakhist R. Jacob ("Rabbenu") Tam (1100-71 C.E.) about the persecution and subsequent martyrdom of Jews in Blois in 1171 C.E. as well as information regarding major events affecting the Speyer Jewry, composed in a combination of Italian semi-cursive and Ashkenazic script.⁴²

Why this particular collection of texts found in the codex was significant to the Treviso Jewry remains a mystery. There were business ties between the Ashkenazim and Northern Italian Jews, many of whom had moved to southward as persecutions grew increasingly frequent in the Rhineland. And Haverkamp suggests the likelihood that Solomon's narrative reached Northern Italy with a group of these German emigrants based on the discovery of Ashkenazic *minhagbücher*, tradition books, indicating that the

⁴⁰ Eidelberg, *Jews and the Crusaders*, 142n1.

⁴¹ Robert Chazan, "A Twelfth-Century Communal History of Spires Jewry," *Revue des études juives* 128 (1969): 256.

⁴² Chazan, "A Twelfth-Century Communal History," 254-55. For a translation of the letter from the Paris and Troyes communities, see Robert Chazan, ed., *Church, State, and Jew in the Middle Ages* (Springfield, NJ: Behrman House, 1980), 114-17; for a fuller discussion of the four letters included in the manuscript containing Solomon's narrative, see idem, *God, Humanity, and History*, 3-15. For scribal information, see Haverkamp, introduction to *Hebräische Berichte*, 143-44.

early fifteenth-century C.E. Jewry in Treviso commemorated the martyrs of 1096 C.E. in their customs associated with the High Holy Days.⁴³

Beyond relating memoirs of the home they left behind, Chazan notes that, while the manuscript's surviving texts may appear unrelated, they are unified by the themes of persecution and catastrophe which reflect "both sympathy for the past and apprehension over the future."⁴⁴ As will be argued at length further below, Solomon's text reflects the tradition of theodicy, which interprets persecution and catastrophe as a result of sinful disobedience of the divine imperative. *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson* also promotes a doctrine of reform and conveys that only through this might the era of redemption be actualized. There was at least one millenarian movement that arose between the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century C.E., headed by an Ashkenazic Jew claiming to be the prophetic forerunner of the Messiah, Asher Lämmlein, who espoused a similar message to that found in Solomon's text. Asher lived in a suburb of Venice, not far from Treviso, and propagated that if the community reformed itself, the Messiah would come to redeem them within six months, in 1502 C.E. When the Messiah did not arrive when expected, several other millenarian movements and messianic claimants arose from Spanish, or Sephardic, Jewish exiles in sixteenth-century C.E. Italy who were influenced by both the reforming message of this Ashkenazic emigre and the 1492 C.E. expulsion of Jews from Spain, where the Jewry was known for assimilation to both

⁴³ Haverkamp, introduction to *Hebräische Berichte*, 144-45.

⁴⁴ Chazan, "A Twelfth-Century Communal History," 257.

Christian and Islamic mores.⁴⁵ Thus, it appears that at least some of the Ashkenazic Jews living around Venice when the sole copy of Solomon's text was copied were receptive to the message of reform as a path to redemption.

Like the codex it is found in, Solomon's text is a compilation within a larger compilation that is unified by the themes of persecution and catastrophe. It consists of several accounts of the 1096 C.E. pogroms, woven together by the above prologue, an epilogue, laments that abbreviate each intermediary segment, and ongoing editorializing commentary. Scholars consider this literary scaffolding to have been constructed by a certain Solomon bar Samson because of a brief autobiographical statement included in the account of the persecution at Cologne and its suburbs: "I, Solomon, son of Samson, copied down this incident in Mainz."⁴⁶ Such an individual is unknown in the records of the ShUM community's rabbis.⁴⁷ This factor is odd given the number of rabbis in medieval Ashkenaz who have been accounted for based on *yeshivot* and communal birth and death records or through literary production, especially since it seems probable that Solomon would have authored or edited other compositions and left additional proof of his existence. Indeed, a certain R. Solomon ben Samson has been accounted for through such means. And, though this Solomon existed in medieval Ashkenaz during the eleventh century C.E., he perished in the pogroms of 1096 C.E. and so could not have composed any segment of the narrative known as the *Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*.

⁴⁵ Stephen Sharot, "Jewish Millenarianism: A Comparison of Medieval Communities," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 22, no. 3 (1980): 398.

⁴⁶ ואני, שלמה בר שמשון, העתקתי זה המאורע במעגנצא *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 433; Roos, A94.

⁴⁷ Marcus, "Representations of Reality," 38; Roos, 'God Wants It!', 11.

It may be that the editor employed a pseudonym with the intention that readers might associate his text with this earlier martyr who was known as an especially devout reformer.⁴⁸ Or, perhaps, the pseudonym hearkened back to the biblical personae Solomon and Samson whom both antique Jews and medieval Ashkenazim commonly regarded as types of *ba'al teshuvah*, a “master of repentance,” who represented the total penitence many Jews believed necessary to usher in the messianic era.⁴⁹ The name Solomon, after all, conjures up associations with one of Israel’s many messianic periods of rebuilding and glory, actualized in King Solomon’s building of the Temple, while the latter alludes to a violent period of Jewish self-immolation epitomized by the judge Samson’s suicide. Taken together, these could allude to the notion that a messianic era was sure to follow that of blood and sacrifice.⁵⁰ What is clear is that whoever edited the narrative attributed to Solomon bar Samson was well versed in Bible, Talmud, and contemporary literature, for his narrative is heavily laden with biblical and talmudic references, it borrowed liberally from *The Mainz Anonymous* and shares many similarities with Eliezer bar Nathan’s narrative, and it incorporates information not included in either of the other two extant Hebrew crusade narratives.⁵¹

⁴⁸ See Kanarfogel, “*Peering through the Lattices*”, 38-40.

⁴⁹ Solomon ben Samson’s reforms are discussed further below, in Chapter Four. The biblical personae, Solomon and Samson, and their forms of repentance, are discussed further below. Cohen, *Sanctifying the Name of God*, 86-7, has also noted the rabbinic idea that repentance performed by *ba'al teshuvah*, or a master of repentance, was necessary in ushering in the messianic era, though he has not interpreted this in light of the potentially pseudonymous Solomon bar Samson.

⁵⁰ Many thanks to Devorah Schoenfeld for sharing her name association of “Solomon” and “Samson,” which I have incorporated here.

⁵¹ See Anna Sapir Abulafia, “The Interrelationship between the Hebrew Chronicles on the First Crusade,” *Journal of Semitic Studies* 27 (1982): 221-39; Chazan, *God, Humanity, and History*, 20-1, 29-30, 217-21; Roos, ‘*God Wants It!*’, 11-16.

Although, in its present form, Solomon's text begins "I shall now give an account of how the persecution developed also in the rest of the communities that were killed for His unique Name and to what extent they held fast to the Lord God of their ancestors and testified to His unity until their dying breath," as with the obscure title, this passage was composed in a different hand from the main text and may have been added by the manuscript's editor.⁵² If this is the case, the heroic, essentializing, presentation of the victims as willing martyrs may also be derived from a context, and sentiment, far different from Solomon's. By contrast, the beginning of the text written in a hand consistent with the remainder of Solomon's narrative is similar to those found in the other Hebrew accounts: "It happened in the year 4856, the year 1028 of our exile. . . ."⁵³ This chapter argues that Solomon depicted the "it" that happened in 1096 C.E., or, more precisely, the Rhineland pogroms and the Ashkenazic responses to them, in the manner of an apocalypse.

There have been many important attempts to describe and define apocalyptic literature based on characteristics and/or function.⁵⁴ This chapter is most indebted to the ideas of the twentieth-century C.E. literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin. In his study of the representation of space and time in the novel, he found that "spatial and temporal

⁵² ועתה אספר גילגול הגזירה גם משאר הקהילות הנהרגים על שמו המיוחד ועד כמה דבקו ביי אלהי אבותיהם וייחדוהו עד מצוי נפשם: *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 247; Roos, A5. See Chazan, "A Twelfth-Century Communal History," 257; Eidelberg, *Jews and the Crusaders*, 142n1.

⁵³ ויהי בארבעת אלפים ושמונה מאות וחמשים ושש שנה, שנת אלף ועשרים ושמונה לגלותינו ויהי בארבעת אלפים ושמונה מאות וחמשים ושש (It happened in the year 4856 after the creation of the world, the year 1028 of our exile): *The Chronicle of Eliezer bar Nathan*, Haverkamp, 247; Roos, A5; and, ויהי בשנת אלף ועשרים ושמונה שנה להורבן הבית הייתה הרעה הזאת בישראל (It happened in the year 1028 after the destruction of the Temple that this evil came upon Israel): *The Mainz Anonymous*, Haverkamp, 259; Roos, A5.

⁵⁴ For Jewish apocalyptic literature, see Latteri, "Jewish Apocalypticism," 74-81, especially.

indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot, and history.” He deemed this fusion the “chronotope,” literally meaning “time space,” and he argued that “it is precisely the chronotope that defines genre.”⁵⁵ This chapter applies Bakhtin’s theory to apocalyptic literature⁵⁶ and builds on the observations of Marcus and others regarding the significance of biblical models, or typology, in Solomon’s narrative. It explores the ways in which the text’s editor employed biblical, talmudic, and *aggadic* quotations and allusions referring to distinct times and places to relate the synonymy of past, present, and future occurrences of anti-Jewish persecution and redemption rather than the uniqueness of 1096 C.E. It first discusses types of chronographic writing within the Jewish tradition before illustrating how Solomon’s narrative is most akin to the apocalyptic rather than the historical genre within which Chazan and others once categorized it.

About Time: Biblical Models of Chronography

⁵⁵ Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 84-5.

⁵⁶ Michael E. Vines, “The Apocalyptic Chronotope,” in *Bakhtin and Genre Theory in Biblical Studies*, Se-meia Studies, ed. Roland Boer (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 2007), 109-17, was the first and only other scholar, to my knowledge, to apply Bakhtin’s theory of chronotope as an essential quality of genre to apocalyptic literature. While I am indebted to his application of Bakhtin, our interpretations differ in regard to what the chronotope within apocalyptic literature entails and how it functions.

The concept of time has long been considered sacred within Jewish thought as a means by which finite mortals could better understand the will and essence of the infinite divine.⁵⁷ Antique rabbis cautioned against casual contemplation, warning: “Whoever reflects upon four things would have been better off had he not been born: what is above, what is below, what is before, and what is beyond.”⁵⁸ And it may be that admonitions like this and the ethos represented in them help to explain the paucity of Jewish histories (“that which is before” the present) written between the post-biblical and the early modern modern era⁵⁹ as well as the taboos attached to messianic speculation (“that which is beyond” the present).⁶⁰ For recording historical events of note could, and sometimes did, lead authors and their audiences to scrutinize whether occurrences of warfare, plague, and especially severe periods of persecution might be what has commonly been referred to as the “birth pangs of the Messiah”—signs that the messianic era was nigh.⁶¹ As is often the case, rules attempting to regulate thought and deed only underscore the sustained appeal and practice of forbidden behavior in society, and this admonition did not prevent chronological contemplation or chronographic composition in medieval Europe. But it did lend an air of esotericism that hinged on mysticism and eschatology to

⁵⁷ Brian Ogren, introduction to *Time and Eternity in Jewish Mysticism: That Which Is Before and That Which Is After*, ed. Brian Ogren (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2015), 1-2.

⁵⁸ Mishnah *Hagigah* 2:1, in *The Mishnah: A New Translation*, trans. Jacob Neusner (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 330.

⁵⁹ See Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, 81-103; Amos Funkenstein, “Collective Memory and Historical Consciousness,” *History and Memory* 1, no. 1 (1989): 5-26, especially 11-20; Spiegel, “Memory and History,” 149-62; and Brenner, *Prophets of the Past*, 9.

⁶⁰ Scholem, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism*, 3-4, 51; Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, 21-5; Joseph Dan, “Scholem’s View of Jewish Messianism,” *Modern Judaism* 12, no. 2 (1992): 120-21; Marc Saperstein, introduction to *Essential Papers on Messianic Movements and Personalities in Jewish History*, ed. Marc Saperstein (New York: New York University Press, 1992), 16.

⁶¹ Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, 21-5.

those who were so engaged,⁶² including Solomon bar Samson.

There are three types of chronographic prose in the biblical tradition that would especially inform later Jewish chronographers throughout antiquity and the Middle Ages: those recognized as history, prophecy, and apocalypse. Biblicists have traditionally designated the books Joshua, Judges, I and II Samuel, and I and II Kings as historical because of their political emphasis and what had once been perceived as an accurate portrayal of events in Israel's past.⁶³ Together, these tell of Israel's conquest of Canaan, the establishment of the monarchy, and its subsequent rise and decline. Within the last few decades, though, significant archaeological finds have undermined claims of biblical historicity in general and of the above books in particular.⁶⁴ Moreover, literary criticism has shown similarities in style and content between the above-noted "historical" books and the "non-historical" books of Deuteronomy, parts of Genesis, and Numbers.⁶⁵ These discoveries call into question the compartmentalization of biblical books within the historical genre, but need not, necessarily. For the function of history in antiquity was not based on a text's provision of an authentic telling of past events but often on its ability to relate some combination of collective identity and parabolic didacticism presented within a linear framework in which one event and, on a broader scale, one epoch, followed after

⁶² Ogren, *Time and Eternity*, 3.

⁶³ Coogan, introduction to Joshua, in *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, 314.

⁶⁴ Brettler, "Biblical History and Jewish Biblical Theology," 563; Zecharia Kallai, "Biblical Narrative and History: A Programmatic Review," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 96 (2006): 135. It should be noted that archaeological finds have also confirmed the existence of some biblical personae.

⁶⁵ Kallai, "Biblical Narrative and History," 134.

another.⁶⁶

This multi-faceted function of historicized parable is observed in numerous biblical books beyond those stated above and moves freely between imposed categories. For instance, linear progression is observed in the five books of the Torah, along with the books of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, I and II Samuel, and I and II Kings, I and II Chronicles, and Ezra-Nehemiah—books that are divided within the biblical canon among the categories of “Torah,” “Prophets,” and “Writings.” In sum, these texts provide an origin narrative of the religio-ethnic and sometimes political Nation of Israel, the basis and significance of holidays and customs incorporated into the daily life of later Jews, and moral lessons regarding the benefits and consequences of a number of different beliefs, behaviors, and actions.

Genesis relates an account beginning with the creation of the world and continues through the migration of the patriarch Jacob/Israel and his family into Egypt. Exodus tells of Moses leading Israel’s flight from oppression in Egypt to an intermediary period of nomadic existence in the desert and the foundation of the legal code found in the subsequent books of the Torah. Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy continue the narrative of desert wandering, and Deuteronomy concludes with Israel in the land of Moab, on the brink of entering the land of Canaan that God had promised the patriarchs. The book of Joshua depicts Israel’s entrance into Canaan under Moses’ successor, Joshua, and a series of its territorial conquests therein. Judges goes on to relate Israel’s inability to

⁶⁶ See Mark S. Smith, “Remembering God: Collective Memory in Israelite Religion,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 64 (2002): 631-51; idem, *The Memoirs of God: History, Memory, and the Experience of the Divine in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 125; Ronald Hendel, *Remembering Abraham: Culture, Memory, and History in the Hebrew Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

fully conquer Canaan and a subsequent extended period of moral decline and civil war. Ruth provides a limited family history of the meeting and wedding of the future King David's ancestors, set during Israel's era of judges which preceded the monarchy. I and II Samuel describe the consolidation of Israel as a monarchy first, haphazardly, under King Saul and then under the quintessential Messiah, David. I and II Kings narrate the height of Israel's political achievement under David's son, King Solomon, reflected in the construction of the First Temple, and the ultimate dissolution of the Israeli political state, culminating with the siege of Jerusalem and the exile of the Judaeen elite during the Babylonian Captivity of 598/7 B.C.E. I and II Chronicles condense the origin narrative presented in Genesis through the liberation of the exiles, and supplement it with additional information regarding the Southern monarchs. Finally, Ezra-Nehemiah provides an account of King Cyrus's emancipation of the Jewish exiles and the return of those willing⁶⁷ in 538 B.C.E., the construction of the Second Temple under the exilarch Zerubbabel, and the (re)establishment of the Mosaic Law as depicted in the Torah.⁶⁸

In the chronotope of these texts, the progression of time is marked by difference in place. For example, the wandering of the Hebrews in the desert outside of Canaan followed their enslavement in Egypt and preceded their conquest of the territory that would become *eretz Israel*, the land of Israel. Yet, within this linear progression is a

⁶⁷ Pamela Barmash, "At the Nexus of History and Memory: The Ten Lost Tribes," *Association for Jewish Studies Review* 29, no. 2 (2005): 207-35, has effectively overturned the predominant collective memorialization of the exiled tribes within Judaic studies by emphasizing that the majority of the populace had been permitted to remain in their territories during the Babylonian Captivity and that many of those who had been exiled chose to remain in their new locales even after having been given leave to return to their ancestral homes.

⁶⁸ There is debate as to whether the law scroll "discovered" by Josiah was created either under his rule or just prior, and if this scroll was the Deuteronomic text. See Nadav Na'aman, "The 'Discovered Book' and the Legitimation of Josiah's Reform," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 130, no. 1 (2011): 47-62.

recurring cyclical trope of exile, redemption, and return that is perhaps best visualized as a spiral.⁶⁹ The redemptive cycle belies an underlying historiographical paradigm which reflects the experience of some of the learned elite who found themselves as exiles during the Babylonian Captivity when many of the biblical books were composed or edited; and the frequent instances of foreshadowing of the Babylonian Captivity within the historical biblical texts underscore the centrality of the event in the compilers' consciousness. A fitting example of this is found in Deuteronomy 31 and 32, in which Moses, after being informed that he would not cross into the Promised Land with Israel and while preparing for his death, is visited by God, who reveals Israel's future to him in a manner that seems all too familiar. Though given land and freedom, God indicated that Israel would transgress the covenant and apostatize, provoking divine retribution at the hands of foreign oppressors who would conquer the nation and exile its peoples. According to Deuteronomy, such persecution would continue until Israel became so demoralized that the people would repent and return to faithful obedience to God.

The cycle of redemption was also well suited to illustrating and reiterating the idea of covenant, or reciprocity, even when the Babylonian Captivity was not obviously alluded to, and so may have evolved prior to this central event. Through it, early biblical editors sought to establish the precedent that Israel's adherence to God's stipulations

⁶⁹ Funkenstein has called attention to what he perceived as the long-held mistake of ascribing a cyclical model of history primarily to the ancient Greeks and a linear model to Judeo-Christians: *Theology and the Scientific Imagination from the Middle Ages to the Seventeenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 248n4; idem, "Collective Memory," 14. Moshe Idel, "'Higher than Time': Observations on Some Concepts of Time in Kabbalah and Hasidism," in Ogren, *Time and Eternity*, 180-81, mentions the existence of linear and cyclical models of time in the Bible and Jewish tradition; and Elliot R. Wolfson, "Retroactive Not Yet: Linear Circularity and Kabbalistic Temporality," in Ogren, *Time and Eternity*, 15, suggests that this dual model is indicative of time itself and not specific (i.e., Jewish, Greek, Christian, etc.) concepts of it: "Time extends as a line that revolves around a circle."

brought blessings and failure to abide by them was met with punishment.⁷⁰ Typically, the redemptive cycle began with a statement of divine election—God choosing to interact with a person or people and imparting instruction on how to live according to His will. The individual(s) and/or their descendants inevitably fell short of divine expectations either by only partially fulfilling the instruction or by disregarding it altogether. As a result, God punished the offender(s) through physical devastation and, often, some form of exile. Those who were sufficiently penitent and reformed, God redeemed. They returned to a position of good standing and the course of divine blessings promised to the faithful—until the next egregious series of indiscretions, when the cycle began again.

There is some suggestion that the indiscretions warranting devastation and/or exile could be any combination of deeds that disregarded the divine imperative. In the first few chapters of Genesis alone, the biblical editors presented God expelling Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden for failure to obey His single command not to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil;⁷¹ flooding the earth and utterly annihilating humanity—save Noah and his family—as punishment for unspecified corruption and acts of violence;⁷² tumbling the great Tower of Babel humans worked together to build, presumably for no other reason than that it reflected human initiative and ingenuity in such a way suggestive of hubris and a challenge to the uniqueness of God’s generative function;⁷³ and raining fire down on Sodom and Gomorrah, destroying the city and its

⁷⁰ See Jacob Neusner, *An Introduction to Judaism* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), 142-45.

⁷¹ Gn. 2:17-3:24.

⁷² Gn. 6:5-13.

⁷³ Gn. 11: 4-9.

inhabitants in fulfillment of a planned course of action made in response to another vague breach of conduct, described merely as a “very grave . . . sin” (Gn. 18:20).⁷⁴ Once the biblical narrative described the series of covenants between God and the patriarchs, though, idolatry, or its zenith—apostasy—became the offense warranting the most severe divine retribution. But idolatry seldom occurred in isolation. The biblical authors and/or editors frequently cast it as a byproduct of interacting with foreigners—a precursor to assimilation—evident in the shared social activities of eating, drinking, and miscegenation, and they emphasized personae who reinforced this trope.

The well-known figures Samson and Solomon whose names the editor of the Solomon bar Samson narrative may have appropriated reflect different stages of the cyclical paradigm of redemption. The book of Judges indicates that Samson had three sexual relationships with non-Israelite women—the Philistine whom he wed, the prostitute of Gaza, and his later mistress, Delilah from the valley of Sorek—each of whom worked to entrap him so that he could no longer effectively rid Israel from Philistine oppression.⁷⁵ In none of the cases was Samson’s copulation with a non-Israelite depicted as sinful *per se*; rather, it was unseemly because foreigners were able to wield

⁷⁴ Gn. 18:20-19:29. As is well known, it has been common for exegetes from the Middle Ages through the modern era to present “sodomy,” or homosexuality, as the transgressive behavior that warranted God’s destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. More recently, John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 105-07, and Holly Joan Tensing, “Women of Sodom and Gomorrah: Collateral Damage in the War against Homosexuality?” *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 21, no. 2 (2005): 61-74, especially 62-3, have claimed that the transgressive behavior of the inhabitants of these cities was not homosexuality but inhospitable treatment of aliens and sojourners—as reflected in the city dwellers’ treatment of, primarily, the angelic visitors—which was related to non-Israelite religious practices. While a reading that challenges the idea that Sodom and Gomorrah were hotbeds of homosexuality or that homosexuality is a sin is to be commended, this argument is ultimately unsatisfactory because it does not account for God’s initial plan to destroy the cities prior to the angelic visitation, and so, prior to the inhospitable treatment they received. Unfortunately, the transgressive behavior to which the biblical author was referring remains elusive.

⁷⁵ Jdg. 14:2, 16:1, 16:4-5.

added influence through sex. Delilah proved most adroit in this regard, evident in her ability to eventually trick Samson into telling her how he had been consecrated by God and given supernatural strength through his unshorn hair to fight the Philistines, thus exposing his vulnerability.⁷⁶

According to I Kings, Solomon's sexual appetite far surpassed that of Samson. Although an exact number of partners is not given, and exaggeration should be considered a literary element employed for effect, 700 princesses are mentioned as wives as well as 300 concubines who hailed from the lands of the Egyptians, Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites, which surrounded Israel.⁷⁷ In this account, sexual intercourse with foreigners is explicitly condemned, and the corrupting influence of non-Israelites moved from a state of potentiality to certainty. This sentiment is made clear by the author of I Kings when, writing as if quoting God, referenced the stipulations of covenant with Israel against intermarriage:⁷⁸ "You shall not enter into marriage with them, neither shall they with you; for they will surely incline your heart to follow their gods" (I Kgs. 11:2).

The turning away from God and towards foreigners and their gods resulted in divine retribution. Samson alone bore the punishment for his transgression: the Philistines who had plotted with Delilah gouged out his eyes, shackled him, and transported him to Gaza where they imprisoned him near their house of idolatry.⁷⁹ In many ways these

⁷⁶ Jdg. 16:17.

⁷⁷ I Kgs. 11:1.

⁷⁸ Dt. 7:3-4; Coogan, I Kings, in *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, 509-10n, I Kgs. 11:1-40.

⁷⁹ Jdg. 16:21.

events are representative of the exile/devastation phase of the above-noted cycle, yet Samson's saga also bears the beginning signs of the repentance/redemption phase. The author of Judges was forthright about the latter, mentioning that the Angel of the Lord had told Samson's barren mother as much before she conceived: "It is he who shall begin to deliver Israel from the hand of the Philistines" (Jdg. 13:5). And Samson's act of self-sacrifice in which he showed remorse for his engagement with foreigners by asking God to give him the strength once more to devastate the Philistines earned the author's praise for his work to fulfill the Angel's words: "those he [Samson] killed at his death were more than those he had killed during his life" (Jdg. 16:30).

Solomon, by contrast, represents the beginning, and most pronounced phase, of Israel's decline within the biblical narrative. Because he had worshipped the gods of his wives and had not remained faithful to his covenant with God or followed His statutes, God promised to "tear the kingdom" (I Kgs. 11:11) from him and thus usher in the gradual conquest of Israel that had only briefly been unified under his father, David. As God had purportedly told Moses and Solomon, a series of foreign conquerors would vanquish both the land and the people of Israel as divine retribution, epitomized in the eventual period of exile during the Babylonian Captivity.

The major and minor prophetic texts of the Hebrew Bible run parallel to the historical texts and some of the prophets, such as Isaiah, Haggai, and Zechariah, are named in writings from both categories.⁸⁰ These personae belonged to a specific time and place, addressed transgression in their own communities, and foretold what the outcome

⁸⁰ See, for example, II Kgs. 19; Ezra 5:1, 6:14.

of it would be in the near future—a day of judgement and punishment for the reprobate marked by the altered locale of exile—as well as the period following—repentance, reconstitution of covenant, and return to *eretz Israel*.⁸¹ As such, the two genres share some aspects of the linear or historical chronotope, by which the progression of Israel's eras is delineated by locale, as well as through the cyclical paradigm of redemption. The similarities could be the result of an extended compilation process of much of the Hebrew Bible between the sixth and fourth centuries B.C.E., and editors who were informed by a similar impetus of defining Jewish identity through adherence to the covenant and performance of the rituals of the Temple cult.⁸² The prophetic texts, however, are distinguished from the historical by the predominance of their visionary content and their function—namely, to explicitly urge, rather than imply, a course of action whereby Israel could return to good standing with God and once again reap the benefits of a unique relationship with the divine, as well as to console those who were working towards that end.⁸³

The significance of chronotope in relation to the cyclical paradigm of redemption is evident in the prophets' repeated calls for reform in the eighth through sixth centuries B.C.E., when Israel suffered the loss of territory and autonomy first with the conquest of the Northern kingdom in the Assyrian Captivity (722 B.C.E.), and then with the ultimate dissolution of Israel reflected in the Babylonian Captivity of the Judaeen elite. Allusions

⁸¹ II Kgs. 19; Ezra 5:1, 6:14.

⁸² See Barat Ellman, *Memory and Covenant: The Role of Israel's and God's Memory in Sustaining the Deuteronomic and Priestly Covenants* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), 4, 8.

⁸³ See Hanson, *The Dawn of the Apocalyptic*, 22-7, for a succinct discussion of the prophetic genre.

to the redemptive cycle, though, also emerge in a common, if evolving, manner of description which, in time, led to the development of archetypes that were not contingent on a specific time or place. These include representations of temptation to assimilate as a personified and feminized city;⁸⁴ assimilation, and especially idolatry—spiritual infidelity against God—as feminine depravity, promiscuity, whoredom, or adultery;⁸⁵ divine retribution through foreign conquest and domination as an act of, or allusion to, rape;⁸⁶ foreign rulers who succeeded in battle against or conquest of Israel as God’s scourge;⁸⁷ divine judgment and retribution as a catch-all Day of the Lord⁸⁸ or End of Days,⁸⁹ precipitated by some combination of natural disaster, plague and pests, such as locusts;⁹⁰ and redemption, actualized by a suffering servant or a royal, juridical, or priestly Messiah⁹¹—each concept malleable enough to be applied to any number of past or future locales, events, and personae.

Various combinations of these elements are included in the prophetic texts considered to be the earliest—Hosea and Amos—which are calls to reform that reference

⁸⁴ Is. 47; Ez. 16:44-58; Na. 3:1-10.

⁸⁵ Is. 1:21; Jer. 2:20, 3:1-2, 3:6, 3:8-9, 3:20, 9:2; Ez. 16:15-41, 23; Hos. 4:10-15, 5:3-4, 6:10, 7:4, 9:1; Na. 3:4.

⁸⁶ Is. 3:16-17, 47:2-3; Jer. 8:10; Ez. 16:39-41, 23:8-10, 22:22, 23:43-9; Hos. 2:10.

⁸⁷ Is. 8:7, 10:5-6, 13:17, 54:16; Jer. 4:6, 5:15-17, 25:8-11; Ez. 30:10-26, 38:1-23.

⁸⁸ Amos 5:18-20; Is. 13: 4-6 and 9-11, 27:12-13; cf. Jer. 30:7-8, 46:10; Ez. 30:3-4; Mi. 4:6-7; Zeph. 1:14-18; Jl. 1:15, 2:1-2, 3:12-14.

⁸⁹ Is. 2:23; Jer. 48:47, 49:39; Ez. 38:16; Hos. 3:5; Mi. 4:1.

⁹⁰ Is. 33:4; Am. 7:1; Jl. 1:4.

⁹¹ Is. 11:1-5, 52:13-53:12; Jer. 23:5-8, 30:3, 33:15; Hos. 3:4-5. For a discussion of divergent types of Messiah in the Jewish biblical and post-biblical tradition, see Jacob Neusner, William Green, and Ernest Frerichs, eds., *Judaisms and Their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

the beginning stages of Israel's decline during the eighth century B.C.E., in the wake of Solomon's demise, through those believed to be the latest—Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, and Joel—which are set in the post-exilic period and stress the significance of reform as ushering in redemption from foreign oppression, and the construction and purification of the Second Temple as emblematic of that redemption.⁹² Although originating in different contexts, each recounts God's revelation of displeasure with a less than pious Israel to a prophet. And the prophet, in turn, warns Israel against continuing to act, or failing to act, in ways that transgressed the covenant and warranted divine retribution by foretelling the horrors of God's wrath that would be visited upon the people should they stay their course. The transgressions here too are predominantly in the assimilative vein: heightened social interaction with non-Israelites is depicted as a precursor to idolatry.⁹³ As noted above, the punishments for transgression entail God working through other nations to conquer and oppress Israel—employing terror tactics of besieging territories, raping, pillaging, murdering, capturing, deporting, and enslaving its inhabitants. Most disturbingly, the prophetic texts also include the extent of Israel's moral degradation as both a cause and product of its plight. Basic human compassion ebbs with the refusal of the able to help the weakest members of society—the poor, widows, orphans, the elderly—but to remain blind and deaf to the suffering of their neighbors.⁹⁴ But all was not hopeless. The prophetic texts also include promises from God that punishment would not

⁹² Coogan, introduction to Hosea; introduction to Joel; introduction to Haggai, in *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, 1278, 1295, 1353.

⁹³ Is. 30:1-33, 44:9-20; Jer. 1:16, 2:7-8, 2:18-28, 5:7, 5:18, 10:1-34, 16:11-13; Ez. 23:37, 23:49; Hos. 7:8-16.

⁹⁴ Is. 10:1-4, 59:2-15; Jer. 5:25-31, 6:13-15.

endure forever and that Israel would again be united in mutual love and a reconstituted covenant.⁹⁵

Again, the similarities among prophetic texts of the Bible could be a result of late compilation or editorial practices, as the majority of the prophecies were not written down or edited until long after—in some cases, centuries after—the prophets associated with them lived. The prophetic text attributed to Isaiah, for example, is now believed to have been composed over several centuries and pertains to different historical periods.⁹⁶ Chapters 28 through 33 and 36 through 39 refer to aspects of the seventh-century B.C.E. King Hezekiah's reign and condemn his reliance on Egyptian rulers, which the former adopted as a means of keeping the invading Assyrians at bay, because of the resulting influence foreign rulers exercised over Judah. This included the dismantling of cultic rite Hezekiah had worked to reform.⁹⁷ Chapters 44 through 66 make a significant chronological leap when they relate the effects of the sixth-century B.C.E. Babylonian Captivity on Israel and present these as retribution for further transgression, especially idolatry.⁹⁸ The post-exilic historical events as well as the lived experience and memories of the final biblical editors further informed the texts in their current form, and thereby potentially rendered the “prophecies” presentist depictions of the past to the same end that the historical texts were intertwined with prophecy: both worked to enforce evolving

⁹⁵ Is. 14:1, 29:22-24, 35:1-10, 43:1-44:8, 44:21-28, 60-62, 65:6-10, 65:18-25, 66:10-14; Jer. 30:10-11, 30:16-31:40; Ez. 39:25-29; Hos. 14: 4-9.

⁹⁶ Coogan, introduction to Isaiah, in *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, 974-77.

⁹⁷ Coogan, introduction to Isaiah, in *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, 975-77.

⁹⁸ Coogan, introduction to Isaiah, in *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, 977. For examples of Israel's failure to adhere to the covenant as a cause of divine retribution, see Is. 44:10, 44:17-20, 46:1-9, 48:18, 57:1-13, 64:5-7.

theologies of reform bent on preserving Jewish identity as Israel came into contact with new groups of foreigners and continued to struggle with pressures and temptation to assimilate.

Apocalyptic literature is underrepresented in the Hebrew Bible compared to the historic and prophetic literature and so gaining a sense of the genre through the biblical text alone is more difficult. Because of this lack, and in an effort to establish how Solomon bar Samson's narrative is most akin to the apocalyptic genre, an examination of the sole apocalypse of the Hebrew Bible in relation to two other apocalypses—the Apocalypse of St. John and the *Sefer Zerubbabel*—that had an immense impact on medieval Jews is useful. Collectively, these texts suggest that the apocalyptic chronotope is that of conflation. Unlike the historical or prophetic texts, the apocalyptic relationship between time and space is meaningful only in terms of its symbolic significance to phases of the redemptive cycle: descriptions of spiritual infidelity or faithfulness, divine retribution or recompense, and the people and places attached to these various scenarios were interchangeable, for they shared the same resonance.⁹⁹

The only recognized apocalypse of the Hebrew Bible, the book of Daniel, bears relation to history and prophecy as a fusion of narrative and visionary material set in the

⁹⁹ In contrast, R. J. Zwi Werblowsky, "Messianism in Jewish History," in Saperstein, *Essential Papers*, 37, claims that the apocalyptic/messianic mode shifted Jewish concepts of time from cyclical to linear: "Slowly but thoroughly the significant features of the cyclical pattern were transferred to the linear, once-for-all dimensions of history." Casey Starnes, "Ancient Visions: The Roots of Judeo-Christian Apocalypse," in *End of Days: Essays on the Apocalypse from Antiquity to Modernity*, ed. Carolyn Kinane and Michael A. Ryan (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2009), 33-4, shares Werblowsky's interpretation, contending that a cyclical pattern was present "in early Jewish apocalyptic, but later seems to have been phased out to adhere to the more traditional Jewish belief of a singular creation and destruction."

defining period of the Babylonian Captivity.¹⁰⁰ It also shares the theological emphasis on covenant and the centrality of the Temple, redeploing—and, at times, redefining—some of the prophetic archetypes.¹⁰¹ These elements reinforce the paradigmatic cycle of redemption operating within the linear chronography while seeming to relate the intersection and fulfillment of both at the eschatological End.

The context, composition, and content of Daniel, though, suggest that rather than *the* End, the editor(s) may have been employing the mode of biblical interpretation known as *peshet*¹⁰² to write of historical events as an exercise in exegesis and relate yet another phase—an end—of the redemptive cycle in the language and sometimes the manner of earlier biblical personae who had witnessed Israel’s past confrontations with assimilative pressures.¹⁰³ In *peshet*, interpreters simultaneously applied any number of biblical texts and allusive references to contemporary events. As will be discussed further below, this interpretive mode was common among apocalyptic communities contemporary to Daniel’s editor(s), such as that at Qumran.¹⁰⁴ And, like much of its

¹⁰⁰ John G. Gammie, “The Classification, Stages of Growth, and Changing Intentions in the Book of Daniel,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 95, no. 2 (1976): 191-204, argues that the very composite nature of Daniel is suggestive of the apocalyptic genre.

¹⁰¹ See Benjamin G. Wright III, “Joining the Club: A Suggestion about Genre in Early Jewish Texts,” *Dead Sea Discoveries* 17 (2010): 116-30; see also Hindy Najman, “The Inheritance of Prophecy in Apocalypse,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature*, ed. John J. Collins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 40-2.

¹⁰² See Amos Funkenstein, “A Schedule for the End of the World: The Origins and Persistence of the Apocalyptic Mentality,” in *Visions of Apocalypse: End or Rebirth?*, ed. Saul Friedländer et al. (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1985), 44-60; idem, “Collective Memory,” 13-14; Himmelfarb, *The Apocalypse*, 51; Najman, “The Inheritance of Prophecy,” 40.

¹⁰³ See Werblowsky, “Messianism in Jewish History,” in Saperstein, *Essential Papers*, 38; Marcus, “Modern and Ancient Jewish Apocalypticism,” 1-27; and Lenowitz, *The Jewish Messiahs*, 6.

¹⁰⁴ Lawrence Schiffman, “The Bible and Its Interpretation in the Dead Sea Scrolls” (plenary lecture, presented at the 28th annual meeting of the Midwest Jewish Studies Association, Springfield, MO, September 11, 2016).

contemporary apocalyptic literature, Daniel offers a message of reform, consolation, and hope, colored by contingent determinism, in which a series of actions were recognized as producing typical reactions, and thus serving as a reminder of the existence of multiple eschatological and messianic moments in Israel's history. Daniel also offers a suggestion as to why these had been lost, or had not acquired their full potential, and an articulation of not only the similarities among types of redemption and exile as the prophetic texts had done, but also a hint as to their essential sameness.

The book of Daniel, an originally untitled composite text, intentionally crafted by an editor, or group of editors, conveys these messages through form and content. The text opens with a chapter that depicts the entry of the Judaeen exiles into captivity in Babylon and introduces the text's central conflict—assimilation.¹⁰⁵ The intermediate portion is dominated by court tales of Daniel's and his companions' bold refusal to explicitly transgress the covenant.¹⁰⁶ And the concluding section is devoted to the title character's eschatological visions and an angelic revelation of their meaning.¹⁰⁷ The intermediate section was composed in Aramaic and is an edited collection of popular stories of a Judaized legendary Near Eastern figure—Daniel—that had been in circulation for

¹⁰⁵ Dn. 1:1-2:3a.

¹⁰⁶ Dn. 2:3b-7:28.

¹⁰⁷ Dn. 8:1-12:13.

centuries.¹⁰⁸ The introduction and visionary sections, by contrast, were composed in Hebrew and are believed to have originated in the territory surrounding Jerusalem between 168 and 164 B.C.E., during, and largely pertaining to, the tumultuous reign of the Seleucid emperor Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Indeed, biblicists recognize much of the visionary material as informed by the Akkadian literary convention *vaticinium ex eventu*, in which purported prophecy was written after the event it describes.¹⁰⁹ As such, Daniel is an exaggeration of the representation of history as prophecy found in Israel's origin narrative, and of the early biblical compilers' historicization of prophecy.

The context of Daniel's composition was one rife with external and internal conflict. A number of Jews from Jerusalem's priestly and elite circles had conformed to Antiochus' programmatic efforts to acculturate the Jewish populace to his Hellenistic imperial society by introducing and enforcing Greek cultural practices. Most contested among these were Antiochus' plundering of the Temple, moving the Jewish seat of learning from the Temple complex to the gymnasium, and the emperor's abolition of the daily sacrifice and replacement of it with sacrifices to foreign deities.¹¹⁰ The community

¹⁰⁸ Scholarly consensus is that the court tales in Daniel were vintage at the time of the composition of the biblical text. There has been some debate, however, as to whether these court tales were composed and contained in a collection prior to their inclusion in the biblical book and inserted only as a means of lending familiarity and credibility to the concluding visionary material, or if they were selected from a combination of written and oral material to further a specific message for the second-century B.C.E. community who received the finished product. See H. H. Rowley, "The Bilingual Problem of Daniel," *Zeitschrift für alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 50 (1932): 256-68; idem, "The Unity of the Book of Daniel," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 23 (1950-51): 233-73; idem, "The Composition of the Book of Daniel: Some Comments on Professor Ginsberg's Article," *Vetus Testamentum* 5 (1955): 272-76; W. Lee Humphreys, "A Life-Style for Diaspora: A Study of the Tales of Esther and Daniel," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 92, no. 2 (1973): 217-23; John J. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 13.

¹⁰⁹ See Grayson and Lambert, "Akkadian Prophecies," 7-30.

