

“A NEW SHOOT FROM THE HOUSE OF DAVID:”
ADOLF JELLINEK AND THE CREATION OF THE MODERN RABBINATE

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A dissertation submitted to the faculty at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Religious Studies.

Chapel Hill
2016

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ABSTRACT

Samuel Joseph Kessler: “A New Shoot From the House of David:” Adolf Jellinek and the Creation of the Modern Rabbinate
(Under the direction of Randall Styers)

This dissertation is a social history of Jewish religious experience in Central Europe during the nineteenth century, primarily told through the life and work of one of its founding rabbis, Adolf Jellinek (1821-1893). In response to Enlightenment ideology, emancipation, and urbanization, from about 1830 to 1860 three major changes occurred in institutional Jewish religious life, changes that transformed the very essence of what the practice of Jewish religion meant between the pre-modern and modern periods. First, the role of the rabbi in the life of the Jewish community shifted fundamentally. Second, because of demographic shifts brought about by emancipation and economic conditions, the monumental urban synagogue became the dominant space for the expression of Jewish religious activity and expression in European cities. Third, the sermon became an integral part of Jewish religious practice and rabbinical responsibility, one that introduced a new form of public Jewish theology focused on individual belief and history (the constituent components of “religion” as it came to be defined in modern Europe).

The Moravian-born Austrian rabbi Adolf Jellinek was both creator and observer of these myriad changes. He was the recipient of a world that (within a relatively short time) lacked many of the legal and cultural discriminations that had kept his parents and grandparents from a more robust participation in European cultural and civic life. His innovative uses of Jewish texts within the new practice of the public weekly sermon, coupled with his prominence as the head of the Viennese community, make him one of the founders of modern Jewish religious practice as we understand it today. This dissertation places Jellinek’s life and writings within a broad framework of religious

institutional and practical reinvention in the middle decades of the nineteenth century. It draws our attention toward an overlooked figure, and points toward many avenues of further research concerning the impacts of urbanization and Enlightenment ideology on Jewish rabbinical and synagogue reformation in the nineteenth century.

To my mother and father

שמע בני מוסר אביך ואל תטש תורת אמך:

Listen, my son, to the *musar* of your father, and do not forsake the *torah* of your mother.

משלי 1:8

יצתה בת קול ואמרה אם הבנים שמחה:

A divine voice emerged and said: A joyful mother of children.

בבלי גיטין , דף נז

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation began as an intellectual biography of Adolf Jellinek, and over the course of two years became a social history of the religious life of mid-nineteenth century Central European Jewry. As I ran after Jellinek's story I discovered that something bigger and, to me, more interesting was at play, and that Jellinek was but one key figure in the vast religious transformation that gave us the form of modern rabbinic Judaism we know today.

It is written in the Talmud: "As Rabbi Elazar said that Rabbi Hanina said: Whoever reports a saying in the name of he who said it brings redemption to the world. As it is stated: 'And Esther reported to the king in the name of Mordecai.'" (BT Tractate *Megillah* 15b) The people whose names appear in the pages of this acknowledgement have been essential both in my attempt to tell the story of Jellinek and his age and in the more fundamental shaping and encouraging of my education and intellectual growth. Whether recommending books, retrieving documents, reading drafts, or spending hours over dinner discussing the intricacies of nineteenth-century European life, these men and women are dear and beloved to me. Their help and critique have made this dissertation fundamentally better than it would have been, though its faults remain, of course, my own.

There are so many people in whose name I have brought sayings, not only the brilliant and insightful scholars quoted in these pages, but many more from interlocutors too numerous to cite in full, sieved through thousands of hours of conversations, lectures, and classes, all of which informed the words and ideas that brought this project to fruition. I owe more gratitude than can be rightfully expressed to my doctoral committee: Randall Styers, Yaakov Ariel, Malachi Hacohen, Susannah Heschel, Jonathan Hess, and Lloyd Kramer. They have devoted many hours of their precious time

to me; have supported me with recommendations to places near and far; and have believed in this project and in me, all the way from the early days when it was a muddled mess of half-formed thoughts and historiographical assumptions to the present. To these six scholars I owe my utmost professional and personal gratitude. To Randall Styers, my chair, I especially owe a marked note of thanks. From my first weeks at UNC he has watched my progress and guided me through the trials of graduate school. He kept me on the straight and narrow. For admirably fulfilling this difficult task--especially given my proclivity for side projects and attendance at far-flung conferences--I owe him much appreciation.