¹¹⁰ See Anthea E. Portier-Young, *Apocalypse against Empire: Theologies of Resistance in Early Judaism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011), 55-73.

was splintered by infighting between conformists and reformists that culminated in an uprising for Jewish spiritual and political independence—the Maccabean Revolt (167-160 B.C.E.)—headed by Judah the Maccabee and his brothers. Ultimately the Maccabean reformists succeeded in retaking and purifying the Temple, securing a degree of autonomy, and establishing the Hasmonean dynasty that would head the Judean polity until the Roman conquest of Jerusalem by Herod in 37 B.C.E.¹¹¹

Daniel has broadly been interpreted as propaganda literature written in support of the Maccabean Revolt. Recently scholars have begun to explore the ways in which the text also reflects resistance to the foreign domination and hegemony of the Seleucid Empire under Antiochus IV.¹¹² Anti-imperial sentiment is easy to find in the visionary segment, where blatant mention of kings and kingdoms teems with metaphors and symbols long understood as reflecting elements of Antiochus's rule, as well as a syncopated history of the rulers and their realms which preceded him. Arnaud Sérandour, David Valeta, and Anatheia Portier-Young have added much to our understanding of additional ways in which Daniel's editor(s) resisted the dominant culture. Sérandour has illustrated that the alternating of Hebrew and Aramaic in Daniel's three segments served

¹¹¹ See Jonathan A. Goldstein, "The Hasmonean Revolt and the Hasmonean Dynasty," in *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, vol. 2 of *The Hellenistic Age*, ed. W. D. Davies and Louis Finkelstein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 292-351.

¹¹² See David Flusser, "The Four Empires in the Fourth Sibyl and in the Book of Daniel," *Israel Oriental Studies* 2 (1978): 148-75; David Valeta, "Polyglossia and Parody. Language in Daniel 1-6," in *Bakhtin and Genre Theory in Biblical Studies*, ed. Roland Boer (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), 91-108; Adela Yarbro Collins, "The Second Temple and the Arts of Resistance," in *From Judaism to Christianity: Tradition and Transition. A Festschrift for Thomas H. Tobin, S. J., on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. Patricia Walters (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 115-29; Richard Horsley, *Revolt of the Scribes: Resistance and Apocalyptic Origins* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010); Anatheia E. Portier-Young, "Languages of Identity and Obligation: Daniel as Bilingual Book," *Vetus Testamentum* 60 (2010): 98-115; eadem, *Apocalypse against Empire*; eadem, "Jewish Apocalyptic Literature as Resistance Literature," in Collins, *The Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature*, 145-62.

to distinguish the holy Jewish people, their sacred past and future, from the profane Seleucid Empire that momentarily ruled them. Valet notes that the context in which Daniel employs Aramaic suggests that the editor(s) were mocking the emperor and empire all the more through the imperial language. And Portier-Young has convincingly argued that the text's bilingualism reflects an iteration of Jewish identity crafted vis-à-vis empire.¹¹³

According to Portier-Young, the Hebrew of Daniel's introductory chapter was meant to convey to original readers and hearers that adherence to the covenant, rather than political autonomy, defined Jewishness.¹¹⁴ The move from Hebrew to Aramaic in the intermediary section indicated to Daniel's audience that Jews during the Babylonian Captivity had been successful in navigating the shifting power dynamics, evident in their ability to rise to positions of prominence while maintaining their religious identity through adherence to the covenant.¹¹⁵ And the Hebrew of the conclusion reflected and urged a rejection of the imperial language and the foreign domination it bespoke at a time when its editor(s) felt Jews could no longer both collaborate with foreign rulers and adequately adhere to the covenant.¹¹⁶ Building on Portier-Young's observations, I would add that the most forthright calls to resist the dominant culture, evident in Daniel's final visionary segment, indicate that the author felt a portion of his co-religionists had not

¹¹³ Arnaud Sérandour, "Hébreu et araméen dans la Bible," *Revue des études juives* 159 (2000): 345-55; Valeta, "Polyglossia," 91-108, especially 99, 104-05; and Portier-Young, "Languages of Identity," 106-07.

¹¹⁴ Portier-Young, "Languages of Identity," 107-110.

¹¹⁵ Portier-Young, "Languages of Identity," 110-11. Humphreys, "A Life-Style for Diaspora," 211, 221, has similarly emphasized that the court tales function to "suggest and illustrate a certain life for the Jew in his foreign environment," whereby the maintenance of religious observance and lucrative position was possible.

¹¹⁶ Portier-Young, "Languages of Identity," 112-15.

sufficiently done so. The editorial choice of language, genre fluidity, and repetitious phrasing work together to underscore Israel's failure to adequately resist pressures to assimilate in the past and present, and suggest that Jews would continue to falter in the future.

The Aramaic of the intermediate section and the Near Eastern genre of court tales are a testament to Israel's conformity to the practices of the dominant culture. Though the content may appear at odds with complete acculturation as it promotes covenant and accentuates redemption or recompense for adherence to it, the court tales reinforce the message conveyed through language and genre. In a more simplistic manner than the esoteric vision segment, and so, perhaps intended to relate the same message to a broader audience, they show that even seemingly innocuous acts of assimilation had been—and, for Daniel's editor(s), continued to be—detrimental to redemption. For instance, the stories of the lion's den and the fiery furnace, where Daniel and his companions, respectively, were sentenced to death for their refusal to commit idolatry, valorize their religious fidelity in the face of the gravest assimilative pressure; hyperbolize God's protection for the faithful in the form of angelic intervention in devastating scenarios; and emphasize divine provision through exaggerated depictions of rewards given by the Babylonian kings. In the aftermath of the episode of the lion's den, King Darius blessed Daniel with prosperity and recognized the supremacy of the God of Israel.¹¹⁷ And, in the aftermath of the episode of the fiery furnace, King Nebuchadnezzar similarly declared “Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and

¹¹⁷ See Dn. 6:25-8.

delivered his servants who trusted in him. They disobeyed the king's command and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God" (Dn. 3:28) before promoting the faithful Jews to serve in the province of Babylon. Yet both instances of reward came after a tale in which the reigning king of Babylon had already praised the God of Israel and had promoted the Judaeen captives to positions of power as a reward for Daniel's divinely granted ability to interpret the king's dream.¹¹⁸

The repetition of these scenarios functions as a subversive reiteration of the shortsightedness of foreign kings and God's sovereignty over rulers and captives alike. But Daniel's critique aims at exiled Israel as much as, if not more than, foreign captors. Plainly put, the fact that the kings were unable to remember God's greatness intimates that these courtiers in exile were less than eager to proclaim it. For, though each time Daniel and his companions were confronted with the choice of idolatry or death they willingly accepted the latter, every additional trial of their faith implies that they had lost the effects of redemption that had come before. And while transgression is neither overtly suggested nor explicitly listed as a reason for the Judaeen exiles' loss of the redemptive phase of the cycle in the intermediary section of the text, it is in the visionary section. There, after Daniel meditated on Jeremiah's prophecy, he repented and made a confession to God of his sins—which seem to have included a relaxation of the dietary restriction he had adhered to when newly arrived in Babylon¹¹⁹—and all of Israel's breaches of

¹¹⁸ Dn. 2:47-9.

¹¹⁹ Dn. 10:2-3 indicates that the text's title character abstained from wine, meat, and rich foods for three weeks while in mourning, implying that these were his regular fare while not in mourning. These foods are of the variety Daniel and his companions refrained from eating upon entering exile as a testament to their religious fidelity (see Dn. 1:8).

covenant from the time of Moses on. He acknowledged God's justice in punishing Israel for continually turning to foreigners for aid and so turning away from God and His law and asked for His merciful reconstitution of His holy city, Jerusalem, and the Temple.¹²⁰

Daniel's use of Hebrew in the introductory chapter and concluding section, the combination of the historical and prophetic genres, and the quotation of and allusion to biblical passages from these genres visually and aurally enhance the cyclical paradigm of redemption and function to convey how the causes for, and effect of, exile in the past and future are not just similar, but synonymous. For example, the editor(s) opened the text as a continuation of the narrative of the fall of Judah, the sacking of the Jerusalem Temple, and the early period of the Babylonian Captivity found in Jeremiah and II Kings,¹²¹ both of which close with King Jehoiachin of Judah essentially acting as a courtier to the King of Babylon—not only dining regularly with the foreign king, but from *ha-melek devreyom*, “the king's daily rations” (II Kgs. 25:30-1; cf. Jer. 52:34). In the first verses of Daniel, readers are reminded of Judah's deportation to Babylon and introduced to the title character and his companions. Like Jehoiachin, the young men were members of the Judaeen elite who were forced to serve as courtiers to the foreign ruler, were required to immerse themselves in the culture of the Chaldeans, and were assigned *ha-melek devreyom* (Dn. 1:5) of food and wine to sustain themselves. In contrast to Jehoiachin, Daniel and the others resolved they would not defile themselves with the Babylonian king's fare but would only eat vegetables and thus display a corrective to transgressive behavior and

¹²⁰ Dn. 9:2-20.

¹²¹ Cf. Portier-Young, “Languages of Identity,” 108.

fidelity to God¹²² in a manner that had, time and again, led to a form of reward or redemption. In this instance, God rewarded the men with literary skill and wisdom, and, in the case of Daniel, the ability to interpret visions and dreams.¹²³ The provision of these skills inaugurates the recurring tension that dominates the court tales in which, each time the men display religious fidelity, they are rewarded with political positions that further ingratiate them into the foreign culture of their captivity, and thus provide them with extended opportunity and pressure to assimilate.

In the concluding section, the author employed Hebrew to lend authority to his writing and to acclimate his audience to the prophetic genre he imitated through writing in the language and borrowed style of an Israelite visionary of the past who foretold of the retribution and reform necessary to aid in the hastening of future redemption.¹²⁴ Yet, he went beyond the prophetic identification of the problem (Israel's transgressions) and solution (reform) by relating that any redemption realized with the return of the exiles and the construction of the Second Temple would be short-lived, for a series of foreign rulers from a variety of lands would persist in defiling the second incarnation like the first and they would be aided by further assimilationists who, like Jehoiachin, would eat the

¹²² Bill Arnold, "Word Play and Characterization in Daniel 1," in *Puns and Pundits: Word Play in the Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Literature*, ed. Scott B. Noegel (Bethesda, MD: Capital Decisions Press, 2000), 241-42, and Portier-Young, "Languages of Identity," 109, argue that the author intended his use of Hebrew in Daniel's first chapter to convey the idea that the Judaeans youths had not fully assimilated to the culture of the Babylonian court.

¹²³ Dn. 1:8-17.

¹²⁴ Najman, "The Inheritance of Prophecy," in Collins, *The Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature*, 40-2, claims that Daniel's editor(s) and other apocalyptic authors employed biblical quotation and allusion to prophetic texts to establish the genre within which they viewed their text, further the prophetic genre, and lend an air of authority to their own writing through both imitation and knowledge of Scripture.

food of the conquerors,¹²⁵ and thus allow the outsiders to “seduce with intrigue those who violate the covenant” (Dn. 11:32).

Beyond linking the actions of unfaithful Jews in the ancient past and the editor’s/ editors’ present, Daniel conveyed the synonymy of persecutors across space and time. This is illustrated in the depiction of Daniel’s beast-vision of imperial savagery and the angelic interpretation of a male goat therein as the king of Greece—a reference believed to apply to Alexander the Great.¹²⁶ The angel told Daniel that the horn of the goat’s head that broke and sprouted four more was symbolic of later kings and kingdoms descended from the goat king of Greece and that the final king—presumed to be Antiochus IV¹²⁷—would arise out of the horn of his head at the time of the height of tribulation and be one of *‘az fanim* (Dn. 8:23). This rare descriptor literally means “face of a goat” but is typically translated as meaning “bold” or “fierce of countenance,” or “grim-faced,” and is only found elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible in Moses’ Deuteronomic prophecy of the type of nation that would arise to besiege Jerusalem and conquer Israel in the days leading up to the Babylonian Captivity: “a grim-faced (*‘az fanim*) nation showing no respect to the old or favor to the young” (Dt. 28:50). By applying the symbolism of a goat to two later periods of imperial rule under Alexander and Antiochus, respectively, Daniel effectually conflated three periods of persecution, the reasons for them, and the solution. As noted above, late antique Jews living in the aftermath of Greece’s decline would continue this

¹²⁵ Dn. 11:26.

¹²⁶ Benjamin Scolnic, “Antiochus IV and the Three Horns in Daniel 7,” *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 14 (2014): 3n7.

¹²⁷ Scolnic, “Antiochus IV and the Three Horns,” 1n2.

apocalyptic tradition by interpreting Daniel's final kingdom as their own contemporary Roman Diaspora, the evil empire.¹²⁸

Chronography in Later Jewish Apocalypses

The contraction of past, present, and future, and the aggregation and compression of the redemptive cycles to a single point in the book of Daniel, is even more evident in the later historical Jewish apocalypses known to posterity as the Apocalypse of St. John and the *Sefer Zerubbabel*.¹²⁹ Like Daniel, the original names of these apocalypses are unknown and their authors are certainly pseudonymous in the case of Zerubbabel and perhaps too in the case of John. Attaching a person of biblical renown to visionary material was probably done as a means of conveying the authority of the text, but anonymity and pseudonymity may also have been a product of their compositional context as they too were born out of periods of intense persecution and anonymity provided protection to write more freely than their authors otherwise might have.¹³⁰ Yet, even the names and personae attached to them by later readers speak to the idea of the synonymity of redemptions realized and lost. For instance, Irenaeus (d. 202 C.E.), the bishop of Lyons, initiated the traditional association of the author of John's Apocalypse as John, the

¹²⁸ See Chapter One, note 18.

¹²⁹ For discussion regarding the difference between historical and celestial apocalypses, see John J. Collins, ed., *Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1979), 4-9; idem, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to the Jewish Matrix of Christianity* (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1984), 56-63, 168-69; Portier-Young, "Jewish Apocalyptic Literature," 145.

¹³⁰ Portier-Young, "Jewish Apocalyptic Literature," 160, argues: "The genre pattern of the historical apocalypse emerged in response to a situational pattern." Invariably, the "pattern" is one of persecution.

beloved apostle of the Christian Messiah, who had lived in the glow of redemption and had witnessed its twofold destruction with the crucifixion of Christ (c. 30 C.E.) and the Roman defilement of the Second Temple (70 C.E.).¹³¹ And the prophetic texts and later rabbinic commentaries alluded to Zerubbabel's own messianic qualities: he had aided in the redemptive return of the exiles from Babylon, in the rebuilding of the Temple and the restoration of its cult, and in uniting pre- and post-exilic Israel as a governor of Judah of Davidic lineage.¹³² The authors of these apocalypses extended the genre's chronotope of conflation by peppering their texts with numerous biblical quotations and allusions; by adapting eschatological symbols and motifs from Daniel, as well as from the prophetic texts that had influenced Daniel's editor(s); and by pushing the timeline for lasting redemption and an eternal Temple further into the future, just beyond their own time, even while paying homage to the recurrent quality in existence in the history of God's relationship with Israel.

The otherwise unknown author of the Jewish-Christian Johannine Apocalypse composed his text in the last decade of the first century C.E., within the borders of the ever-growing Roman Empire.¹³³ At the time, the Jewish populace in Rome was in the process of rebuilding after the failed attempt to secure independence in the Great Revolt (66-73 C.E.) against imperial oppression and confronting devastating effects that had resulted as a byproduct of the insurrection—most notably, the siege of Jerusalem and

¹³¹ Thomas B. Slater, "Dating the Apocalypse to John," *Biblica* 84, no. 2 (2003): 253.

¹³² Reeves, *Trajectories*, 43.

¹³³ See Elaine Pagels, *Revelations: Visions, Prophecy, and Politics in the Book of Revelation* (New York: Viking, 2012), 2-3.

destruction of the Second Temple by the future emperor, Titus (79-81 C.E.), and the mass homicides and suicides performed at Masada in 72-73 C.E., predominantly by the Jewish sect known as the *sicarii* who had opted for death rather than surrender to the Roman governor of Judaea, Lucius Flavius Silva (73-81 C.E.), and conform to Roman rule. Though the situation had somewhat improved for pharisaic Jews who collaborated with imperial officers and who were not required to adhere to the strictures of the imperial cult, this was not the case for the Jews of the Qumran community, Essenes, Zealots, and many other anti-assimilationist sects, including that of Jewish Christians, to which John belonged.¹³⁴

Like the book of Daniel, John's Apocalypse is a composite text. It is made up of a brief introduction; letters of spiritual guidance to the author's contemporary communities, which were most likely an aggregate of Jewish and Gentile Christians who had begun congregating in early churches; a lengthy visionary segment cast as an End Time prophecy of a series of punishments for those who had transgressed the covenant; and, ultimately, recompense for the faithful, actualized in a heavenly and eternal Jerusalem. The letters provide a complementary message of reform and a collapsing of time similar to that found in the visionary segment, but more succinctly and in a manner less burdened by esoteric symbolism of the prophets and so, perhaps, more attuned to a mixed group of Jews who were well-versed in Scripture and its impact on Jewish sexual and dietary restrictions who might instruct Gentile novices who, if knowledgeable at all regarding the Hebrew Bible, were probably more familiar with the broad contours of the text rather

¹³⁴ See Marcus, "Jewish Apocalypticism," 4-5, 8-10, 12-15, 23-5.

than individual segments or verses.¹³⁵

For example, when writing to the seven churches of Asia Minor, John blatantly conflated contemporary and ancient threats to religious fidelity by using the names associated with three of the most nefarious personae in Israel's past—Balaam, Balak, and Jezebel. To the church at Pergamum, after praising the congregation for holding steadfast to the name of Christ, he aired what was ostensibly Christ's complaint:

I have a few things against you: you have some there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the people of Israel, so that they would eat food sacrificed to idols and practice fornication . . . Repent then. If not, I will come to you soon and make war against them.¹³⁶

And, to the church at Thyatira, again, as Christ, John wrote: "I have this against you: you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophet and is teaching and beguiling my servants to practice fornication and to eat food sacrificed to idols" (Apoc. 2:20).

Balaam and Balak are personae from the account in Numbers of Israel's encampment in Moab before entering into Canaan and eventually establishing the monarchy; Jezebel is from I and II Kings' depiction of the decline of the Northern Kingdom and its eventual conquest by the Assyrians.¹³⁷ The authors of the Hebrew Bible presented each of these personae as seducers of ancient Israelites who had enticed them

¹³⁵ Boyarin, *Dying for God*; idem, *Border Lines*; and Peter Schäfer, *Jesus in the Talmud*; idem, *The Jewish Jesus: How Judaism and Christianity Shaped Each Other* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), are among the most prominent scholars to have conducted studies indicating an undeniable intermingling among Jewish and Gentile believers of Christ in the first centuries of Christianity's development. Both have found that in these newly forged communities, many Jewish customs and dietary restrictions were adhered to as Jews maintained the traditions with which they were raised and Gentile Christians sought to identify with Israel and the practices of Jesus. Indeed, the author of the Gospel of Matthew depicted Jesus as declaring himself an adherent of Jewish tradition: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill" (Matt. 5:17).

¹³⁶ Apoc. 2:14,16.

¹³⁷ See Nm. 22-31; I Kgs. 16-21; II Kgs. 9.

to engage in sexual relations with Gentiles and to commit idolatry by eating *treif*, or ritually impure, foods.¹³⁸ Whether these were actual personae who had incited Israel to sin or if written sources about them reflect typological literary strategies is uncertain;¹³⁹ however, by associating the churches of Pergamum and Thyatira with specific ancient Israelites from alternate eras, John conveyed not only the similarity between Israelites and his own contemporary communities which had been tempted by and had succumbed to the allure of idolatry and its trappings of food and sex, time and again, but also their synonymy.

John's promotion of abstinence is removed from the type of license given by the apostle Paul. The latter attempted to appeal to Gentiles and taught a doctrine of freedom in Christ which permitted followers to forego traditional Jewish dietary restrictions and even to eat food sacrificed to idols in contrast to Pharisaic Jews who adhered to a strict interpretation of purity laws, denied the messiahship of Jesus, and so, perceptually, worshipped at the "synagogue of Satan" (Apoc. 2:6; 3:9).¹⁴⁰ As such, John's reform message was entirely apropos to the leniency of religious regulation in his era, and all the more for one given to *peshet* exegesis.

John further conflated distinct eras in the visionary segment of his Apocalypse

¹³⁸ Balaam's role in sexual transgression is relished in the Babylonian Talmud, where rabbis fantasized about his punishment in a boiling vat of semen. See Schäfer, *Jesus in the Talmud*, 86-7.

¹³⁹ "Balaam" and "Balak" are generally accepted as references to the respective wizard and king mentioned in the Hebrew Bible. There remains, however, debate regarding the possibility that "Jezebel" may have been a first-century C.E. historical persona, or if John's account of her is a symbolic and typological reference to Queen Jezebel. See Marla J. Selvidge, "Powerful and Powerless Women in the Apocalypse," *Neotestamentica* 26, no. 1 (1992), 159; Tina Pippin, *Apocalyptic Bodies: The Biblical End of the World in Text and Image* (London: Routledge, 1992), 32-42. Edmondo F. Lupieri, *A Commentary on the Apocalypse of John*, trans. Maria Poggi Johnson and Adam Kamesar (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 120-23.

¹⁴⁰ See I Cor. 8:1-8, 9:1-7.

through toponyms. For instance, when depicting the preaching and persecution of the two unnamed witnesses who would come before the Messiah and prepare the faithful by encouraging repentance, he invited his audience to think of these events as if occurring in both “Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified” (Apoc. 11:8). Edmondo F. Lupieri has noted that Sodom became a byword for “human sites of sin and betrayal” and Egypt the “exemplar of idolatry” within the biblical narrative¹⁴¹ based on events described in the Genesis account of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and the Exodus account of Egypt’s sustained idolatry and its influence over Israelite religious practice even after the Hebrews, and later Israelites, had been shown God’s supremacy.¹⁴² By aligning these cities with that of the site of Jesus’s crucifixion at Golgotha, John conflated three distinct contexts to convey the synonymy of negative effects of transgressive behavior. He also did so when he redeployed the prophetic archetype of Babylon as feminized and corrupting city and crafted the antagonistic persona, Babylon the Great—applying the name of the capital city of the empire responsible for toppling the First Temple, symbolically through the use of *peshar* exegesis, to the capital city of the empire that had toppled the Second.¹⁴³

Unlike the book of Daniel or the Johannine Apocalypse, the *Sefer Zerubbabel* was never canonized or codified, but survives in a variety of forms. The fullest version of this apocalypse, and that which has contributed the most to modern editions and translations,

¹⁴¹ Lupieri, *A Commentary*, 179-80.

¹⁴² See Gn. 18-19; Ex. 1-15, 32. For a further allusion to Egyptian influence in Israelite worship of bovine deities, see I Kgs. 12:28.

¹⁴³ See P. G. R. de Villiers, “The Lord was Crucified in Sodom and Egypt: Symbols in the Apocalypse of John,” *Neotestamentica* 22, no. 1 (1988): 133-35.

is found in Eleazar HaLevi's *Sefer ha-Zikhronot* mentioned above.¹⁴⁴ In it, the reader is introduced to the title character as he ponders whether there would be another Temple to replace the first that Nebuchadnezzar II had destroyed. In this contemplative state, a voice from heaven called out and responded to Zerubbabel's query, promising to reveal what would transpire in the future. By means of a heavenly wind Zerubbabel was carried to a city identified as both Nineveh and Rome.¹⁴⁵ And once there, the same voice from heaven directed him to an imprisoned man claiming to be the long awaited Messiah of Davidic lineage, Menahem ben Amiel, son of Hezekiah.¹⁴⁶ At first sight, this Messiah appeared "despised and wounded, lowly and in pain," much like the messianic suffering servant found in Isaiah 53 and discussed in rabbinic lore before morphing into a young man who was beautiful to behold.¹⁴⁷

In short order, Zerubbabel began to question him about the eschatological sequence of events before being interrupted by the archangel, sometimes named as

¹⁴⁴ Himmelfarb, "Sefer Zerubbabel," 70; eadem, *Jewish Messiahs*, 10, 13-15.

¹⁴⁵ Himmelfarb, "Sefer Zerubbabel," 71-2: "Then a spirit lifted me between heaven and earth and led me about Nineveh, the great city, which is the city of blood . . . I asked, 'What is the name of this place?' 'This is Rome the Great.'"

¹⁴⁶ For a discussion of Menahem's different patronymics and their function in the *Sefer Zerubbabel*, see Himmelfarb, "Mother of the Messiah," 386-87; eadem, *Jewish Messiahs*, 48-52; Latteri, "On Saints, Sinners, and Sex," 20-1.

¹⁴⁷ See Is. 53: 3-5; Babylonian Talmud, tractate *Sanhedrin* 98a, in Epstein, vol. 3 of *Seder Nezikin*, 661-65; cf. Himmelfarb, "Sefer Zerubbabel," 72n29; eadem, *Jewish Messiahs*, 5, 75-8, 97-8, 113-19, especially. For an extended discussion of the messianic motif of the suffering servant in rabbinic literature, see Abraham Berger, "Captive at the Gate of Rome: The Story of a Messianic Motif," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 44 (1977): 1-17.

Michael and at others as Metatron,¹⁴⁸ who disclosed the devastation that would transpire before the new and final messianic era would commence. The angel informed Zerubbabel that the very Temple the biblical Zerubbabel would be charged with erecting would fall at the hands of persecutors and plunderers who would defile it and make an end to the cultic offerings there. He also revealed that there would be a series of battles fought between the forces of good and evil before Israel would be fully victorious.

The first battle would be led by Menahem's mother, Hephzibah, who wielded a wonder-working blossoming staff given by God and previously belonging to Adam, Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and David.¹⁴⁹ With this staff, the messianic mother would successfully slay two kings—the king of Yemen and the king of Antioch—who threatened Jerusalem and the religious practices of her people. Five years later, a secondary messianic figure known as the Messiah ben Joseph—Nehemiah ben Hushiel—would emerge, gather Israel in Jerusalem, and reinstate the Temple cult for a total of forty years.¹⁵⁰ After this, further apocalyptic antagonists would attack under the leadership of

¹⁴⁸ “Michael” and “Metatron” seem to be used interchangeably in the extant versions without any specific, or consistent, ideological program. Himmelfarb, “Sefer Zerubbabel,” 73, based on Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Heb. d. 11, f. 248b, lines 11-12, read: “Then Michael, who is Metatron, answered ‘I am the angel who led Abraham through all the land of Canaan. . .’” Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Opp. 603, by contrast, is not as clear in its identification of Metatron and Michael as the same entity. Rather, f. 33a, lines 12-13 explicitly acknowledge Metatron as the angel “who led Abraham . . . ,” etc., and only later mentions Michael as a name, used interchangeably with Metatron, of the entity responding to Zerubbabel’s questions regarding the eschatological sequence: see f. 33b, lines 1, 14. While there is much scholarly literature devoted to Metatron and his varied levels of identity, there has not, to my knowledge, been an explanation of the potential motivation for scribal vacillation between Metatron and Michael.

¹⁴⁹ Himmelfarb, “Sefer Zerubbabel,” 74. For a discussion of the significance of the rod of the patriarchs in Jewish eschatology, see Christine Meilicke, “Moses’ Staff and the Return of the Dead,” *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 6 (1999): 345-72; and Reeves, *Trajectories*, 187-99. Incidentally, the same rod makes several appearances in various texts found in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Heb. d. 11.

¹⁵⁰ While the Messiah ben Joseph makes varied appearances in Jewish literature, Himmelfarb, *Jewish Messiahs*, 115, succinctly describes the relationship between the two male messianic figures in the *Sefer Zerubbabel*: “the messiah son of Joseph was clearly understood as subordinate to the messiah son of David. . .”

Siroy, the king of Persia, until killed by Hephzibah and her staff. A third battle would be fought first between Nehemiah and an Antichrist figure, Armilos, who would slay the Messiah ben Joseph. This was quickly followed by yet another battle between Armilos and the Messiah ben David, Menahem ben Amiel, to whom his mother, Hephzibah, had given her staff to by which he resurrected Nehemiah and led the faithful to victory.

The product of a union between Satan and a stone statue carved in the shape of a beautiful virgin, Armilos would capitalize on his mother's appeal to lure and subdue the nations who bowed before her. All who refused, he threatened with death like that he had delivered to Nehemiah. The final battle would be fought by Menahem, the prophet Elijah, the resurrected Nehemiah, the martyrs of Israel who were also resurrected, the faithful remnant, Moses, and Zerubbabel, against the remaining forces of evil. After the victory of Zerubbabel and his cohort, Israel would celebrate at the final Temple that had been crafted in heaven and descended to earth, seemingly as divine recompense for fidelity and yet another incarnation of the symbol of Israel's election and redemption.¹⁵¹

Most scholars date the compositional context of the apocalypse to the Eastern Roman, or Byzantine Empire of the early seventh century C.E., and so consider it to have been written against the backdrop of ongoing Sassanid-Roman conflict and the reconquest of Jerusalem in 629 C.E. by the Roman emperor Heraclius, prior to the Arab siege and conquest of the city in the 630s C.E.. This tendency is based on the early twentieth-century C.E. claims of Israel Lévi who argued that the name of the king of Persia was the same as that of the Sassanid *sha-hansha*, or emperor, who took the regnal

¹⁵¹ See Himmelfarb, "Sefer Zerubbabel," in Stern and Mirsky, *Rabbinic Fantasies*, 71-81; Latteri, "On Saints, Sinners, and Sex," 11-13.

name Kavad II (628 C.E.), and briefly ruled Palestine after colluding with the Roman Emperor Heraclius by staging a coup against his father, Chosroes II (590-628 C.E.).¹⁵² In conformance to this dating, Lévi and those influenced by his thesis have interpreted the *Sefer Zerubbabel*'s name for the final emperor and chief Antichrist persona, Armilos, as a transposed version of the name of Rome's mythic founder, Romulus, and so, an allusion to the sitting Roman Emperor. And they have suggested that Armilos's mother—the unnamed stone statue—was a paradoxical polemic alluding to the Virgin Mary. For, while Christians believed that the Virgin conceived the Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit, this stone maiden conceived the Antichrist through the power of the unholy of spirits, Satan.¹⁵³ They reinforce their position by the fact that Heraclius was said to have been so devoted to the Virgin that he employed her image at the head of his naval campaign when going into battle, much like Armilos is presented as parading his mother before the nations to conquer them.¹⁵⁴ In this regard, the messianic mother, Hephzibah, who led the initial charge against foreign domination, also shares similarities with the ideological role of the Virgin in the seventh-century C.E. Byzantine Empire, and Martha Himmelfarb has suggested that the *Sefer Zerubbabel* parsed out attributes associated with Mary between the two feminine personae of the narrative, thus illustrating Jewish

¹⁵² Israel Lévi, "L'apocalypse de Zorobabel et le roi de Perse Siroès," *Revue des études juives* 68 (1914): 152; Reeves, *Trajectories*, 58n128.

¹⁵³ See David Biale, "Counter-History and Jewish Polemics against Christianity: The *Sefer Toldot Yeshu* and the *Sefer Zerubavel*," *Jewish Social Studies* 6, no. 1 (1999): 140; Himmelfarb, "Mother of the Messiah," 384-85; eadem, *Jewish Messiahs*, 7, 57; and Reeves, *Trajectories*, 47-9.

¹⁵⁴ Ernst Kitzinger, "The Cult of Images in the Age before Iconoclasm," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 8 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1954), 111.

ambivalence to the Christian messianic mother.¹⁵⁵

These arguments have merit, yet a seventh-century C.E. compositional context remains uncertain due to a number of factors. Extant textual remains of the *Sefer Zerubbabel* are lacking until the tenth century C.E.¹⁵⁶ The notion that the apocalyptic antagonist “Siroy” alluded to a minor Persian emperor who ruled for less than one year assumes, without any corroborating evidence, that seventh-century C.E. Jews were aware of Kavad’s pre-regnal name.¹⁵⁷ Moreover, if willing to take Siroy at name value, it is unclear why numerical values should carry less weight. For reading the *Sefer Zerubbabel* as a rendering of Sassanid-Roman conflict requires intertextual chronography of the time period between the first and second battles to be read as “four years”—which Lévi proposed—rather than the “forty years” consistently represented in all known fragments and manuscripts of the text.¹⁵⁸ Arguments for a seventh-century C.E. composition also seem to disregard the intertextual claim that the eschatological battle sequence would begin 990 years after the destruction of the Temple. The text is ambiguous but, if referring to the destruction of the First Temple, the eschatological sequence would begin around the close of the fourth century C.E.; if referring to the Second Temple that Zerubbabel had a hand in constructing, the final battle would commence in 1068 C.E.—in either case, centuries removed from Heraclitus’s Byzantium.¹⁵⁹ Moreover, painted

¹⁵⁵ Himmelfarb, “Sefer Zerubbabel,” 69; eadem, “Mother of the Messiah,” 382; eadem, *Jewish Messiahs*, 6, 38-9; and Latteri, “On Saints, Sinners, and Sex,” 14.

¹⁵⁶ See Reeves, *Trajectories*, 48.

¹⁵⁷ Paul Speck, “The Apocalypse of Zerubbabel and Christian Icons,” *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 4 (1997): 187; Reeves, *Trajectories*, 58n128.

¹⁵⁸ Reeves, *Trajectories*, 57n125.

¹⁵⁹ Reeves, *Trajectories*, 56n118.

icons of the Virgin rather were far more common during Heraclius's time than the statuary of the Romanesque and Gothic periods.¹⁶⁰ And seventh-century C.E. Byzantium was hardly the only era in which Jews felt ambivalent toward a feminine representation of foreign religion or animosity toward an emperor of Rome. As will be discussed further below, this was something of a common trope that was malleable enough to conform to a variety of situations. Thus, while suggesting a seventh-century C.E. context of composition is possible, these counterpoints raise questions regarding the plausibility of such assertions.

Addressing multiple communities suffering yet another period of persecution and exile, the *Sefer Zerubbabel* condenses the past, present, and future within the cycle of redemption through the appearance of and interaction among significant prophesied and historical biblical personae, a messianic accessory of remarkable longevity, toponyms, and allusions to biblical and talmudic passages as well as the inclusion of numerous quotations, primarily culled from the prophetic and *aggadic* biblical books. In it, a future antagonistic king of Persia bore the same unusual descriptor *'az fanim* that the Deuteronomist had employed in allusion to the nation of Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar II and the editor(s) of Daniel had applied to Antiochus IV;¹⁶¹ Gog, a foreign prince depicted most in the biblical text attributed to the sixth-century B.C.E. prophet Ezekiel as God's scourge sent to punish a reprobate Israel, and functioning in the same way in the

¹⁶⁰ See Speck, "Apocalypse of Zerubbabel," 89, who both challenges claims of Heraclius's role in the Byzantine Cult of Icons and cautions against understanding the stone statue in the *Sefer Zerubbabel* as based on those of Mary common during the High Gothic period. See the evolution of Himmelfarb's treatment on the topic in her articles and monograph, which has come to resemble that of Speck: Himmelfarb, "Sefer Zerubbabel," 69; eadem, "Mother of the Messiah," 383; eadem, *Jewish Messiahs*, 56.

¹⁶¹ Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Heb. d. 11, f. 248b, line 9, includes עז פנים, *'az fanim*. Himmelfarb, "Sefer Zerubbabel," 73, has translated this phrase as "arrogant face" in this context.

first-century C.E. Johannine Apocalypse, figures once again as an attacker and pillager of a future Israel;¹⁶² and the righteous dead from Israel's past, including Moses, and the ninth-century B.C.E. prophet Elijah, each help to combat foreign oppression.¹⁶³ The uncommon names of the future Messiah's parents, Hephzibah and Hezekiah,¹⁶⁴ also reflect a meeting of past and future, for they are those of the seventh-century B.C.E. King of Judah and his consort. Moreover, the interchangeability of toponym of the place of the Messiah's captivity between Nineveh and Rome especially relates to the text's chronographic compression of the redemptive cycle. For these capital cities had, like Babylon, conquered segments of Israel and ushered in periods, or at least perceptions, of widespread exile 800 years apart—Nineveh in the eighth century B.C.E. and Rome in the first century C.E.¹⁶⁵

The Chronotope of The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson

The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson shares situational context, pseudonymity, symbolism, and formal elements with texts recognized as apocalypses; and each of these characteristics helps to situate Solomon's narrative within the apocalyptic genre. Like the compositional contexts of the apocalypses mentioned above, Solomon crafted his

¹⁶² Ez. 38:1-39:11; Apoc. 20:8; Himmelfarb, "Sefer Zerubbabel," 77-8.

¹⁶³ Himmelfarb, "Sefer Zerubbabel," 77-79.

¹⁶⁴ Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Heb. d. 11, f. 248a, line 28; Himmelfarb, "Sefer Zerubbabel," 72. This manuscript is the only extant recension that includes Hezekiah. See Himmelfarb, "Mother of the Messiah," in Schäfer, *Talmud Yerushalmi*, 387; eadem, *Jewish Messiahs*, 48-52; Latteri, "On Saints, Sinners, and Sex," 20-1.

¹⁶⁵ See Latteri, "On Saints, Sinners, and Sex," 17-21.

narrative in the wake of bloody communal upheaval and in response to unrelenting pressures to assimilate to the culture serving as the latest manifestation of the evil empire, Christendom.¹⁶⁶ As was the case in the book of Daniel, the *Sefer Zerubbabel*, and perhaps even the Johannine Apocalypse, pseudonymity would have provided a measure of safety for Solomon in an era of heightened persecution. It concealed the composer's identity from hostile members of his own society who had assimilated. And it protected him from members of the dominant society who would most likely take offense at the narrative's anti-Christian sentiment that was hinted at in the prologue's symbolic designation of crusaders as *'azey fanim*, the same goat-faced apocalyptic destroyers found in Deuteronomy, Daniel, and the *Sefer Zerubbabel*;¹⁶⁷ coercive Christian attempts to convert the Ashkenazim likened to the oppressive rulers of Babylon found in II Kings, Jeremiah, and Daniel, each of whom had imprisoned the Judaeen elite and tried to lure them into assimilating through impure "rations";¹⁶⁸ references to Christians as locusts who, like the pests of the prophetic texts and the Johannine Apocalypse, figured as hellish elements of divine retribution;¹⁶⁹ and naming Christ's tomb as a *bet ha-toref*, the same designation employed for the idolatrous shrine that had housed the mother of the Antichrist in the

¹⁶⁶ See Chapter One above. I have presented "Christendom" as an empire here intentionally, for the anti-Jewish pogroms of 1096 were not confined to the Holy Roman Empire but, in each locale they occurred, were wrought by self-proclaimed Christians and under some guise of Christianity.

¹⁶⁷ Chazan, *God, Humanity, and History*, 62, was the first scholar, to my knowledge, to argue that by employing *'azey fanim* (plural, construct form of *'az fanim*), Solomon attempted to connect the persecuting crusaders to earlier aggressors in Israel's history. Chazan, however, did so with reference to the persecuting nation mentioned in Deuteronomy only, and without the connotation of divine retribution attached.

¹⁶⁸ See *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 423; Roos, A90; Eidelberg, *Jews and the Crusaders*, 154n155.

¹⁶⁹ See Apoc. 9:3-11.

Sefer Zerubbabel.¹⁷⁰ Members of the dominant, Christian society perhaps would have taken even more umbrage at obvious insults found in the prologue which spoke to contemporary theological concerns. These include designations of the cross as a “defective sign” at a time when ecclesiastics were desperate to promote and defend the sacred symbol of Christ’s redemption against criticism levied by Ashkenazim and “heretics” that adoration of the crucifix amounted to idolatry;¹⁷¹ the idea that the Christian messianic mother, Mary, menstruated, just as the Church reinvigorated the doctrine of Christ’s dual nature and emphasized that he was born of a human mother, but one who was pure of corrupting bodily effluvia associated with ordinary women;¹⁷² or the many other epithets sprinkled throughout the text that refer to “the Pope of wicked Rome” as “Satan,”¹⁷³ Christian religion as comparable to seduction by a whore,¹⁷⁴ and Christ as a bastard, his mother, Mary, a whore.¹⁷⁵ Yet, as noted above, Solomon’s

¹⁷⁰ *Bet ha-toref* will be discussed further below in Chapter Three.

¹⁷¹ סימן פסול: *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 251; Roos, A7. Michael Frassetto, “Heretics and Jews,” 47-8. See also the discussion found in Chapter One regarding heresy and Christian theological insecurities. References to the cross as a סימן פסול suggest a Jewish perception of Christianity as idolatry, for the triliteral root of “defective,” פסל, is translated as “idol” in several biblical passages: see “פסל,” in Francis Brown, ed., *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 820-21.

¹⁷² As noted above, הנידה, *ha-niddah*, or menstruant, in the prologue of Solomon’s text is a later replacement for a term that had been erased. For discussion on why the term “menstruant” was both theologically and popularly offensive, see Anna Sapir Abulafia, “Invectives against Christianity in the Hebrew Chronicles of the First Crusade,” in *Crusades and Settlement: Papers Read at the First Conference of the Society for the Study of Crusades and the Latin East and Presented to R. C. Smail*, ed. Peter W. Edbury (Cardiff, UK: University College Cardiff, 1985), 68-9; Frassetto, “Heretics and Jews,” 47-8; and Alexandra Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust in Medieval Religious Polemic* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 56-7. Further examples of Mary as a “menstruant” in Solomon’s narrative, and discussion of theological resonances, are found below in Chapter Three.

¹⁷³ ריבא גם השטן, הפפיוס של רומי הרשעה (Job 2:1): *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 299; Roos, A30.

¹⁷⁴ כי התעתו רוח זנונים (Hos. 4:12): *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 295; Roos, A29.

¹⁷⁵ ממזר בן הנידה בן הזומה: *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 333; Roos, A47.

pseudonym may also have been an attempt to continue the apocalyptic tradition of paying homage to biblical personae or a devout reformer within the Ashkenazic community and, in so doing, lend authority to his text.

As was the case with Daniel, the Johannine Apocalypse, and the *Sefer Zerubbabel*, another way for apocalypticists to gain authority was to display facility with the biblical text, situating their own writing within the prophetic tradition by utilizing quotations and applying them to their own context through the exegetical method of *peshet*. Extensive knowledge of the biblical text was characteristic of *talmidim*, or pupils, trained in the Mainz *yeshivah*, as well as in the related ShUM *yeshivot*, throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries C.E.,¹⁷⁶ and Gerson Cohen and Elliot R. Wolfson have helped to further explain the significance of biblical knowledge and citation. The former has shown that it was common for medieval Ashkenazic rabbinic poets and authors—including those who composed the Hebrew crusade narratives—to employ biblical references in their writings as a means of translating the biblical context to whatever they may have been discussing, and thus imparting the appropriate *kavvanah*, or spiritual meaning; the latter has contended that acquiring this esoteric knowledge was believed to contribute to mystical visionary experience—like those antique and medieval apocalypticists presented in their texts.¹⁷⁷ Such biblical references would come to be termed “prooftexts” because they provided “proof” of the author’s intent and validated

¹⁷⁶ See Kanarfogel, *Peering through the Lattices*, 61-9.

¹⁷⁷ See Gerson D. Cohen, “The Hebrew Crusade Chronicles and the Ashkenazi Tradition,” in *Minḥah le-Naḥum: Biblical and Other Studies Presented to Nahum M. Sarna in Honor of His Seventieth Birthday*, ed. Marc Brettler and Michael Fishbane (London and New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 1993), 44-53; Wolfson, “Martyrdom, Eroticism, and Asceticism,” 176.

his or her position through Scripture.

In his prologue, Solomon included no fewer than thirty-three prooftexts.¹⁷⁸ The majority pertain to the causes for the destruction of, and laments for, Jerusalem and its Temple in the sixth century B.C.E. If he was in fact employing *peshet*, there is little question that Solomon associated the devastation in the ShUM with that affecting First Temple Israel. Yet, he did not shy away from prooftexts that aligned 1096 C.E. to other periods in the biblical narrative. Rather, much as the apocalypses discussed above moved freely between eras, Solomon's prologue has the disorientating effect of pulling the reader forwards and backwards in time and space—in one instant, to the mythic origins of the Jewish people and, in the next, to the future messianic era. In this regard, the prologue is a microcosm of Solomon's narrative.

He reinforced the chronotope of conflation through the structure of his narrative and literary techniques. In his prologue, Solomon indicated that the ShUM community of 1096 C.E. had hoped for messianic redemption by employing the same prooftext that had been used in the *gematria* to prophesy that the Messiah would come between the years 1085 and 1104 C.E. (“we had *hoped for salvation* and consolation according to the prophecy of Jeremiah: *Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob, and raise shouts for the chief of the nations*”). He also gave an explanation of why their aspirations had not been fulfilled (“because it was a . . . *day of punishment*”) and projected redemption further into the future, perhaps onto his own mid-twelfth-century C.E. context (“this generation was chosen . . . to be His portion”). Through this structure, Solomon suggested that his own

¹⁷⁸ See Haverkamp's copious notes to *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, 246-56; and those of Roos, *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, A5-12.

ShUM community—the redeemed remnant who had been saved from annihilation—had lost the effects of their salvation and had returned to the tumultuous state of messianic expectancy found in the ShUM of 1096 C.E.¹⁷⁹

As noted above, the majority of Solomon’s narrative is a collection of accounts of persecution that occurred in several cities and villages throughout the Rhineland in the spring and early summer of 1096 C.E. Though the segments are primarily arranged in the linear order of the past events they depict, the same chronological vacillation of the prologue continues throughout the text. For instance, immediately following the prologue, Solomon depicted the ShUM pogroms that occurred in May, during the lunar months of Iyyar and Sivan, through the undated persecution in the town of Sla¹⁸⁰ which, presumably, preceded the arrival of crusaders in Hungary at the end of June, or Tammuz.¹⁸¹ But this forward-marching linear progression is fractured by the literary techniques of overlapping and backtracking. The former is evident when, in his account of the persecutions in Mainz, Solomon included a depiction of the community’s behavior during the week between the first and second attacks on the Speyer community, which preceded the mob’s arrival.¹⁸² When presenting the persecutions in the various Cologne suburbs to which the Jewish community fled, Solomon’s depiction of the chronology of events in Neuss and in another unnamed town is vague: it is unclear whether the

¹⁷⁹ For the context of the above quotations, see the prologue of Solomon’s narrative quoted at the beginning of the chapter.

¹⁸⁰ There is debate regarding whether Sla refers to Wesseli in Bohemia or Prague. See Roos, ‘*God Wants It!*’, A119n341.

¹⁸¹ See *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 485; Roos, A120; and Eidelberg, introduction to *Jews and the Crusaders*, 5.

¹⁸² See *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 291-97; Roos, A27-30.

persecutions occurred one week or more after the other or on the same day, as both are presented as happening on “Tuesday” without any other signifier of date.¹⁸³ And Solomon brought up the persecutions occurring in Trier, Metz, Prague, and Bohemia, towards the end of his account, though he suggested that these began in April, or Nissan, and so prior to those in the ShUM cities with which he had opened his narrative.¹⁸⁴

Solomon’s presentation of the above is understandable insofar as it remains difficult to convey simultaneity when the physical, textual, representation necessitates one event following the other. Less understandable examples of chronological deviation are found in his inclusion of a disparaging presentation of Pope Urban’s November 1095 C.E. call to crusade in the midst of the Mainz segment which, as noted above, treats the pogroms there in May of 1096 C.E., and again in his epilogue.¹⁸⁵ Further non-linear representation is also observed in this concluding segment when Solomon ended his narrative with an account of the same persecution in Speyer he had begun with, again mentioning the murder of eleven Jews by the crusading mob and the efforts of Bishop John to protect the community. Here, Solomon also included how the Speyer Jewry originated as those taking refuge from the earlier persecution and fire in the Jewish quarter at Mainz in the 1080s C.E. And he provided his version of what became of the Speyer community in the aftermath of the 1096 C.E. pogroms that foreshadowed the tension among isolationist *hasidim* and assimilationist Jews found in every period of eschaton and recounted in every historical apocalypse. Though the Speyer Jewry returned

¹⁸³ See *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 405-07; Roos, A83-85.

¹⁸⁴ *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 467-69; Roos, A110-12.

¹⁸⁵ See *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 299; Roos, A30-1.

to their homes, their sense of safety within the broader Christian community was gone. They were paralyzed with fear to such an extent that members from the upper and lower sections of the Jewish quarter did not dare to meet together even for prayer. Instead, the *talmidim* were isolated and prayed in the home of Judah Kalonymus, founder of the mystical reform movement known as the *Hasidei Ashkenaz*, while the other members of the community were dispersed among the predominantly Christian society of Speyer.¹⁸⁶

With the redundant inclusion of the Speyer Jewry's fate in 1096 C.E., Solomon truly distinguished his text from the emergent historiographic trends of his Jewish and Christian neighbors. For, while the other extant Hebrew and Latin crusade narratives also emphasize the concept of theodicy, employ prooftexts and typology, and, to varying extents, call for reform in the hopes of ushering in messianic redemption,¹⁸⁷ no other account of events during the First Crusade that I am aware of ends by recounting the same events it began with. Structurally, this hearkens to the apocalyptic presentations of the full cycle of redemption secured and lost in the book of Daniel, the Johannine Apocalypse, and the *Sefer Zerubbabel*. As the authors or editors of these earlier apocalypses had done, Solomon visibly and symbolically compressed the cycle of redemption, operating within a linear trajectory to a single point that might reflect all other periods of potential redemption. The persecuted community at Mainz in the 1080s C.E. which had given rise to the Speyer Jewry, and the Speyer Jewry later perched on the

¹⁸⁶ See *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 491-93; Roos, A123-25.

¹⁸⁷ For a discussion of theodicy, typology, and reform in Latin narratives of the First Crusade, see Stow, "Conversion, Apostasy, and Apprehensiveness," 911-33. For a discussion of apocalypticism in numerous Latin chronicles, including those treating the First Crusade, see Peter Classen, "*Res Gestae*, Universal History, Apocalypse: Visions of the Past and Future," in *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, ed. Robert L. Benson and Giles Constable (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 387-417.

brink of further pogroms attending the Second Crusade, were synonymous with the Ashkenazim of 1096 C.E., the Jewish inhabitants of the Roman Empire in the seventh and first centuries C.E., the Jerusalemites of the sixth century B.C.E., and the Northern Kingdom in the eighth century B.C.E. For each confronted pressures to assimilate while preparing for the next day of reckoning that was sure to come.

Conclusion

The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson provides a rendering of the past, parable for the present, and prophecy for the future. Although it has been categorized for most of its known existence as a historical text, its fluid relationship to time and place, evident in its composer's employment of pseudonym, symbolism, prooftexts, and narrative structure, suggests that it is better classified as an apocalypse. Within this genre, authors and editors altered the more traditional, spiral-like Jewish chronographic style evident in the historical and prophetic books of the Hebrew Bible by condensing time and space to a single point and by categorizing personae, locales, and events based not on their uniqueness as historical entities belonging to a specific context but on their significance to the redemptive cycle. Chapters Three and Four build on many of the themes discussed here. Based on a more extensive analysis of the prooftexts Solomon drew from, these argue that the main messages of Solomon's apocalypse were those consistently represented in other Jewish apocalypses—resistance to assimilative pressures and reform.

Chapter Three

Liaisons of an Adulterous Woman: Playing *ha-Zonah* and Projecting Guilt in *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*

When those who were in the chambers saw what those pious ones had done, and that the enemies had come upon them, they all cried out: “Now there is nothing <better> than to offer up the sacrifice of our own lives.” There, women girded their loins with strength and slaughtered their sons and daughters and also themselves. Many men as well found strength and slaughtered their wives, children, and babies . . . They all stood, men and women, and slaughtered each other. Maidens, brides, and bridegrooms looked out through the windows and cried out in a loud voice: “Behold and see, our God, what we are doing for the sanctification of your great Name, in order not to exchange you” . . . They did not wish to deny or exchange the fear of our King for an abominable offshoot, a bastard, and a son of the menstruant and whore . . . They were killed and slaughtered for the unity of the venerated and awesome Name.

—*The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*¹

Resignation and resolve. Confounded, angry, fighting words. Insulting and inciting words. Boastful bluster to mask shameful surrender of a love too late to be realized. Is love ever too late to be realized? Or reciprocated? Or rewarded? The Ashkenazim of 1096 C.E. or, more aptly, the majority of medieval commentators who wrote about them, thought not. They were optimistic that Israel’s love for God should, and so would, always be acknowledged and duly compensated—whether individually and on another plane of consciousness, in a heavenly post-mortem eschatology intended for the faithful, or through collective messianic redemption in the here and now. It was a hope fostered for

¹ ואותם שבחדרים כשראו את המעשה הזה מאילו הצדיקים והאויבים שבאו עליהם, כבר צעקו כולם: עוד אין <טוב> מלהקריב קרבן נפשינו. ושם חגרו נשים בעוז מתניהם וישחטו בניהם ובנותיהם וגם עצמם. וגם אנשים רב אימצו כח וישחטו נשיהם ובניהם וטפם. . . ויעמדו כולם, איש ואשה, וישחטו זה לזה. והבתולות וכלות וחתנים הביטו בעד החלונות וצעקו בקול גדול: הביטה וראה, אלהינו, מה אנו עושין על קידוש שמך הגדול, בלי להמיר אותך. . . ולא אבו לכפור ולהמיר יראת מלכינו בנצר נתעב ממזר בן אלהינו. . . ונהרגו ונטבחו על יחוד שם הנכבד והגורא *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 331-35; Roos, A46-7.

the sake of the victimized generation and, no doubt, for their own—the remnant. But Solomon had acknowledgements of another kind in mind; namely, that his readers recognize moments when they and their forebears had been tempted by foreigners and foreign worship, when their love for God had wavered, and what was required of them to return to a state of union that merited any form of eschatological reward.

The above quotation is an excerpt taken from the Mainz segment of *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*. In it, the reader is introduced to a portion of the Ashkenazim who were cloistered within the chambers of the bishop's palace at Mainz when the crusading horde, clamoring peasants, and frenzied neighbors attacked during the Spring of 1096 C.E. Their location belied the fact that they had been willing to put their trust in a priest and enter into an area presumably teeming with the material trappings of Christianity that would have been considered taboo by strict *halakhic* standards and under normal circumstances, for they reflected a level of intimacy with idolatrous Gentiles and the highest representative of foreign worship.² But these were hardly normal circumstances.

According to Solomon's account, the group within the chambers had just witnessed a number of their co-religionists fight a losing battle against Christian aggressors in the bishop's courtyard, after which the majority of the remaining Jewry inside the palace slaughtered each other and themselves in *kiddush ha-Shem*. The group in the courtyard, it seems, opted for martyrdom when there was still a chance that they might have survived at least a little longer by seeking further sanctuary from the bishop

² See Chapter One.

within the walls of his residence, but “they did not want to escape into the chamber in order to live a temporary life, for lovingly they accepted the heavenly judgement upon themselves.”³ Emboldened by the courtyard martyrs’ perceptually superior commitment to God that was reflected in their willingness to remain outside and to perish in *kiddush ha-Shem*, and no doubt fearful of the tortures worse than death that the mob might inflict upon them, those who were inside the bishop’s chamber followed suit and slaughtered each other.

At times, Solomon presented such acts of martyrdom as reflections of ardor for the divine in a manner that echoed eleventh- and twelfth-century C.E. rabbinic poets who commemorated the victims of the Rhineland pogroms in verse. R. Kalonymos bar Judah of Mainz, for instance, depicted betrothed martyrs “hurrying to the slaughter as to the wedding canopy.”⁴ And R. David bar Meshullam of Speyer shared the imagery in his account of parents slaughtering their children: “Sons are led to the slaughter as to the beautiful wedding canopy.”⁵ Solomon’s depiction of the martyrs’ love is sometimes faint, as observed when those in the courtyard were merely said to have “lovingly . . . accepted” their fate, or when those inside the chambers declared that they chose to die so

³ ולא רצו לברוח תוך החדרה לחיות חיי שעה, כי מאהבה קיבלו עליהם דין שמים: *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 331; Roos, A45.

⁴ ממהרים לטבח כבאפריון חפתם: R. Kalonymos bar Judah, “The Voice, Jacob’s Voice,” in *Sefer Gezerot Ashkenaz ve-Tsarefat: divre zikhronot mi-bene ha-dorot shebi-tekufat mas’e ha-tselav u-mivhar piyutehem* (The Book of the Decrees of Germany and France: Memories of Members of the Generations of the Periods of the Crusades), ed. Abraham Meir Habermann and Yitzhak Baer (Jerusalem: Sifre Tarshish be-siyu’a Mosad ha-Rav Kuk, 1945), 65.

⁵ מוליכים בניהם לטבח כלחפה נאה: R. David bar Meshullam, “O God, Do Not Hush Up the Shedding of My Blood!” in Habermann and Baer, *Sefer Gezerot*, 71.

as “not to exchange” their God for another.⁶ The sentiment figures more prominently in his account of events in the Cologne suburb of Eller, where he included a monologue by a communal leader, Master Judah, who slaughtered his son’s fiancée, Sarit, as if the act was a mystical union forged in love in language closely resembling that of R. Kalonymos and R. David: “This is the wedding canopy of my daughter, my bride. . . .”⁷

The blend of familial and connubial love echoes that found in the Song of Songs, where the persona of the Beloved describes his Lover as “my sister, my bride.”⁸ Another allusion to the Song is found in Solomon’s depiction of the martyrs at Xanten, where he employed a biblical proof-text—“*therefore the maidens love you*” (Sg.1:3)—and incorporated a well-known exegetical interpolation of the verse’s meaning—“*they loved you unto death!*”⁹ Solomon further indicated the idea that martyrdom helped to produce mystical union when he applied a proof-text from the Psalms to the same community, describing them en masse “*like a bridegroom from his wedding canopy, and like a strong man runs his course with joy,*”¹⁰ for they had made haste to sacrifice themselves. And he cast the rabbi who led this group in prayer before their act of communal sacrifice as one so united in love with God that he seemingly moved beyond the spiritual phase of merely receiving divine blessings for abiding the covenant—including meriting the martyrs’

⁶ “מאהבה קיבלו”; “בלי להמיר אותך”; *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 335, 331; Roos, 46, 45, respectively.

⁷ ראו כולכם זאת חופת בתי כלתי: *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 431; Roos, A93.

⁸ Sg. 4:9, 4:10, 4:12, 5:1. A further blend of familial and connubial love is found in Sg. 8:1, where the Lover tells her Beloved “O that you were like a brother to me, who nursed at my mother’s breast!”

⁹ עד מות אהבוך, על כן עלמות אהבוך, *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 435; Roos, A96. See Wolfson, “Martyrdom, Eroticism, and Asceticism,” 173.

¹⁰ כחתן יוצא מחפתו ישיש כגיבור לרוץ אורה: *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 441; Roos, A97. The proof-text Solomon employed is an excerpt from Psalm 19:6 in the Hebrew Bible, 19:5 NRSV.

crown—to a level of mystical union in which he was able to reciprocate as a partner: “His prayers went up to heaven, before the throne, to the one who lives forever, and turned into a crown and a diadem on the head of God Most High, the King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He.”¹¹

As lovely as these depictions are, Solomon also presented martyrdom as an act of contempt—specifically, for Christianity. This is reflected in the desecration of the name of the Christian God and Messiah, Jesus, and his mother, Mary, found in this chapter’s opening quotation, in which the martyrs within the bishop’s chamber collectively denigrated Christ as an “abominable offshoot, a bastard, and a son of a menstruant and a whore.”¹² Similar language is found in the narrative’s Prologue, where Solomon presented an unlikely scenario in which Christian crusaders referred to Mary as a menstruant when spurring each other on to kill or convert their Jewish neighbors: “Come, let us wipe them out as a nation; the name of Israel shall be remembered no more, unless they become like us and acknowledge the son of the menstruant.”¹³ The sentiment is echoed yet again in Solomon’s description of the force that had motivated Duke Godfrey to both go on crusade and torment Jews: “a spirit of whoredom had led him astray.”¹⁴ To clarify that this “spirit of whoredom” was intended to convey Christianity, following shortly thereafter, Solomon included his depiction of Pope Urban’s call to Holy War at

¹¹ ותפילתו עולה למרום פני כסא ערבות להי עולמים ונעשית כתר ועטרה בראש אל עליון מלך מלכי המלכים הקיביה' *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 435; Roos, A95.

¹² *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 333; Roos, A47.

¹³ *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 253; Roos, A9.

¹⁴ *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 295; Roos, A29.

Clermont: “the Pope of wicked Rome . . . declared among all the nations who believed in the offshoot of adultery [i.e., Jesus] . . . that they should gather together and go up to Jerusalem and conquer the city for themselves. . . .”¹⁵

Yet the most pronounced reiteration of the martyrs’ contempt for Jesus and Mary observed at the opening of this chapter is that found in another martyrological vignette from the Mainz segment. Like that relating events occurring in the bishop’s courtyard and chambers, the locus of drama is the residence of another priest in Mainz. According to Solomon’s account, Master David, son of the *gabbai*, or communal treasurer, was hiding with his household in an unnamed priest’s courtyard. After the attacks at the bishop’s palace, and those at a local count’s residence where another segment of the Mainz Jewry sought refuge, the priest told them of the devastating number of murders and acts of martyrdom that had already claimed the lives of the majority of the Jewish community there. He also told of members of the Mainz Jewry who had converted for a while to save themselves only to revert to Judaism when it was safe to do so. He begged those in his courtyard to do the same, promising that if they consented to be *tinfum*, or “defiled,” by converting to Christianity, they and all their money would be rescued.¹⁶

The scenario was a common one in Solomon’s account. In Speyer,¹⁷ Worms,¹⁸ and Trier,¹⁹ Jews hid in their respective bishop’s palaces or among priests. In the case of the

¹⁵ הפפיוס של רומי הרשעה, ויעבר קול בכל הגוים אשר האמינו בנצר נאפוף . . . שיתקבצו יחד ויעלו לירושלים ויכבשו העיר לידם: *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 299; Roos, A30.

¹⁶ טינפום: *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 369; Roos, A64.

¹⁷ *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 263; Roos, A14-15.

¹⁸ *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 269, 273; Roos, A16.

¹⁹ *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 473-79 ; Roos, A114-17.

Cologne Jewry, the bishop took responsibility for secreting the Ashkenazim in the neighboring suburbs of Neuss, Wevelinghoven, Eller, Xanten, Mehr, Tremonia, and Kerpen that were under his jurisdiction.²⁰ In each of these instances, with the exception of Bishop John of Speyer, the priests who had agreed to protect the Ashkenazim inevitably attempted to persuade them to convert when pressure from the horde and the clamor for Jewish blood grew uncontrollable.²¹ The results of these efforts vary and include reluctant conversion, forced conversion, and mass martyrdom.

For his part, David appeared to accede to the request of his host, telling the priest: “Now you shall go outside to the crusaders and the townspeople and tell them in my name that they should all come to me.”²² The priest, crusaders, and townspeople were overjoyed that such a prominent Jew seemed to have been convinced to convert. At least Solomon wished to convey that this was the case by surely inflating the number of those who gathered to witness the event to total in the “thousands and tens of thousands,”²³ if not inventing the scenario entirely. But the crowd, in all of its ecstatic enormity, was disappointed when, instead of the baptism and acceptance of Christianity, Solomon presented David’s affirmation of Judaism and the God of Israel:

When the righteous one [David] saw them [the crowd that had gathered], he placed his trust in the God of his ancestors and called out to them and said: You are the children of whoredom. You believe in a deity who was

²⁰ *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 405; Roos, A83.

²¹ See, especially, the case of Trier, where the bishop who had promised to protect the Jewry ordered the execution of the most prominent community under his care in the hopes of inspiring the rest to convert. *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 473-75; Roos, A115.

²² עתה, לך לך חוצה אל התועים ולא העירונים, ודברת להן בשמי שיבואו אלי כולם: *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 369; Roos, A65.

²³ לאלפים ולרבבות: *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 371; Roos, A65.

born into whoredom. I believe in the God who will live for all eternity, who dwells in the highest heavens. In Him I have placed my trust until this day and thus I will do until my soul departs. I know the truth: If you kill me, my soul will rest in *gan Eden*, in the light of life. You, on the other hand, will descend to the lowest pit, to everlasting contempt. You are condemned to *Gehinnom* with your <deity> in boiling <excrement> for he is <the son of the whore and a crucified one>.²⁴

In response to these pointed insults against Jesus, Mary, and Christians, including his host, the mob killed David's entire household before throwing their corpses into the street.

Although existing side by side, for most of the known history of *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, scholars have emphasized the martyrdom of love rather than that of contempt. Nils Roemer provides an explanation of why this has been the case in his historiographical study of the nineteenth-century C.E. Jewish-German scholars of Judaica, known as practitioners of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, or the scientific study of Judaism, who were responsible for first publishing and popularizing the Hebrew crusade narratives. According to Roemer, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831 C.E.), and the majority of contemporary Gentile-German scholars influenced by his philosophy of history, failed to adequately address the Rhineland pogroms of 1096 C.E. or deign to show respect for the Jewish dead by recognizing the victims as martyrs. The reason: they

²⁴ ויהי כראות אותם הצדיק, ובטח באלהי אבותיו ויקרא אליהם ויאמר: אתם בני זנונים, באלוה אשר <ממזר ותלוי> אתם מאמי-נים, אבל אני מאמין באל חי לעולמים, הדר בשמי מרום! בן בטחתי עד היום הזה וכן אעשה עד יציאת נפשי. וידעתי האמת, אם אתם הורגים אותי, נשמתי תהא מונחת בגן עדן, באור החיים ואתם יורדין לבאר שחת, לדיראון עולם ובגיהנם אתם נידונים ע <ם אלוה> <שלכם >ובצואה> רותחת, שהור <בן הזונה> *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 371; Roos, A65. In the Babylonian Talmud, rabbis interpreted Jesus's punishment for disrespecting his teachers, etc., as boiling in excrement: see Schäfer, *Jesus in the Talmud*, 87-94. I have employed Roos's translation with the exception of עדן בגן, *ba-gan Eden*, which she has translated as "in Paradise," and ובגיהנם, *ve-ba-Gihinnom*, which she has translated as "and in Hell." I have kept as the transliterated forms because I believe the theological resonances of *gan Eden* and *Gihinnom* are somewhat different from Western notions of "Paradise" and "Hell." *Gan Eden*, the Garden of Eden, as a locale of reward, for instance, reinforces the idea of redemptive cyclicity while *Gihinnom*, as noted in Chapter Four, is closer to the Catholic concept of Purgatory.

did not acknowledge Judaism as a valid, rational religion, or post-biblical Jewish history as having any bearing on world events. For they perceived both had been superseded by the logic of Christianity and the dominance of “Christian” empires.²⁵ Countering this position, *Wissenschaft* scholars helped to usher in an ideological paradigm shift by employing an argument of rationalism against Christianity, contending that the murderous actions of medieval Christian aggressors were based on irrational prejudice against innocent victims which only served to undermine the socio-economic vibrance of the Rhineland during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. They also made the most of the nineteenth-century C.E. interest in the history of the Crusades, suffering, and the heightened romantic emphasis on “heroic” or “beautiful” death as the pinnacle of love and devotion, in the case of the martyrs, for God.²⁶

For the majority of the twentieth and continuing on into the twenty-first century C.E., scholars of Judaica have maintained the innocence and the righteous devotion of the Ashkenazim—a topic which will be discussed at length in Chapter Four. To a far lesser degree, some scholars have also remained enthralled by the language of love in Ashkenazic martyrological accounts. Daniel Boyarin, for example, traces the emergence of amorous martyrdom to early efforts by antique rabbis to distinguish their communities from those of Jewish-Christians. One way they achieved this was through developing an ideology of martyrdom to match the simultaneously sexual repressed and suggestive ardor for Christ found in antique Christian martyrologies. He claims that the Jewish

²⁵ Roemer, “Turning Defeat into Victory,” 65-6.

²⁶ Roemer, “Turning Defeat into Victory,” 66, 70-2; Iris Shagrir and Netta Amir, “The Persecution of the Jews in the First Crusade: Liturgy, Memory, and Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture,” *Speculum* 92, no. 2 (2017): 407.

“eroticization of death for God” was initiated by the foremost rabbi of the famed Ten Martyrs, R. Akiba, who met his death during the second-century C.E. Hadrianic persecutions, and the later fourth- and fifth-century C.E. talmudic references which told of the event.²⁷ As noted in the Introduction, Akiba perished while reciting the *Shema* —“Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord is one” (Dt. 6:4)—and fulfilling the positive commandment in the verse that followed to “love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might” (Dt. 6:5) through his death. According to Boyarin, it was Akiba’s willingness to die for God as an act that consummated the bond of love between the Creator and created, reinforced by expression of the singularity of the God Israel in the *Shema*, and alleged to have been accompanied by visionary experience of heavenly glory and a “bright and ruddy” (Sg. 5:10) divine Beloved, that was novel to Jewish tradition. For earlier martyrs—such as those included in the Books of Maccabees—were certainly righteous, but they were said to have gone to their deaths out of fear. Akiba, by contrast, was likened to a lover longing for his paramour, much like the persona found in the Song of Songs and discussed further below. Boyarin asserts that it was this example that would be the most important to the medieval Ashkenazic martyrs.²⁸

By contrast, Wolfson’s exploration of the martyrological language of love reaches forward in time from the persecutions of the generation of 1096 C.E. and the narratives composed about them to those following in the later twelfth- and thirteenth-century C.E.

²⁷ Boyarin, *Dying for God*, 107.

²⁸ Boyarin, *Dying for God*, 95-110.

mystical reform movement of the *Hasidei Ashkenaz*. In his study, Wolfson reinforces Boyarin's claims of the "eroticization of death for God" among the Ashkenazic martyrs. He illustrates how the *Hasidei Ashkenaz* employed the same language of love, prooftexts, literary allusions, and methods of achieving visionary experience and individualized post-mortem paradise as a reward for martyrdom found in the Hebrew narratives of the Rhineland pogroms and applied these to *hasidic* ascetic practices. According to Wolfson, the *hasidim* who were willing to deny themselves the desires of the flesh, especially their sexual appetites, might experience mystical union on par with the martyrs, even to the extent of reciprocally crowning God like the rabbi who led the martyrs in prayer in Xanten.²⁹

Interpretations of either the martyrdoms of 1096 C.E. or, more aptly, the representations of them found in the Hebrew narratives as love acts are not necessarily inaccurate, but they are incomplete, and, at times, intentionally so. When the *Historische Commission für Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland* commissioned Neubauer, Stern, and Baer to compile the first collection and German translation of the Hebrew crusade narratives in their publication of *Hebräische Berichte*, they asked that the offensive references to Jesus as a bastard and corpse, Mary as menstruant and whore, Christianity as a religion of whoredom, churches as houses of idolatry, etc., not be included. The reasons given were that such invectives could potentially incite antisemitism, and that they were merely unwitting commonplace descriptors used by medieval Jews that had no

²⁹ Wolfson, "Martyrdom, Eroticism, and Asceticism," 174, 179-80.

significant bearing on the narratives or the events they described.³⁰ *Wissenschaft* scholars were understandably cautious about the potentially violent and politically destabilizing effects of anti-Christian language and sentiment found in the narratives and so, as noted above, focussed instead on the deleterious results of crusader violence on the Rhineland in general, or on the heroic suffering and piety of the Ashkenazim of 1096 C.E. Often their emphasis was predicated on politics ranging from bids for full German citizenship to Zionist justification for the necessity of an independent Jewish State.³¹

Caution prevailed throughout the majority of the twentieth century C.E. and, indeed, does so even now, as threatening antisemitism continues to impact the focus of scholarship and the willingness to share findings lest these be misconstrued and misused to validate anti-Jewish propaganda, political platforms, and hate crimes. In light of this, Eidelberg's decision to break with tradition and to include the anti-Christian invectives in his 1977 C.E. English translation of the Hebrew crusade narratives should be considered nothing less than a courageous commitment to scholarship. His bravery and studiousness were made all the more evident by his identification of the Jewish tradition of such insults found in the *Ma'aseh Yeshu*, The Deeds of Jesus, alternately known as the *Toledot Yeshu*, The Life Story of Jesus, in both his Introduction to Solomon's narrative as well as in a note appended to his translation.³²

Shortly after Eidelberg's publication, Anna Sapir Abulafia would go on to indicate

³⁰ Abulafia, "Invectives against Christianity," 67.

³¹ See Friedlander, *Memory, History and the Extermination of the Jews*, 44; Roemer, "Turning Defeat into Victory," 65-80; Spiegel, "Memory and History," 156; Cohen, *Sanctifying the Name of God*, 31-43; Marcus, "Israeli Medieval Jewish Historiography," 244-85.

³² Eidelberg, introduction to *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Simson*, in *Jews and the Crusaders*, 16, 144n10.

that the anti-Christian invectives present in the crusade narratives permeated all types of Jewish literature in the Middle Ages, ranging from the Babylonian Talmud employed by the educated elite to the popular polemic of the *Toledot Yeshu*. Because of their ubiquity, she contends that rather than mere commonplace descriptors, as *Wissenschaft* scholars had maintained, “the pejorative expressions had a specific function to play in determining the attitudes of medieval Jews to the Christian world in which they lived.”³³ Abulafia found that references to Mary as a menstruant or whore, Jesus as a bastard or corpse, churches as houses of idolatry, etc., first appeared in antiquity during the lengthy process of self-definition and delineation of Jewish and Christian communities. Then, as well as in the Middle Ages, the insults worked together to negate Christian supersessionism by undermining and offering an alternative to Church doctrine regarding the details of Jesus’s conception and birth, the source of his ability to work wonders, and why his tomb was found empty. In doing so, the invectives functioned primarily internally as resistance to Christian assimilative pressures and a means of bolstering Jewish spirits via crass humor that insulted the dominant culture.³⁴

Recently, Alexandra Cuffel has reaffirmed and extended Abulafia’s assertions to illustrate the ways in which Jews, Christians, and Muslims all used similar polemics to create something of a linguistic system based on a fusion of theological, social, and scientific ideas about the body. As is the case with the common apocalyptic linguistic system, Cuffel has found that the use of shared polemical metaphors reflect an inter-

³³ Abulafia, “Invectives against Christianity,” 67-8.

³⁴ Abulafia, “Invectives against Christianity,” 66-72.

confessional milieu which she traces to the first centuries of the Common Era in the case of Jews, Christians, and pagans, that continued to evolve throughout the Middle Ages and eventually include Muslim invectives as well. Like Abulafia, Cuffel primarily views the function of such insults as a form of resistance to competing religious systems. For medieval Ashkenazim, as a religious and political minority in Northern Europe, they provided one of few such viable avenues. Instead of jovial mockery, however, Cuffel asserts that the type of corporeal epithets employed were intended to work on multiple levels simultaneously to render Christianity and fraternization with Christians as unacceptable to the intended Jewish audience. Though she shows that such insults were largely based on biblical concepts of promiscuity and impurity, “the polemic of filth was more effective . . . because it created simplified categories of good and evil by translating condemnation based on abstract theological and metaphysical reasoning into images of physically disgusting people or behavior.”³⁵

This chapter builds on the insights of each of these scholars. Yet, rather than focussing on either the amorous or contemptuous aspects of Solomon’s account of Ashkenazic martyrdom in isolation, it explores how the two operate together within Judaic tradition more broadly. First, it discusses the ideal of love between God and His chosen people, Israel, as epitomized in the Song of Songs—a text that became increasingly popular throughout the twelfth century C.E. when Solomon composed his narrative.³⁶ Then it examines the often feminized and sexualized religious temptations

³⁵ Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*, 7.

³⁶ See Ann W. Astell, *The Song of Songs in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), 50-2, and Chapters Four and Five, 86-150.

presented as dangerous obstructions to that love within medieval biblical commentary, the apocalyptic tradition, and *Toledot Yeshu* folklore. Finally, it suggests how these tropes informed and are reflected in Solomon's presentation of Mary as an apocalyptic *femme fatale* who tempted Jews to stray from the religious ideal, and how renunciation of her aided Ashkenazic efforts to be counted among the *hasidim* who might still merit eschatological reward.

A Martyr's Love in The Song of Songs

The language of human love and longing for God that Boyarin and Wolfson have identified as integral to the acts of second-century C.E. and medieval Ashkenazic martyrdom or mystical union, and the literary renderings of them, is epitomized in the biblical book alternately known as the Song of Solomon or, as in the original Hebrew, *Shir ha-Shirim*, the Song of Songs. Recognized variously as a collection of poems or a brief series of dialogues between paramours and their companions in a single compositional unit,³⁷ the Song relates through increasingly erotic language a number of the lovers' unions and separations. It begins with desire ("Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth!" [Sg. 1:2]), the persona of the Lover eager to unite with her Beloved and giddy with anticipation for his taste and smell ("Your love is better than wine, your anointing oils are fragrant, your name is perfume poured out . . ." [Sg. 1:2-3]). Though self-conscious about her own darkened appearance due to excessive toil in the sun ("I am

³⁷ Gordon H. Johnston, "The Enigmatic Genre and Structure of the Song of Songs, Part 2," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 166:662 (2009): 163-80.

black but beautiful³⁸ . . . Do not gaze at me because I am dark, because the sun has gazed on me” [Sg. 1:6-7]) and aggravated that her Beloved’s companions are ever more accessible than him (“Tell me, you whom my soul loves, where you pasture your flock . . . for why should I be like one who is veiled beside the flocks of your companions?” [Sg. 1:7]), she persists in her search for him. When they finally meet, the two revel in one another’s physical appearance—sometimes to each other and at other times to their companions nearby—until the Lover is completely besotted and “faint with love” (Sg. 2:5).

Each meeting is short-lived and, when abbreviated, the Lover laments her solitude to her companions, all the while admonishing them not to disturb her Beloved (“I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem . . . do not stir up or awaken love until it is ready!” [Sg. 1:7; 3:5; 8:4]). The Beloved’s sometimes coy advances (“Look, there he stands behind our wall, gazing in at the windows, looking through the lattice” [Sg. 2:9]) and their limited time together left his Lover unsatisfied, and his prolonged absences inflict suffering that spur her to seek him out in the potentially dangerous city streets at night.³⁹

In these instances, the Lover appears to internalize blame, and she expresses guilt that her sometimes slow or non-committal responses to her Beloved may have prompted

³⁸ In modern translations, including in *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, which is used throughout this dissertation unless otherwise noted, Sg. 1:2 is translated as “I am black and beautiful.” The current and more popular use of the conjunction “and” denotes a positive sentiment in the verse as an affirmation of both beauty and blackness while the traditional use of the conjunction “but” conveys a negative stigma. In the original Hebrew of the Masoretic text, accessed here in the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, 5th ed., ed. A. Schenker (Nördlingen, Germany: C. H. Beck, 1997), the verse—שחורה אני ונאורה—could be translated either way as the conjunction *vav* (ו) means both “and” and “but.” I have translated the conjunction as “but” because the antique and medieval rabbis seem to have understood the term as such, as will be discussed further below. Their contemporary ecclesiastics seem to have as well since the Vulgate translates the verse as “Nigra sum, sed formosa” (Cant. 1:4), “I am black, but beautiful,” rather than “Nigra sum, et formosa,” “I am black, and beautiful.”

³⁹ See Sg. 3:2-3; 5:6-7.

his evasion. For when he was forthright about his love for her, and called to her to open the door to him (“Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my perfect one” [Sg. 5:2]), she paused to wonder if she should go through the trouble (“I had put off my garment; how could I put it on again? I had bathed my feet; how could I soil them again?” [Sg. 5:3]) rather than letting him in immediately. By the time she finally did open the door, her “Beloved had turned and was gone” (Sg. 5:6). When she tried to make amends by wandering after him, she suffered immodest disrobement and physical abuse by strangers (“I sought him, but did not find him; I called him, but he gave no answer. Making their rounds in the city the sentinels found me; they beat me, they wounded me, they took away my mantel . . .” [Sg. 5:6-7]). Her companions did not help the situation any. Instead, failing to comprehend why the Lover was so forlorn for this Beloved, they mocked her and questioned why another would not do just as well (“What is your Beloved more than another beloved . . .” [Sg. 5:9]). Despite their taunts, the Lover remained most eager to reconcile with her Beloved. Indeed, the closing chapters of the Song reiterate the cycle of longing and anticipation, followed by union, separation, and expectation—a memory of what had been and a hope for what might be. It ends as it begins, with the Lover awaiting to be fully united with her Beloved.

Before he would return, and to be sure of her ardor, the Beloved requested his Lover’s pledge: “Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; for love is strong as death, passion fierce as the grave. Its flashes are flashes of fire, a raging flame. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it (Sg. 8:6-7).” She, in turn, seems both to have conceded and to have acknowledged her past faults, once again

promising that she would teach her sister to guard love most precious and cultivate it most tenderly⁴⁰ before pleading with her Beloved to “Make haste” (Sg. 8:14) and return to her once more.

Despite its attribution to the famed builder of the First Temple, biblicists believe that the Song was composed in the third or fourth century B.C.E., after the Judaeen exiles had already returned from Babylon and erected the Second Temple to replace Solomon’s that had been destroyed.⁴¹ Determining the context for the composition of the Song is made all the more difficult as it is among the few biblical books lacking explicit mention of God, Israelite religion, or a historical epoch. The problem plagued antique Jews as much as modern biblicists and the inclusion of the Song in the Hebrew canon was contested, though this may also have been due to its erotic content, a perceived lack of spiritual value, questions regarding the authenticity of its alleged author, a combination of these explanations, or some other reason entirely.⁴² Even so, and despite the rumors that sections of the Song were sung in antique taverns and at weddings as a song of physical love, Jewish sages since the first century C.E., at least, interpreted it as a depiction of the relationship between Israel, represented as the expectant Lover or Bride, and God, her

⁴⁰ See Sg. 8:8-10.

⁴¹ Coogan, introduction to the Song of Solomon, in *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, 959.

⁴² See A. P. Hayman, “Qohelet, the Rabbis and the Wisdom Text from the Cairo Geniza,” in *Understanding the Poets and Prophets: Essays in Honor of George Wishart Anderson*, ed. A. Graeme Auld, *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, Supplemental Series 152 (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 160; John Barton, “On the Canonicity of the Canticles,” in *Perspectives on the Song of Songs*, ed. Anselm C. Hagedorn (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2003), 4.

Beloved or Bridegroom.⁴³ Indeed, Akiba, the epitome of the lover-martyr, championed the Song as the most sacred text of Scripture, exclaiming: “God forbid that any man in Israel ever disputed concerning the Song of Songs . . . for the whole world is not worth the day on which the Song of Songs was given to Israel, for all the Scriptures are holy, but the Song of Songs is the holiest of the holy.”⁴⁴

Akiba’s sentiment informed many subsequent rabbinic interpretations and is included among them in the *Midrash Rabbah*, Great Commentary, of the Song of Songs (c. 550 C.E.)—a compilation of late antique rabbinic interpretation from the first centuries C.E.⁴⁵—as well as in the translation and commentary compilation of the Song found in the Aramaic *Targum* (c. 650 C.E.). In both commentary collections, rabbis associated the Song with Israel’s history from the liberation from foreign Egyptian domination depicted in the book of Exodus⁴⁶ through the foundation of the unified kingdom of Israel under King David, its successive declines during the periods of the Assyrian, Babylonian, and Edomite Exiles, to anticipation of future messianic

⁴³ William E. Phipps, “The Plight of the Song of Songs,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 42, no. 1 (1974): 83-5; Coogan, introduction to the Song of Solomon, 959; Johnston, “The Enigmatic Genre,” 169; Sara Japheth, “Exegesis and Polemic in Rashbam’s Commentary on the Song of Songs,” in *Jewish Biblical Interpretation and Cultural Exchange: Comparative Exegesis*, ed. Natalie B. Dohrmann and David Stern (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 182.