Many professors at New York University, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and Duke University have taught and encouraged me along the way. I am immensely grateful for their knowledge, their guidance, and their love of learning. “Rabbi Elazar ben Shammua said: Let your student’s honor be as precious to you as your own; let your colleague’s honor be like the reverence due to your teacher; and let the reverence you have for your teacher be like the reverence due to Heaven.” (*Pirkei Avot* 4:15)

Many institutions have supported my research with generous grants and fellowships. The Carolina Center for Jewish Studies supported my work for three summers and on three continents. Karen Gajewski, especially, works tirelessly at the Center to make everything run smoothly and efficiently. I owe a special thanks to the Jack O. Spies and Family Jewish Studies Fund, which allowed me to spend a summer in the archives at the National Library of Israel in Jerusalem. As directors of the Center, Jonathan Hess and Ruth von Bernuth have succeeded in creating a vibrant intellectual and social life for scholars of Judaism in North Carolina, and wonderfully included me within it. Similarly, the Triangle Intellectual History Seminar and Triangle Jewish Studies Seminar have given me a window into the depth and breadth of contemporary scholarship.

Numerous scholarly centers provided me with the funding, office space, and intellectual stimulus to complete this project. I owe many thanks to the Simon Dubnow Institute in Leipzig for a grant in the summer of 2013 that made preliminary research for this dissertation possible, and which provided me with so many wonderful and supportive friends and colleagues. I wish especially to thank Jörg Deventer of the Dubnow Institute for giving me an intellectual home that summer, and to Arndt Engelhardt, also of the Dubnow Institute, for his selfless help, encouragement, support, and friendship these last few years. The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars hosted me in June 2015 on a Title VIII Short-term Research Grant. I gained a handful of new friends and colleagues during that month, whose thoughtfulness, dignity, and humor made the long hours of work nothing but joy. Grants from the Council for European Studies Society of Fellows at Duke University and the DAAD-Leo Baeck Institute provided me with the monetary assistance to work in libraries in New York City during fall 2015 and spring 2016. Finally, an Off-Campus Dissertation Research Fellowship from the Graduate School at UNC Chapel Hill for spring 2016 allowed me the time away from the classroom for the final months of writing.

To the scholars and staff who have made research possible all along the way, here is a list that will undoubtedly be missing important names: Mandy Fitzpatrick, Carina Röhl, Grit N. Scheffer, and Marion Hammer of the Simon-Dubnow-Institut für jüdische Geschichte und Kultur an der Universität Leipzig. Klaus Fitschen and Steffen Hoffmann of the Universität Leipzig. Peter Honigmann and Eva Blatter at the Zentralarchiv zur Erforschung der Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland in Heidelberg. Emily Buss, Christian F. Ostermann, and Zdenek David of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Global Europe Program.

To the staff and archivists at whose institutions I have researched and written: the National Library of Israel in Jerusalem; the Center for Jewish History in New York City; the Universitätsarchiv in Leipzig; the Stadtarchiv in Leipzig; the Albertina Bibliothek in Leipzig; the

Bundesarchiv in Koblenz; the Davis Library at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; the Duke University Libraries; the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, D.C.; the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.; and the Dorot Jewish Division at The New York Public Library in New York City. (I especially wish to thank Eleanor Yadin of NYPL, whom I have had the fortune to know now for almost a decade, and whose wit and irreverent joy lighten every interaction, given always in that delightful Hebrew-English patois so particular to a certain generation of Israeli ex-pat.).

Lastly, I am in debt to the taxpayers of the many towns and cities across America who generously fund free public libraries, so that wanderers like myself might spend a few quiet hours composing a paragraph or two. For me, these especially include the Westport Public Library, Westport, Connecticut; the Greenwich Library, Greenwich, Connecticut; and the Brooklyn Public Library, Brooklyn, New York. As the Talmud remarks, so may it be said of my peregrinations: “A certain widow, in whose neighborhood there was a synagogue, everyday went and prayed in the study hall of Rabbi Yochanan. [He] said to her: My daughter, [is there] not a synagogue in your neighborhood? She said to him: My teacher, don’t I attain a reward [for] the steps?” (BT Sota 22a)

“Ten miracles were performed for our ancestors in the Temple...no one ever said to his fellow: There is no room for me to stay overnight in Jerusalem.” (Pirkei Avot 5:7) Human kindness can make the miraculous become real. It can turn a few shekels into an overflowing pot, and a square cubit into a king’s dwelling. In the course of writing this dissertation I have been the beneficiary of the kindness of so many people, who made space in their homes, their lives, and at their dinner tables. The germ of this project began one Sabbath morning in Berlin in February 2009. A man named Jehoschua Bieler, then a young medical student and the scion of a long family of German Jews, approached me in the Fraenkelufer Synagoge in Kreuzberg and invited me home for

lunch.¹ His mitzvah--*bachnasat orchim*, the welcoming of guests--was also my entrée into German Jewish history, and the still vibrant living culture of its scattered remnant.