⁴⁴ Mishnah *Yadayim* 3:5, in Neusner, *The Mishnah*, 1127.

⁴⁵ See, for instance, *The Song of Songs Rabbah*, I.1,11, vol. 9 of *Midrash Rabbah*, trans. Harry Freedman and Maurice Simon (London: Soncino Press, 1939), 18, which cites the above-noted quotation by Akiba and so indicates familiarity with the rabbi’s views on the Song. Akiba’s interpretations are also included at several other times throughout the *Midrash*.

⁴⁶ While at times rabbis also included the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and even Adam in their interpretation of the Song, in general the trajectory begins with Moses and the Exodus from Egypt.

redemption.⁴⁷ They bolstered their interpretation by claiming that Solomon’s mythic request for wisdom from God⁴⁸ enabled him to understand the mysteries of Scripture like none other and to write parables about them in the books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, so that the studious who also sought wisdom might glean it there. Those who were most zealous in their pursuit would be purified, grow to fear sin, and humble themselves. And, as a result, they would rise in saintliness, have the ability to resurrect the dead like the prophets of yore, and even summon Elijah who, according to long-held Jewish and later Christian tradition, would be the forerunner of the Messiah, sent to prepare the way for his advent.⁴⁹ In short, the rabbis were hopeful that those who understood Scripture’s multivalent meanings might be able to repair the damage done to Israel’s union with God that had once been actualized in the Davidic kingdom and the construction of the First Temple, but which had subsequently been lost as a result of Solomon’s love for foreign—and, according to *The Song of Songs Rabbah*, menstruant—women, which had led him to tolerate and eventually practice and propagate foreign worship, to the great demise of Israel.⁵⁰

In this vein, rabbis interpreted the Song’s depiction of the lovers’ brief meetings

⁴⁷ Sara Japhet, “Rashi’s Commentary on the Song of Songs: The Revolution of the Peshat and Its Aftermath,” in *Mein Haus wird ein Bethaus für alle Völker genannt werden: Festschrift für Thomas Wille zum 75 Geburtstag*, ed. J. Männchen and T. Reiprich (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 2007), 200; Johnston, “Enigmatic Genre,” 163-64.

⁴⁸ I Kgs. 3:9; II Chr. 1:10.

⁴⁹ *The Song of Songs Rabbah*, I.1,7-9, in Freedman and Simon, *Midrash Rabbah*, 7-13. For an indication of the messianic connotations of resurrection from the dead, see Marla Segol, “Messianism: Apocalypics between Magic and Religion,” *Association for Jewish Studies Perspectives* (2012): 24-5. For a discussion of Elijah in Jewish and Christian messianic traditions, see Richard Bauckham, “The Martyrdom of Enoch and Elijah: Jewish or Christian?” *Journal of Biblical History* 95, no. 3 (1976): 447-58.

⁵⁰ *The Song of Songs Rabbah*, I.1,7-9, in Freedman and Simon, *Midrash Rabbah*, 14-17.

and the Beloved leading his Lover to a lush garden as the Exodus from Egypt, the granting of the Law at Sinai, the construction of the Tabernacle, and the entry into the Promised Land.⁵¹ When he is depicted as reveling in her beauty, the divine Beloved is praising Israel's fulfillment of all of the positive and negative commandments, works of charity, and observance of religious customs and festivities.⁵² And when he went to his Lover's door at night and asked that she "open to me" (Sg. 5:2), or that she "set me as a seal" (Sg. 8:6) on her heart and arm, it was the divine Beloved's way of asking her to repent of her transgressions and again be wholly united with him in love, as when God gave Israel His covenant.⁵³

Israel's transgression as an explanation of God's absence is found at several other points in the commentaries as well. The most pronounced expressions, however, are in the rabbis' interpretations of the Lover's assessment of her own physical appearance as "black but beautiful . . . dark, because the sun has gazed on me" (Sg. 1:5-6), and in her depiction of the abuse she suffered at the hands of strangers who assaulted and disrobed her.⁵⁴ According to the rabbis, both represented the loss of Israel's divinely sanctioned political autonomy, power, and prestige as a direct result of sin.⁵⁵ In *The Song of Songs Rabbah*, the Lover's blackness or darkness was a result of clearly identified transgressions. These include Israel's several instances of rebellion against God as

⁵¹ See, for example, *The Song of Songs Rabbah*, I.2,1-2, 4; II.13,2, in Freedman and Simon, *Midrash Rabbah*, 20-6, 123.

⁵² *The Song of Songs Rabbah*, I.15,1, in Freedman and Simon, *Midrash Rabbah*, 85.

⁵³ *The Song of Songs Rabbah*, V.2,2; VIII.6,2, in Freedman and Simon, *Midrash Rabbah*, 232-33, 306-07.

⁵⁴ "They beat me, they wounded me, they took away my mantle" (Sg. 5:7), noted above.

⁵⁵ *The Song of Songs Rabbah*, V.7,1, in Freedman and Simon, *Midrash Rabbah*, 237.

reflected in the Hebrews' murmurs against Moses for leading them out of Egypt only to perish in the desert; in their construction of the Golden Calf; and in the habitual occurrence of taking foreigners as spouses and practicing their foreign worship, much to the abandonment and detriment of Israelite religion.⁵⁶ The transgression of idolatry, epitomized by Israel's construction of the Golden Calf, is even more pronounced in the Aramaic *Targum* as the cause for the Lover's blackness, though heeding the council of false prophets who advised Israel to live according to diasporic mores, assimilation, and apostasy, also figure as explanations.⁵⁷ *The Song of Songs Rabbah* suggests that the Lover's past instances of religious infidelity led the divine Beloved to seek her repentance and to request a pledge of faithfulness that her love would be "strong as death" (Sg. 8:6), and thus proclaim her willingness to become a martyr for love's sake.⁵⁸ If she did, the rabbis conveyed that Israel would be repaired, restored, and made to prosper, as in the days of Zerubbabel, who helped to lead the people out of Babylon and worked to erect the Second Temple.⁵⁹

Although rabbinic exegesis was only for the learned elite and scholars were not to read the Song until they had reached their maturity at the age of forty lest they interpret only its carnal rather than its spiritual significance, passages of it were included in the

⁵⁶ *The Song of Songs Rabbah*, I.5,1-2; I.6,1-4, in Freedman and Simon, *Midrash Rabbah*, 51-3, 55-61.

⁵⁷ *The Targum of Canticles*, vol. 17A of *The Aramaic Bible*, trans. Philip S. Alexander (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2003), 82-3.

⁵⁸ *The Song of Songs Rabbah*, VIII.6,4, in Freedman and Simon, *Midrash Rabbah*, 308-09. The Aramaic *Targum*, by contrast, interprets this passage as Israel beseeching God to remember their covenant and redeem His people: *The Targum of Canticles*, Alexander, 196.

⁵⁹ *The Song of Songs Rabbah*, VIII.6,2, in Freedman and Simon, *Midrash Rabbah*, 306-07.

liturgy for Passover and were well known even among the masses.⁶⁰ Jewish familiarity with the Song may also have been supplemented by its popularity in the dominant Christian culture of medieval Europe. For, throughout the course of the High Middle Ages, the poetry of the Song would be favored among Christian exegetes, mystics, and lay spiritualists who were caught up in the throes of recently emergent affective piety and eager to be united with their own version of the divine Beloved—in this case, Jesus.⁶¹

The exegesis of ecclesiastics and rabbis alike intimates something of a lovers' rivalry expressed through polemic. In the twelfth century C.E., the Cistercian abbot, Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153 C.E.), famously crafted eighty-six sermons on the Song. Although many of these focussed on the interiority of the soul and its relation to God, Bernard specifically interpreted heretics, uncloistered women religious, and Jews—three segments of the population ecclesiastics often categorized as threats to contemporary Christian orthodoxy—as obstructions to union with the divine.⁶² For their part, the prominent Ashkenazic rabbis of the late eleventh and twelfth centuries C.E., R. Tobiah ben Eliezer (1050-1108 C.E.), Rashi, and the latter's grandson, R. Samuel ben Meir (c. 1085-1158), also known by the acronym Rashbam, each composed their own commentaries on the Song in which they interpreted Christianity as the primary

⁶⁰ A. Z. Idelsohn, *Jewish Liturgy and Its Development* (1932; repr., New York: Schocken Books, 1967), 199.

⁶¹ See Astell, *The Song of Songs*, Chapters Four and Five, 87-150, especially. Interpretations of the Song as a love ballad between Christ and the Church or between Christ and the individual, in the Christian tradition, were popular in antiquity throughout the medieval period. In the twelfth century C.E., Christians began to increasingly interpret the Song as pertaining to the relationship between Christ and the individual soul.

⁶² See Bernard of Clairvaux, "Sermo XIV" and "Sermo LXV," *Sermones in Cantica Cantico- rum*, in Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, 183;839B-843C, 183;1088D-1093C. For an English translation, see *Cantica Cantico- rum: Eighty-Six Sermons on the Song of Solomon by Saint Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, A.D. 1115-1153*, trans. Samuel J. Eales (London: Elliot Stock, 1895), 74-8, 393-98.

hindrance to Israel's union with the divine. In the same manner that the antique and early medieval commentaries had focussed on how contemporary foreigners tempted Israel to commit idolatry and grouped these threats with other Gentile nations found throughout Israel's history, Tobiah, Rashi, and Rashbam read the Song as a prophetic parable of their own era and cast their Christian neighbors in the role of chief antagonists. Christianity served as the most recent incarnation in a litany of foreign worship that could easily be combined and conflated with idolatry introduced by the Egyptian, Assyrian, or Babylonian cultures that had successfully severed the bond between the Beloved and Lover, resulting in the subjugation of Israel in the past.⁶³

In contrast to the sometime presentation of forced conversion found in Solomon's crusade narrative and the modern scholarly emphasis on it that will be discussed further in Chapter Four, the rabbis alive during the First Crusade—Tobiah and Rashi—interpreted Christians as enticing as much as coercing Jews to commit spiritual adultery through assimilation and apostasy, and, thus, by extension, waylaying Israel's reunion with the divine Beloved and messianic redemption. Tobiah, for instance, specifically associated the Christian threat with conversionary efforts of 1096 C.E. when he interpreted Song 1:3—"therefore the maidens love you"—as an indication that Israel could repent its transgressions and prove love for God through martyrdom, as so many victims of the Rhineland pogroms had done:

Because when they [the Jewish people] see the uniqueness of the righteous ones who are slain in sanctification of Your Name, they will be made to

⁶³ See Japhet, "Rashi's Commentary," 205; eadem, "Exegesis and Polemic," 191-94; and Jonathan Jacobs, "The Allegorical Exegesis of Song of Songs by R. Tuviah ben 'Eli'ezer-Lekah Tov, and Its Relation to Rashi's Commentary," *Association for Jewish Studies Review* 39, no. 1 (2015): 84-8.

repent, and they will give thanks to Your great Name, as happened in our lifetime, in the communities of Ashkenaz in the year 4856 [1096 C.E.], when the children of Seir [i.e., Christians] decided to go up to the Holy Land, and sent forth their hand against the [Jewish] communities, which were slain in *kiddush ha-Shem*.⁶⁴

The transgression warranting martyrological repentance is unclear in the above passage, but it is suggested elsewhere in Tobiah's interpretation where he cited an antique homiletic commentary on the Song, *Shir ha-Shirim Zuta*.⁶⁵ Composed centuries earlier, the *Zuta*'s author bemoaned his contemporary community's lack of religious observance, reflected in minimal study of and meditation on the Law: "Just as a sick person is fed only on warm bread and soft foods, so this generation seeks neither [talmudic] tractates nor hermeneutical reasoning, but rather the flavor of *aggadah* and moral teachings by the sages."⁶⁶ Tobiah built upon this critique and applied it to his own era, claiming that the lack of rigorous *halakhic* observance existed "all the more so in our miserable generation, for if the sages spoke thus in their generation—what shall we say!"⁶⁷

Rashi too fully conceded that Israel had sinned, emphasizing, like the sages in the *Midrash Rabbah* and the Aramaic *Targum*, that the nation had committed idolatry at multiple points in its history, and so, according to the doctrine of theodicy, had deserved

⁶⁴ לפי שרואין ייחודן של צדיקים שנהרגין על קדושת שמך חוזרין על כרחן ונותנין הודייה לשמך הגדול, כדרך שנעשה בימינו
Tobiah ben Eliezer, *Perush Lekah Tov 'al Megilat Shir ha-Shirim*, ed. Albert Greenup (London: n.p., 1909), 15.

⁶⁵ Jacobs, "The Allegorical Exegesis of Song of Songs," 87. The name *Zuta* is derived from the minor Babylonian Talmud tractate.

⁶⁶ וכשם שהחולה אין מאכילין אותו אלא פת חמה ומיני רכוכין כן הדור הזה אינו מבקש מסכתות ולא קלים וחמורים אלא טעמי
Tobiah ben Eliezer, in Greenup, *Lekah Tov*, 38-9.

⁶⁷ כל שכן בדורנו העלוב הזה, שהרי אם חכמים דברו כך בדורם—אנו מה נאמר
Tobiah ben Eliezer, in Greenup, *Lekah Tov*, 39.

to be punished in the various exiles.⁶⁸ Yet he was quick to point out that the prolonged absence of the divine Beloved had left Lover Israel vulnerable to the seduction of foreigners past and present, and he suggested that those who had given in to temptation were not entirely to blame. This sentiment is illustrated in the rabbi's interpretation of Song 1:7, and the verses that form a refrain: 2:7, 3:5, and 8:4. Song 1:7 reads: "Tell me, you whom my soul loves, where do you feed, where do you pasture your flock, where do you make it lie down at noon; for why should I be like one who is veiled beside the flocks of your companions?" Rashi interpreted this as the Lover questioning God as to His whereabouts during Israel's times of suffering and indicating that she would not like to be found among the flocks of His companions (i.e., the Gentile nations) but rather would prefer to be under His protection.⁶⁹

The rabbi's interpretation of verses 2:7 and 3:5 sustains the discussion of Israel's relation to God and the nations while in exile. In the Song, verses 2:7 and 3:5 read: "I adjure you, O Daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or the wild does: do not stir up or awaken love until it is ready!" According to Rashi, the "Daughters of Jerusalem" also represent the nations among whom Israel sojourns.⁷⁰ What exactly the Lover adjured the nations against was tempting her, that is, Israel, to forsake God by turning from Him and following, or turning towards, others: "*I adjure you . . . that you neither awaken nor*

⁶⁸ See Rashi, "Commentary on the Song of Songs," Sg. 5:3-7, in *The Megilloth and Rashi's Commentary with Linear Translation*, trans. Avraham Schwartz and Yisroel Schwartz (New York: Hebrew Linear Classics, 1983), 107-10. While I have consulted the English translation provided by Avraham and Yisroel Schwartz, the translations of Rashi's commentary below are my own.

⁶⁹ בגלות הזה . . . בין הזאבים הללו . . . in this exile": Rashi, "Commentary on the Song," Sg. 1:7, in Schwartz and Schwartz, *The Megilloth*, 64.

⁷⁰ האמות: Rashi, "Commentary on the Song," Sg. 3:5, in Schwartz and Schwartz, *The Megilloth*, 84.

arouse: my Beloved's love from me through seduction or enticement to forsake Him, to turn from following Him."⁷¹ And, again, "*that you neither awaken nor arouse the love*: that is between my Beloved and I, to change it and to alter it and beg me to be enticed to follow you."⁷²

Adjuration was not always effective. Rashi interpreted the Lover's reluctance to open the door to her Beloved, as indicated in Song 5:3 ("I had put off my garment; how could I put it on again? I had bathed my feet; how could I soil them again?"), as "the language of an adulterous wife, who does not wish to open the door for her husband"⁷³; and the Beloved's plea that his Lover "Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm . . ." (Sg. 8:6-7) as a corrective to past transgressive behavior. For even though the "many waters" of the "nations" had and would continue to try through seduction and enticement as much as force to lure Israel from God, the Lover was called to willingness to die rather than "exchange" her Beloved for the love of another, in the same way that the martyrs in the bishop's chambers at Mainz claimed to have resisted exchanging their God for another.⁷⁴

In his interpretation of the above passages, Rashi both attested to and circumvented the biblical trope of Israel as an adulterous woman mentioned above in Chapter Two, who had been unfaithful to her divine lover either through cooled zeal to

⁷¹ Rashi, "Commentary on the Song," Sg. 3:5, in Schwartz and Schwartz, *The Megilloth*, 84-5.

⁷² Rashi, "Commentary on the Song," Sg. 2:7, in Schwartz and Schwartz, *The Megilloth*, 74.

⁷³ Rashi, "Commentary on the Song," Sg. 5:3, in Schwartz and Schwartz, *The Megilloth*, 107.

⁷⁴ Rashi, "Commentary on the Song," Sg. 8:7, in Schwartz and Schwartz, *The Megilloth*, 144; *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 335; Roos, 46.

adequately fulfill the commandments or through acts of explicit idolatry. Both forms of lax religious observance warranted the stigma of whoredom that was accompanied by divine retribution resulting in the diasporic condition of separation from the land of Israel and the divine Beloved that Rashi and his contemporaries found themselves in. Yet Rashi blamed the Christian “Daughters of Jerusalem” for tempting Israel. He was not alone in this transference of culpability; rather, it is one of the more prominent misogynistic features of the Hebrew Bible and post-biblical Judeo-Christian apocalyptic literature.

Lust and Loathing: An Apocalyptic Standard

As noted in Chapter Two and in the above discussion of the Song of Songs, the Hebrew Bible regularly combines and frequently conflates sexual and spiritual infidelity. The books commonly recognized as accounts of Israel’s history relate how sexual couplings between Israelites and foreign women often contributed to lax religious observance, assimilation, or apostasy, each of which were believed to serve as the catalyst for divine retribution in the form of separation from God through communal devastation and exile. Prophetic texts and the Writings convey a similar message through allegory, often casting Israel in the feminine role as a promiscuous wife who was unfaithful to her divine husband. Apocalyptic literature moves freely between these modes, employing allegory of Israel as a lover or bride and a fecund mother while also maintaining the stereotype of the dangerous foreign woman from the historical writings in a manner that reflects the

chronotope of conflation and aided in the development of an archetypal *femme fatale*.⁷⁵

It should be noted that feminized personifications of good and evil do not always make an appearance in Jewish apocalyptic, but they are found in the two most popular medieval apocalypses—the Johannine Apocalypse and the *Sefer Zerubbabel*. In the Johannine Apocalypse, an unnamed messianic mother who was “clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and crowned with twelve stars” (Apoc. 12:1) and the Bride of the Lamb provide positive feminine allegories who display the qualities of fertility or chastity, respectively, as well as the characteristic passivity that was much lauded in the patriarchal society of the first-century C.E. Roman Empire and throughout the majority of Christian history. Exegetes over the centuries would interpret these personae as symbolic archetypes. The messianic mother was variably viewed as Mother Israel with her twelve tribes, the personified Church, *Ecclesia*, with her twelve disciples, or the Madonna. The Bride of the Lamb was the same penitent and purified Lover/Bride of the Song who would be recognized as the community of the faithful, the individual soul, or the Virgin. Both archetypes manifested different aspects of Mary and fulfilled the role of the feminine divine that was so popular in the antique mystery cults devoted to the Magna Mater, Isis, and Cybele. In the *Sefer Zerubbabel*, the messianic mother Hephzibah also figures as a type of the Lover/Bride of the Song, as well as Mother Israel—both conveyances responding, in turn, to the popularity of Mary once Christianity had taken hold in the Roman world.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Some of the prophetic literature also incorporates historical *femmes fatales*, or archetypes of them, alongside the allegory of Israel as God’s Bride. Examples are included below.

⁷⁶ Himmelfarb, “Mother of the Messiah,” 385; eadem, *Jewish Messiahs*, 35-8; and Latteri, “On Saints, Sinners, and Sex,” 16.

The prophet Isaiah associated the name Hephzibah—meaning, “My delight is in her”—with the religio-political reconstitution of Israel in the Holy City of Jerusalem during the messianic era. This is observed when, speaking as God, Isaiah addressed an Israel that had sinned and had been duly punished before becoming penitent:

You shall no more be termed Forsaken, and your land shall no more be termed Desolate; but you shall be called Hephzibah,⁷⁷ and your land shall be married. For as a young man marries a young woman, so shall your builder marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you. (Is. 62:4-5)

In later talmudic lore, the rabbis of late antiquity seem to have extended Isaiah’s treatment of Hephzibah and promoted the idea that the seventh-century B.C.E. queen consort of the same name had given birth to the Messiah who had been in hiding but would return at the appointed time of redemption.⁷⁸ It appears that these references informed the crafting of the Hephzibah of the *Sefer Zerubbabel*, who is presented as a woman cut from the same cloth as the patriarchs and able to wield their staff, and who displayed incomparable valor when fighting to defend Israel from foreign invasion and idolatry.⁷⁹ This threat is epitomized by the unnamed stone statue who gave birth to the Antichrist and who, as noted above in Chapter Two, has often been interpreted as a Jewish polemical parody of Mary—functioning to reflect the lure of foreign religion in similar way as the personae of Jezebel of Thyatira and Babylon the Great do in the Johannine Apocalypse.

⁷⁷ The modern translation of this passage found in *The New Oxford Annotated Bible* has translated this term as “My Delight is in Her.” I have transliterated הֶפְצִיבָה, Hephzibah, from the Hebrew of the Masoretic text.

⁷⁸ Himmelfarb, “Mother of the Messiah,” 385-89.

⁷⁹ Himmelfarb, “Sefer Zerubbabel,” 74-5; and Latteri, “On Saints, Sinners, and Sex,” 12.

Each of these evil female personae are related in function to the “Daughters of Jerusalem” in the Song of Songs who Rashi blamed for seducing and enticing the Lover Israel away from her divine Beloved. They also contribute to the martyrdom of love found in the Song and *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*. For each *femme fatale* provides a justification for Israel’s infidelity and also an easy enough solution. By displaying contempt for the feminine emblems of foreign religion that had been so successful in leading Israel astray, loathing as a suppression of lust, apocalyptic protagonists could prove their love for God. Willingness to become martyrs is a hyperbolic extension of this display of love, representing the pinnacle of repentance and a desperate bid for reconciliation with God.

Jezebel in the Johannine Apocalypse is the clearest apocalyptic reference to the seductive lures of actual rather than exclusively allegorical foreign women and religion because John’s representation of her shares many similarities with, if it is not entirely based on, a preexisting ideology and textual tradition found in the Hebrew Bible. As a reflection of the apocalyptic chronotope of conflation, it appears that by the time John wrote his Apocalypse, Jezebel was already on her way to archetypal status as a *femme fatale*. Moreover, the manner in which the faithful of Israel treated Jezebel within the biblical text also appears to have provided a precedent for how the faithful of Israel ought best to deal with forces of sexual and spiritual temptation through insults, violence, and the murder of the seductress’s children.

As noted in Chapter Two, the Jezebel of the Hebrew Bible figures in the narrative account of I and II Kings as a promoter of idolatry. She was a Sidonian princess and the

queen consort of King Ahab (c. 871-52 B.C.E.) of Israel who led her husband to practice idolatry in the form of worshipping *Baalim* (plural of the idol/deity *Baal*) and erecting sacred poles to the Ugaritic mother goddess, *Asherah*. Meanwhile she included the prophets of her deities in her retinue and executed those of the Israelite God.⁸⁰ Because she had led the king and, by extension of royal prerogative, many others in Israel astray, and she had slain the majority of the prophets who remained faithful to the God of Israel by speaking out against idolatry, II Kings relates that the prophet Elijah foretold of her brutal demise—“The dogs shall eat Jezebel within the bounds of Jezreel” (I Kgs. 21:23). He also charged Jehu with carrying out her murder, as well as the murder of her children, and of Ahab’s entire household.

Dutifully following the orders of the prophet of God, Jehu commanded that his men “throw her down,” causing Jezebel’s blood to spatter “on the wall and on the horses, which trampled on her” (II Kgs. 9:33) before the dogs consumed the better part of her corpse. In this account, the author of II Kings reinforced the common biblical conflation between sexual and spiritual promiscuity and added insult to injury by presenting Jehu as telling Jezebel’s son that his mother was a whoring witch just before murdering him and en route to torturing her to death.⁸¹ The author also depicted Jezebel as if she had “painted her eyes, and adorned her head” (II Kgs. 9:30)—primping like a prostitute—in a manner suggesting she may have hoped to save herself through sex acts just before she was thrown down by Jehu’s men.⁸²

⁸⁰ See I Kgs. 16:31-2, 18:4, 18:18-19, 21:25.

⁸¹ II Kgs. 9: 22.

⁸² Coogan, II Kings, in *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, 547-48n, II Kgs. 9:30-1.

In his Apocalypse, John similarly represented “Jezebel of Thyatira” as one who had usurped the prophetic role and tempted Israel with idolatry. Like that earlier queen of the same name, the Apocalypse indicates that Christ declared to John that he would throw down Jezebel of Thyatira as punishment and slay her children: “Beware, I am throwing her on a bed, and those who commit adultery with her I am throwing into great distress, unless they repent of her doings; and I will strike her children dead” (Apoc. 2:22-3). Significantly, the later Jezebel’s punishment becomes more explicitly sexualized. Whereas Queen Jezebel was thrown down, Jezebel of Thyatira was thrown on a bed in a manner evoking rape rather than consensual coupling; and yet, despite this violent handling, the literary persona Jezebel of Thyatira seems to have borne more responsibility for sexual and spiritual deviance than did her counterpart in the Hebrew Bible. Indeed, while II Kings indicates that both Queen Jezebel and the Israelites who had been seduced and worshipped *Baalim* were killed by God’s agents of vengeance, John claimed that Christ had promised to throw those who had succumbed to the temptation of Jezebel of Thyatira into “great distress” only so long as they refused to repent their doings. In contrast to an indefinite opportunity for redemption for the members of the early church at Thyatira, John presented an unforgiving Christ who declared that repentance was no longer an option for Jezebel after she had been warned but refused to change her ways.⁸³ Additionally, there is no mention of any opportunity for Jezebel’s children to repent either their unnamed transgressions or those of their mother; rather, Christ promised to strike them dead, presumably as part of their mother’s punishment.

⁸³ Apoc. 2:21.

The evolution of the perceived culpability and treatment of Jezebels, or types of Jezebels, is attested to in the presentation of Babylon the Great in the Johannine Apocalypse as well as the presentation of the unnamed stone statue in the *Sefer Zerubbabel*. John again borrowed from prophetic tropes in such a manner that further conflated contexts while emphasizing the connection between spiritual and sexual temptation when he presented Babylon as a feminized and corrupting city and crafted the antagonistic persona Babylon the Great as another type of Jezebel. Also sometimes known as the Great Whore, like Queen Jezebel and the later Jezebel of Thyatira, Babylon was known for the quality of her seduction and the quantity of her conquests. Moving beyond the confines of Israel or the early churches to which John wrote, the Babylon of the visionary segment of the Johannine Apocalypse was able to arouse the lust of the whole earth and took as her paramours kings, wealthy merchants, and the powerful, each of whom she enticed into promiscuity and led into idolatrous worship.⁸⁴ She was imagined by John, and often depicted in later iconography, both as a woman riding on another figure of false religion and enemy to God—the Seven-Headed Beast (Apoc. 17:3)—which John identified as representing the kings of the earth—and as seated on “waters”—identified as “peoples and multitudes and nations and languages” (Apoc. 17:15), much like Rashi’s above-noted interpretation of “waters” in the Song.⁸⁵ In either mount, Babylon’s position is evocative of female sexual dominance, which would come to be feared as unnatural and unlawful in the ancient and medieval worlds where

⁸⁴ See Apocalypse, chaps. 17-18.

⁸⁵ The iconographic program of illuminated apocalypses in medieval Europe was fairly standardized. Most include Babylon mounted on the Seven-headed Beast, yet those of her on waters are somewhat less so. An example of the latter is found in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Tanner 184, p. 46.

Christianity thrived.⁸⁶

John's personification of Babylon appears conscious of her own influence and the power she wields, haughty enough to think to herself: "I rule as a queen; I am no widow and I will never see grief" (Apoc. 18:7). This quotation echoes the prophet Isaiah's feminine allegory of the city Babylon written several centuries prior. Once called a "mistress of kingdoms" (Is. 47:5) who sat upon a throne (Is. 47:1), and a "lover of pleasures," Isaiah imagined Babylon saying to herself "I am, and there is no one besides me; I shall not sit as a widow or know the loss of children" (Is. 47:8). The inclusion of this internal dialogue provides a marked contrast to how both Isaiah and John described what became of Babylon as punishment for leading so many of Israel astray. John prophesied that the Beast and the ten horns on the head of the Beast—the same who had paraded her before the nations of the earth—"will hate the whore; they will make her desolate and naked; they will devour her flesh and burn her up with fire" (Apoc. 17:16). Isaiah, more subdued, declared that she would be abandoned by those who had once "trafficked" with her (Is. 47:15). Like Jezebel of Thyatira, John's Babylon was the victim of sexual assault by those she had once successfully seduced.⁸⁷ And, as with the latter-day Jezebel whose erstwhile partners were called to "repent of *her* doings" (Apoc. 3:22), Babylon was held far more culpable than her former lovers who still might be redeemed: John recorded that Christ urged those who lagged behind in abbreviating liaisons with Babylon to "come out of her . . . do not take part in *her* sins . . . that you do not share in

⁸⁶ James A. Brundage, "Sex and Canon Law," in *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality*, ed. Vern L. Bullough and James A. Brundage (New York: Routledge, 1996), 40.

⁸⁷ Apoc. 17:16, emphasis added. See Selvidge, "Powerful and Powerless," 160, 163-65.

her plagues” (Apoc. 18:4)—as if sex acts were performed by her alone and as if any infection or disease resulting from contact with her lasted only so long as one dallied within.⁸⁸

The stone statue of the *Sefer Zerubbabel* bears many similarities to the *femmes fatales* of the Johannine Apocalypse, but also some notable differences. The latter most likely reflects the lived reality of the author(s) and propagators of the *Sefer Zerubbabel*, as well as the ideological shifts resulting from it. Like Jezebel and Babylon, the stone statue was so attractive that, when her son took her outside of her abode and brought her before the nations, they were compelled to kneel in honor and worship her:

Armilos will then take his mother, the stone from which he was born, out of the *bet ha-toref* of the scoffers. From all over, the nations will come to worship that stone, burn incense, and pour libations to her. No one will be able to look upon her face because of her beauty. Whoever does not bow down to her will die, suffering like an animal.⁸⁹

Whether attraction was a result of awe, pragmatic personal concern, or some combination, is not specified. Nevertheless, the treatment of the statue is similar to that of Babylon the Great, whom the Beast paraded before the nations, essentially putting the goods she had to offer on full display.⁹⁰

Also like John’s presentation of Babylon and Jezebel of Thyatira, the author(s) and redactors of the *Sefer Zerubbabel* implied the rape of the stone statue. Jezebel and Babylon were depicted as vocally spreading lies, flagrantly spreading their legs, and,

⁸⁸ Emphasis added. Latteri, “On Saints, Sinners, and Sex,” 6-9.

⁸⁹ Himmelfarb, “Sefer Zerubbabel,” 80, is employed here with one exception: I have included *bet ha-toref*, the transliteration of בית התורף, which is found in the original manuscript Himmelfarb used for her translation. By contrast, Himmelfarb has translated בית התורף as “house of disgrace.” Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Heb. d. 11, f. 248a, line 19 and f. 251a, line 4.

⁹⁰ Apoc. 17:3.

along with them, physical and spiritual disease. As a result, John employed incendiary rhetoric to verbally assault them as promiscuous women; and he justified the violent attacks made on them as accepted modes of God's vengeance. The stone statue, in contrast to the Johannine *femmes fatales*, is presented as all but inanimate—she is not depicted as thinking, feeling, acting, or speaking. Even when adored by the masses, she appears a wholly passive pawn, taken into public by her son in an effort to secure his own position rather than moving of her own volition. The sole exception to the statue's inanimate quality is suggested in connection to her reproductive system. Yet, here too, passivity is enforced as the reference evokes sexual victimization rather than agency.

Rape is alluded to in Michael/Metatron's introduction of the statue as “the wife of Belial,” who would conceive Armilos when Satan lay with her.⁹¹ Logically, sexual assault is suggested by a statue's presumed lack of will, intellect, or emotion, and so, its inability to consent. But beyond unduly imposing any of the strictures of reality on an apocalypse with a statue capable of procreation, rape is alluded to by the name Belial. Within the biblical narrative, this name connotes the forced entry of violent conquest. For Belial, or a variant of it, is mentioned twenty-seven times within the Hebrew Bible, as is Satan. The two names were often used interchangeably in Jewish apocalyptic literature as advocates of apostasy and idolatry who would successfully seduce the morally lax of Israel as well as the Gentile nations at the End of Days to assault the *hasidim*. This tendency is observed in ancient Jewish apocalyptic texts from Qumran, which refer to the assimilationist Hasmonean government and its supporters as *bnei beli'al*, or sons of

⁹¹ Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Heb. d. 11, f. 249a, lines 24-25; Himmelfarb, *Sefer Zerubbabel*, 75.

Belial.⁹² And in apocalyptic literature circulating around the time of the First Crusade, including the *Sefer Zerubbabel*, the *'Otot ha-masiah*, the *'Aggadat ha-masiah*, mentioned above, Christians are cast as *bnei beli'al*, sons of Belial, and Urban II as Satan for his role in preaching the First Crusade and enticing Christians to travel to Jerusalem and conquer the Holy City for themselves.⁹³

One of the clearest examples of Belial as a perpetrator of violent assault in the Jewish tradition, and one that has the most relevance in relation to the *Sefer Zerubbabel*, is found in the biblical book of Nahum. There, the title prophet chastised Nineveh—an early Diaspora during Israel's Assyrian Exile and one of the cities named, along with Rome, as the context of the unfolding apocalyptic drama in the *Sefer Zerubbabel*—as a den of idolatry and exhorted the faithful of Judah in exile there to practice the religion of the patriarchs. He also suggested that Belial was associated with the conquest, or rape, of territory and that he had been employed as an agent of God's vengeance when he promised that if Nineveh repented, “never again shall Belial invade you” (Nah. 1:15).⁹⁴ But, according to the biblical text, the inhabitants of the city did not repent. Rather, they were seduced by an allegorical prostitute of the same ilk as the Jezebels or Babylon the Great—a “gracefully alluring mistress of sorcery, who enslaves nations through her debaucheries” (Na. 3:4).

⁹² G. K. Beale, *The Use of Daniel in Jewish Apocalyptic Literature and in the Revelation of St. John* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1984), 45; Marcus, “Modern and Ancient Jewish Apocalypticism,” 4.

⁹³ Himmelfarb, *Jewish Messiahs*, 132-33; השטן, הפפיוס של רומי הרשעה: *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 299; Roos, A30.

⁹⁴ This verse is Na. 2:1 according to the Masoretic text. There, בליעל, Belial, is found. In the English translation found in *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, the verse reads: “never again shall the wicked invade you. . . .”

As a result, God, through Nahum, promised the inhabitants of the city who had succumbed to temptation that they would be punished in a manner similar to the treatment of the *femmes fatales* who were sexually violated. They would be invaded—violently penetrated—and God promised them: “I . . . will lift up your skirts over your face; and I will let nations look on your nakedness and kingdoms on your shame. I will throw filth at you and treat you with contempt, and make you a spectacle” (Na. 3:5-6). The author of Lamentations applied a similar statement of disrobement to Jerusalem at the time of the Babylonian Exile—“Jerusalem sinned grievously, so she has become as one unclean; all who honored her despise her, for they have seen her nakedness; she herself groans, and turns her face away. Her filthiness was in her skirts . . .” (Lam. 1:8-9). This imagery would be echoed again in the Song when the Lover was stripped of her garment on the city streets at night and physically attacked, and later too in Solomon’s narrative, in which he repeatedly described how Christian aggressors stripped the slain Ashkenazim.⁹⁵

These biblical and post-biblical apocalyptic connections to Belial help to convey a cluster of associations with assimilation, exile, defilement, uncleanness, and the perpetuation of idolatry layered in the *Sefer Zerubbabel*’s brief description of the stone statue’s impregnation that are reinforced by her residence within a *bet ha-toref*. The term *bet ha-toref* can be translated alternately as “the house of filth,” “brothel,” or “the vagina,” but was also understood as meaning “the house of idolatry” or “church.”⁹⁶ More

⁹⁵ See, for example, *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 275, 353, 361; Roos, A25, A56, A60.

⁹⁶ Biale, “Counter-History and Jewish Polemics,” 139-40, was the first, to my knowledge, to call attention to the multiplicity of meanings of *bet ha-toref* within the context of the *Sefer Zerubbabel*.

than a mere insult, the *double entendre* underscores the link between sexual and spiritual transgression and the perceived consequences a conquered and feminized Israel suffered as a result of both. For the statue, like the Israelites exiled in Nineveh and invaded by Belial, was made unclean in her imprisonment in a *bet ha-toref* and defiled by satanic penetration. Moreover, in her role as the wife of a demon and mother of Antichrist, she became a foreign *femme fatale* in essence, complete with the ability to pollute others who were attracted to and worshipped her.

Not all who had assimilated, been conquered, or dabbled in idolatry shared the statue's fate. When Zerubbabel first encountered the Davidic Messiah, he too was "imprisoned" in a *bet ha-toref*, appearing "*despised and wounded, lowly and in pain.*"⁹⁷ Unlike the suffering servant of Isaiah 53 who is alluded to in this proof-text from the *Sefer Zerubbabel*⁹⁸ and who was depicted by the prophet as something of a sacrificial lamb for the transgressions of others, this Messiah's specific location suggested his status as sufferer may have been something closer to that of the onetime judge Samson or the man of sorrows found in Lamentations 3, or even those who had fallen prey to the lures of Jezebel and Babylon in the Johannine Apocalypse, each of whom had been punished for their own spiritual-sexual transgressions, but were not without redemption. Once penitent, they were allowed to emerge from the filth of foreign women and idolatry and become purified. This option was not available to the *femmes fatales*, each of whom had thoroughly befouled Israel through the *bet ha-toref* they epitomized, inhabited, or

⁹⁷ Himmelfarb, "Sefer Zerubbabel," 72.

⁹⁸ See Is. 53: 3-5; Babylonian Talmud, tractate *Sanhedrin* 98a, in Epstein, vol. 3 of *Seder Neziḳin*, 663. See Chapter Two for literature on the suffering servant.

embodied, and so, could not escape.

Mary in the Toledot Yeshu, Another Dirty Whore

The Mary of the *Toledot Yeshu* is an extension of the *femme fatale* in Judaic tradition and plays an important, if limited, role in establishing apocalyptic tension and martyrological ambiguity in *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*. Like Jezebel, Babylon, and the stone statue, Mary was believed able to entice Israel to stray from the Judaic religious ideal and to worship one who was perceived as both a false Messiah, or Antichrist, as well as an idol—Jesus.⁹⁹ As a result, her character and person were maligned in similar ways to her unfortunate sisters above. In some recensions of the *Toledot*, as well as in anti-Christian polemical treatises dating from antiquity through the Middle Ages, and in the Babylonian Talmud, Mary is depicted as a seductress like Jezebel and Babylon, complete with a foul whore's vagina, which both represented separation and perceptually led to exile from *verus Israel* for those who had been led astray by her.

In other recensions, Mary, like the stone statue residing in a *bet ha-toref*, is presented as having been sexually assaulted while in a state of exile in the form of *niddah*. This term most typically refers to the ritual impurity of women during menses and their periodic separation, or exile, from the community. But *niddah* also applies to the impurity, or sinfulness, of Israel—particularly that of heretical or idolatrous religious

⁹⁹ For a discussion of Mary's role in Jewish conversion, see Alexandra Cuffel, "'Henceforward All Generations Will Call Me Blessed': Medieval Christian Tales of Non-Christian Marian Veneration," *Mediterranean Studies* 12 (2003): 56-60; Ora Limor, "Mary and the Jews: Story, Controversy, and Testimony," *Historein* 6 (2006): 55-71.

practice—which habitually resulted in exile. *Niddah* also applies to all foreign women who were considered perpetually impure as a result of their idolatrous religious practices, as attested to in talmudic debate, the above-noted commentary on the Song, and in more general rabbinic discourse.¹⁰⁰

In Northern Europe during the High Middle Ages, the multivalence of *niddah* worked polemically to refute the Christian doctrines regarding Jesus’s dual nature that insisted Mary did not menstruate because menstrual blood was derived from lust, of which Mary, ever-Virgin, was perceived to be void,¹⁰¹ and to call into question the divinity of one who would deign to inhabit the filth of a woman’s womb.¹⁰² Intra-communally, however, it conveys shame for the diasporic condition and fears regarding defilement while in exile that might lead to further communal devastation and even a loss of Jewish identity. It also provides a way to subvert these concerns through amplifying disgust for Mary¹⁰³ and whatever appeal Christianity might hold. And it contributed to revenge fantasy tropes similar to those expressed in the Johannine Apocalypse and the *Sefer Zerubbabel* in which authors and propagators effectively sought to prove contempt for the dominant culture and this latest manifestation of idolatry through insults and sexual assault. While each of the versions of *Toledot* appeal to voyeuristic appetites and the more sadistic elements of religious competition, the constructions of Mary

¹⁰⁰ See Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*, 32-5, 56-7.