Since that morning I have been blessed to be welcomed as a guest everywhere I have travelled. During my stay in Leipzig, the Synagoge Keilstraße became my second home, where Rabbis Zsolt Balla and Noah Kunin showed graciousness and kindness. Their devotion to creating a vibrant, living Judaism in Central Europe sustain me still.

My aunt and uncle, Edward and Arleen Kessler, in Washington, D.C., graciously and warmly opened their home to me during my summer at the Wilson Center. With affability and love they fed me dinner, took me to shows, and asked after my progress; the weeks sped past. Another aunt and uncle, Michael and Elizabeth Kessler (along with their four daughters, Peri, Brooke, Sophia, and Jocelyn, and house keeper, Vicky), in Westport, Connecticut, hosted my now-fiancée and me with love and with, what could only be described as, bemused enjoyment. In and out we came, at all hours of the day and night, as I wrote at the library, she began a fellowship, and we both commuted back and forth to Brooklyn for events and holidays. In the midst of great transition they gave us the warmth and love of family.

I must also thank my community in Chapel Hill and Carrboro, with whom I spent five very happy years. First, to my students, both as a Teaching Assistant and Teaching Fellow at UNC Chapel Hill: their interests and dreams make me hopeful for the future of this, my beloved country, and of our entire global community. To the friends who sustained me through my graduate work I owe deep and heartfelt love. There are too many of you to list. You know who you are. To those who enriched my home on Sabbath evenings with joy and holiness, you made the end of long weeks glow warm and bright, and helped me to rebalance the mitzvah of generosity I have received from so many others.

¹ They now have a beautiful new website: <https://fraenkelufer.wordpress.com>

My future in-laws, Jacob Laufer and Clara Schwabe, have opened their home to me for many years now, welcoming me into their family and showing me much love and attention. We are, *bizrat haShem*, to spend many, many more years together, and I look forward to those years with happiness and contentment. With simple gestures you made me a part of your lives, and you raised a daughter whose being completes my own. I can never repay the debt.

My grandmother, Helen Hurwitz, is the light at the end of the tunnel. One hundred years old this year, she was born on the Lower East Side as Franz Joseph sat on the throne during the final months of his reign, when the glimmer of the-world-that-was still shone brightly in the European dusk. But nostalgic she has never been. For her the past is a darker place than the future--a belief that has led to many fruitful arguments between us. For as long as I can remember she has represented elegance and love of learning. Her paintings have adorned every space I have ever called my own. My life is a model, and continuation, of hers.

My beloved M: (8:5 שיר השירים): מי זאת עלה מן המדבר מתרפקת על דודה: Thank you for your patience, your kindness, the depth of your love and faith in me. Your eyes see the brightest of colors, the best of intentions, the most beautiful places. You have been by my side through this entire adventure, which has really only just begun. You are a true partner, a vision in the darkness, an oasis in the wilderness. Your goodness, as they say, is as deep as a well to China. I cannot imagine a world without you.

Finally, I owe an endless expression of love and thankfulness to my parents. They have sustained me through so many years and so many miles. "I called for wilder music and for stronger wine...I dread to speculate what [they] thought of me, a permanent long-distance nuisance and source of perplexity and expense."² They are unique among couples, my parents; deeply in love, yet

² Patrick Leigh Fermor, *The Broken Road*, ed. Colin Thubron and Artemis Cooper (New York: New York Review Books, 2015), 222.

outward looking, engaged in the troubles and adventures of others. They fill their home with kind, often lost people. They have a way of seeing into your soul, of knowing who you are and what will make you happy. Their passion for goodness, their vision of what a life can and should be, has sustained me and brought me to this place. It is written: “May you be blessed by God as were Ephraim and Menasheh, who understood that wherever they lived their Jewishness was the essence of their lives, who loved and honored their elders and teachers, and cherished one another without pettiness or envy, accepting in humility the blessings that were theirs.” In their light I have attempted to live governed by these words, and to write about others who did as well.