¹⁰¹ Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*, 71, 108-15, 120.

¹⁰² See David Berger, trans. and ed., *The Jewish-Christian Debate in the High Middle Ages: A Critical Edition of the Nizzahon Vetus* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1979), 44.

¹⁰³ Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*, 129-30; Evyatar Marienberg, “Jews, Jesus, and Menstrual Blood,” *De Gruyter Open* 14 (2016): 7.

popularized in Northern European *Toledot* cast her as something of a tragic victim of circumstance whom the Ashkenazim could certainly identify with even while marking her as a defiled Jewish woman turned foreign *femme fatale*, and thus disavow her (and her son's, and his followers') identity as part of *verus Israel*.

The earliest versions of the *Toledot Yeshu* are believed to have circulated orally in the antique Levant and there is some evidence to suggest a compositional date of the fourth or fifth century C.E.,¹⁰⁴ though either Hebrew or Aramaic textual witnesses do not appear until much later and the majority date from the thirteenth century C.E. through the early modern era.¹⁰⁵ Bearing this gap in the historical record in mind, early oral sources do appear to have incorporated details about Mary that would later be included in the Babylonian Talmud and the extant manuscripts of the *Toledot* corpus.¹⁰⁶ This speculation is based on polemical treatises by pagans or Christians that relate Jewish notions of Jesus's conception and/or parentage. In *Althēs Logos*, *Word of Truth* (ca. 177 C.E.)—a text by the second-century C.E. pagan philosopher Celsus that has been preserved only in quotation by the Church Father Origen in his third-century C.E. response, *Contra Celsum*, *Against Celsus* (ca. 231-33 C.E.)—a Jewish character relates his community's belief that Jesus was the product of an adulterous liaison between Mary and a certain

¹⁰⁴ See Limor, "Mary and the Jews," 57; Pierluigi Piovanelli, "The *Toledot Yeshu* and Christian Apocryphal Literature: The Formative Years," in Schäfer, Meerson, and Deutsch, *Toledot Yeshu Revisited*, 94.

¹⁰⁵ See Meerson and Schäfer, introduction to *Toledot Yeshu*, 4-27.

¹⁰⁶ Scholars continue to speculate and debate when and where the *Toledot Yeshu* emerged as a written text in some recognizable form to what we have now. However, they are in agreement that oral stories of a similar vein to that found in the *Toledot Yeshu* circulated in addition to, if not prior to, the extant textual recensions. For an indication of some of the many scholarly contentions regarding the date of *Toledot Yeshu* in oral and textual form, and what the earliest versions may or may not have contained regarding Mary, see Schäfer, introduction to *Toledot Yeshu Revisited*, in Schäfer, Meerson, and Deutsch, 3-11; Meerson and Schäfer, introduction to *Toledot Yeshu*, 3-18, 45-56.

Roman soldier identified only as Pandera (or Panthera), the antique equivalent of a John Doe. When Mary's husband discovered the affair, he drove her away and, as a result, she led a life of poverty as a spinner of cloth.¹⁰⁷ In his treatise *De spectaculis*, On Spectacles (ca. 200 C.E.), the Christian author Tertullian provided a brief comment on Jewish belief in regard to Mary that was, perhaps, even less flattering: Jesus was *quaestuariae filius*, a "prostitute's son."¹⁰⁸ The Church Father Jerome's *Epistola ad Titum*, Letter to Titus (ca. 400 C.E.), indicates that Jewish criticism of the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation and Virgin Birth may not only have been literary, for it provides an account of Roman Jews who disturbed the peace by continuing to pose agitating questions regarding Jesus's parentage into the fifth century C.E. And the eighth-century C.E. *Vita Silvestri*, Life of St. Sylvester, likewise depicts sustained Jewish incredulity of Mary's virginal-maternal status in a public disputation.¹⁰⁹

Celsus's and Tertullian's specific ideas about Mary as a woman who had engaged in an adulterous affair with a foreign lover and/or acted as a common whore were reiterated in the Babylonian Talmud along with a few other scintillating details that found their way into various *Toledot* recensions and helped to render Mary as yet another representative of the biblical trope of the promiscuous woman. In one talmudic tradition, Mary had a husband, Stada, along with her Roman lover, Pandera, and Jesus could have been the son of either. In another, Mary's husband's name was Pappos ben Yehudah and he would lock her in the house every time he left in the hopes of maintaining her wifely

¹⁰⁷ Schäfer, *Jesus in the Talmud*, 18-20.

¹⁰⁸ Schäfer, *Jesus in the Talmud*, 112; Meerson and Schäfer, introduction to *Toledot Yeshu*, 6-7, 45.

¹⁰⁹ Meerson and Schäfer, introduction to *Toledot Yeshu*, 5-6.

chastity. As Peter Schäfer has shown, Pappos’s lack of success is suggested by the term “Stada,” here a reference to Mary’s extra-marital activity as a *sotah*, or adulteress, who engaged in illicit relations with the Roman soldier Pandera.¹¹⁰ This last persona weathered the test of time and was cited in most *Toledot* recensions as Jesus’s father, including in Amulo’s aforementioned ninth-century C.E. reference to a Carolingian *Toledot Yeshu* tradition in which Jesus was recognized as *filium impii . . . quem nominant Pandera*, that is, the “son of an impious man . . . whom they call Pandera.”¹¹¹ In later recensions, Pandera’s role was implied simply by including the standard patronymic form—Yeshu ben Pandera, Jesus son of Pandera¹¹²—and, at others, through a detailed conception narrative.¹¹³

Blatant identification of Mary as either an adulteress or a harlot also found its way into some *Toledot* recensions, though not many, and not in a uniform manner. One particularly idiosyncratic version appears to have borrowed an inordinate amount of information from the Babylonian Talmud, going so far as to present the unsuccessful attempts of Mary’s husband, Pappos ben Yehuda, at sequestering his wife lest she commit

¹¹⁰ Schäfer, *Jesus in the Talmud*, 15-22; idem, “Jesus’ Origin, Birth, and Childhood according to the *Toledot Yeshu* and the Talmud,” in *Judaea-Palaestina, Babylon and Rome: Jews in Antiquity*, ed. Benjamin Isaac and Yuval Shahar (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 141-43; and Meerson and Schäfer, introduction to *Toledot Yeshu*, 46-7.

¹¹¹ Amulo Lugdunensis, *Liber Contra Judaeos*, in Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, 116:169D. See Chapter One.

¹¹² Meerson and Schäfer, introduction to *Toledot Yeshu*, 47. See also Meerson’s and Schäfer’s English translation of several *Toledot* manuscripts in the same volume (136-38, 147, 160, 165, 168, 185-86, etc.), as well as their transcriptions of the extant *Toledot* recensions in vol. 2 of *Toledot Yeshu: The Life Story of Jesus*. I have consulted Meerson’s and Schäfer’s translations, and I have included the page numbers of vol. 1 where these can be accessed, but all translations of the *Toledot Yeshu* are my own unless otherwise noted.

¹¹³ See Meerson and Schäfer, introduction to *Toledot Yeshu*, 45-56.

adultery, and Mary’s escape with her lover and Jesus’s father, Pandera.¹¹⁴ Another indicates that Mary only became a promiscuous woman after she had been tricked into copulating with a man she believed was her husband and had given birth to Jesus: “not long after, Mary became pregnant again by whoredom, more than once. . . .”¹¹⁵ In other versions, Mary’s status as a whore is implied by association with Pandera’s licentious behavior as a “pimp, an evil man, and scoundrel”¹¹⁶ or as one who behaves as a “pimp every day.”¹¹⁷ In what is, perhaps, the clearest transference of blame, Pandera is described as “an attractive man and a pimp” who “desired to lie with her [Mary] as though she were a whore.”¹¹⁸ As a result of Pandera’s reputation and whispered rumors regarding the sordid details of Jesus’s conception, “it was heard in the city and in the markets and in the streets, that Mary had become pregnant by whoredom.”¹¹⁹

In related talmudic traditions alluding to promiscuity, Mary is said to have occupied herself as either a poor spinner of cloth or one who let her “women’s hair grow long” and left it uncovered in public—suggesting a lack of modesty and that she may

¹¹⁴ Amsterdam, Universiteitsbibliotheek, Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana, MS Ros. 442, f. 1a, in Meerson and Schäfer, vol. 2. of *Toledot Yeshu*, 240-41; Meerson and Schäfer, vol. 1 of *Toledot Yeshu*, 305-06.

¹¹⁵ ולימים מעטים עוד נתעברה מרים בזנות פעם ופעמים והולידה: St. Petersburg, National Library of Russia, MS Evr. 1. 274, f. 22a, lines 8-9, in Meerson and Schäfer, vol. 2. of *Toledot Yeshu*, 73; Meerson and Schäfer, vol. 1 of *Toledot Yeshu*, 156.

¹¹⁶ רועה זונות איש רע ובליעל: Harvard University, Houghton Library, MS Heb. 57, f. 22a, line 2, in Meerson and Schäfer, vol. 2 of *Toledot Yeshu*, 213; Meerson and Schäfer, vol. 1 of *Toledot Yeshu*, 286.

¹¹⁷ רועה זונות כל היום: Strasbourg, Bibliothèque Universitaire et Régionale, MS 3974, f. 170b, lines 25-6, in Meerson and Schäfer, vol. 2 of *Toledot Yeshu*, 84; Meerson and Schäfer, vol. 1 of *Toledot Yeshu*, 170.

¹¹⁸ היא אז חשקה נפשו לשכב אותה הכזונה: New York, Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, MS 2221, f. 39a, line 11, in Meerson and Schäfer, vol. 2 of *Toledot Yeshu*, 97; Meerson and Schäfer, vol. 1 of *Toledot Yeshu*, 185.

¹¹⁹ נשמע בעיר בשווקים וברחובות שמרים הרה לזנונים: New York, Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, MS 2221, f. 39a, lines 40-1, in Meerson and Schäfer, vol. 2 of *Toledot Yeshu*, 98; Meerson and Schäfer, vol. 1 of *Toledot Yeshu*, 187.

have plied more than her handiwork at market.¹²⁰ Traces of these details are found in what is probably the earliest extant Hebrew *Toledot*,¹²¹ in which Jesus describes his mother as one who “lets women’s hair grow long.”¹²² In another, Jesus claimed that his mother was occupied as one who “cleans and fixes up women’s faces, she tends to and combs their hair.”¹²³ And, in another, a narrator depicts Mary as “‘Miriam the braider of women,’ mentioned in the Talmud.”¹²⁴ Variations withstanding, each of these references hint at, if not emphasize, earlier ideas of Mary as a promiscuous woman, either by design or by circumstance and association. As such, they work to delegitimize Christian claims of the messianic mother’s moral and bodily purity as well as the doctrines of the Incarnation and Virgin Birth, and, by extension, Jesus’s divinity, which required both.¹²⁵ Additionally, the *Toledot* that present Jesus as the son of a Gentile Pandera—a representative of the apocalyptically designated “evil” Roman Empire—also signaled that Mary’s son could in no way even tangentially be considered the Davidic Messiah by Christians. For the Gospel of Matthew traced the Messiah’s royal Judaeon lineage through Jesus’s Jewish stepfather, Joseph.¹²⁶ Jesus instead should be considered a false

¹²⁰ Schäfer, *Jesus in the Talmud*, 17-18; and Meerson and Schäfer, introduction to *Toledot Yeshu*, 46.

¹²¹ Meerson and Schäfer, introduction to *Toledot Yeshu*, 48.

¹²² מרים שמה והיא גודלת שער נשים גדולות: New York, Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, MS 8998, f. 1a, line 16, in Meerson and Schäfer, vol. 2 of *Toledot Yeshu*, 60; Meerson and Schäfer, vol. 1 of *Toledot Yeshu*, 138.

¹²³ א"ל מרים שמה א"ל ו א"ל מגלחת ומתקנת פני הנשים ומגדלת ומשרקת שערותיהן: St. Petersburg, National Library of Russia, MS Evr. 1. 274, f. 23b, lines 9-10, in Meerson and Schäfer, vol. 2 of *Toledot Yeshu*, 74-5; Meerson and Schäfer, vol. 1 of *Toledot Yeshu*, 160.

¹²⁴ מרים מגדלת נשיא הנזכרת בתלמוד: Harvard University, Houghton Library, MS Heb. 57, f. 22a, lines 4-5, in Meerson and Schäfer, vol. 2 of *Toledot Yeshu*, 213; Meerson and Schäfer, vol. 1 of *Toledot Yeshu*, 286.

¹²⁵ See Abulafia, “Invectives against Christianity,” 68-9; Limor, “Mary and the Jews,” 58; Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*, 120-21; and Marienberg, “Jews, Jesus, and Menstrual Blood,” 7.

¹²⁶ Schäfer, *Jesus in the Talmud*, 21-2.

Messiah, or an Antichrist, like Armilos.

While denial of Jesus as the awaited Jewish Messiah was essential to *Toledot*, the great majority, including those that referenced Pandera and some element of coiffure, present Mary as something of a tragic figure who had fallen—or rather, been thrust—from grace. Before the conception of Jesus, she was often presented as a beautiful, wealthy, pious Jewish woman who had either been tricked into committing adultery with a Jewish man whom she believed was her husband, or one who had been raped, either by a Jew or by a man of unspecified religio-ethnic identity.¹²⁷ The earliest hint of this version of Jesus’s conception emerges in Amulo’s above-noted ninth-century C.E. remarks about the alleged beliefs of his Jewish neighbors that he supposed were recited as an accompaniment¹²⁸ to their every prayer: “They [Jews] say they believe him [Jesus] to be the impious son of an impious man, that is, of I know not which heathen, whom they call Pandera: by whom [Pandera] they say the mother of the Lord [Mary] was defiled,” and thus conceived Jesus.¹²⁹

Schäfer has interpreted two segments of Amulo’s passage—*a quo . . . adulteratam* and *ethnici*—somewhat differently than the above translation. His reading served as the foundation for his claim that Jewish literary depictions of Mary’s rape were positive presentations that coincided with and reflected the rise of the Cult of the Virgin in

¹²⁷ See John G. Gager and Mika Ahuvia, “Some Notes on Jesus and his Parents: From the New Testament Gospels to the *Toledot Yeshu*,” in *Envisioning Judaism: Studies in Honor of Peter Schäfer on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday*, vol. 2, ed. Ra’anana S. Boustán, et al. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 2:1008-14.

¹²⁸ Meerson and Schäfer, introduction to the *Toledot Yeshu*, 47.

¹²⁹ Amulo Lugdunensis, *Liber Contra Judaeos*, in Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, 116:169D. See Chapter One for the quotation in Latin.

medieval Europe, for he believed they were intended to expunge her of any culpability in Jesus's conception.¹³⁰ As a foremost scholar of *Toledot Yeshu*, Schäfer's reading and claims have also contributed a great deal to subsequent scholarship. Yet Schäfer's interpretation is problematic in that it is based on a misreading of Amulo's passage that fails to recognize a much older tradition regarding the rape of Mary, and because it fails to consider the highly negative stigma associated with rape in the Judeo-Christian literary tradition, the function and effects of actual rape, or why Jews might be interested in propagating this scenario.

According to Schäfer, Amulo's text reads that Jews blasphemed Jesus by claiming that he was "impious and the son of an impious, namely, [someone] of uncertain origin (*ethnici*), whom they call Pandera: with whom (*a quo*) they say the mother of our Lord committed adultery (*adulteratam*)"¹³¹ Schäfer's interpretation of *a quo* *adulteratam* is questionable in that it presents Mary as an active party to adultery when the Latin of Amulo's account suggests she was a passive recipient of action—in this case, the victim of defilement. Pandera's active role and Mary's passivity are suggested through the ablative prepositional phrase *a quo*, "by whom," followed by the accusative form of mother (*matrem*), indicating that action was done to mother Mary rather than with her. *Matrem* agrees in case, number, and gender with the perfect passive participle of "defile" (*adulteratam*), thus conveying that mother Mary had been the recipient of

¹³⁰ Schäfer, "Jesus' Origin, Birth, and Childhood," 160.

¹³¹ Schäfer, "Jesus' Origin, Birth, and Childhood," 142.

defilement by Pandera.¹³²

Schäfer's interpretation of *ethnici* as "origin" is questionable for a different reason. Although *ethnici* certainly could be translated as a reference to ethnic "origin," this word choice does not relate the quality of religious belief or practice that the term probably conveyed—perhaps in conjunction with ethnicity—to Amulo. For, while Jerome's Vulgate presentation of *ethnici* (Mt. 5:47) and *ethnicus* (Mt. 18:17) were based on the Greek *ethnikos*, which is commonly translated into modern English as "Gentile," the Douay-Rheims edition, which is closer to the Vulgate text known to Amulo than either the Greek or modern English versions of the Bible, translates *ethnici* and *ethnicus* as heathens/heathen, as did Tertullian.¹³³ A common term for heathen in Hebrew—*min*—applied both to non-Jews (i.e., Gentiles) who practiced foreign worship as well as to Jews who committed idolatry, especially by following the teachings of Jesus.¹³⁴ Thus, Schäfer's interpretation of Pandera's "uncertain origin" might have meant to convey

¹³² Schäfer has repeated this idea in his "Agobard's and Amulo's *Toledot Yeshu*," in Schäfer, Meerson, and Deutsch, *Toledot Yeshu Revisited*, 27-48; and Meerson and Schäfer, introduction to *Toledot Yeshu*, 9.

¹³³ See Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, eds., *Ethnicus*, in *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879). Many thanks to Timothy Graham for suggesting this reference.

¹³⁴ For a discussion of *min* (and the plural, *minim*) in antiquity, see Boyarin, *Border Lines*, 53-68; Gideon Bohak, "Magical Means for Handling *Minim* in Rabbinic Literature," in *The Image of the Judaeo-Christians in Ancient Jewish and Christian Literature*, ed. Peter J. Tomson and Doris Lambers-Petry (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 272-75; Schäfer, *Jesus in the Talmud*, 53-5; and Ruth Langer, *Cursing the Christians? A History of the Birkat HaMinim* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 16-39. The best source for late medieval understandings of *min/minim* is Langer. In *Cursing the Christians?*, 5-7, she argues that individuals designated as *minim* in late medieval Ashkenaz were "often born Christians" as opposed to Jewish apostates. Whether or not this may have been the case in general (and I have reservations that it was), Langer also notes that the meaning of *minim* changed in time and place depending on Jewish identity: *Cursing Christians*, 25. By her own admission, the early antique references to *minim* suggest Jewish-Christians, and the Ashkenazic sources she examines are from the thirteenth century C.E. on: *Cursing Christians*, 39, 69. This leaves a gap of several hundred years during which Jewish identity in a Christian Diaspora, the *Toledot* corpus, and presentations of Pandera continued to evolve. As Goldin, *Apostasy and Jewish Identity*, has shown, 52-73, Jewish identity and the classification of apostates as non-Jews became increasingly strident in the thirteenth-century C.E. juncture compared to eleventh- and twelfth-century C.E. Ashkenaz. Thus, it does not seem improbable that individuals depicted as either *goyim*, or *minim*, may have formerly been Jews whom the community wished to disavow.

uncertainty about whether Pandera was a Gentile or an apostate/impious Jew rather than merely perpetuating the trope of the Roman soldier Pandera siring Jesus that is found in Celsus's *Althēs Logos* and the Babylonian Talmud.¹³⁵ Without an extant Hebrew source, there is no way to verify if *min* was the term Amulo referred to when he used *ethnici*; only speculation is possible. However, the fact that *Toledot* manuscripts originating in Ashkenaz even centuries after Amulo's account typically present Pandera as a "wicked Jew" who "raped" Mary suggests that medieval Jews may have transmitted a tale slightly, though significantly, different from Schäfer's reading. Perhaps it was variations of this early version that developed into something of a regional Ashkenazic *Toledot* originating, or first mentioned, during the ninth century C.E. when, as noted above, Jews and Christians began to permanently inhabit a shared Northern European milieu in which they increasingly came into contact and conflict.¹³⁶

Toledot would continue to be transmitted orally and textually among Ashkenazic Jews for the next several centuries, as indicated by mention of a text entitled *Tolada de Yeshu* by the liturgical poet and author of a Hebrew narrative recounting the persecutions of the Second Crusade, R. Ephraim of Bonn (1132-1200 C.E.).¹³⁷ And concepts of Mary derived from the Babylonian Talmud as well as extended variations of Mary's defilement by Pandera are suggested by epithets commonly attached to Jesus in Jewish texts and Christian commentaries on them. These include insults that Jesus was the son of *ha-*

¹³⁵ See Natalie E. Latteri, "Playing the Whore: Illicit Union and the Biblical Typology of Promiscuity in the *Toledot Yeshu* Tradition," *Shofar* 33:2 (2015): 99-100n16.

¹³⁶ Meerson and Schäfer, introduction to *Toledot Yeshu*, 9-10, have classified Ashkenazi manuscripts but not included Amulo's account among them. Rather, they classify it, along with Agobard's and Hrabanus's accounts, with Oriental fragments.

¹³⁷ Meerson and Schäfer, introduction to *Toledot Yeshu*, 10.

zonah, “the whore,” a *mamzer ve-ben niddah*, “a bastard son of a menstruating woman,” or the combined *mamzer ben ha-niddah ha-zonah*, “bastard son of the menstruant and whore,” found in the Latin *Extractiones de Talmud*, Excerpts of the Talmud, collected in the mid-thirteenth century C.E. by the faculty of the University of Paris in preparation for the Talmud Trial of 1240 C.E., in the thirteenth-century C.E. Ashkenazic anti-Christian polemic, *Nizzahon Vetus*, Old Book of Victory, and in the Hebrew narratives of the First Crusade, respectively.¹³⁸ These few examples reflect a common tradition of anti-Marian defamation which, as attested to by Amulo and his cohort, was present in the ninth-century C.E. Carolingian Empire,¹³⁹ but which scholars believe began to develop in earnest from about the twelfth century C.E. on, during the same time that Solomon composed his narrative.¹⁴⁰

The rise in Jewish polemic occurred in tandem with escalating Marian devotion among Christians,¹⁴¹ which included popular stories of Jewish veneration of Mary and of her ability to convert Jews.¹⁴² While it is uncertain how many Jews in Northern Europe may have actually converted as a result of some type of affinity for the Virgin-Madonna, Jewish presentations of her as a wanton and/or defiled woman with an impure,

¹³⁸ Eidelberg, introduction to *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Simson*, in *Jews and the Crusaders*, 16, 144n10; Ora Limor, “Mary and the Jews,” 58; Marienberg, “Jews, Jesus, and Menstrual Blood,” 7.

¹³⁹ See Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*, 71, 80-2.

¹⁴⁰ Abulafia, “Invectives against Christianity,” 67; Gager and Ahuvia, “Some Notes on Jesus and his Parents,” 2:1009.

¹⁴¹ Peter Schäfer, *Mirror of His Beauty: Feminine Images of God from the Bible to the Early Kabbalah* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 147; Meerson and Schäfer, introduction to *Toledot Yeshu*, 12-13, 54; and Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*, 108-09.

¹⁴² Cuffel, “Henceforward All Generations Will Call Me Blessed’,” 56-60; Limor, “Mary and the Jews,” 55-71.

menstruating vagina by which a new form of idolatry (Christianity) and a new class of persecutors (Christians) arose to divide *verus Israel* suggest that the Ashkenazim perceived the threat Mary posed to the community as very real. And that one of the ways they countered it was by employing similar rhetorical strategies as those traditionally used against other apocalyptic *femmes fatales*—namely, by dissuading Jews from the lures of Christianity and the recently emergent Cult of Mary by reference to the perceived locus of physical and spiritual corruption, her multivalent *bet ha-toref*.

The thirteenth-century C.E. Ashkenazic liturgy further reflects Jewish perception of a Marian threat and lends some credence to Amulo's complaint that recitation of Mary's defilement served as a standard accompaniment to Carolingian Jews' prayers. It also intimates that such slander might have functioned simultaneously as a form of penance and a declaration of faith in the same way that insulting rhetoric and representations of rape functioned in apocalyptic literature. For it was on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, that Israel was directed to sing to the Lord in affirmation of Israel's covenant while denouncing Mary as a promiscuous woman, perhaps chiefly because they had been tempted by her: "The nations call 'Your Holiness' [i.e., Israel] to a son of adultery [Jesus]; Your chosen ones despise the one conceived by the fornicating woman [Mary]." ¹⁴³

Inquisitorial records further suggest the link between Marian slander as a form of penance and a return to good faith in their revelation that by the 1340s C.E., at least, specific renunciations of Jesus as "an accursed bastard" and Mary as "the greatest of

¹⁴³ הגויים מכנים קדשתך לעול הזימה, נשואיך משקצים יחום אשת הזמה "Old Version of Aleinu Le-Shabbe'ah," quoted in Marienberg, "Jews, Jesus, and Menstrual Blood," 7.

whores” were recited by apostates who wished to revert to Judaism and incite Christians to kill them so that they might die as holy martyrs and merit eschatological reward.¹⁴⁴ Based on Solomon’s presentation of the Mainz martyrs’ location within the chambers of the bishop or the courtyard of a priest—areas, as noted above, suggestive of unseemly familiarity with representatives of foreign religion in which other Ashkenazim were known to have converted under duress—it may be that he intended to convey that a segment of these victims had also apostatized. Like the Jews mentioned in the Inquisitorial records, the martyrs of 1096 C.E. too were able to repent and return to union with God, and to thus be counted among the *hasidim*, by fully renouncing Mary, Christianity, and their former reliance on Gentiles—the companions of the Beloved rather than the Beloved Himself. Unfortunately, there is no way to determine what exact details might have been included in Ashkenazic *Toledot* emerging between the ninth and fourteenth centuries C.E. as the next extant recension to mention Jesus’s conception dates to the fifteenth century C.E., and the manuscripts of it and related versions date primarily from the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries.¹⁴⁵ Bearing this caveat in mind, it is possible that these later accounts might reveal other longstanding communal interpretations or traditions associated with *Toledot* which informed Solomon’s narrative, and especially the disparagement of Mary therein.¹⁴⁶

The extant Ashkenazic *Toledot* present Mary as a victim of circumstance, the

¹⁴⁴ Meerson and Schäfer, introduction to *Toledot Yeshu*, 15.

¹⁴⁵ See Meerson and Schäfer, introduction to *Toledot Yeshu*, 14-18, 50-1, 54.

¹⁴⁶ Morris Goldstein, *Jesus in the Jewish Tradition* (New York: Macmillan, 1950), 164, was among the earliest scholars to make this point rather than reading *Toledot* as a variant, but authentic, account of Jesus’s life.

impiety of others, and naïveté. Even so, they show how she is made to suffer the consequences of transgression, is impugned as a harlot, and so, in some ways, is made to blame for the communal conflict caused by conceiving Jesus. In the earliest Ashkenazic version of Jesus's conception in *Toledot* following Amulo's account, the reader is presented with a fuller narrative in which Mary plays a more substantive role. The tale begins with a depiction of Jesus's conception: Mary was a descendant of Israel and her fiancé, Yohanan, was of royal Davidic lineage. Yohanan was a good Jew, both God-fearing and well versed in Scripture. And one Sabbath's eve while he was away—presumably at Temple, as he was a good first-century C.E. Jew, though many *Toledot*, including this version later on, anachronistically refer to synagogue, the rabbinate, and the Babylonian Talmud—a “good-looking”¹⁴⁷ neighbor, Yosef ben Pandera, passed by Mary's house. In a drunken state, this good-looking Yosef went inside and began to behave as if he were her fiancé. Mary “thought in her heart that he was her fiancé Yohanan”¹⁴⁸ but, even so, when he began hugging and kissing her, she hid her face in shame and protested, saying, “Do not touch me, for I am menstruating.”¹⁴⁹ Yosef “was not alarmed and did not pay attention to her words. He lay with her, and she conceived

¹⁴⁷ יפּה מראּה יוסף: Strasbourg, Bibliothèque Universitaire et Régionale, MS 3974, f. 170a, lines 4-5, in Meerson and Schäfer, vol. 2 of *Toledot Yeshu*, 82; Meerson and Schäfer, vol. 1 of *Toledot Yeshu*, 167.

¹⁴⁸ וּהיָא חֲשֵׁבָה בְּלִבָּהּ שֶׁהוּא יוֹחַנָן: Strasbourg, Bibliothèque Universitaire et Régionale, MS 3974, f. 170a, lines 6-7, in Meerson and Schäfer, vol. 2 of *Toledot Yeshu*, 82; Meerson and Schäfer, vol. 2 of *Toledot Yeshu*, 168.

¹⁴⁹ אוּמַרְתָּ לּוֹ אַל תִּגַּע בִּי שֶׁפִּרְשֵׁי נִדָּה לֹא: Strasbourg, Bibliothèque Universitaire et Régionale, MS 3974, f. 170a, line 8, in Meerson and Schäfer, vol. 2 of *Toledot Yeshu*, 82; Meerson and Schäfer, vol. 1 of *Toledot Yeshu*, 168.

from him.”¹⁵⁰

When Yohanan returned in the middle of the night and sought to have relations with Mary—presumably once Pandera had fled the scene—she asked him about his uncustomary behavior of seeking her twice in one night and engaging in sexual activity while she was menstruating. In frustration, Yohanan left and told his rabbi, R. Shim‘on ben Shetah, what had happened. Shortly after discovering Mary’s pregnancy and suspecting Pandera to be the father, Yohanan fled to Babylonia in shame, leaving Mary to bear and raise Jesus, seemingly alone and evidently without manners. For, while he was a young boy at *yeshivah*, Jesus behaved disrespectfully by leaving his head uncovered in the presence of his teachers, failing to greet those he came into contact with, and only bowing to his rabbi. Sensing this as an affront, one of the rabbis declared he was a “bastard,” and another that he was a “bastard and the son of a menstruating woman”¹⁵¹—two epithets referencing Jesus’s illegitimacy and inherently defiled status as an explanation for his wickedness.¹⁵²

The next day, as the rabbis were discussing a talmudic tractate, Jesus not only offered his own *halakhic* interpretation but also posed an especially difficult question to his teachers, who became embarrassed when they were unable to adequately answer. Both of these acts were frowned upon as manifestations of inordinate arrogance and

¹⁵⁰ חשב ולא חשב לדבריה ושכב עמה ונתעברה ממנו: Strasbourg, Bibliothèque Universitaire et Régionale, MS 3974, f. 170a, line 9, in Meerson and Schäfer, vol. 2 of *Toledot Yeshu*, 82; Meerson and Schäfer, vol. 1 of *Toledot Yeshu*, 168.

¹⁵¹ ואמר ממזר הוא ענה השני ואמר ממזר ובן הנדה: Strasbourg, Bibliothèque Universitaire et Régionale, MS 3974, f. 170b, line 7, in Meerson and Schäfer, vol. 2 of *Toledot Yeshu*, 83; Meerson and Schäfer, vol. 1 of *Toledot Yeshu*, 169.

¹⁵² See Meerson and Schäfer, introduction to *Toledot Yeshu*, 46-9.

resulted in the rabbis paying Mary a visit and questioning her about Jesus's parentage. They claimed to have witnesses that Jesus was a bastard and the son of a menstruant. After this, R. Shim'on came forward to reveal what Yohanan had told him in confidence before fleeing for Babylonia. When the rabbis declared that Shim'on's testimony proved Mary was not liable and would not be put to death for adultery, all the more as Pandera's bad reputation was well known and he was surely the culprit, she admitted the rumor was true. From that time forward, her son was known as "the bastard son of a menstruant."¹⁵³

In this account, the idea that Mary was a nonconsensual victim of sexual assault is clear and her assailant's identity as a Jew is belied by the addition of a Hebrew name and patronymic, "Yosef ben."¹⁵⁴ But, in addition to these elements that appear to have built upon ninth-century C.E. *Toledot Amulo* was aware of, Mary rejected Yosef ben Pandera with verbal protests that referred to Jewish purity laws against copulating with a woman during her menses. These regulations were better known among the Jewish populace than many others implemented in post-biblical *Halakhah* because they originated in the Torah.¹⁵⁵ The Babylonian Talmud and response literature indicate that women often claimed to be *niddah* even when they were not to avoid unwanted advances and it was

¹⁵³ ממזר ובן הנדה: Strasbourg, Bibliothèque Universitaire et Régionale, MS 3974, f. 170b, line 28, in Meerson and Schäfer, vol. 2 of *Toledot Yeshu*, 84; Meerson and Schäfer, vol. 1 of *Toledot Yeshu*, 170. Many scholars have noted that the story of Jesus as an arrogant *yeshivah* pupil, rabbinic name-calling of the youth as bastard son of a menstruant, and the questioning of the youth's mother about his parentage closely parallel *aggadah* from the Babylonian Talmud: see Marienberg, "Jews, Jesus, and Menstrual Blood," 3-4. Eli Yassif, "Toledot Yeshu: Folk-Narrative as Polemic and Self-Criticism," in Schäfer, Meerson, and Deutsh, *Toledot Yeshu Revisited*, 106-7, also relates this story to the *Toledot Ben Sira* and *The Arabic Gospel of the Infancy of the Savior*.

¹⁵⁴ William Horbury, "The Strasbourg Text of the *Toledot*," in Schäfer, Meerson, and Deutsh, *Toledot Yeshu Revisited*, 59, also notes that Pandera is not a Gentile in this recension; however, he thinks this marks a change from Amulo's account.

¹⁵⁵ Yonah Lavery-Yisraeli, "Talmudic Descriptions of Menstruation," *Women in Judaism: A Multidisciplinary Journal* 13, no. 1 (2016): 8.

commonly believed that even a wicked man would refrain from raping a woman if he thought she was *niddah* because she was likened to *treif*, impure, meat and the penalty for sexual relations while a woman was menstruating stipulated *karet*, or death by divine mandate.¹⁵⁶ In medieval Europe, the mystical reform group that was active around the time Solomon wrote his narrative, the *Hasidei Ashkenaz*, formulated and resurrected the most stringent ancient customs of separation between a husband and wife during her menses and all other *niddah* women, for it was believed in antiquity as much as in medieval Ashkenaz that a child conceived of a menstruant would be unable to learn Torah properly or ever be counted among the pious, but would be an idol worshipper whose moral nature was inherently flawed.¹⁵⁷

In subsequent Askenazic *Toledot*, these features would become more pronounced to emphasize the circumstances that set Mary, ever-*niddah*, and Jesus, her son, apart from the community of *verus Israel*. In one version, the narrator indicates that Mary “screamed and cried out in a bitter voice and said, ‘What are you doing now? I have just begun menstruating!’”¹⁵⁸ Later, when she confronted her fiancé Yohanan about his behavior, she explicitly defined his actions as rape:

I am shocked about you, Yohanan, that a scholar such as you would do such a shameful thing in Israel. And such [a thing] is not done, that you raped me and lay with me, and have taken my virginity. You had your way

¹⁵⁶ See Israel M. Ta-Shma and Judith R. Baskin, “Niddah,” in vol. 15 of *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, ed. Michael Barenbaum and Fred Skolnick, 2nd ed. (Detroit: Macmillan, 2007), 15:253-58; Lavery-Yisraeli, “Talmudic Descriptions of Menstruation,” 9.

¹⁵⁷ Peter Schäfer, “The Ideal of Piety of the Ashkenazi Hasidim and Its Roots in Jewish Tradition,” *Jewish History* 4, no. 2 (1990): 14; Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*, 55-7, 104-05.

¹⁵⁸ ויצעק ויצעק ויצעק צעקה בקול מר ואמרה מה אתה עתה עושה כי עתה פרסתי נידה: New York, Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, MS 2221, f. 39a, lines 17-18, in Meerson and Schäfer, vol. 2 of *Toledot Yeshu*, 97-8; Meerson and Schäfer, vol. 1 of *Toledot Yeshu*, 185-86.

with me, and you transgressed a prohibition in Torah, and you came to me while I was menstruating. And so I did say, but behold you came unto me despite all this, and you did not listen to me.¹⁵⁹

And the most popular version to circulate in Northern Europe¹⁶⁰ leaves no doubt that Yosef was Jewish and, like other invasive apocalyptic antagonists, a type of Belial. Both elements are reflected in the narrator's description of him as a "pimp, an evil man, and scoundrel (*beli'al*), by ancestry of the tribe of Judah."¹⁶¹ But this version also includes other telling details that deserve consideration.

In it, Yosef befriended Mary's fiancé Yohanan for the purposes of having his way with her. Mary warned her fiancé to avoid Pandera because she recognized him to be an evil man, but he protested, claiming that his own goodness might rub off and positively influence the scoundrel. Yohanan was wrong. Pandera got him so drunk he passed out and, as Yohanan slept, he stole into Mary's house and pretended to be her exceedingly devout fiancé. He tricked her by extinguishing all light and reciting the *Shema* with vigor. Even so, she rejected his advances because she was menstruating. To remedy the situation, he lied and told her that a new *Halakhah* had recently been taught that a man may copulate with his fiancée even when she is menstruating. Mary believed him and he had his way with her, once that night and again the next morning, thus conceiving

¹⁵⁹ תמיהא אנכי אליך ועליך יוחנן שתלמיד חכם כמותך יעשה נבלה כזאת בישראל וכן לא יעשה שנאנסתני ושכבת עמדי ונטלתה בתולותי ועשית עמדי כרצונך ועברת על מצות לא תעשה שבתורה ובאת לי בנידתי ואז אמרתי והנה באת על כל זאת עלי ולא שמעת לקולי: New York, Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, MS 2221, f. 39a, lines 23-6, in Meerson and Schäfer, vol. 2 of *Toledot Yeshu*, 98; Meerson and Schäfer, vol. 1 of *Toledot Yeshu*, 186.

¹⁶⁰ Meerson and Schäfer, introduction to *Toledot Yeshu*, 16-17.

¹⁶¹ רועה זונות איש רע ובליעל מגזה יחוס שבט יהודא: Harvard University, Houghton Library, MS Heb. 57, f. 22a, line 2, in Meerson and Schäfer, vol. 2 of *Toledot Yeshu*, 213; Meerson and Schäfer, vol. 1 of *Toledot Yeshu*, 286.

Jesus.¹⁶²

In each of these Ashkenazic *Toledot*, Mary did most definitely conceive a bastard while she was menstruating. And, as noted above, according to Jewish custom, these two corrosive details were believed to have marred Jesus *in utero* and led to a disastrous severing of the Jewish community that spawned a new class of persecutors—Christians, the *bnei beli'al* Ashkenazic Jews lived among. In most cases, however, Mary is not presented so much as an adulterous or promiscuous woman but as a naïve victim who believed that her protests against sexual transgression might save her from defilement by any Jewish man who should have also been aware of the consequences of copulating with a woman during her menses, or as one who mistakenly believed that she could put her trust in a man known to be learned and pious but who she only later discovered had lied about his identity and *Halakhah* to serve his own purposes.¹⁶³ In these situations, Mary's victimization is not entirely dissimilar from that of medieval Ashkenazim discussed in Chapter One who protested what they perceived as lenient *halakhic* rulings by the rabbis to handle ritually impure meat, or to trade in the trappings of Christians religious ceremony, or to create their synagogues to look like Christian churches, or to fraternize with apostates and Christians for economically advantageous purposes. For, even if they did not choose to transgress and commit spiritual adultery, others in their communities had and, having been defiled by association, they all suffered God's wrath.

When allusions to Mary's promiscuity are mentioned in Ashkenazic *Toledot*, they

¹⁶² The entire conception narrative in this recension is found in Harvard University, Houghton Library, MS Heb. 57, f. 22a, line 1 through f. 22b, line 7, in Meerson and Schäfer, vol. 2 of *Toledot Yeshu*, 213-15; Meerson and Schäfer, vol. 1 of *Toledot Yeshu*, 285-87.

¹⁶³ Cf. Gager and Ahuvia, "Some Notes on Jesus and his Parents," 2:1009-13.

are typically faint, such as in the references to Yosef's licentiousness or her coiffure, as noted above. Yet the additional statements of Yosef's good looks and mention of repeated sexual coupling, once even in the light of day when confusion about who he was seems much less likely, suggests that Mary might not have completely balked at all of Yosef's advances. In these cases, perhaps she, like the Ashkenazim who initially resisted *halakhic* leniency, could appreciate some of the attractive benefits, however fleeting and ultimately disastrous.

Medieval Ashkenazim would also have identified with Mary's defilement in relation to the Rhineland pogroms of 1096 C.E. as well as the many others of the era. In the vignette of Master David mentioned earlier in this chapter, for example, a priest asked him if he would convert to Christianity by using the term for defilement—*tinuf*—that was commonly employed in Ashkenazic *halakhic* discourse in reference to baptism¹⁶⁴ as well as in the Song of Songs to describe the Lover who was reluctant to open the door to her divine Beloved, and who rabbis had long interpreted as having committed spiritual adultery by engaging in idolatry.¹⁶⁵ Moreover, in Rashi's rabbinic responses about pogrom victims, and in Solomon's narrative, forced converts are referred to as *anusim*¹⁶⁶—a term that also applies to the victims of rape, including the Mary of the

¹⁶⁴ Rachel Furst, "Captivity, Conversion, and Communal Identity: Sexual Angst and Religious Crisis in Frankfurt, 1241," *Jewish History* 22, nos. 1/2, The Elka Klein Memorial Volume (2008): 196.