This work is dedicated to them.

Portions of Chapters Four and Five have previously appeared as Samuel J. Kessler, “Translating Judaism for Modernity: Adolf Jellinek in Leopoldstadt, 1857-1865,” *Simon Dubnow Institute Yearbook* 14 (2015): 393-419.

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NOTE ON PLACE NAMES AND TRANSLATIONS

I have attempted to use a unified system of transliteration for words that occurred originally in Hebrew or use the Hebrew alphabet. For historical locations I have referred to them using their German name (e.g., Pressburg instead of Bratislava), although upon first use I have included any alternate or contemporary terms as well (e.g. Breslau [Polish: Wro^śław]). If Anglophone readers are most familiar with a particular name (e.g. Vienna instead of Wien) I have used what is familiar. For other places, I have used a period- or linguistically-appropriate name and spelling (e.g. Leopoldstadt instead of Leopold City).

In the nineteenth century, personal and family names often contained slight differences depending on location, language, and typography. For Jellinek, a vast majority of contemporary scholarship spells his first name “Adolf.” However, he himself was not consistent. In Leipzig, his printed and manuscript works often spell his Christian name “Adolph.” Jellinek’s Hebrew name was Aaron, which he inherited from his maternal grandfather. (In German, Aaron is rendered “Aron.”)

Unless otherwise noted, German, French, and Hebrew translations are by the author.

CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION:

“AND ALL NATIONS SHALL FLOW FROM IT:”

TRACING THE CREATION OF THE MODERN RABBI, RABBINICAL SERMON, AND URBAN SYNAGOGUE IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY CENTRAL EUROPE

I wasn't a political observer, I went on; races, language, what people were like, that was what I was after: churches, songs, books, what they wore and ate and looked like, what the hell! Surely he, who was interested in foreign literature and the republic of the arts and wanted to see the outside world too--just like me--could understand that? Monasteries, temples, paintings, I went on, mountain ranges, art, history. 'This is history!' he interjected hotly, and scored an important point.

Patrick Leigh Fermor, *The Broken Road*

Introduction

A vast transformation occurred in Jewish communal existence over the course of the last two hundred years, one that separates the Jews of the contemporary period from their co-religionists of the preceding millennia.¹ A Jew who travelled between Alexandria and Marseille in the tenth

¹ Arguing that the end of the eighteenth century, and specifically the French Revolution, marked a decisive turning point in European history since the fall of the western Roman Empire, the historian Jacques Le Goff wrote: “one can argue that certain fundamental structures persisted in European society from the fourth to the nineteenth century, bestowing a coherent character on a period of some fifteen centuries. Jacques Le Goff, *The Medieval Imagination*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 21. In his most recent work, about the periodization of history, Le Goff writes: “Even if breaking time into segments is something that historians cannot help but do, no matter whether history is regarded as the study of the evolution of societies, or as a particular type of knowledge and teaching, or else as the unfolding of time itself, periodization is more than a mere collection of chronological units. It contains also the idea of transition, of one thing turning into another; indeed, when change is sufficiently far-reaching in its effects, a new period represents a repudiation of the entire social order of the one preceding it. It is for this reason that periods have a very special meaning: in their very succession, in both the temporal continuity this succession embodies and the rupture of temporal continuity that it brings about, they constitute an inescapable object of inquiry for the historian.” Jacques Le Goff, *Must We Divide History Into*

century, or from Strasbourg to Venice in the fifteenth, would certainly have encountered Jewish communities materially and linguistically distinct. What that sailor or merchant or rabbi would not have found, however, were the demographic, theological, and political divisions that began to fragment European Judaism in the latter decades of the eighteenth century and--spreading to communities as distant as New York, Johannesburg, Buenos Aires, and Melbourne--have continued to do so to the present day.² Indeed, European modernity has succeeded in altering almost everything about Jewish religious and communal existence: its governance and organization, its vernacular languages, the role of women, the centrality of Torah, Talmud, prayer, and religious law, and its rural-urban demographics. For an observer from a more distant past, little about Jewish practice or thought in the twenty-first century would feel remotely familiar.

This dissertation is a social history of Jewish religious experience in Central Europe from about 1830 to 1860. It was during this period that three major changes occurred in Jewish life. First, Judaism became defined as a religious practice, separate from the life of individual Jews, who themselves took on the role of bourgeois national subjects. Second, because of demographic shifts brought about by changes in civil laws and economic conditions, the urban central synagogue became the dominant space for the expression of Jewish religious feeling. And third, the role of the rabbi was redefined, from that of overseer and adjudicator of law to that of spokesman for Jewish values and ideals, whose theological ideas and moral words were rooted in historical texts but also clearly linked with broader issues arising in the contemporary non-Jewish world. Though beginning

Periods?, trans. Malcolm DeBevoise (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 2.