¹⁶⁵ טינפום is found in Solomon's narrative: *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 369; Roos, A64. אטנפום is found in Sg. 3:3. Both are based on the trilateral root טנפ, meaning "soil" or "defile." See "טנפ," in Brown, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 380.

¹⁶⁶ See Norman Roth, *Conversos, Inquisition, and the Expulsion of the Jews from Spain* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2002), 26; הגאנסים: *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 483; Roos, A120.

Ashkenazic *Toledot*.¹⁶⁷

The connection between physical and spiritual defilement was concretized when Northern European Christians took Jewish women hostage in pogroms. When this occurred, it was not uncommon for the Jewish community to suppose that women had been both raped and forcibly converted. And, having been thus doubly defiled, the women were transformed into different entities altogether—either non-Jews or harlots. Rashi, for instance, promoted the idea that wives who had been seized in pogroms and forcibly converted were probably raped and, because they could subsequently corrupt those around them by virtue of their defiled status, need not necessarily be accepted as wives again by their husbands should they return to Judaism and their community.¹⁶⁸ The thirteenth-century C.E. Rabbi Yitzhak ben Moshe went a step further by presuming that women who had been captured would use any means at their disposal to save their lives—not only succumbing to rape (as opposed to committing suicide and dying in *kiddush ha-Shem*), but also by using their bodies to seduce and ingratiate themselves to their tormentors.¹⁶⁹ And R. Hai ben Sherira Gaon (d. 1038 C.E.) pronounced that a woman who had apostatized but who later repented and returned to the community was not a “Jew” in the same way that men who had once belonged to the community but who had willingly apostatized were considered by Rashi to have retained their inherent

¹⁶⁷ The trilateral root אנס in Hebrew refers to rape or force. See “אנס,” in Brown, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 60; Ya’acov Levy, ed., *Oxford English-Hebrew, Hebrew-English Dictionary*, ed. Ya’acov Levy (Tel Aviv: Kernerman and Lonnie Kahn Publishing, 1995), 13. See New York, Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, MS 2221, f. 39a, line 24, in Meerson and Schäfer, vol. 2 of *Toledot Yeshu*, 98.

¹⁶⁸ See the discussion of Rashi’s interpretation of Mishnah *Ketubbot* 2:9 in Furst, “Captivity, Conversion, and Communal Identity,” 192.

¹⁶⁹ Furst, “Captivity, Conversion, and Communal Identity,” 192.

Jewishness;¹⁷⁰ rather, such a woman became “like a harlot.”¹⁷¹ As Rachel Furst has shown, these rabbis implicated forcibly converted or apostate women because the conquest of their bodies damaged the Jewish body politic. Their status was significant not only because Jewish women had been violated or demeaned but also because such violation emasculated the community’s male population through the defilement of “their” women and affirmed the diasporic subservience of the entire group.¹⁷²

Solomon’s narrative similarly reflects this sentiment in the vignette of Master Judah’s slaughter of his son’s fiancée Sarit, mentioned above. In it, Solomon indicated that Sarit was perceived as something of a prize for the community: she was “handsome and good-looking and very lovely in the eyes of those who saw her.”¹⁷³ Yet, however much Judah attempted to present her slaughter as an act of ardor for the divine (“This is the wedding canopy of my daughter, my bride”¹⁷⁴), Solomon plainly noted that “she wanted to escape out of fear.”¹⁷⁵ It was only after Judah “perceived his daughter-in-law’s plan”¹⁷⁶—presumably to use her beauty to ingratiate herself to the Christian aggressors she could see slaughtering her coreligionists outside the window—that “he called out to her, saying: ‘My daughter, since you did not manage to be married to my son, Abraham,

¹⁷⁰ Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance*, 71.

¹⁷¹ *Ozar Ha-Geonim, Ketubbot*, no. 789 in *Ozar Ha-Geonim*, vol. 8, ed. B. M. Levin (Jerusalem: Mosad HaRav Kook, 1939), 356.

¹⁷² Furst, “Captivity, Conversion, and Communal Identity,” 199.

¹⁷³ והיא היתה יפת תואר ויפת מראה ונעימה מאוד בעיני רואיה: *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 431; Roos, A93.

¹⁷⁴ ראו כולכם זאת חופת בתי כלתי: *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 431; Roos, A93.

¹⁷⁵ ורצתה לברוח מפהד: *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 431; Roos, A93.

¹⁷⁶ שכך היה דעת כלתו: *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 431; Roos, A93.

you will not be married to another, to a Gentile.”¹⁷⁷ To show the Christians that they would not be able to dominate his community by taking such a beauty as their own, “he pulled her out through the window” where they could see and “kissed her on the mouth,” thus claiming her before murdering her.¹⁷⁸

Yet, however much the Ashkenazim might have been able to identify with Mary as an exile who had been lied to and assaulted, she, so much more than medieval Jewish women who had been compromised through rape or forced conversion, could not be counted as part of *verus* Israel. For it was through the fruit of her womb that the nation had been severed and continued to suffer persecution. To prove that they could resist the temptation to become like and part of the dominant foreign culture she represented, the authors and propagators of *Toledot* verbally maligned her as a menstruant and/or whore and thus denied the notion of her inviolate purity which Christians touted as a characteristic of her saintly status. They also defiled her literary persona in a manner directly responding to Christian treatment of Jewish hostages and forced converts, and so may have functioned as an expression of revenge fantasy to dominate Christians. In this regard, representations of Mary’s rape also mimicked the way in which those who had been seduced by foreign religion in apocalypses achieved revenge on the objects of their lust and showed their devotion to God.

Conclusion

¹⁷⁷ קרא לה ואומר: בתי מאחר שלא היית זוכה לינשא לבני אברהם, לאתנשאי לאחר, אל הנכרי *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 431; Roos, A93.

¹⁷⁸ ותפשה והוציאה מן החלון ונשקה בפיה *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 431; Roos, A93. See Latteri, “Playing the Whore,” 93-4.

Literary renderings of the martyrdom of love and the martyrdom of contempt complement each other in Solomon's narrative. When the two forms are found together, martyrs proclaim their devotion to God while simultaneously renouncing Mary as a whore and/or menstruant. As a martyrological unit, statements of this kind function as an expression of Israel's idealized relationship with God as that of a Lover and her Beloved, captured most eloquently in the Song of Songs. But at the same time, such statements underscore the temptation and threat Gentile nations and idolatrous foreign worship continued to pose to Israel's relationship with God by depicting Israel as both a promiscuous woman and as a nation seduced by promiscuous women. Ultimately, Marian epithets served as either resistance to idolatry, or a means of proving fidelity and love for God after having succumbed to temptation in a manner similar to that found within the apocalyptic and anti-Messiah tradition.

Explicit links to the apocalyptic tradition are lacking in references to Mary as a whore and/or menstruant in Solomon's narrative. They can, however, be extrapolated by analyzing notions of Mary's defiled and corrupting vagina found in popular stories and in conjunction with apocalypses circulating around the time Solomon wrote his narrative. In these, verbal abuse and sexual assault of feminine personifications of foreign religion serve as methods of repentance for assimilation or apostasy and provide a path of return to union with God. The inclusion of contemptuous statements about Mary, and when and where the martyrs were presented as either having said or thought them, suggest that anti-Marian epithets served a similar function in Solomon's narrative. Chapter Four provides

further suggestions of ways in which Solomon employed apocalyptic literary strategies to subtly reveal that the Ashkenazim of 1096 C.E.—and his own generation—were responsible for the delayed advent of the Messiah and redemption.

Chapter Four

Teshuvah:

A Call to Reform in The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson

Who has heard of such a thing? Who has seen such things? Ask now, and see. Was there ever such a numerous sacrifice since the days of Adam? Were there ever one thousand, one hundred sacrifices all on one day, all of them like the sacrifice of Isaac, son of Abraham? On account of one who was offered up on Mount Moriah [Isaac], He [God] shook the world . . . What has been done? O heavens, why did you not go black, O stars, why did you not withdraw your light, O sun and moon, why did you not darken in your sky? . . . After all this, will you restrain yourself, O Lord?

—*The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*¹

Questions. Questions that were more than questions. Accusations? Yes. And an indictment. But directed at who? Dare one question God and how He chose to express His will through nature? Was the alternative—questioning the religious devotion of the victims of the Rhineland martyrs—probable in the twelfth-century C.E. compositional context of *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*? Perhaps not for most, but possibly in Solomon's case.

Featuring as part of Solomon's rendering of the thoughts of the survivors of the persecutions in Mainz after the numerous acts of sacrifice and martyrdom in 1096 C.E.—presented here as no less than “one thousand and one hundred holy souls,” slaughtered on one day, “all of them like the sacrifice of Isaac, son of Abraham”—the answer seems clear enough. The communal voice lifted a plaint to God that demanded an accounting for

¹ מי שמע כזאת ומי ראה כאלה? שאלו נא וראו, ההיית עקידה כזאת מרובות מימות אדם הראשון, האם היו אלף ומאה עקידות ביום אחד, כולם כעקידת יצחק בן אברהם? על אחת הרעיש העולם. . . מה עשו? למה שמים לא קדרו וכוכבים לא אספו נוגהם? וצר . . . העל אלה תתאפק יי *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 335-39; Roos, A48-9.

the disaffected state of heaven and nature after such a show of devotion. And the voice demanded yet more: “You shall avenge the blood of your servants which has been poured out, in our lifetime, before our eyes, amen, and swiftly.”²

The brashness of tone, rendering “why did you not” more like “how could you not,” and the insistence and the surety of “you shall,” so much more like a command that should be fulfilled rather than a prayerful petition, are suggestive of a power dynamic removed from what one might expect to find on the lips of those addressing their God. It does not bespeak awe of a creature addressing its Creator, but rather of parties with clear expectations of how the other should act based on a principle of *quid pro quo*. This is evident in Solomon’s expression of the formula: because it was “For your [God’s] sake innumerable souls were killed. *You [God] shall avenge the blood of your [God’s] servants* [i.e., the martyrs of 1096 C.E.]... .”³ Still, the sentiment, regardless of the manner or tone of expression, is entirely compatible with the notion of covenant found throughout the Hebrew Bible and the post-biblical Judaic tradition of retributive justice.⁴ As noted above at length in Chapter Two, Israelite and later Jewish sages had long indicated a belief that obedience to God would be rewarded with blessings and disobedience punished by

² ותנקום דם עבדיך השפוך בימינו ולעינינו, אמן, במהרה *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 339; Roos, A49.

³ כי עליך הרגו נפשות לאין מספר, ותנקום דם עבדיך *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 339; Roos, A49.

⁴ Anson Laytner, *Arguing with God: A Jewish Tradition* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1990), xvi-xvii, presents human challenges to divine decisions, also known as *hutzpah k’lapel shemaya* (acting with nerve against heaven), as an expression of the covenant relationship between God and Israel generally found in response to traumatic events of persecution. According to Laytner, such *hutzpah* is secondary to the mainstream submissive response and acknowledgment of just cause (sinfulness) for suffering. David A. Frank, “Arguing with God, Talmudic Discourse, and the Jewish Countermodel: Implications for the Study of Argumentation,” *Argumentation and Advocacy* 41 (2004): 71-86, posits that the type of argumentation depicted by Laytner was not secondary but the crux of Jewish theology as well as an expression of free will.

devastation.⁵

From Solomon's query, it would appear that he not only adhered to the traditional interpretation of covenant but that he was also of the opinion that God had somehow failed to uphold His end of the bargain. After all, according to the above formulation, the Ashkenazim had proven their obedience by their willingness to die for their faith while God had yet to deliver the communal reward of redemption via vengeance against Christian persecutors. Indeed, Solomon reiterated that the pious Ashkenazim should have merited redemption and that the Christian aggressors should have earned God's wrath time and again. For instance, in the final lament for the Mainz community, he prayed: "May the blood of His pious ones produce merit and atonement for us, and for the generations after us, for the children of our children for all eternity, like the binding of our father Isaac, when our father Abraham bound him upon the altar;"⁶ and, "May their merit, righteousness, piety, innocence, and sacrifice serve us as a righteous advocate and a defender before the Most High, and may He, soon, and in our lifetime, bring us out of the exile of Edom. May our true Messiah come, amen, soon and in our lifetime."⁷ In the lament for the martyrs of Xanten, he similarly beseeched God:

May their merit and the merit of the others who were slaughtered, pierced, strangled, burnt, drowned, stoned, and buried alive, who accepted upon themselves out of love and affection seven kinds of death . . . stand like a righteous advocate on our behalf before God Most High, so that He shall

⁵ Of course, a counter-tradition also exists within the Bible and post-biblical Judaic writings, in which suffering is viewed as inexplicable in terms of punishment. This interpretation is discussed further below.

⁶ ויעמוד לנו דם חסידינו לזכות ולכפרה לדורותינו אחרינו ולבני בנינו עד עולם כעקידת יצחק אבינו, כשעקדו אברהם אבינו על גבי המזבח: *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 399; Roos, A80.

⁷ וזכותם וצדקותם וחסידותם ותמימותם ועקידתם>ם יהיה לנו למליץ יושר ולסניגור פני עליון. ויוציאנו מגלות אדום <הרשעה> במהרה בימינו, ובמהרה צדקנו, אמן, במהרה בימינו: *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 399; Roos, A81.

redeem us soon from the exile of <wicked> Edom, soon, in our lifetime...⁸

And, in his overarching review of the martyrs of the Cologne Jewry, which had been dispersed among the surrounding suburbs, Solomon also expressed the idea that redemption had been merited:

The Lord had chosen that good generation in its entirety to be His portion, and in order to produce merit through them for the generations coming after them. May it thus be the will of the high and exalted God that He should pay the reward for the deeds of the earlier ones to their children after them.⁹

The related calls for vengeance against Christians also abound in Solomon's narrative. These were often bolstered by prooftexts traditionally held to be delivered through the quintessential Messiah-Psalmist, King David. At the close of his segment on the Trier Jewry, for instance, Solomon combined the ideas of God's vengeance and the merit of the martyrs seamlessly with the Psalmist's prayer: "Let the Master of Vengeance [i.e., God] avenge, *in our lifetime and before our eyes, the blood of His servants which has been poured out*" (Ps. 79:10). May their merit and righteousness serve as a merit and protect us on a day of evil."¹⁰ Solomon similarly pled for gruesome vengeance with the Psalmist's words when depicting the mistreatment of the bodies of those of the Mainz Jewry who had perished inside the bishop's chambers:

May God on High recall them and avenge them soon, in our lifetime.

⁸ וזכותם וזכות האחירים הנשחטים ומדוקרים ונחנקים ונשרפים ונטבעים ונסקלים ונקברים חיים וקייבלו עליהם מאהבה ומחבה *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 443; Roos, A99.

⁹ כל אותו דור הטוב בחר לו יה למנה ולזכות בהם את דורות הבאים אחרים. וכן יהי רצון מלפני אל רם ונישא, שישלם לבניהם *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 469; Roos, A111.

¹⁰ ובעל נקמות ינקום בימינו לעינינו נקמת דם עבדיו השפוך, וזכותם וצדקותם יעמוד לנו לזכות ויגן עלינו ביום רעה *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 479; Roos, A118.

Concerning them it is said: *He [God] will execute judgement among the nations, filling them with corpses; He will shatter heads over the wide earth* (Ps. 110:6). And it is said: *O Lord, you God of vengeance, you God of vengeance, shine forth* (Ps. 94:1).¹¹

And for another sub-group of the Mainz Jewry:

O Lord, you God of vengeance, you God of vengeance, shine forth (Ps. 94:1). For *because of you we are being killed all day long* (Ps. 44:22)¹² . . . they killed and showed no mercy to us. *Return sevenfold into the bosom of our neighbors* (Ps. 79:12). *Rise up, O judge of the earth [i.e., God]; give what they deserve* (Ps. 94:2), *to rouse wrath, to take vengeance on their opponents [i.e., Christian aggressors]* . . . *Pour out your wrath on the nations that do not know you and on the kingdoms* (Ps. 79:6). *Pour out your indignation upon them* (Ps. 69:25). You shall require from them the blood of your servants . . . grant us vengeance. *Let the avenging of the outpoured blood of His servants be known among the nations before our eyes* (Ps. 79:10), soon, for the sake of your great Name, by which we are called, so that all creatures shall know and understand their sin and guilt on account of what they did to us. Make them pay what they owe as they made us pay.¹³

Beyond providing the lengthiest call for vengeance, which continues beyond this excerpt for several lines, Solomon clearly indicated the idea that any harm befalling the Christian aggressors of 1096 C.E. was punishment—divine retribution—for persecuting Israel. He reiterated this sentiment in his depiction of the demise of the town governor of Kerpen and his wife, and in his account of events when the crusading horde reached Hungary. According to Solomon, the governor was killed by a falling Jewish gravestone and his wife went mad as a result of heavenly judgement, for the governor had ordered

¹¹ יפקדם אלהי מרום וינקום נקמתם במהרה בימינו. ועליהם נאמר: ידון בגוים מלא גויות מחץ ראש על ארץ רבה. ונאמר: אל 11
The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson, Haverkamp, 389; Roos, A74. נקמות יי אל נקמות הופיה

¹² Ps. 44:23, according to the Masoretic text.

אל נקמות יי אל נקמות הופיע. כי עליך הורגנו כל היום. . . הרגו ולא חסו עיניהם עלינו. השב לשכינינו שבעתים אל חיקם וגו'.¹³
הנשה שופט הארץ השב גמול וגו'. ועל קמיהם להעלות חימה ולנקום נקם מהם. . . שפוך חמתך על הגוים אשר לא ידעוך ועל
הממלכות וכו'. שפוך עליהם זעמך וכו'. ותדרוש מהם דם עבדיך. . . יתן נקמתינו בידינו, ויודע בגוים לעינינו נקמת דם עבדיו
השפוך במהרה, למען שמך הגדול שנקרא עלינו. כדי שידעו ויבינו כל היצורים את חטאתם ואשמתם אשר עשו לנו. וכגמולם ישיב
The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson, Haverkamp, 397-99; Roos, A79-80. בראשם כאשר גמלו עלינו

the construction of a new building in town from Jewish gravestones stolen from the Cologne cemetery.¹⁴ Likewise, the members of the so-called People's Crusade were barred entry into Hungary and those who had snuck in before the borders were secured were struck down until, according to Solomon, the local Hungarians "had killed everyone who went with Peter the priest. The Holy One, blessed be He, avenged upon them the blood of His servants and not even one man remained from among them."¹⁵ And many who followed after Emicho of Flonheim were either imprisoned, became stuck in the bogs when they attempted to escape, drowned in the river, or were cut down, leading the remnant of the Ashkenazim to rejoice: "we heard and were glad for the Lord had shown us vengeance on our enemies."¹⁶

Such portrayals of the martyrs' merit and petitions for God's vengeful justice have contributed to the predominant scholarly and popular positions articulated in the last two centuries that the eleventh-century C.E. Ashkenazim were pious and that the medieval Jewish accounts presented them as praiseworthy martyrs in such a manner as to encourage emulation.¹⁷ Alan Mintz and Israel Yuval have extended this idea by illustrating how the generation of 1096 C.E. was also perceived by contemporaries as innocent, and so, "punished" without just cause. Based on this premise, Mintz and Yuval

¹⁴ *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 61; Roos, A106-07.

¹⁵ *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 487; Roos, A122. וְנָקַם הַקִּיבִי'ה' נִקְמַת דָּם עֲבָדָיו מֵהֶם וְלֹא נֹתֵר מֵהֶם אֶפְיָלוּ אִישׁ אֶחָד. שְׁהָרְגוּ אֶת כּוֹלָם, אוֹתָם הֵהוּלְכִים עִם פִּידְרוֹן הַכּוֹמֵר.

¹⁶ *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 489; Roos, A123. וְשִׁמְעָה וְשִׁימָה לְבָנוּ, כִּי הִרְאָנוּ יְיָ נִקְמָה בְּאוֹיְבֵינוּ.

¹⁷ See Roemer's presentation of *Wissenschaft* scholars in "Turning Defeat into Victory," 65-80, discussed above in Chapter Three. For a discussion of indoctrination into martyrdom, see Marcus, "Hierarchies, Religious Boundaries and Jewish Spirituality," 7-26, especially 9-13; Grossman, "The Roots of *Kiddush ha-Shem* in Early Ashkenaz," 119-27, especially; Goldin, "The Socialisation for *Kiddush ha-Shem*," 117-38; Einbinder, *Beautiful Death*, 17-44.

posit that significant theological paradigm shifts developed in response to the pogroms. Mintz contends that the innocence of the victims upset the understanding of suffering as divine retribution and replaced it with the notion that suffering served as a sign of election. Within this conception, suffering amounted to a gift given by God to the most worthy so that they could prove righteousness and merit heavenly rewards: “Destruction was thus divorced from sin . . . suffering became a spiritual compliment.”¹⁸

Like Mintz, Yuval has contended that the experience of suffering was not based on any individual or communal sinfulness that may have merited punishment; rather, the suffering of the innocent helped to resuscitate a latent theological precursor to the doctrine of vengeance developed among medieval Ashkenazim. In his model, poets and exegetes found solace in their beliefs and subsequent presentations that the Jewish deaths in the 1096 C.E. pogroms served as a slaughter of innocents that would provoke God’s ire against Christians and summon a purge that would be accompanied by messianic redemption.¹⁹

Reflecting the concerns and influence of *Wissenschaft* scholars, Yuval’s claims have come under harsh criticism from scholars worldwide who are leery of fueling antisemitism, both from those who feel he has somehow tarnished the martyrs’ reputation

¹⁸ Alan Mintz, *Hurban: Responses to Catastrophe in Hebrew Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 6. Mintz does note that the idea that suffering served as an indication of divine love had existed prior to 1096 C.E., but posits it had only been a minor motif until the crusade pogroms.

¹⁹ Yuval, “Vengeance and Damnation,” 33-90, expresses many of the points he expanded on in his later monograph, *Two Nations*, especially in Chapter Three, “The Vengeance and the Curse: Hostility to Christianity among Ashkenazic Jewry,” 91-134. Yuval’s position, in some regards, may be seen as an extension of Spiegel’s earlier work, *The Last Trial*, which charts the tradition of rabbinic interpretation of human sacrifice as a facilitator to redemption and suggests that this understanding may have informed martyrdom in high medieval Ashkenaz, as well as the work of early Zionist Yitzhak Baer, *Galut*, trans. Robert Warsaw (New York: Schocken, 1947), 43, who opined that medieval Jews living in the European Diaspora “gave vent to their feelings of hatred in prayers for vengeance and in apocalyptic visions.”

by blaming them for the accusations of infanticide and Blood Libel persecutions that befell later Jews, and from those who emphasize Ashkenazic integration into the broader Christian society.²⁰ The tendency for Jews and Christians to interact economically, socially, and even religiously, as indicated in the chapters above, as well as the increasingly salient interpretation of a common milieu inhabited by Jews and Christians in which conviviality and infighting could be found, much the same as in any other medieval community, undermine Yuval's isolationist presentation and weaken his claim that the dominant, long-running trajectory of Ashkenazic theology was vengeance against insufferable Christian oppression.²¹ Still, the evidence that sacrificial imagery played a role in apocalyptic and messianic rhetoric of medieval Ashkenazim is undeniable, even if minimized since Yuval's controversial thesis and neutralized by integrationist presentations.

At the same time, some who espouse an integrationist view maintain the traditionalist position that the generation of 1096 C.E. was especially devout and that its deaths were not viewed as the product of divine retribution in Hebrew sources.²² But, as indicated in Chapter One, blanket statements of exceptional piety are difficult to concede as integration was often precipitated or accompanied by an inability among smaller

²⁰ See Johannes Heil, "'Deep enmity' and/or 'Close ties'? Jews and Christians before 1096: Sources, Hermeneutics, and Writing History in 1996," *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 9 (2002): 269-70, especially; Rainer Walz, "Die Debatte über die Thesen Israel J. Yuvals," *Aschkenas* 9, no. 1 (1999): 189-232; and Marcus, "Israeli Medieval Jewish Historiography," 273-77. For further critiques of Yuval's argument, see the double 1994 C.E. issue of *Zion* devoted to the topic.

²¹ For a discussion of medieval inter-confessional conviviality in northern Europe, see Elukin, *Living Together, Living Apart*; and Chazan, *Reassessing Jewish Life*. These presentations share the idea that conviviality did not necessarily indicate a monolithic "tolerance" or "intolerance" in society, but included bouts of violence as well as amicability. David Nirenberg had articulated the same position earlier in regards to Iberia in his seminal work, *Communities of Violence*, noted above.

²² See Marcus, "From Politics to Martyrdom," 47; and Roos, 'God Wants It!', 165.

Jewish enclaves, or a disinclination among major Jewish hubs, such as the ShUM communities, to maintain the purity laws in Northern Europe.²³ Moreover, Jeremy Cohen and David Malkiel have recently made significant strides in debunking the aura of sanctity shrouding the victims of 1096 C.E. Cohen argues that the Hebrew crusade narratives, particularly that of Solomon bar Samson, evince ambiguity: they do not unilaterally promote martyrdom or the righteousness of the pogrom victims, but sometimes imply guilt over perceived sinfulness and a conversionary ethos among the narrative's constructed literary characters.²⁴ And Malkiel contends that a close reading of Latin and Hebrew crusade narratives indicates that sacrificial martyrdom was, at times, a fabrication—showing that many Jews were not posed with the choice of conversion or death but were slain without the option, and that others did not perish for ideological but personal reasons.²⁵ According to both, it was the later interpreters of the events of 1096 C.E. who contrived a mythologizing of the victims, perhaps as a way to give salvific significance to their death that might otherwise have been viewed as incomprehensible.²⁶

This chapter builds on Yuval's observations regarding sacrificial imagery in literary and liturgical pleas for redemption in high medieval Ashkenaz, as well as Cohen's and Malkiel's claims of textual ambiguity and a sometimes unfavorable presentation of the martyrs and/or martyrdom in Solomon's narrative. Through an examination of the

²³ See Chapter Two above.

²⁴ Cohen, *Sanctifying the Name of God*, 55-69.

²⁵ See Malkiel, "Destruction or Conversion," 257-80; idem, "Vestiges of Conflict," 323-40.

²⁶ Cohen claims that the medieval narratives idealized the martyrs, though ambiguously, while Malkiel asserts that modern scholars rather than the medieval texts *per se* are responsible for this reading. Cohen, *Sanctifying the Name of God*, 29; Malkiel, "Destruction or Conversion," 257-59.

author's use of prooftexts, biblical allusions, details included in martyrological vignettes, and euphemistic expressions and explicit statements acknowledging the sinfulness of some of the members of the persecuted generation of 1096 C.E., it illustrates the cohesiveness of Solomon's message of reform, which he viewed as a precursor to messianic redemption. This endeavor is complicated by what appear to be contradictory representations of the victims of the Rhineland pogroms as either deserving or undeserving of punishment. Without denying the sometimes positive presentation of religious devotion among members of the persecuted Ashkenazim, evidenced by a willingness to sacrifice and be sacrificed in *kiddush ha-Shem*, this chapter argues that Solomon strove to show that, on the whole, the Ashkenazim of 1096 C.E. were not as universally devout as later generations had purported them to be. As in every era of eschatological persecution and apocalyptic presentation of it, the pogroms were conceived of as both divine retribution for widespread communal transgressions ranging from lukewarm ardor for the divine to assimilation and apostasy as well as testing grounds for the righteous resisters of assimilative tendencies—the *hasidim*—to prove their unwavering fidelity. And so, rather than indicting God for permitting the pogroms of 1096 C.E. to occur, or unilaterally lauding the victims, as Mintz and the majority of later scholars have interpreted, Solomon presented a good portion of the affected Ashkenazic Jewry as guilty of transgression and thus, theologically speaking, to blame for the persecution that befell them all.

For the most part, Solomon expressed his message cryptically, in a manner most suited to the learned elite and those studying for the rabbinate, precisely because he held

this group responsible for leading the community astray through lenient *halakhic* interpretation and self-aggrandizement. For, not only had medieval Ashkenazic rabbis sanctioned what some in the community considered to be overfamiliarity with Gentiles, as described in Chapter One; they also fostered an interpretation of the biblical account of Abraham's near-sacrifice of Isaac and its redemptive effects which seems to disregard or excuse overfamiliarity with Gentiles, all the while establishing liturgical associations between the victims of 1096 C.E. and the patriarchs which reinforced their own self-perception of sanctity.

The Covenant and the Claim: Pious Posturing of Rabbi-Poets

Two of the most significant rabbinic understandings of the covenant between God and Israel that Solomon responded to are those found in the post-biblical treatment of the binding of Isaac, commonly referred to as the *Akedah*, and the Exodus, loosely bracketed by God's appearance to Moses in the burning bush and the granting of the Torah. Independently, these biblical episodes provide models of messianic personae and collective redemption; and, in rabbinic treatment, the two were often associated, if not conflated. In the biblical account of the *Akedah*, found in Genesis 22, Abraham unquestioningly obeyed God when his faithfulness was tested and displayed singular devotion by taking his beloved son to sacrifice on Mount Moriah. In response, God made a promise in perpetuity: "Because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will indeed bless you, and I will make your offspring as numerous as the

stars of heaven and the sand that is on the seashore; and your offspring shall possess the gate of their enemies . . .” (Gn. 22:16-17).

Later generations further developed the notion that Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice Isaac amounted to human fulfillment of the covenant and merited redemption for the patriarchs and their descendants. As Spiegel, Yuval, and others have shown, some writings and traditions that would become significant within medieval Ashkenazic tradition reflect the idea that Abraham did actually slay his son—a willing and fully grown Isaac—and that human sacrifice was not only accepted but desired by God.²⁷ For example, within a talmudic discussion regarding the proper conduct for public fasts and the significance of the ritual surrounding them is the notion that ashes, symbolic of those remaining after a burnt offering, were heaped upon the Ark and put on the head of each of the participants to remind God of the faithfulness of Abraham and Isaac at the *Akedah* and the promise of blessings awarded as a result of it.²⁸ Whether the ashes referred to are those of Isaac or the ram is, at times, ambiguous within exegetical discourse.²⁹ But some rabbis were explicit in their claims that the *shofar*—or, ram’s horn—blown at *Rosh*

²⁷ Laytner, *Arguing with God*, 7, has discussed the biblical and post-biblical development of the concept of *zekhut avot* (merit of the ancestors) as first evidenced in the Genesis account of the redemption of Lot. He notes that “In succeeding generations, less emphasis was placed on personal merit and more emphasis on the merit of the ancestors . . .” Spiegel, *The Last Trial*, has shown that the idea that Abraham had actually sacrificed Isaac existed in early, antique biblical commentary. In his second (17-27) and tenth chapters (120-38), Spiegel questions whether this alternate reading of the *Akedah* informed the medieval martyrs’ sacrifice of their children or if the popularity of the interpretation was only found in the aftermath of the acts of martyrdom. Marcus, *Rituals of Childhood*, 7, also notes that it is uncertain if the martyrdoms came before or after the popularity of this doctrine within rabbinic literature. Nirenberg, “The Rhineland Massacres of Jews,” 288, with more surety than Spiegel and Marcus (and I think more than is warranted), posits that this alternate reading only truly began to flourish in the aftermath of the Rhineland pogroms as a means of providing precedent for the sacrificers’ killing of their children. See also Yuval, *Two Nations*, 91-134; and Roos, *God Wants It!*, 89-94.

²⁸ See Spiegel, *The Last Trial*, 42-3.

²⁹ Within the biblical text, the slaughter and burnt offering of a ram is the prescribed guilt offering that was to procure atonement. See Lv. 19:22.

Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, was symbolic of the ram at the *Akedah*, and that the one blowing it should remind God of His covenantal obligations through the mnemonic of Isaac's ashes when petitioning that He "Regard the ashes of Father Isaac heaped up on top of the altar, and deal with Thy children in accordance with the Mercy Attribute" rather than the Justice Attribute.³⁰

Rabbis further associated human sacrifice with appeasement and redemption when they tied the ritual of painting door frames with lamb's blood during Passover to the *Akedah*. For instance, R. Ishmael (c. 90-135 C.E.) promoted the idea that the blood of the paschal lamb, interpreted as a metaphor for the blood of Isaac shed on the altar, had the effect of deterring the Angel of Death and securing God's protection for the faithful on the eve of their flight from Egypt. In addition, he presented the blood of Isaac as inclining God's mercy towards Israel when He had intended to destroy the city of Jerusalem due to disobedience.³¹

Rabbis extended the idea that human sacrifice served as atonement or merit for future generations further still, in a manner suggesting that the Abrahamic covenant warranted expectation. The early medieval *aggadic* interpretation of the Torah known as the *Midrash Tanhuma* (c. 500-800 C.E.),³² for example, relates that whenever Jews might sin, God would redeem them based on Isaac's binding: "Whenever the children of Isaac sin against you and [as a result] come into distress, remember on their behalf the *Akedah*

³⁰ "Supplication for the one who sounds the shofar," quoted in Spiegel, *The Last Trial*, 38. For a discussion of the Justice and Mercy Attributes of God, see Spiegel's Chapter Ten, *The Last Trial*, 121-38.

³¹ Spiegel, *The Last Trial*, 51-2.

³² This collection of *Midrash* is named for the fifth-century C.E. homilist, R. Tanhuma bar Abba.

of their father Isaac. Forgive them and redeem them from their distress.”³³ The interpretation of R. Judah ben R. Simon (c. 165-200 C.E.) included in the *Midrash Rabbah* on Genesis clarifies the meaning of “distress.” R. Judah declared that when Israel would fall “into the clutches of sin” Jews would “be the victims of persecution” because of it; and the fourth-century C.E. R. Abba ben R. Pappi and R. Joshua of Siknin explained, in the name of R. Levi, that the “sin” of Israel that had resulted in persecution amounted to habitual overfamiliarity with Gentile peoples, or assimilation.

Because the Patriarch Abraham saw the ram extricate himself from one thicket, and go become entangled in another, the Holy One, blessed be He, said to him: “So will thy children be entangled in countries, changing from Babylonia to Media, from Media to Greece, and from Greece to Edom; yet they will eventually be redeemed by the ram’s horn. . . .”³⁴

Ideologically, past and future redemptions were bound to the *Akedah*.

In each of these cases, rabbinic invocation of Isaac’s binding served not merely as a commemoration of an actual event in Israel’s historic or mythic past but as a reminder to God to fulfill his part of the bargain struck at Moriah.³⁵ So too, in their way, did the Ashkenazic rabbi-poets call out to God to remember and make good on His word by pointing to parallels between ancient and contemporary Jewish homicides and communal devastation. Indeed, their poems often allude to multiple martyrdoms from different eras in Jewish history as each was perceived to be an act of sacrifice akin to both the *Akedah*

³³ *Midrash Tanhuma, Wayyera* 4.46, trans. John T. Townsend (Hoboken, NJ: KTAV, 1989), 131.

³⁴ *Genesis Rabbah* LVI:9, in Freedman and Simon, *Midrash Rabbah*, 499.

³⁵ Nirenberg, “Rhineland Massacres of Jews,” 89-92, contends that medieval literature treating the Rhineland pogroms as well as the persecutions attending the Second Crusade and contemporary pogroms indicates anxiety that God had failed to remember the covenant and served as an attempt to remind Him. Yerushalmi has written more substantively regarding the significance of memory in the covenant relationship between God and Israel in his above-noted text, *Zakhor*.

and the cultic Temple rite it was believed to have prefigured.³⁶ And, according to David G. Roskies, the poetic form and recitation, more than biblical exegesis or the narratives, facilitated “the rabbinic strategy of highlighting the timeless, cyclical nature of the event” for the community at large.³⁷ In further contrast to exegesis which recognizes the *Akedah* as atonement for contemporary sins or those that Israel would commit in the future, the poetic verses composed for recitation during the communal liturgy tend to minimize references to any type of transgression by medieval Ashkenazic martyrs or their cohort and instead present them as a righteous generation which (should have) merited messianic advent.³⁸ Indeed, some poets were so confident of the purity of the persecuted that they presented their deaths as atonement—sin offerings—for Israel’s transgressions in the distant past and they questioned, in the same vein as the communal voice captured by Solomon bar Samson above, why the martyrs’ willingness to sacrifice their children had not been met with an actualization of redemption comparable to that awarded to the patriarchs.³⁹

³⁶ Spiegel, *The Last Trial*, 15-27, 131-34, provides a discussion of intentional parallelism between the *Akedah* and later acts of martyrdom as well as examples that some later martyrs’ sacrifice was presented as superseding that of the Patriarchs, because of either actualization or the number of sacrifices. Numerous other scholars have noted the intentional parallels between the biblical *Akedah* and the medieval narrative and poetic accounts of the *akedot* of 1096 C.E. and later eras. For the *Akedah* as a prefiguration of the Temple cult, see Roos, ‘*God Wants It!*’, 94.

³⁷ Roskies, *The Literature of Destruction*, 72.

³⁸ See, for example, “Commemoration of Martyrs” in the Sabbath Prayer Book, Ashkenazic Rite, in Roskies, *The Literature of Destruction*, 82-3: “May the Merciful Father, who dwells in heaven, in his abundant mercies remember compassionately the pious and righteous and pure, the sacred communities, who sacrificed themselves for the sanctification of the Divine Name . . . May God remember them beneficently along with the other righteous of history.” Einbinder, *Beautiful Death*, 27, has also commented on the tendency for entire communities of victims to be memorialized as pious victims in medieval martyrological literature.

³⁹ For the idea of medieval martyrs atoning for ancient sins, see Nirenberg, “Rhineland Massacres,” 292; Roos, ‘*God Wants It!*’, 91-2. For the idea that post-biblical *tzaddikim*, or righteous ones, of later generations could atone for sin (implied as having been committed in the past), see Spiegel, *The Last Trial*, 115.

For example, a poet by the name of R. Abraham who is believed to have been an eye-witness to the pogroms of 1096 C.E. asked, or rather, accused: “O Lord, Mighty One, dwelling on high! / Once, over one *Akedah*, Ariels [i.e., angels] cried out before Thee. / But now how many are butchered and burned! / Why over the blood of children did they not raise a cry?”⁴⁰ Another twelfth-century C.E. rabbi-poet of Cologne, R. Eliezer bar Joel HaLevi would go on to point out the disparity in results between what he perceived to be similar displays of fidelity between the patriarchs and the Ashkenazic victims of crusade pogroms:

Before that patriarch could in his haste sacrifice his only one, / It was heard from heaven: Do not put forth your hand to destroy! / But now how many sons and daughters of Judah are slain— / While yet He makes no haste to save those butchered nor those cast on the flames.⁴¹

Evoking a like sentiment in regards to God’s seeming apathy toward the community, Abraham’s contemporary, R. David bar Meshullam, declared: “On the merit of the *Akedah* at Moriah once we could lean, / Safeguarded for salvation, generation after generation— / Now one *Akedah* follows another, they cannot be counted.”⁴²

Still other poets were downright insulting in their attempts to rouse God to finally act in response to the many *akedot*. R. Isaac bar Shalom sarcastically nodded to God’s superiority in all things—even cool abandonment of the persecuted Ashkenazim—in his poem, “There is None like You among the Dumb.” Throughout the composition, he went

⁴⁰ חסין יה שכן מעלים / מקדם על-עקדה אחת צעקו לפניך אראלים / ועתה כמה נעקדים ונכללים / ומדוע לא הרעישו על-בני 40
עוללים: R. Abraham, “I Shall Speak in the Grief of My Spirit,” in Habermann and Baer, *Sefer Gezerot*, 62.

⁴¹ R. Eliezer bar Joel HaLevi, lament fragment, quoted in Spiegel, *The Last Trial*, 20-1.

⁴² קדם שענגו ותעמד עקדת הר מר / טמונה לישע בכל דר ודר לשמר — / נתוספו אלה וכאלה עד-בלתי לאמר 42
R. David bar Meshullam, “O God, Do Not Hush Up the Shedding of My Blood!” in Habermann and Baer, *Sefer Gezerot*, 71.

to lengths to describe the unwavering devotion of both the survivors of the pogroms as well as the slain victims. To God, the remnant cried out, “We have not forgotten You nor deceived You,”⁴³ while the dead are presented as having proclaimed their reverence to Christians in response to coercive conversionary efforts: “From our God we turn not, nor shall we worship yours! / . . . / Alive and enduring is our Redeemer, / Him we shall serve, and Him we praise. / In time of trouble, He is our salvation.”⁴⁴ Modeling themselves after the patriarch Abraham, these souls “made ready to slay their children, / Intending the blessing of sacrifice.”⁴⁵ And, like the antique martyr, R. Akiba, they passed with the *Shema* on their lips, declaring their faith in the singularity of God and their willingness to kill and be killed as a savory and fitting holocaust rather than join ranks with Christians who had treated the Torah and Talmud “as refuse” by desecrating the many “pages and parchments” full of “holy letters” with a “flailing sword.”⁴⁶

In addition to emphasizing the similarities between the *Akedah* and the martyrs of later generations, Isaac juxtaposed faithful Ashkenazim who had piously waited for a late-in-coming redemption to profaning, irreverent Christians as justification for his insistent refrain that God “not keep silence.” His closing stanzas, quoted below, provide

⁴³ לא-שכחנו ולא שקרנו R. Isaac bar Shalom, “There Is None like You among the Dumb,” in Habermann and Baer, *Sefer Gezerot*, 103. In addition to consulting the Hebrew original found in Habermann and Baer, I have employed Roskies’s English translation of this poem, found in *The Literature of Destruction*, 83-5.

⁴⁴ לא נשוב ולא נעבדנו / . . . / חי וקים גאלנו / אותו נעבד ונחטבנו / בעת צרה ישועתנו R. Isaac bar Shalom, “None like You,” in Habermann and Baer, *Sefer Gezerot*, 103. These lines echo Psalm 44:16-17: “All this has come upon us, yet we have not forgotten you, or been false to your covenant. Our heart has not turned back, nor have our steps departed from your way.” In truth, this entire poem resonates with the message, as well as the tone, of Psalm 44.

⁴⁵ טבח ילדים הכינו / ברכת הזבח כונו R. Isaac bar Shalom, “None like You,” in Habermann and Baer, *Sefer Gezerot*, 103.

⁴⁶ סח שמו תורת משה / . . . / עמודים וגוילים לאבהות R. Isaac bar Shalom, “None like You,” in Habermann and Baer, *Sefer Gezerot*, 104.

others. Like the rabbis who had associated the salvific blood of the paschal lamb with that of the patriarch Isaac, and those who had connected future redemption to the events at Moriah, he aligned the protection and blessing God granted in response to the *Akedah* with that of the Exodus and the coming of the Messiah (and the messianic era).

This treatment is observed when Isaac implores God to redeem his generation in the same way that He had rescued Israel from Egypt and the Egyptians during the first Passover:

Almighty God, be zealous for Your Law / Put on Your vengeance and Your zeal / Arouse Your mighty power— / As You once rebuked the swinish beast / With destruction and havoc and breaking / Him and his people You smote with the plague / Do not keep silence!⁴⁷

Here, Isaac described the Egyptians as “swinish beasts” to denote the physical and spiritual impurity of Gentiles whom God tormented with the Angel of Death. The implied contrast is with the pure Israelites whom God spared as a result of their obedience to divine instruction.

The connection with past and future redemption is further conveyed in the next stanzas, in which Isaac implored the same Redeemer who had rescued Israel from Egypt to annihilate the current foreign oppressor:

Your right hand once smote the monster of the Nile / Crush now with a hammer the skull of her / Who sits securely to her pleasures given / Bright and ruddy as You came from Seir / Scatter with destructive storm the one who now does rule / Like a tested warrior, do arouse Your zeal! / Do not keep silence!⁴⁸

⁴⁷ שדי קנא לתורתך / לבש נקמתך וקנאתך / ועוררה את גבורתך / תגער חית נובר / בכליון שוד ושבר / אותו ואת-עמו בדבר / אל- 47
דמי-לך R. Isaac bar Shalom, “None like You,” in Habermann and Baer, *Sefer Gezerot*, 104.

⁴⁸ ימינך רהב מחצבת / חרץ גלגלת במקבת / זאת עדינה היושבת / צח ואדום משעיר / נסיכה בכליון תסעיר / כאיש-מלחמות קנאה 48
לך אל-דמי-לך R. Isaac bar Shalom, “None like You,” in Habermann and Baer, *Sefer Gezerot*, 104.

“Bright and ruddy” alludes to the Beloved of the Song of Songs—“My Beloved is bright and ruddy, distinguished among ten thousand” (Sg. 5:10). As noted in Chapter Three, the Beloved is a persona recognized as either God or the Messiah within a text associated with the Exodus and future redemption in medieval rabbinic exegesis as well as in the liturgy for Passover.⁴⁹ Seir, as noted in Chapter One, is a reference to the offspring of Edom, or Esau, who, according to the biblical narrative, had settled in the land of Seir, and Jewish literature commonly associated both figures with Christians and Christendom. But Seir also played an important role in rabbinic understanding of Israel’s unique relationship with God. In the Babylonian Talmud, tractate *‘Avodah Zarah*, R. Johanan cited Deuteronomy 33:2 (“The Lord came from Sinai and dawned from Seir upon us . . .”) as evidence that the Lord had offered the Torah to all, but only Israel accepted it in love, as His bride.⁵⁰ By contrast, the feminine personification connected to Seir—she who “sits securely”—hearkens to the figure of “virgin daughter Babylon” (Is. 47:1) in the biblical text whom Isaiah depicted as a “lover of pleasures who sit[s] securely” (Is. 47:8) after God had given a wicked Israel over to her hand, and like Babylon the Great of the Johannine Apocalypse who was depicted as sitting securely on her beastly paramour and on many waters.⁵¹ Read typologically, the feminized Seir also represents the institution of Holy Mother Church, *Ecclesia*. The added “to her pleasures given” evokes, in this context, all the lascivious female panderers of foreign religion in the Judaic

⁴⁹ See also *Exodus Rabbah* XXIII:8, in Freedman and Simon, *Midrash Rabbah*, 286-87, in which the divine redeemer of Israel from Egypt is described through the same verse, Sg. 5:10. Idelsohn, *Jewish Liturgy*, 199.

⁵⁰ Babylonian Talmud, tractate *‘Avodah Zarah*, 2b, in Epstein, vol. 4 of *Seder Nezikin*, 2-5.

⁵¹ Apoc. 17:3, 17:15.

tradition, including Jezebel(s), Babylon(s), the Marian statue of the *Sefer Zerubbabel* who had given birth to Antichrist, and the trollop, Mary, of the Babylonian Talmud and *Toledot Yeshu* who had given birth to Yeshu the bastard and Judaism's chief rival religion in medieval Europe. Solomon bar Samson also employed these allusions to an unholy sexualized union of politics and religion in Christendom when he depicted the Pope as Satan who declared all "who believed in the offshoot of adultery" (i.e., Jesus) to be "*children of Seir*" (i.e., Christians and, by regressive extension, Edomites).⁵²

The combination of these rich references in Isaac's poem relates a call for the Messiah to come and destroy impure Christians and their defiled institution on the way to reestablishing a union with the remnant of Israel in the new and everlasting era. Isaac's argument is one based on his understanding of the covenant: because he presumed the faithfulness of his own community, and because God had established a precedent of rewarding fidelity, God should reward the Ashkenazim. In essence, Isaac believed he had the right to make demands: "Make our remnants Your own once again / Among crowds show us Your wonders / Establish peace upon us! / Pity, O our Holy One, those whom You have dispersed; / Let a willing spirit uphold us / Arise for our help, and redeem us! / Do not keep silence!"⁵³

Did these poets have a sound case? Did the evidence support their temerity before heaven? Were their analogies of precedent applicable? Were the many slain of Israel really sacrifices to God? If they were, had the sacrificers been singular in their devotion,

⁵² The *Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 299; Roos, A30.

⁵³ קנה שנית שרידנו / ברבים נסיד תראנו / שלום תשפת לנו / חמל זרוייד קדושנו / ורוח נדיבה תסמכנו / קומה עזרתה-לנו ופדנו / אל-דמי-לך: Isaac bar Shalom, "None like You," in Habermann and Baer, *Sefer Gezerot*, 104.

never hesitating or wavering to fulfill that which was commanded of them, like Abraham at Moriah? Had those sacrificed been docile before the knife and accepting of their fate, like Isaac?

Yes and no. In many regards, the poets were following stylistic and theological patterns that had been established within the biblical text and reinforced generation after generation when, in the wake of persecution, individuals aired grievances by lamenting and protesting to God that He had punished Israel either without due cause or too severely. In such compositions, it was common to claim innocence and to remind God of how He had provided redemption for the patriarchs in the past and request, or even demand, that He do the same for them. The poems are expressions of impatience and rage and sorrow, but also of faith, that could only be uttered by those who fully believed that they would be redeemed because of the firm conviction that God was both just and merciful, and that He loved Israel above all others.⁵⁴ As discussed in Chapter Two, interpreting history through a typological lens as theology was a common practice among medieval Jewish (and Christian) intellectuals who often related contemporary events to biblical models.⁵⁵ That the poets mostly employed the sacrificial imagery of the *Akedah* and the cultic Temple rite when depicting victims who were slain, both at the hands of Christians and by loved ones, most likely served to provide a further measure of consolation for those traumatized and grieving the loss of so many lives by giving lofty

⁵⁴ See Laytner, *Arguing with God*, especially 28-32 and 127-39.

⁵⁵ Marcus, "From Politics to Martyrdom," 40-52; idem, "Representations of Reality," 37-48; idem, "History, Story and Collective Memory," 365-88. See Chapter Two.

meaning to their deaths.⁵⁶

However, protestations of innocence and precedence do not necessarily amount to innocence and precedence. The halakhically questionable socio-economic relationships, relaxed understandings of *kashrut*, and sexualized and/or sexual familiarity with non-Jews discussed above in Chapters One and Three, suggest that the communities affected by the pogroms of 1096 C.E. may have been less than zealous in their religious devotion and more informed by mundane concerns than medieval and modern historians have realized or let on. The above-noted chronological development of a number of the martyrdoms in Solomon's narrative, in which victims first appeal for help from Christians and, only when this plan failed, opt to slay their co-religionists and be slain also belies pragmatism more than piety. These factors somewhat diminish the "sacrificial" element of the martyrs' deaths and undermine the repeated comparisons with patriarchs. Thus, the poets' insolence towards God regarding a perceived failure to fulfill covenant, while understandable, was not as warranted as their presentation suggests, and Solomon sought recognition and redress of this factor from his readers.

A Voice Crying in the Wilderness: Prooftexts as a Call to Reform

When he adopted the communal voice and asked why heaven and nature were unaffected by the many martyrs made in 1096 C.E., Solomon did so fully aware of the incongruity

⁵⁶ The idea that the Hebrew crusade narratives and poetry provided a therapeutic function has also been expressed by Heil, "'Deep Enmity and/or Close Ties,'" 283, 305-6, Roos, '*God Wants It!*', 20-1, and Cohen, *Sanctifying the Name of God*, 68-9, among others.

of the poets' parallels between the *Akedah* and contemporary events. He styled himself after the prophets of old who took up the people's voice to better illustrate the nature of Israel's complaint against God while addressing their questions. And, like apocalypticists, he indicted the community of 1096 C.E. as well as his own, later generation—not God—for breach of covenant.⁵⁷ For, when Solomon asked “*O heavens, why did you not go black, O stars, why did you not withdraw your light, O sun and moon, why did you not darken in your sky? . . . After all this, will you restrain yourself, O Lord?*”⁵⁸ it was only after providing a case for why it had been so, evidenced through prooftexts, biblical allusions, detailed martyrological scenarios, and, if all this were not enough, he even included explicit claims that the sinfulness of the Ashkenazim had led to their demise.

Within the narrative, Solomon's query is found in a lament punctuating a synopsis of the events occurring from the first through third of the month of Sivan, in and around the bishop's palace in Mainz that figured so prominently in Chapter Three. It begins with Count Emicho and a band of crusaders and simple folk storming the city gates. In their fright, leaders of the Jewish community appealed to the bishop, Ruthard II (1089-1109 C.E.), to help them, bribing both him and an unnamed count for protection. Their successes with these local authorities led the Ashkenazim to hope they would be able to avoid a dangerous encounter with Emicho as well, but this was not so. Emicho and the mob, joined by townspeople who had opened the gates to them, made their way to the

⁵⁷ See Laytner's idea that prophetic arguing with God tended to reinforce God's justice and communal shortcomings by presenting God's case against Israel: *Arguing with God*, 16.

⁵⁸ למה שמים לא קדרו וכוכבים לא אספו נוגהם? וצר ואור, למה לא חשכו בעריפתם . . . העל אלה תתאפק יי! *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 339; Roos, A48-9. Roos's translation of this passage is slightly different than mine above.

bishop's dwelling where they murdered, or witnessed the sacrifice of, Ashkenazim gathered in the courtyard and within the bishop's chambers. It was about this group, in its entirety, that Solomon posed his series of questions.

As the longest in Solomon's narrative, it is not surprising that the Mainz segment contains the majority of prooftexts. Yet the tenor of the references is. In contrast to the group who had fled to Xanten, to which Solomon had applied overwhelmingly positive biblical and talmudic passages extolling their love and devotion to God by comparing them to earlier pious Israelites,⁵⁹ those employed for the Mainz community are far more varied and include numerous allusions to a sinful Israel and the divine retribution the people were made to suffer. If these references were intended to call to the mind of the educated reader or listener the biblical or talmudic context of the quotation and to translate the meaning and resonances to the scenarios depicted in the narrative at hand, as prooftexts typically are, the effect is hardly complimentary.⁶⁰ Solomon's heavily biblicalized representation of Count Emicho is illustrative of this point.

In general, both Latin and Hebrew sources depict the eleventh-century C.E. Count

⁵⁹ See the discussion of the Xanten martyrs in Chapter Three.

⁶⁰ See Cohen, "The Hebrew Crusade Chronicles," in Brettler and Fishbane, *Minḥah le-Naḥum*, 40-9. By contrast, Susan L. Einbinder claims that, in their description of female martyrdom, medieval authors used whatever prooftexts and allusions to common post-biblical literature were to hand. Their limitations, derived from traditional modalities of expression, illustrate the "absolute linguistic void confronted by the poets who struggled to describe the unprecedented behavior of these women, and the uneasiness, perhaps ambivalence, their courage aroused": "Jewish Women Martyrs: Changing Models of Representation," *Exemplaria* 12, no.1 (2000): 117. This claim is somewhat unconvincing. If the medieval authors were merely describing women through the only traditional language they had available to them then their personal unease or ambivalence with women martyrs is a nonissue. If they were expressing unease or ambivalence then their use of prooftexts was intentional, and thus intentionally non-complimentary to some of the female martyrs. This is an impossibility for Einbinder as she begins with the premise that Jewish sources about persecutions during the crusades were memorials that lauded the piety of the victims. In her later examination of the use of prooftexts within medieval martyrological literature, Einbinder's position comes closer to that of Cohen's. She emphasizes that literature containing prooftexts and allusions was probably intended for an educated elite who automatically completed verses and references internally. See Einbinder, *Beautiful Death*, 37.

Emicho as the single worst persecutor of the Ashkenazim. Many scholars neutralize or minimize the notion that Jews were to blame for the persecution that befell them and, instead, evince a distancing of Emicho from official Church policy toward Jews.⁶¹ For example, the ecclesiastical chronicler Albert of Aachen (d. 1120 C.E.) described Emicho matter-of-factly as *vir nobilis*, “a noble man,” who was *in hac regione potentissimus*, “the most powerful in the region,” before listing his gruesome acts of homicide of the Ashkenazim⁶² and adding that he may have been motivated by *animi errore*, an “error of mind.”⁶³ The latter justification was shared by Ekkehard of Aura (d.1126 C.E.), who likewise presented Emicho as a man of ill repute and hinted at the count’s delusional self-fashioning as a latter-day King Saul.⁶⁴ And, much as King Saul had sometimes led the Israelites into battles that God had not sanctioned, Frutolf of Michelsberg (d. 1103 C.E.) claimed that Emicho had “seduced” the people “as [had] once the Israelite army [been seduced] by the spirit of fornication.”⁶⁵

In contrast to these sparse descriptions that tend to favor an error in judgement or disobedience to God as an explanation for the anti-Jewish persecution, Solomon used

⁶¹ See, for example, Stow, “Conversion, Apostasy, and Apprehension,” 911-33; and Haverkamp, ““What Did the Christians Know?”,” 59-86, especially 74-82.

⁶² Albert of Aachen, *Historia Ierosolimitana*, Book II. i. 27, ed. Susan B. Edgington (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), 50.

⁶³ Albert of Aachen, *Historia Ierosolimitana*, Book II. i. 26, Edington, 50.

⁶⁴ Riley-Smith, “The First Crusade,” 60; Stow, “Conversion, Apostasy, and Apprehension,” 916.

⁶⁵ “. . . quamvis et amplissima utriusque multitudo a quodam Emichone viro militari seducta, vel potius ut Israheliticus quondam exercitus spiritu fornicationis decepta . . .”: Frutolf of Michelsberg, *Chronica*, in Schmale and Schmale-Ott, *Frutolfi et Ekkehardi Chronica*, 108.

prooftexts to convey that the count's brutality amounted to divine retribution by associating him with other agents found in the biblical narrative through whom God had punished a reprobate Israel. Of Emicho, Solomon wrote: "He did not take pity on old men or maidens, nor did he have mercy on children, infants, or on sick persons. He made the people of the Lord *like the dust at threshing. Their young men he killed with the sword and their pregnant women he ripped up.*"⁶⁶ The first sentence of this quotation alludes to figures in one of the prophet Ezekiel's visions of the devastation of Jerusalem. In Ezekiel 9, God sends six emissaries out to execute all Israelites who had engaged in idolatry and commands them: "your eye shall not spare, and you shall show no pity. Cut down old men, young men and young women, little children and women . . ." (Ez. 9:5-6). The second sentence refers to the way King Hazael of Amram (ca. 842-800 B.C.E.) treated Israelites who persisted in committing idolatry after God had already forgiven this offense and restored peace and prosperity to the community.

In the biblical account, Hazael is explicitly identified as the means by which God punishes Israel for their breach of covenant in the time of King Ahab and Queen Jezebel: "The anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, so that he gave them repeatedly into the hand of King Hazael of Amram . . ." (II Kng. 13:3). Of his treatment of the unfaithful, II Kings further records that Hazael "destroyed them and made them like the dust at threshing" (II Kng. 13:7). The third sentence in Solomon's description of Emicho is also associated with King Hazael. When the narrative relates that the count killed young men with the sword and ripped up pregnant women, it echoes the prophet Elisha's address to

⁶⁶ על זקן ועל בתולה לא חמל ועל עוללל ויונק וחולה לא חסה עיננו. וישם את עם יי כעפר לדוש, בחוריהם הרג בחרב והריותיהם בקע: *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 309; Roos, A36.

Hazael regarding his treatment of Israel in the future: “you will set their fortresses on fire, you will kill their young men with the sword, dash in pieces their little ones, and rip up their pregnant women” (II Kng. 8:12).

Emicho’s association with the figures in these prooftexts suggests that Solomon sought to present the count as God’s scourge, sent to punish a wicked community that had been led astray by Jezebel and her false prophets. The prooftexts and biblical allusions he employed in connection with the community itself provide further, albeit subtler, clues that Solomon felt the Mainz Jewry had transgressed the covenant in some way and so had, according to traditional theology, deserved the devastation visited upon them. For instance, when decrying how the community’s attempts to bribe Emicho were of no use, Solomon wrote: “We were not even like Sodom and Gomorrah, because for them ten were sought in order to rescue them, but on our behalf, neither twenty nor ten were sought.”⁶⁷ This quotation alludes to Genesis 18, in which Abraham bargains with God for the salvation of Sodom and Gomorrah. In the biblical account, after being made privy to God’s plan to destroy the cities as punishment for behavior offensive to the deity, Abraham petitions for mercy based on the merit of a few, claiming that a just God surely would not destroy the righteous along with the wicked. The patriarch begins by questioning whether God would spare the cities if fifty righteous inhabitants could be found. When God agrees, Abraham grows bolder and asks if salvation could be secured on the merit of fewer and fewer until, at last, God concedes that if but ten righteous ones could be found, He would stay His hand.

⁶⁷ שאפילו כסדום ועמורה לא היינו, כי להם נתבקשו עד עשרה כדי להצילם, ולנו לא נתבקש לא עשרים ולא עשרה *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 311; Roos, A37.

The use of this reference in Solomon's narrative could be interpreted as a complaint against God that is similar to the accusatory questions posed in this chapter's opening lament. "If you were willing to bless the nation for the binding of Isaac, why were you not for the binding of many?" and "If you were willing to spare Sodom and Gomorrah for the merit of ten, why would you not spare Mainz for the merit of two times as many?" both require an accounting of God's justice based on the covenant model. Moreover, both infer the possibility of changing God's mind and course of action by effectively proving divine injustice through the devastation of the innocent.⁶⁸ There is little doubt that the poetic presentations of inordinately devout souls-made-martyrs informed later generations' opinions that the Ashkenazim of 1096 C.E. were not only innocent but among the most pious and zealous in Israel's history. Indeed, the *Memorbücher*, or memorial books, listing the names of victims in later medieval persecutions that were composed for public recitation during synagogue services foster this view by referencing the victims of the 1096 C.E. pogroms as part of a litany of holy martyrs, presumably named to inspire God's avenging of the innocent and Israel's redemption.⁶⁹

Still, the exegetical pronouncements that Israel would be perpetually redeemed from sinfulness based on the merit of the patriarchs at the *Akedah*, and the poets' insistence that the Ashkenazim were innocent and their persecution unmerited, were

⁶⁸ Laytner, *Arguing with God*, 3-8; Frank, "Arguing with God," 77.

⁶⁹ For an example of this tendency, see the *Worms Memorbuch*, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Opp. 716. The majority of the folios include pleas that God remember, and avenge, the righteous dead. For further discussion, see Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, 46; Chazan, *European Jewry and the First Crusade*, 148; Yuval, *Two Nations*, 136-38.

hardly the only understandings of the significance of sacrifice or of the events of 1096 C.E. In the popular and, by the High Middle Ages, increasingly accessible *Genesis Rabbah*,⁷⁰ the antique R. Hinanah bar Isaac challenged the notion that the *Akedah* should or would provide redemption forever. Rather, he opined that it provided a model of worshipful obedience for future generations which, only if heeded, would prove to their benefit by binding Gentile nations and rendering them unable to fight against Israel. If not followed—if Israel engaged in sinful behavior that disregarded God and covenant—Hinanah warned that heaven would loose foreign powers to devastate the people.⁷¹ Evincing a continuation of the ideology of retributive justice during the high medieval period, in his late eleventh- to early twelfth-century C.E. biblical commentary, *Lekah Tov*, The Good Doctrine, the aforementioned R. Tobiah ben Eliezer remarked that the Mainz community's sinfulness was responsible for foiling messianic expectations for the year 1096 C.E. and he proclaimed the need for repentance if collective redemption was ever to be actualized.⁷² Others shared Tobiah's belief, and evidently would continue to from generation to generation. For, as Eidelberg has noted, the idea that the sinfulness of the Ashkenazim of 1096 C.E. had waylaid the Messiah's anticipated advent during the cycle of Ranu was present even in the seventeenth century C.E.⁷³

Innovations in the liturgy regarding prayer for the dead also suggest that some

⁷⁰ Marc Bregman, "Midrash Rabbah and the Medieval Collector Mentality," *Prooftexts* 17, no. 1 (1997): 69.

⁷¹ *Genesis Rabbah* LVI:5; see also LVI:2 for an iteration that sustained worship brought about redemption rather than the merit of the patriarchs alone: in Freedman and Simon, *Midrash Rabbah*, 491-93.

⁷² Silver, *History of Messianic Speculation*, 59-60.

⁷³ Eidelberg, *Jews and the Crusaders*, 140n19.

within the community perceived the persecuted Ashkenazim as less than blameless before God. Collective memorialization of the dead only began in the Germanic lands after the crusade pogroms and in connection with the martyrs. The practice subsequently spread throughout Ashkenaz, and mourners offered prayers and charity to atone for the sins of the dead in the hope of liberating them from a purgatory-like state in *Gehinnom*.⁷⁴ During the twelfth century C.E., memorialization was further connected to the martyrs: the Mourner's *Kaddish* began to be delivered by a child who had been orphaned as a result of the Rhineland pogroms.⁷⁵ This innovation has led to the speculation that those who had passed in the pogroms were considered by at least a contingent within their communities as in need of prayerful intercession; that is, the victims were not always considered to be the exemplars of piety that much of the martyrological literature implies or modern readers have interpreted.⁷⁶

Neither was the idea that God was somehow dependent on reminders from humans of how to behave appropriately the dominant medieval interpretation of Sodom

⁷⁴ See Solomon B. Freehof, "Hazkarat N'shamot ('Memorial of Souls'): How It All Began," in *May God Remember: Memory and Memorializing in Judaism—Yizkor*, ed. Lawrence A. Hoffman (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights, 2013), 77-89. In this essay, Freehof provided an overview of the custom of memorializing the dead within the Judaic tradition. He referenced authoritative rabbinic sources from medieval Ashkenaz which explicitly state that memorial services and charity were intended for the atonement of the living and the dead, and, in the case of *Midrash Tanhuma*, freedom from *Gehinnom* (or *Gehenna*). Yet he, like Shyovitz, mentioned below, refused to consider the possibility that the martyrs may have been considered anything other than entirely righteous and instead concluded—without a clear indication as to why—that the need for atonement written about was only in regards to the ordinary members of the community who had not died as martyrs.

⁷⁵ Shyovitz, "'You have saved me from the judgement of Gehenna,'" 49-50.

⁷⁶ For a discussion of contrarian positions, see Shyovitz, "'You have saved me from the judgement of Gehenna,'" 53. Freehof, "Hazkarat N'Shamot," 84, likewise claimed it impossible that the practice was implemented for the souls of the martyrs based on heated debate as to whether prayers should be said for them at all. The fact, however, that the issue called for debate and that an orphan of the pogroms remained the choice leader of the *Kaddish* portion of the weekly Shabbat service belies the viability of the contrarian position.

and Gomorrah, but a modern one. In twelfth-century C.E. Ashkenaz, Genesis 18 was understood as an indication of God's justice of the staid retributory type: medieval commentators believed God would have spared the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah if the inhabitants but repented.⁷⁷ Moreover, Solomon's reference to the wicked cities most likely brought to his reader's mind other biblical references beyond that found in Genesis. For example, the expression of grief over the destruction of Jerusalem, or "daughter Zion," in Lamentations 4:6 ("For the chastisement of my people has been greater than the punishment of Sodom, which was overthrown in a moment, though no hand was laid on it") was recited as part of the Ashkenazic Scripture reading for the Ninth of Av—a day of commemoration of the destruction of the Temples and one of national atonement. It was also included in a *kinah*, or elegy, composed for the same occasion.⁷⁸ These expressions of grief resonate with that related by Solomon—the biblical and post-biblical authors alike cried out that the later cities of Jerusalem and Mainz, respectively, had been punished for longer and in a more severe manner than Sodom. But these authors had not cried out that punishment was unwarranted.

In the biblical text, the reason for heightened severity is presented as proportionate to the wickedness of the community. Jerusalem is considered "more corrupt" than Sodom. For the capital was proud of its place of primacy but used its power and influence for self-gratification and excess rather than benevolence and charity. And so, according to the prophet, it was fitting that the city's punishment be greater. In

⁷⁷ See Rashi, *Pentateuch with Targum Onkelos, Haphtaroth and Rashi's Commentary*, trans. M. Rosenbaum and A. M. Silbermann (New York: Hebrew Publishing Co., 1978), 74.

⁷⁸ Idelsohn, *Jewish Liturgy*, 253-55, 350.

relation to Sodom and another city of ill-repute, Samaria, the prophet Ezekiel sustained the above-noted gendered metaphor of feminized wantonness as an expression of sinfulness when he referred to Jerusalem as a city that had “played the whore” (Ez. 16:16) in the same chapter that he concluded the three cities were sisters, born of a lewd and hateful mother:

Your younger sister, who lived to the south of you, is Sodom with her daughters. You not only followed their ways, and acted according to their abominations; within a very little time you were more corrupt than they in all your ways. As I live, says the Lord God, your sister Sodom and her daughters have not done as you and your daughters have done . . . she and her daughters had pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy. They were haughty, and did abominable things before me . . . you have committed more abominations than they . . . so be ashamed . . . and bear your disgrace, for you have made your sisters appear righteous. (Ez. 16:46-52)

Jeremiah also associated the cities’ reputation for sin with a feminized Jerusalem on the eve of destruction. Through the same innuendo of sexual misconduct as a metaphor for spiritual infidelity, he aligned a wicked Israel—this time the communal leaders, especially prophetic teachers—with Sodom, Gomorrah, and Samaria:

In the prophets of Samaria I saw a disgusting thing: they prophesied by Baal and led my people Israel astray. But in the prophets of Jerusalem I have seen a more shocking thing: they commit adultery and walk in lies; they strengthen the hands of evildoers, so that no one turns from wickedness; all of them have become like Sodom to me, and its inhabitants like Gomorrah . . . for from the prophets of Jerusalem ungodliness has spread throughout the land . . . They keep saying . . . “No calamity shall come upon you.” (Jer. 23:13-17)

And Isaiah, too, admonished the rulers and people of Jerusalem to repent through the metaphor of feminine depravity, advising that heeding right instruction was preferable to empty sacrifice and ceremony that had rendered the once “faithful city . . . a

whore” (Is. 1:21). In contrast to the other prophets, Isaiah advised Israel to count its blessings and quickly amend its actions, for God had at least provided a remnant of survivors from Jerusalem and so had not yet devastated all hopes for redemption. But, best not to try His patience and truly become like these cities in effect as well as action:

If the Lord of hosts had not left us a few survivors, we would have been like Sodom, and become like Gomorrah. Hear the word of the Lord, you rulers of Sodom! Listen to the teachings of our God, you people of Gomorrah! What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says the Lord; I have had enough of burnt offerings . . . I do not delight in blood . . . Trample my courts no more; bringing offerings is futile; I cannot endure solemn assemblies with iniquity . . . they have become a burden to me, I am weary of bearing them. When you stretch out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood. Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your doings from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow. (Is. 1:10-17)

Is it possible that Solomon viewed the later community of Mainz in a similar manner as the prophets had viewed Jerusalem—as more corrupt and, ultimately, more fortunate than Sodom and Gomorrah? Mainz was known among the other ShUM communities for its prosperity, ease of life, and the tendency to fraternize with Christians. As indicated in Chapter One, it was the rabbinic elite of Mainz who had condoned breaches of biblical admonishments and traditional *halakhic* rulings regarding economic dealings with Gentiles that had facilitated the community’s prosperity; and, as discussed in Chapter Three, spiritual leaders from Mainz misadvised the people to ingratiate themselves to Christian ecclesiastics in the hopes of salvation rather than trust in God to redeem them. These offenses hearken to Ezekiel’s and Jeremiah’s descriptions of Jerusalem and its leadership just prior to destruction.

Moreover, like the haughtiness and exclusivity of Jerusalem described by Ezekiel and Isaiah, Mainz society was not immune from ostracizing those they deemed less worthy based on pedigree rather than religious fervor. In a martyrological vignette depicted in both Solomon's narrative and *The Mainz Anonymous*, for instance, "a very good man," Jacob, who "did not come from a distinguished family"—presumably a designation assigned because "his mother was not Jewish"—is said to have lashed out at the community and claimed that his neighbors had mistreated him just before slitting his own throat: "All the days of my life until this day you have regarded me with contempt. Now behold what I shall do." While the narrators commented that Jacob "slaughtered himself in the name of the Mighty of Mighties,"⁷⁹ they presented his suicide as a way for a tormented man to incite those who had hurt him to harm themselves. And, by juxtaposing Jacob's willingness to die for his faith to the initial cowardice of his peers, they illustrated the community's inflated confidence and self-righteousness.

The authors singled out the community of Mainz elsewhere due to overconfidence as well. Echoing Jeremiah's depiction of Jerusalem's prophets' false assurances to the people that no calamity would befall them if they continued in their course of action, *The Mainz Anonymous* indicates that when the French Jewry wrote to the leaders of Mainz to warn them of the impending danger from crusaders, they received a rather flippant response: "All the communities [here] have decreed a fast. We have done our duty . . . We are very much afraid for your sake, but not particularly for ourselves. We have not even

⁷⁹ ויהי שם איש טוב מאוד ושמו מר יעקב בר סולם, והוא לא בא ממשפחת יקרים ואמו <לא> היית מישראל, ויקרא בקול גדול לכל 79 הנצבים עליו, לאמר: עד עכשיו הייתם מבזים אותי, עכשיו ראו מה אעשה. ויקח הסכין שבידו וישם בגרונו לעין כל, וישחוט את *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson and The Mainz Anonymous*, עצמו בשם אדיר אדיררון, הוא שמו יי צבאות Haverkamp, 367; Roos, A63.

heard a rumor, nor have we heard that a decree has been issued. . . .”⁸⁰ Perhaps it was because of this overconfidence that, when danger did reach them, God is said to have removed the Ashkenazim from His sight, much as the prophet Isaiah declared He would hide His eyes from the willfully misguided citizens of Jerusalem.⁸¹

Whether or not Solomon did actually consider Mainz’s behavior as worse than that of Sodom, at the very least, the resonances of these additional biblical references, their use in the Ashkenazic liturgy, and their applicability to events described in the crusade narratives raises the probability that Solomon’s association of these cities was deliberate. It echoes the antique R. Hinanah’s interpretation that the merit of the *Akedah* resided in the model of fidelity rather than the provision of perpetual redemption through human sacrifice, the exegetical expressions in the *Lekah Tov* that the generation of 1096 C.E. had not helped to inspire messianic advent but divine retribution, and the fears manifest in the Mourner’s *Kaddish* that even the persecuted dead of the Rhineland pogroms needed to be atoned for. Moreover, it suggests that, while surely some righteous could be found, Solomon meant to convey that the vast majority of Ashkenazim had lived in a way that somehow disregarded the divine imperative and had been unwilling to repent—like Sodom, Gomorrah, and Jerusalem on the eve of destruction. Indeed, in the case of Mainz, Solomon made the connection explicit: “The Lord’s anger was kindled against his people and he fulfilled the plan of the crusaders and they succeeded . . . they

⁸⁰ גזרו כל הקהילות צום; עשינו את שלנו . . . עליכם אנו יריאים יראה גדולה, אבל אנו אין לנו כל כך לירוא, אפי'לו <כשמועות
האוזן לא שמענו ולא היינו שומעין שנגזרה גזירה: *The Mainz Anonymous*, Haverkamp, 259; Roos, A10.

⁸¹ See *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 255; Roos, A11.

[the Jews of Mainz] were destroyed like the children of Jerusalem in their destruction.”⁸²

As noted above, despite comparisons between Jerusalem’s and Mainz’s destruction, scholars have predominantly tended to minimize references in the crusade narratives to anti-Jewish persecution as divine retribution. A possible explanation for the traditional interpretation is that the crusade narratives appear to contain predominately laudatory depictions of the martyrs’ piety, righteousness, zeal, and ardor for the divine. This type of reasoning, though, fails to consider the negative connotations implied in seemingly innocuous, or even positive descriptions. For Solomon intimated a disregard for divine command among the Ashkenazim, and thus called their righteousness into question, even when describing the Mainz community in what seems to be entirely complimentary terms. An example is found when he described the community as “the pious of the Most High” who “were set apart in holiness and in purity and were sanctified in order to ascend to God, all of them together, because *they were lovely in life and not separated in death.*”⁸³ As praiseworthy as this passage might suggest the Mainz Jewry of 1096 C.E. was, immediately preceding it, Solomon provided a chronology of events that functioned along with prooftexts and biblical allusions to assimilate the crusade and biblical narratives in a manner that, like the reference to Sodom and Gomorrah, also bears a negative connotation.

According to Solomon’s account, the massacre at Mainz occurred “On the third day of Sivan which was a day of sanctification and abstinence for Israel when the Torah

⁸² *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 315; Roos, A38. . . ונהיו לכלייה כבני ירושלים בחורבנם

⁸³ חסידי עליון, בקדושה ובטהרה והוקדשו לעלות אל האלהים כולם יחד קטנים וגדולים, כי היו נעימים בחייהם ובמותם לא נפרדו
The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson, Haverkamp, 313; Roos, 37-8.

was given, on that day on which our teacher Moses, peace be upon him, said: *Prepare for the third day.*”⁸⁴ Within the biblical context of Exodus 19, where the proof-text in this passage appears, Moses admonishes the Israelites to ready themselves for the reception of the Law that would be given by God from atop Mount Sinai on the third day of Sivan. Here, prescription of sexual purity has practical application and spiritual implication rather than the common inversion found in the prophets.

Not only was the community called upon to be chaste, it was at the festival celebrating the granting of the Torah—*Shavu'ot*—that Ashkenazim welcomed young school-age boys into biblical study through initiation rituals which included recitation and, at times, an incantation against *Sar ha-Potah*, the “Prince of Forgetfulness,” in efforts to draw down the mystical *Sar ha-Torah*, or “Prince of the Torah” and foster remembrance of the biblical text.⁸⁵ Because of the significance of *Shavu'ot* in medieval Ashkenaz, it seems likely that the Ashkenazim would be well versed in the biblical portion recounting the mythic event. They would have known that three times in this chapter God commands Moses to warn the people against ascending the mountain to Him: “You shall set limits for the people all around [the mountain], saying, ‘Be careful not to go up the mountain or to touch the edge of it. Any who touch the mountain shall be put to death’” (Ex. 19:12-13); “Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘Go down and warn the

⁸⁴ יהי ביום שלשה בסיון, אשר היה יום קידוש ופרישה לישראל במתן תורה, באותו יום שאמר משה רבינו ע"ה: היו נכונים ל:שלשת ימים. *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 313; Roos, 37.

⁸⁵ See Marcus, *Rituals of Childhood*, 45-6, 66-7, 151; Ephraim Kanarfogel, *Jewish Education and Society in the High Middle Ages* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1992), 86-91; idem, “Peering through the Lattices”, 142. Here, Marcus and Kanarfogel discuss rituals described in Northern France and Germany during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries C.E. However, I agree with Kanarfogel’s overarching position expressed throughout, “Peering through the Lattices”, of the likelihood that such rituals had a pre-Crusade antecedent.

people not to break through [the limits surrounding the mountain] to the Lord to look; otherwise many of them will perish” (Ex. 19:21); “do not let either the priests or the people break through [the limits] to come up to the Lord; otherwise He will break out against them” (Ex. 19:24).

In twelfth-century C.E. exegesis contemporary with Solomon’s narrative, the aforementioned *peshat* mode of biblical interpretation, characterized by such descriptions as “literal,” “contextual,” or a rendering of the “plain meaning,” became increasingly popular and Rashi’s commentary was the standard instrument of instruction.⁸⁶ In the rabbi’s commentary on Exodus 19, he implemented the *peshat* method and interpreted the above verses as nothing more than God explicitly warning and reminding Israel to refrain from even approaching too close to the mountain, let alone attempting ascent. For instance, Rashi understood Exodus 19:13, quoted above, as a message to set boundaries for the people “as a sign that they should not come nearer [to the mountain].”⁸⁷ Exodus 19:21 he read, similarly, as a note of caution: “warn them not to go up the mountain.”⁸⁸ And he viewed 19:24 as yet another admonishment against climbing to heaven: “the people shall altogether not break their position to ascend to the Lord.”⁸⁹ Bearing these

⁸⁶ For a discussion of increased literalist and ethical interpretations of Talmud and Torah in response to the dialectic mode, see Kanarfogel, *Jewish Education and Society*, 86-91; idem, “Peering through the Lattices,” 59, 69, 148, 162; and Isaac B. Gottlieb, “Medieval Jewish Exegesis on Dual Incipits,” *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 12 (2012): 4. For the primacy of Rashi’s Torah interpretation, see Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance*, 22n1.

⁸⁷ Rashi, *Pentateuch with Targum Onkelos, Haphtaroth and Rashi’s Commentary*, in Rosenbaum and Silbermann, 99.

⁸⁸ Rashi, *Pentateuch with Targum Onkelos, Haphtaroth and Rashi’s Commentary*, in Rosenbaum and Silbermann, 101.

⁸⁹ Rashi, *Pentateuch with Targum Onkelos, Haphtaroth and Rashi’s Commentary*, in Rosenbaum and Silbermann, 101-02.

biblical verses and rabbinic interpretations of them in mind, Solomon's assertion that, on the third day of Sivan, the martyrs took it upon themselves to "ascend to God" hints at disobedience rather than piety.

The connotation is further implied through the prooftext applied to these martyrs from II Samuel: "they were lovely in life and not separated in death" (II Sam. 1:23). Within the biblical context, the verse appears as part of David's lament for the death of Saul and Jonathan. It also appears within the poem *Av Harachamim*, or "The Merciful Father," composed for the martyrs of 1096 C.E. and initially recited during memorial services on the Sabbath preceding the Ninth of Av.⁹⁰ This service also included *kinot* (plural of *kinah*), elegies, composed by the prominent rabbis Menahem ben Machir of Regensburg, Kalonymous ben Judah, and Joel HaLevi, which conflated commemoration of the destruction of the Temple with the destruction of the Ashkenazic communities during the Rhineland pogroms.⁹¹

While there is nothing in David's dirge to indicate that the king and prince had perished as a result of their sinfulness, and the quotation of the verse in both Solomon's narrative and *Av Harachamim* seems—when taken out of context—to be approving, the preceding narrative in I Samuel depicts the cause for Saul's demise as the King of Israel and the madness that contributed to his death as failure to follow divine instruction, or disobedience. For Saul did not utterly destroy the Gentile forces and their effects as he had been commanded to do, but instead spared the Kenites who had shown him kindness

⁹⁰ *Av Harachamim*, in Hoffman, *May God Remember*, 136, v. 2.

⁹¹ Lawrence A. Hoffman, "Yizkor and Memorial in Jewish Tradition," in Hoffman, *May God Remember*, 11-12; Freehof, "Hazkarat N'Shamot," 78; Idelsohn, *Jewish Liturgy*, 351.

and permitted the army's looting of valuables and cattle. When Samuel questioned why the king had not done as he was told, Saul attempted to justify his behavior by claiming that the cattle were intended as a sacrifice for God. But the king's protests were in vain. Samuel chastised him with a question—a reproach—that, like Isaiah's above rebuke of Jerusalem qua Sodom, could readily be applied to Ashkenazim who had engaged in questionable relationships with their Gentile neighbors and only later attempted to appease God when danger (or retribution?) was imminent: "Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obedience to the voice of the Lord? Surely, to obey is better than sacrifice" (I Sam. 15:22).