² Perhaps the most interesting and impressive new history of the Jews is Simon Schama, *The Story of the Jews: Finding the Words, 1000 BCE - 1492 CE* (London: Bodley Head, 2013) and idem, *The Story of the Jews: When Words Fail, 1492 - Present* (London: Bodley Head, 2015). Preceding it are Salo W. Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, 20 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952-83), Simon Dubnow, *History of the Jews*, trans. Moshe Spiegel (South Brunswick, N.J.: Yoseloff, 1967-73), and Heinrich Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden von den ältesten Zeiten bis auf die Gegenwart*, 11 vols. (Leipzig: Leiner, 1853-75).

in the decades before the 1830s and 1840s, each of these changes came to fruition in the generation formed by the 1848 revolutions. Each proved immensely significant for how urban Jews at the beginning of the modern period came to understand their relationship to the religious ideas and practices professed by their ancestors.

One of the central actors in the dramatic transformation that defined Jewish modernity in nineteenth-century Central Europe was Adolf Jellinek (1821-1893). Born and raised in a traditional Jewish society in the southern Czech province of Habsburg Moravia, his intellectual and geographic peregrinations--yeshiva in Prague, university in Leipzig, rabbinate in Vienna--offer the historian a powerful narrative through which to trace Judaism's religious adaptation in European modernity. Jellinek was both creator and observer of these changes. He was the recipient of a world that (relatively suddenly) lacked many of the legal and cultural discriminations that had prohibited his parents and grandparents from a more robust participation in European cultural and civil life. Likewise, his biography overlapped with a momentous transformation in European economics and technology, one that witnessed the rapid growth of industrialized cities and the subsequent urbanization of culturally diverse rural populations. His obvious intellectual virtuosity, coupled with a dedication to community organization, cohesion, and continuity, made him one of the most interesting and forward-thinking religious leaders to be found in mid-nineteenth century Central European Jewry. As will be discussed in the conclusion, many of his ideas about how the rabbinate should be imagined for modernity have become the pillars of religious Judaism for a majority of Anglo-American Jews today.

Jellinek's intellectual and social importance for Central European Jewish modernity is why the narrative aspect of this dissertation follows the contours of his life. He, as much or more than his peers, understood that the historical role of the rabbi in the middle nineteenth century was changing and that the entire structure of religious Judaism itself was being radically altered by

Enlightenment ideas and urban migrations. Jellinek was one of just a handful of figures whose actions and writings created the underlying framework, assumption, and scope of the rabbi and synagogue as we understand them today. “But this new, great, and glorious time, of which our ancestors in their seclusion had little idea, sets on us new obligations, and presents for us new challenges on whose fulfillment we want to use our ability,” he wrote.³ Jellinek sought to chart a path of religious synthesis, integration, and non-destructive transformation, a path that would embrace the newly liberalizing culture of the densely urban industrial city without demeaning or forgetting the small traditional towns and lives that these Jewish migrants (and that he himself, in fact) had only recently left behind.

It remains important to note that Jellinek was as much jostled about by his era as he was a leader of it. At every juncture in his life Jellinek found that the world revealed a multitude of new possibilities and presented a new array of challenges. The story that I tell in the pages below is certainly not the only one that can or should be written about rabbinic modernity. Jellinek did not set out from Prague assuming he would become disenchanted with *Wissenschaft des Judentums* and return to communal engagement; or move from Leipzig to Vienna with plans to become the greatest orator of his generation. There is no predestination in this narrative, no logical endpoint of a great trans-historical struggle. Instead, there are a myriad of individual actors each confronted by a rapidly changing political, social, and economic world. What I attempt to portray here is a cascade of events as well as the particular personalities caught up within them. How and from what motivating purpose these personalities engaged their world is ultimately what created the foundations of a new sort of rabbinic Judaism, founded on central monumental synagogues and sermon-giving rabbis.