Finally, the prooftexts used even in Solomon's series of questions regarding why nothing in heaven or nature had taken note of the Mainz community's plight indicate that neither historical accuracy nor intra-textual consistency was of foremost importance to his narrative while contributing to the understanding that the author may have been arguing for the community's rather than God's breach of covenant. Seven out of eight verses quoted in this lament are taken from segments of the prophetic writings that describe the punishment for a reprobate Israel.⁹² The segment quoted above ("*O heavens, why did you not go black, O stars, why did you not withdraw your light, O sun and moon, why did you not darken in your sky?*") alludes to Joel 2:10: "The earth quakes before them, the heavens tremble. The sun and moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining." In Joel 2, the earth quakes and the heavenly lights are dimmed because of the appearance of God's army sent to bring suffering upon a wayward nation. The prophet

⁹² The prooftexts in this lament include Is. 5:30, 33:7, 64:11, and 66:8, Jer. 19:3, 30:6, and Joel 2:10. *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 335, 337, 339; Roos, A48-9.

described these destroyers as harbingers of the “day of the Lord”—a day of punishment for Israel—which immediately preceded a messianic era of peace and prosperity for the repentant. Earlier within the same segment, Solomon depicted the day as one of “*darkness and gloom*, a day of clouds and thick darkness,” using another description of a day of reckoning for Israel, this time from Zephaniah 1:15, as a prooftext (“That day will be a day of wrath, a day of distress and anguish, a day of ruin and devastation, a day of darkness and gloom”). Though his characterizations of the weather on the third of Sivan differed, his inference was the same: the devastation of Mainz was divine retribution in the biblical vein—necessary to purge Israel of sinful elements and encourage repentance, reform, and return to God which would, in turn, incline God toward redemption.⁹³

The Devil is in the Details: Martyrological Motifs as a Call to Reform

Solomon’s use of biblical references may have required a degree of scholarly training in order to decode his message that might not have been readily available to the general populace. For, while all boys were to be versed in Torah from an early age as part of their basic education,⁹⁴ memorization of the entire Bible and the ability to recall multiple exegetical references with ease may have been beyond the purview of those not preparing for the rabbinate. And so, perhaps it was to better facilitate understanding among novices

⁹³ By contrast, Roos, ‘*God Wants It!*’, 95-105, interprets the motif of the sky darkening at the time of human sacrifice as Jewish internalization and appropriation of the Gospel account of Jesus’s death, applied positively to both the *Akedah* and later martyrs.

⁹⁴ See Marcus, *Rituals of Childhood*, especially 35-46, for a discussion of the preeminence of Torah study and the rituals surrounding it in medieval Ashkenaz.

as well as adepts that Solomon included details within martyrological vignettes which reinforced the ideas that medieval Ashkenazim had assimilated overmuch; that the devastation of 1096 C.E. was not entirely unmerited; and that reform was necessary for the advent of messianic redemption. The vignette of Mistress Rachel and that of Master Isaac are illustrative of this feature. For, while a version of Mistress Rachel's vignette is also found in *The Mainz Anonymous*, and a version of Master Isaac's appears in *The Chronicle of Eliezer bar Nathan*, those found in Solomon's narrative exemplify the author's tendency to add significant embellishments through which he presented sometimes less-than-pious responses to persecution among the victims of 1096 C.E. By doing so, Solomon further challenged the more popular ideology expressed in the poems of R. Abraham, R. Eliezer bar Joel HaLevi, R. David bar Meshullam, and R. Isaac bar Shalom, mentioned above, which declared that the martyrs were comparable to Abraham and Isaac in piety; their sacrifice equal to if not greater than the *Akedah*; and implied that the later martyrs merited the same type of redemption because of it.

Within *The Mainz Anonymous*, the vignette of Mistress Rachel relates how a young mother who was hiding with others from the Mainz community within the bishop's chamber slaughtered—or sanctioned a companion to slaughter—her four children because she feared that the crusaders would capture and convert them.⁹⁵ While

⁹⁵ As Marcus, "Representations of Reality," 40 has noted, the language in this passage is ambiguous and could be interpreted as indicating that either Rachel slaughtered her children or her companion did. In the beginning of the vignette, Rachel tells her companion, "I have four children. You shall not spare them either . . .," suggesting that the companion was responsible for the killing. Later, when relating the sacrifice of the first child, the author hints that Rachel performed the deed herself: "She [Rachel] took Isaac, her younger son—he was very lovely—and slaughtered him." But, shortly thereafter, Rachel is said to have told her companion, "Wait! Do not slaughter Isaac in the sight of his brother Aaron," once again suggesting that her companion was responsible for fulfilling the deed. *The Mainz Anonymous*, Haverkamp, 355; Roos, A57-8.

her two daughters and younger son were killed without incident, her older son, Aaron, is said to have hid under a chest and pleaded, “Mother, mother, do not slaughter me!”⁹⁶ His protests were for naught. While searching for him, Rachel called out, “Aaron, Aaron, where are you? I shall not spare you nor have compassion for you either,” before she pulled him out from under the chest by his foot and slaughtered him against his will.⁹⁷ The scene ends with Rachel, having placed two children under each of her arms, covering them with her sleeves and lamenting their loss. When the crusaders find her they suspect she is hiding money in her sleeves. When they see her dead children instead, they first assault, then kill her, before going on to massacre the others who were in the chamber.

The general storyline is similar in Solomon’s account, yet there are some important differences. Details alluding to cultic sacrifice are only found in Solomon’s narrative. For example, while *The Mainz Anonymous* relates that Rachel “extended her sleeves between the two brothers”⁹⁸ to shield Aaron from witnessing the sacrifice of his younger brother, in Solomon’s account, Rachel “extended her sleeves to receive the blood; she received the blood in her sleeves instead of in the chalice for blood.”⁹⁹ The chalice refers to the Temple cult. Solomon sustained this metaphor by depicting Rachel’s daughters as preparing the knife used in their own slaughter so that it would “not be defective” in much the same way as Levitical priests checked for defect in the sacrificial

⁹⁶ *The Mainz Anonymous*, Haverkamp, 357; Roos, A58.

⁹⁷ *The Mainz Anonymous*, Haverkamp, 359; Roos, A59.

⁹⁸ *The Mainz Anonymous*, Haverkamp, 355; Roos, A58.

⁹⁹ *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 355; Roos, A58.

ritual.¹⁰⁰ These additions are significant and have been treated at length by Marcus, Einbinder, and others, because of their contribution to the sacralization of the Rhineland massacres and their memorialization within the liturgy;¹⁰¹ they shed light on the active role women played during the crusade pogroms,¹⁰² illustrating the ability for women to transcend gender norms by effectively becoming priests and emulating the patriarchs, Abraham and Isaac;¹⁰³ as additions present in only one of the later versions, details also point to the literary rather than historical quality of the crusade narratives;¹⁰⁴ and they mark the influence of Christian symbolism and interpretation of Jewish tradition on the Ashkenazim.¹⁰⁵

Less treated is the presence of Rachel's husband and the father of her children, R. Judah, and his reaction to the slaughter of his family. Found only in Solomon's narrative and comprising no more than a few lines, it merits quotation. Judah is first introduced as part of Rachel's identification as a member of the rabbinic elite: "Mistress Rachel, who was the daughter of R. Isaac, son of R. Asher, and wife of R. Judah."¹⁰⁶ His more

¹⁰⁰ בלי להמיר: *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 357; Roos, A58.

¹⁰¹ See Marcus, "From Politics to Martyrdom," 40-52.

¹⁰² See Ivan G. Marcus, "Mothers, Martyrs and Moneymakers: Some Jewish Women in Medieval Europe," *Conservative Judaism* 38, no. 3 (1986): 34-45; see also Einbinder, "Jewish Women Martyrs," 108-14; and David Malkiel, "The Underclass in the First Crusade: A Historiographical Trend," *Journal of Medieval History* 28 (2002): 169-97, especially 172.

¹⁰³ Gershenzon and Litman, "The Bloody 'Hands of Compassionate Women'," 79-80; Marcus, "From Politics to Martyrdom," 43-5.

¹⁰⁴ See Marcus, "Representations of Reality," and "From Politics to Martyrdom," quoted above; idem, "History, Story and Collective Memory," 365-88; Abulafia, "The Interrelationship between the Hebrew Chronicles," 221-39; and Isaiah Sonne, "Which Is the Earliest Narrative about the 1096 Persecutions?" [Hebrew] *Zion* 12 (1946): 74-82.

¹⁰⁵ See Cohen, *Sanctifying the Name of God*, 120-29.

¹⁰⁶ מרת רחל הבחורה, בת ר' יצחק בר אשר אשת ר' יהודה: *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 355; Roos, A57.

formative appearance is at the end of the vignette, upon finding his wife and children dead.

When the father saw the death of his four *handsome and good-looking* children, he screamed, cried, and wailed, and went and threw himself on his sword, which he had in his hand, and was disemboweled. He rolled around in blood on the road with the others who had been killed, who rolled around and convulsed in their blood.¹⁰⁷

Here, R. Judah is clearly horrified at finding his children—though, evidently, not his wife—in such a state. Solomon presented his grief as all the more tragically ironic in context and in relation to his wife when, in the line immediately prior, he employed Psalm 113:9 to describe Rachel: “*the mother of children is happy.*”¹⁰⁸

Analysis of prooftexts and allusions employed in this vignette leads to the association of Judah with a despondent King Saul, who threw himself on his sword to avoid defilement by his victors. The figure of Rachel is more complex. At times Solomon presented her negatively by employing a prooftext describing her response to the crusader threat drawn from the expression of grief by Esau, who “cried out with an exceedingly great and bitter cry” (Gn. 27:34).¹⁰⁹ Considered by Jews to be the patriarch of Christianity, in contemporary Christian polemic, Esau figured as an archetype of Jews who had relinquished their birthright to their younger sibling in religion—Christians. Solomon may have been expressing an internalization of this polemic along with the

¹⁰⁷ והאב צווח בבכי ויללה כאשר ראה במיתת ארבעת בניו, יפי תואר ויפי מראה, והלך והפיל עצמו בחרבו שבידו. ויצאו מעיו והוא *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 359; Roos, A59.

¹⁰⁸ אם הבנים שמחה *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 359; Roos, A59.

¹⁰⁹ The association of Rachel with Esau has been noted by Marcus, “Representations of Reality,” 40, and Cohen, *Sanctifying the Name of God*, 116-17, 127-29. While Cohen, especially, analyzes the connection of Esau with Christianity, neither scholar considers Esau as a tragic figure who had been duped.

traditional retributive theology when he presented Rachel as a type of Esau, and both like the people of Mainz and the Ashkenazim more generally, who had been tricked out of the birthright of redemption for some momentary creature comforts procured through assimilation.

Solomon reinforced negative association by applying a proof-text drawn from Hosea's depiction of the destruction of assimilationist Jerusalem to Rachel and her children—"Mothers were dashed to pieces with their children" (Hos.10:14).¹¹⁰ Yet, at the same time, Solomon seems to have cast Rachel positively. She, like the matriarch whose name she bears, proved the consummate mother who grieves for her children in exile.¹¹¹ And she, like the lauded Maccabean Mother, committed suicide after witnessing the martyrdom of her children.¹¹² The symbolism employed may even constitute a Jewish response to the prominence of the Cult of the Virgin and the personification of Holy Mother Church in twelfth-century C.E. Christendom, as Cohen has suggested.¹¹³ The ambiguous multivalency of the vignette quite likely could have been easy for the less educated to miss. What would have been gleaned, though, is that two of the "martyrs" in this text were not complicit in their martyrdom—Aaron hid and begged his mother not to kill him and Judah only committed suicide out of grief for his children, not devotion to God.¹¹⁴ Their deaths defy association with the *Akedah* and, so it seems, fail to merit

¹¹⁰ אה על בנימ רוטשה: *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 359; Roos, A59.

¹¹¹ See Jer. 31.

¹¹² See II Mc. 7.

¹¹³ Cohen, *Sanctifying the Name of God*, 117-29.

¹¹⁴ Malkiel, "Vestiges of Conflict," 327-28, 334; idem, "The Underclass in the First Crusade," 172. Malkiel is one of the few to note that these "martyrs" were not willing or ideologically motivated sacrifices.

equivalent redemption, regardless of what the Ashkenazic rabbis propagated.

Elements that call into question the piety and willingness of the martyrs also appear in the vignette of Isaac found in Solomon's account. The scene opens by explaining that two men of the community of Mainz—Master Uri and Master Isaac, son of R. David, the *parnas*, or religious leader of the community—had survived the massacre of much of the community that occurred on the third of Sivan. They had been saved by accepting Christian baptism and they felt guilty and sought to atone for their transgressions. Nothing is mentioned of Uri's family, or even if he had one, but the reader learns that Isaac used his two children as part of his penance. In cryptic language, Isaac hinted at his plan to his mother: "I have decided to offer up a sin-offering to God in the highest, and through this I shall find atonement."¹¹⁵ This was enough to warrant his mother's pleas that he not harm himself, for she cherished him and he had protected her—at least her soul—from the crusaders:

When his mother heard her son's words . . . she implored him not to do this, for she was overcome with affection towards him, for he was the only one she had left of all her loved ones . . . [she] was confined to her bed, for the enemies had assaulted her, leaving her with several wounds. This son of hers, Master Isaac, had rescued her from death without having to be defiled, after they had already befouled him.¹¹⁶

The mother's protest had little effect. Her son boarded up the house and abandoned her inside while he took his children, who had agreed to be sacrificed, to the

¹¹⁵ גמרתִי בלבי להקריב קרבן חטאת לאלהי מרום, אמצא בזה כפרה *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 379; Roos, A69.

ויהי כאשר שמעה אמו את דברי בנה . . . השביעה, לו שלא לעשות דבר זה, כי נכמרו רחמיה עליו והוא נשאר לה יהיד שם מכל ¹¹⁶ אוהביה . . . וגם אמו עצמה מוטלת במטה, כי הכוה האויבים לכמה פצעים, וזה בנה מר יצחק הצילה מן המות בלא ציחון, אחרי *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 379; Roos, A69. שכבר טנפוהו

synagogue. Once there, he slaughtered them before the “Ark of the Covenant.”¹¹⁷ Reminiscent of the antique rabbis’ employment of the blood of the patriarch Isaac as a mnemonic device to remind God that He had promised Israel perpetual forgiveness and redemption, Solomon wrote that Master Isaac “sprinkled some of their blood on the pillars of the Holy Ark, so it should come as a reminder before the unique and eternal King and before his throne of glory <and he said> ‘May this blood bring me atonement for all my transgressions.’”¹¹⁸ Afterwards, Isaac returned to his father’s house and set it ablaze with his mother inside before returning yet again to the synagogue to burn it down as he prayed inside, effectively committing suicide in the manner of the martyr-priests of the First Temple.¹¹⁹ Appearing little more as an afterthought here, Solomon described Master Uri as having wanted to die along with Isaac in the synagogue, as the two had planned, but Christians overtook him and killed him en route.

This vignette pivots on the psychological effects of Isaac’s conversion and the physical ramifications he and his family endured. Solomon wrote that Isaac and Uri “had been rescued for *Gehinnom*, for the enemies defiled [i.e., baptized] them against their will,”¹²⁰ and so implied that the conversion was physically forced upon the men. However, a little further down, Solomon suggested that Isaac had made the decision to

¹¹⁷ ארון הקודש: *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 379; Roos, A69. References to the Ark of the Covenant should be viewed as part of Solomon’s attempt to align Mainz with Jerusalem, as discussed in Chapter Two.

¹¹⁸ ויז מדמם על עמודי ארון הקדש, כדי שיבואו לזכרון לפני מלך יחיד חיי העולמים ולפנו כסא כבודו <ויאמר>: והדם הזה יהי לי *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 379; Roos, A69.

¹¹⁹ Goodblatt, “Suicide in the Sanctuary,” 15-18.

¹²⁰ נוצלו אילו שני החסידים לגיהנום וציהנום האויבים בעל כרחם *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 375-77; Roos, A68. My translation again differs from Roos’s in transliterating גיהנום, *Gehinnom*, rather than translating this term as “Hell.”

convert when he wrote, as Isaac, of mental manipulation by the Christian aggressors: “the enemies *have executed the intents of their minds* on me in order to take me away from the Lord and to make me rebel against the Torah of our holy God”;¹²¹ and later, “It is well known to the One who examines the hearts that I heeded the enemies merely in order to rescue my children from the hands of the wrongdoers, so that they should not be brought up in their deviance. . . .”¹²² From these quotations, it would appear that Isaac agreed—however reluctantly—to convert in order that his children be spared the ordeal of kidnapping and indoctrination into Christianity, much as the quotation above about Isaac’s mother indicates that his conversion saved her from having to apostatize as well.

Yet, Solomon intimated that monetary considerations may have also factored into Isaac’s decision. This is illustrated when, after noting his conversion, Solomon depicted Isaac as going to the cellar “to see to the treasures that were hidden there since the days of his father.”¹²³ Upon finding that the crusaders had not touched these at all, and surmising that their purposes were not economically motivated but bent on terrorizing Jews until they renounced their faith and converted, Isaac was struck by the full weight of his apostasy: “Will this money benefit me any longer? When a man goes to his eternal home, neither silver nor gold accompanies him, only penitence and good deeds.”¹²⁴ Only after coming to this conclusion did he decide to perform penance by sacrificing his

¹²¹ האויבים מזימות לבם, כדי להרחיקני מעם יי ולהמריד בתורת אלהינו הקדוש *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 377; Roos, A68.

¹²² וגלוי וידוע לפני בוחן לבות, כי לא שמעתי אל האויבים, אלא כדי להנצל בניי מיד בני עוולה, ושלא יהיו מקויימים בתעותם *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 377; Roos, A68-9.

¹²³ לראות המטמונות אשר היה טמון שם מימות אביו *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 377; Roos, A68.

¹²⁴ האם יש לי עוד צדקה בממון הזה? ואין מלוין לו לאדם לבית עולמו, לא כסף ולא זהב, אלא תשובה ומעשים טובים *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 377; Roos, A68.

children, mother, and himself.

What Solomon failed to specify is whether Isaac felt atonement was necessary for his conversion, his family's treasures, or both. That the family was able to amass treasures at all suggests lucrative economic involvement which, in medieval Ashkenaz, would imply involvement with Christians. Could it be that Isaac's father, a rabbi and a *parnas*, had already laid the foundation of assimilation through sanctioning and perhaps even engaging in questionable business transactions with Gentiles that had made his family wealthy?¹²⁵ Is this why Isaac's mother pled with her son not to atone for his conversion but to, instead, remain fully assimilated for the good of the family—like his father may have?

These are conjectures that may or may not have crossed the medieval reader's mind. Still, in the ambiguous presentation of Isaac's transgressions, the reader would have recognized that the subject of the vignette did not think of himself as a pious martyr but as a sinner in search of forgiveness who used homicide and suicide as a means of achieving that end. The literary figure of Isaac was not alone in thinking suicide was penitential. The twelfth-century C.E. youth, Yom Tov b. Moshe of London, is also reported to have committed suicide as atonement for even considering conversion to Christianity.¹²⁶ Moreover, it was not uncommon for French and German rabbis of the High Middle Ages to prescribe physical penance for sins, and the twelfth-century C.E.

¹²⁵ A similar question might be asked of Master David, mentioned in Chapter Three, whose treasure was sufficient for the priest who attempted to convert him to mention it as motivation to apostatize. See *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 369; Roos, A64.

¹²⁶ Efraim Kupfer, "A Contribution to the Chronicles of the Family of R. Moses b. Yom Tov 'The Noble' of London," [Hebrew] *Tarbiz* 40 (1971): 384-87; Grossman, "The Roots of *Kiddush ha-Shem*," 126-27.

founder of the *Hasidei Ashkenaz*, R. Judah he-Hasid, also condoned suicide as an acceptable form of penance.¹²⁷ Yet, regardless of usage, that Isaac felt the need to repent his actions and did so through the sacrifice of his family and himself distances his acts from association with the patriarch Abraham at the *Akedah*, for, while Genesis sometimes shows Abraham transgressing, the Binding of Isaac is not presented as atonement for the father's sins. Master Isaac's mother's unwillingness to see her son sacrifice himself, let alone his children and herself, reinforces the distance between the personae of the biblical and medieval sacrificial episodes while exposing what was most likely the sentiment among the survivors of the pogroms who had not perished in *kiddush ha-Shem*—to favor conversion over death and, in so doing, commit the most pronounced, even if insincere, act of assimilation through apostasy.

Absent from *The Mainz Anonymous*, only elements of Master Isaac's martyrdom surface in Eliezer bar Nathan's sparse rendering of events.¹²⁸ In just a few sentences, Eliezer told of the forcible conversion of Isaac and Uri. In response to their defilement, the two took it upon themselves to slaughter Isaac's children at his home and set his house alight before walking to the synagogue where they perished before the "Ark of the Covenant" as the building burned. Nothing is mentioned of Isaac's mother, his family treasure, his quest for atonement, or the idea that his children's blood might help to fulfill it. In contrast to Solomon's account, Eliezer wrote that Isaac slaughtered his children—daughters, instead of the daughter and son found in the previous version—in their own

¹²⁷ Kanarfogel, "Peering through the Lattices", 81-3, 115-16, 234, 234n41.

¹²⁸ In the oldest extant version of Eliezer's narrative, the vignette of Isaac and Uri is less than five lines long. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Heb. d. 11, lines 5-12, f. 234b.

home, without the sprinkling of their blood on the Ark; and Isaac and Uri died only as a thanksgiving offering to God, with no suggestion of the existence of or need for a sin-offering.¹²⁹ This is a much tamer version. The positive presentation of child sacrifice and the softening of details that might have been read as subversive to the Ashkenazic rabbinate or the martyrs are indicative of Eliezer's narrative in general and may be a contributing factor as to why Eliezer's account has survived in nine manuscripts while Solomon's has only survived in one.¹³⁰

Literalism in the era of Peshat? Acknowledgement of Transgressions as a Call to Reform

If the prooftexts and details in martyrological vignettes in *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson* were not enough to alert the reader that Solomon perceived and wished to convey that the Ashkenazic victims of the Rhineland pogroms of 1096 C.E. may have deserved the travesty that befell them as divine retribution, he included euphemisms as well as explicit statements to the same effect. These are found in the concepts of “heavenly judgement” and the related “decrees” as indicators of God's displeasure with transgressive behavior, bolstered by undeniable admissions of sinfulness.

The concept of heavenly judgement is most pronounced in regard to the Mainz segment. Shortly after depicting Duke Godfrey's arrival, persecution, and extortion of the

¹²⁹ Solomon's account also uses a prooftext to depict Isaac's and Uri's deaths as a thanksgiving offering —“Those who bring thanksgiving as their sacrifice honor me” (Ps. 50:23)—but only in conjunction with the more prominent (and numerous) references to transgression and atonement. *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 381; Roos, A70. In Eliezer's narrative, only thanksgiving is mentioned: *The Chronicle of Eliezer bar Nathan*, Haverkamp, 347, 381; Roos, A68. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Heb. d. 11, f. 234b, line 12.

¹³⁰ Roos, *God Wants It!*, 7, 10.

Jewry there, Solomon described how God had “shut His eyes to His people and *surrendered them to the sword*.”¹³¹ Though he employed a rhetorical question which appeared to doubt God’s rationale for treating the Ashkenazim “as if they had been murderers,”¹³² he provided an evocative answer: “Surely He [God] *judges righteously* and we must bear the wicked reputation.”¹³³ Also in the Mainz segment, Solomon included the idea of God’s judgement twice in connection with those gathered in the bishop’s courtyard. As a narrator, he described how,

When the children of the holy covenant saw that the decree had been issued and that the enemies had defeated them and entered the courtyard, they all cried out together . . . to their Father in heaven. They wept for themselves and their lives but declared that the heavenly judgement over them was righteous.¹³⁴

Solomon added this sentiment as part of the victims’ own speech as well, claiming that as those in the courtyard awaited the enemy, they questioned: “When shall the destroyer come, so that we shall receive upon us the heavenly judgement?”¹³⁵ And, again in the Mainz segment, Solomon described a victim’s assessment of his own persecution as part of God’s justice. When Master Samuel was found hiding “in a certain house,” Christian

¹³¹ מעלינו והעלים עיניו מעמו והגירם על ידי הרב *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 297; Roos, A30.

¹³² כאילו היו שופכין דמים *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 297; Roos, A30.

¹³³ זולתי וודאי הגה הוא שופט צדק ולנו הדיבה *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 297; Roos, A30. Whether by “we” Solomon meant to convey the Mainz Jewry or the Ashkenazim at large is unclear. Either could be applied, though Solomon did use the concept of heavenly judgement specifically in regard to Mainz alone.

¹³⁴ כשראו בני ברית קדש, כי נגזרה הגזירה ונצחום האויבים ונכנסו בחצר, ויצעקו כולם . . . לאביהם שבשמים ובכו עליהם ועל שמים *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 325; Roos, A43.

¹³⁵ מתי יבא השודד ונקבל עלינו דין שמים *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 345; Roos, A55.

aggressors gave him the option of conversion or death.¹³⁶ In response, Samuel “declared the judgement over himself to be righteous.. . .”¹³⁷

The related concept of a decree, issued forth as an extension of judgement, is also concentrated in the Mainz segment. In addition to the quotation of Solomon’s narration of the events in the bishop’s courtyard as a “decree” noted above, it is found three times in relation to a vignette of ghosts praying in the Mainz synagogue that had all but been abandoned. According to Solomon, when a few men congregated at the synagogue to pray as part of a ghostly *minyan*, or group of ten necessary for the recitation of prayers, shortly before the second crusading horde led by Emicho had come to the city, they were somehow cognizant of the pressing threat and “They wept loudly, until they were exhausted, for they saw that it was a decree of the King of kings, and who could avert it?”¹³⁸ In Solomon’s depiction of R. Baruch’s testimony of what he had witnessed, the rabbi too claimed that heaven had judged and issued a decree: “Know truly and honestly that a decree has been issued against us from heaven, and we cannot be rescued, for tonight we, I and my son-in-law Judah, heard the souls who were praying during the night in the synagogue.. . .”¹³⁹ And, lastly, Solomon described how the group Baruch had told went, in turn, and told the others of the Mainz Jewry who were hiding at the count’s and bishop’s residences. They all, evidently, “understood that it was a decree from the

¹³⁶ *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 383; Roos, A72. בבית אחד

¹³⁷ *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 385; Roos, A72. דבר מפיו והצדיק עליו את הדין

¹³⁸ *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 305; Roos, A33. ובכו בכייה גדולה עד יציאת הנפש, כי ראו כי גזירת מלך מלכי המלכים היה ומי יפר

¹³⁹ דעו באמת וביושר, כי נגזרה גזירה עלינו מן השמים ואין אני יכוליו להנצל, כי הלילה שמענו, אני וחתני יהודה, הנפשות שהיו מתפללין הלילה בבית הכנסת *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 305; Roos, A34.

Lord and they cried loudly, and declared that the judgement over them was righteous... .”¹⁴⁰

Despite this concentration, the concept of a heavenly decree transcends the Mainz segment to color Solomon’s entire narrative and, indeed, the Rhineland pogroms in general, which are known colloquially in the Jewish tradition as *Gezerot TaTN”U*, or the “Decrees of 1096.”¹⁴¹ Mention of a decree is also found in the Xanten segment. When the community presented as especially ardent for God was not even able to waylay the attacks with prayers, Solomon claimed that it was because “a decree had been issued and something like a copper pan was constructed between us and our Father who is in heaven, and *He shut out our prayer.*”¹⁴² The first mention of a decree appears early on, in the Prologue of Solomon’s narrative, and helped to establish this same sense expressed in the Xanten segment that there was nothing the community of 1096 C.E. could do to appeal to God’s mercy once the punishment of the pogroms had begun. Here, Solomon provided an overview of what was to transpire in the course of the attacks and described how God failed to acknowledge the Ashkenazim’s fasting, charity, or prayers “because it was a decree from Him, from *my day of punishment.*”¹⁴³

The prooftext used in this passage is an allusion to the day of punishment that God promised Moses He would visit upon the Israelites who had committed idolatry and

¹⁴⁰ וידעו כי היתה גזירה מאת יי, ויבכו הם בכי גדולה והצדיקו עליהם את הדין *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 307; Roos, A34.

¹⁴¹ Chazan, preface to *Sanctifying the Name of God*, viii. In *gematria*, תתנ”ו, or *TaTN”U*, represents the numerical value 1096.

¹⁴² נגזרה גזירה ונעשית כמין מחבת נחושת בינינו לאבינו שבשמים וסתם תפילתנו *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 435; Roos, A95-6.

¹⁴³ כי היית גזירה מלפניו מביום פקדי *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 257; Roos, A11.

worshipped the Golden Calf.¹⁴⁴ In contrast to the medieval rabbi-poets or modern scholars who have interpreted the victims of 1096 C.E. as atonement for the transgressions of past generations, including those who committed idolatry while wandering in the Sinai Desert, Solomon explicitly included at least a faction of the Ashkenazim with those who were in need of atonement. For instance, in his depiction of Pope Urban's call to Holy War and the Ashkenazim's ineffectual response of prayer and fasting, Solomon employed a proof-text alluding to the prophet Jeremiah's account of the Babylonian Exile: "The Lord *has done as he said, because we had sinned against him.*"¹⁴⁵ In his narration of what had transpired in the courtyard of the bishop of Mainz, Solomon declared that Jews and Christians "fought each other at the gate, but the transgressions [of the Jews] caused the enemies to overcome them and they [i.e., crusaders] captured the gate."¹⁴⁶ And, in his account of the persecutions in Metz, Solomon included the number of slain victims and those who had been forcibly converted and attributed it to the people's "great quantity of transgression and shame."¹⁴⁷

Scholars such as Marcus and Roos have noted that the idea of Ashkenazic transgression appears in the narratives. Yet Marcus ultimately glosses over the concept of sin and punishment as a "minor motif."¹⁴⁸ While Roos completely dismisses it by claiming that the universalizing wording in Solomon's narrative functions to categorize

¹⁴⁴ Roos, 'God Wants It!', A11.

¹⁴⁵ ויעש יי כאשר דבר, כי חטאנו לו: *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 299; Roos, A31. See Jer. 40:3.

¹⁴⁶ וגרמו העוונות ונצחום האויבים ולכדו את השער: *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 319; Roos, A42.

¹⁴⁷ ורובם נאנסו ברוב עון ואשם: *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, Haverkamp, 481; Roos, A118.

¹⁴⁸ Marcus, "From Politics to Martyrdom," 47.

“all” the victims as martyrs who suffered equally, thus reinforcing “the idea that the martyrs did not die as punishment for their own sin.”¹⁴⁹ Both positions appear cautious of casting an unseemly pallor on the Ashkenazic victims whom scholars have often romanticized as heroes. Though this treatment is understandable, the disregard for explicit admissions of sinfulness and Solomon’s stated perception that this was the cause of the pogroms of 1096 C.E. at a time in which *peshat* literalism was especially popular is not.

Conclusion

Solomon bar Samson’s narrative responds to notions of the covenant expressed by the author’s contemporaries—exegetes and poets who claimed that sacrificial bloodshed amounted to human fulfillment of the covenant, and who propagated the idea that the bloodshed of the victims of the Rhineland pogroms entitled later generations to demand messianic redemption of God. Through prooftexts, biblical allusions, details within martyrological vignettes, euphemistic expressions, and explicit statements, Solomon conveyed that the Ashkenazic communities persecuted in 1096 C.E. were not as pious as many of the rabbi-poets of his generation had presented them to be. Indeed, he cast some of the victims as more self-righteous than righteous, showing time and again that the most revered communities of Ashkenaz had transgressed the covenant by adhering to leaders who had misadvised them to seek out help from Gentiles rather than waiting for

¹⁴⁹ Roos, ‘*God Wants It!*’, 165.

divine intervention. This move resulted in assimilation and, at times, even led to apostasy. Thus, the deaths of a great many in 1096 C.E. were not those of willing sacrifices and so, not nearly comparable to the patriarchs' sacrifice at the *Akedah*. By exposing the sinfulness of the generation of 1096 C.E., Solomon also revealed the fallacious reasoning and misguided promotion of martyrdom as either superior to or in lieu of reform that rabbis of his own generation perpetuated. Yet his message was not without hope. Solomon's call to acknowledge transgressions, followed by repentance and reform, served as an effort to right the wrongs of the previous generations, composed in the hopes of contributing to redemption.

Afterword

The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson was composed by an otherwise unknown, and perhaps pseudonymous, member of the next generation of Ashkenazim following that which had suffered in the Rhineland pogroms of 1096 C.E. Living in the wake of the most pronounced devastation that the Ashkenazim had suffered up to that point, Solomon and his cohort were desperate to find or give meaning to Christian anti-Jewish aggression and the variety of Jewish reactions to it.

Scholars have typically interpreted Solomon's narrative, along with *The Mainz Anonymous* and *The Chronicle of Eliezer bar Nathan*, as an attempt to provide a historical rendering of the events of 1096 C.E. And many have argued that each of the narratives might have been composed and employed as an accompaniment to liturgical commemoration and composed as a laudatory homage to the Jewish victims, in general, but the martyrs, in particular. Such readings are based on more than one questionable premise. First and foremost, such interpretations tend to operate under the assumption that either the Ashkenazic community of 1096 C.E. was unequivocally and unilaterally pious or that all the authors who wrote of their persecuted predecessors believed them to be, or both. Second, such interpretations assume that each of the narratives share the same function—to provide factual, if fawning, reports—due to their many similarities in content.

This dissertation, by contrast, has argued that Solomon uniquely conveyed an unpopular message of religious reform for a highly variegated populace which most likely did not share a solitary position regarding the extent of piety found among the

Ashkenazim of 1096 C.E.. Rather than complimenting the victimized community, Solomon employed and adapted familiar accounts of the Rhineland pogroms to critique the ShUM rabbinate's assimilationist policies and their implemented practices among many of his co-religionists, both in 1096 C.E. and in his own generation. He was not alone in this endeavor. R. Tobiah ben Eliezer's *Lekah Tov* and commentary on the Song of Songs, the Ashkenazic *Toledot Yeshu*, and *The Mainz Anonymous*, among other texts, provide their own, oftentimes similar critique of the generation of 1096 C.E. This factor may help to explain the anonymity of the Mainz narrative and the fact that it, like Solomon's text, has only survived in one manuscript while Eliezer bar Nathan's far more flattering account has survived in nine.

Interpreting *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson*, or any of these other texts, as calls to reform should not be considered as taboo as it might initially appear in contrast to traditional readings. For Solomon's society was not monolithic but complex, resounding with the clamor of a cacophony of voices expressing competing ideas regarding orthodoxy and orthopraxy, the degree to which Jewishness was predicated on ethnicity or religion, and if, when, where, why, how, and the extent to which Jews and Gentiles should interact. While common to every era and in every region Jews inhabited, debates of this kind were exasperated in Northern Europe during the High Middle Ages due, in part, to widespread apocalypticism. The End-Time ideology both reflected and affected the spectrum of Ashkenazic positions on the above topics, for apocalypticism all too commonly emerged, and continues to emerge, as a byproduct of conservative, xenophobic reaction to growing cross-cultural contact among more liberal members of

inter-confessional societies.

Northern European apocalypticism is attested to in the particular manner in which zealots disparaged less ardent co-religionists along with religio-ethnic others. Examples are found within Christian religious writing, rhetoric, and artistic representation of the High Middle Ages which promote the belief that Jews are agents of Antichrist whose very existence poses a threat to Christendom via perceptually weak-minded, heretical, and Judaizing individuals. The Jewish apocalyptic complement is found in media promoting the idea that Christians were demonic *bnei beli'al*, that Jesus was an anti-Messiah, and that his mother, Mary, served as a type of *femme fatale* who was capable of seducing Jews to stray from right religion and apostatize. It was in response to these threats to religious purity that members of both groups promoted inter-confessional aggression as part of intra-confessional reform in the hopes of ushering in messianic redemption. At the same time, liberal members of both groups continued to promote coexistence and sought mutually beneficial solutions to mundane concerns. The vast majority of Northern European Jews and Christians living in the High Middle Ages appear to have straddled these positions by employing xenophobic rhetoric and imagery in religious settings, which helped them to conceive of themselves as exceedingly pious representatives of *verus Israel*, all the while attempting to distinguish religious tenets they regularly professed inside the synagogue or church from daily life outside where they shared so much with their neighbors.

Solomon was all too familiar with the latter two groups of Jewish society, for they had long adjudicated the ShUM Jewry. Yet it appears that he shunned the leading rabbis

and strove instead to be included among the most pious segment of society, the *hasidim*, as a type of master of repentance, a *ba'al teshuvah*, at the time he composed his narrative. This may have been a gradual process that developed along with the budding Pietistic movement at the time—the *Hasidei Ashkenaz*. After all, as a twelfth-century C.E. Ashkenazim, he was presumably raised hearing stories of how his community had suffered profound devastation by the Christian crusading horde, neighbors, and even ecclesiastics charged with protecting Jews in their territorial jurisdictions. And he was certainly familiar with, and no-doubt participated in, the liturgical commemorations composed by the ShUM rabbinate that lauded the pogrom victims who were either murdered by Gentile aggressors or who had sacrificed themselves and their loved ones in *kiddush ha-Shem*, ironically uttered by those who had escaped a similar fate, most likely through apostasy. He probably also took part in the liturgical and popular disparagement of Jesus and Mary, and uttered prayers pleading for God to avenge His people. But Solomon had also witnessed the reestablishment of the Northern European Jewry in the wake of the pogroms. He saw, and may even have taken part in, the rebuilding efforts of his co-religionists who worked alongside their attackers and their attackers' descendants to repair the communal bonds that had been splintered by religiously motivated violence.

Yet instead of responding as many of his contemporaries did—namely, by continuing to ingratiate himself to the dominant society, all the while lauding the victims collectively as pious martyrs whose deaths ought to merit messianic redemption, or by questioning God when He would make good on His covenant—Solomon was chiefly concerned with understanding, and conveying to his audience, why the generation of

1096 C.E. was unsuccessful in securing the redemption that had been prophesied to come between the years 1085 C.E. and 1104 C.E.

Though he borrowed liberally from *The Mainz Anonymous*, and perhaps *The Chronicle of Eliezer bar Nathan*, his unique editorialization conveys the conviction of one who believed he had been gifted with esoteric knowledge of Scripture. This knowledge indicated that reform, rather than martyrdom alone, was required for the Ashkenazim to truly prove their ardor for the divine and merit messianic redemption that had eluded them until that point. In turn, he attempted to reveal his secret knowledge to others through the form and content of a traditional revelatory text—an apocalypse. This purpose emerges most blatantly in Solomon’s cyclical presentation of events of the Rhineland pogroms that both ended and began with the persecutions in Speyer. Through this technique, Solomon mirrored the cyclicity found in the book of Daniel’s repetition of the phrase *ha-melek devrei-yom* to signal to his readers that they were perched on yet another eve of destruction that was a result of their own assimilative tendencies. Moreover, Solomon’s ubiquitous use of *peshet* biblical exegesis far surpassed that found in other apocalyptic texts circulating in twelfth-century C.E. Ashkenaz; he employed the well-known prophetic trope of Israel as a promiscuous woman, and the related apocalyptic trope of Israel’s seduction by a promiscuous woman, a *zonah*; and his overarching doctrine of reform, *teshuvah*, epitomized this essential apocalyptic characteristic. Through these, Solomon critiqued what he perceived to be religious leniency, both among the generation of 1096 C.E. as well as his own contemporary society, and he suggested that past moments of potential messianic redemption had not

come to fruition because of over-familiarity with or assimilation to the dominant Christian culture. As in all historical apocalypses, he called for reform as the first and most essential step to securing messianic redemption and ushering in the new and final era.

One final word is necessary. The Hebrew crusade narratives and, far more so, the Ashkenazic victims of the Rhineland pogroms, hold a treasured place in many Jews' self-identity as well as in the collective consciousness developed and expressed in religious ritual. The few attempts to challenge the victims' pristine image or traditional readings of the narratives have been met with extreme vitriol, or they have been instinctively dismissed out of hand as outrageous and lacking any real analytic merit. Bearing this in mind, I am fully aware that my interpretation of Solomon's narrative as an apocalypse relating a xenophobic doctrine and the necessity of reform may be considered an irreverent attempt to shock, and so, nothing more than purposefully offensive and, worse yet, unreasonable.

I assure you, shock for shock's sake has in no way been my intent. What I have attempted is to share my interpretation of a text, reflexive only of a component of a culture, that continues to amaze and delight me with its infinite dimensionality. It is my hope that, especially in times such as these, when the world appears to have gone mad and regressed decades if not centuries, when the gross categorization of peoples based on their ethnicity, belief system, or political affiliation has become standardized once more, that we might encourage considered challenges to interpretations of sacred texts and subtexts, and that we might make the most valiant efforts to avoid character assignments

of entire religio-ethnic groups based on the slightest of sample sizes and identity politics formulated by a governing elite. Students of the past have a responsibility to scrutinize benevolent or complimentary classifications of groups in their entirety just as much as negative classifications. Failure to do so continues to have disastrous effects.

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