The new religious structures that arose and later came to define Jewish practice in Central Europe in the middle of the nineteenth century were not necessarily the most obvious responses to

³ Adolf Jellinek, *Predigten*, vol. 3 (Vienna: Herzfeld & Bauer, 1866), 4.

the challenges of modernity. Indeed, there were many parallel sets of institutions and ideologies that Jewish leaders developed over the course of that century as they faced the pressures and opportunities of modernizing Europe. But in the end, the aspects of Jewish religious transformation discussed in the pages to come are the ones that persisted and the ones that indelibly shaped modern Jewish religious experience from that time until ours. It is therefore on them, and not on many of the other strands along the way, that this dissertation is distinctly focused.

In the chapters to come I examine the practice and content of Jewish religious culture as it formed in the seminal decades 1840 to 1860. I am attempting to explain the process through which some of the core intellectual and social components of today's religious Judaism came to be constructed. The rabbi, the sermon, and the centralization of the synagogue as the location of Jewish worship and Jewish theological experience are the key sites in the formation of contemporary Jewish practice. By the conclusion of this work I will have shown how a number of Jellinek's specific insights—the role of the weekly sermon, the idea of midrash, the importance of liberal advocacy, a continued language of Jewish community and peoplehood—have become essential, foundational assumptions of the modern rabbinate. Certainly, Jellinek's ideas, as those of many of his peers, were based in historical Jewish texts and arose from traditional rabbinic values. But their valence, emphasis, and patina were thoroughly modern. In 1861 Jellinek wrote: "The Torah stands as the greatest world book, whose spirit must be understood by the people if they do not want to be condemned in the name of religion to a monotonous standstill. This should be the task of today."⁴ Ancient text and modern spirit were the guiding principles Jellinek came to apply in his thinking. By his death in 1893, his rabbinic model was widely adopted in Central Europe and beyond, and transcended many of the usual denominational divides: Reform and Orthodox rabbis relied on the sermon and the synagogue, and employed Jellinek's methodology of midrashic interpretation to

⁴ Ibid., 312.

introduce new moral ideas into their justifications for Jewish religious continuity. The practical religious changes Jellinek and his peers devised in the 1850s and 1860s were the force that led to a dramatic evolution in the role and idea of the rabbi and synagogue in the modern era—to, in many ways, a new form of Rabbinic Judaism altogether.

Modernity and Central Europe

The adjective “modern” and its noun “modernity” have and continue to have a multiplicity of definitions. In one common academic form, it refers to the long nineteenth century (1789-1914). In another, it means the years from the Franco-Prussian war to the end of Weimar (1870-1933). When the Museum of Modern Art in New York adopted the word, it canonized a specific period in the progress of Euro-American expression beginning with the 1880s and extending to the present. When used to describe warfare, architecture, or film, the term can span from the Renaissance (the early development of guns and the rediscovery of dome construction) to the present (Ingmar Bergman, Francis Ford Coppola, and Woody Allen are all modern directors). Modernism (another noun), as a particular mode of expression that characterizes forms of fine art, literature, or music, is again something different entirely.

Each of these usages is valuable in its different way, and all should be understood as having an influence on the meaning of the term in this dissertation. Still, instead of offering another definition, “modernity” in these pages is meant to act as a signifier of the pace and character of nineteenth century change. Separating or identifying historical moments, actions, or ideas as modern or pre-modern is not the goal. Instead, modern is used to suggest a particular type of movement and action. It is a rhetorical indicator, pointing out that a new form of thought or social existence is taking shape at a particular moment or place in nineteenth century Europe.

Modernity, in this definition, is an activity and not a state of being. I follow those who theorize “the modern” as an act of becoming, as about the active transformation of landscapes, rituals, and ideologies.⁵ Jonathan Hess observes:

‘Modernity’...is not simply a period or a process. It is not merely something [that people] were subjected to nor can it be grasped as a process of social, economic or political transformation whose conformity to an abstract standard might be quantified. It is, rather, a *discourse*, a mode of envisioning a new and secular world that claimed its legitimacy not with reference to the various traditions and legacies of the past it sought to overcome but solely in relation to itself, to the break it performed with tradition to insist on its right to institute and follow its own norms.”⁶

Modernity was a method to be used rather than an ideology to be encountered. Certainly, by the second half of the nineteenth century, much that was invented or reinvented as modern was too overwhelming to ignore (such as the army, railroads, capitalism, and liberal education), meaning that modernity did eventually become a force that acted on people even against their will. As Louis Dupré wrote:

Cultural changes, such as the one that gave birth to the modern age, have a definitive and irreversible impact that transforms the very essence of reality. Not merely our thinking about the real changes: reality itself changes as we think about it differently. History carries an ontic significance that excludes any reversal of the present.⁷

Yet in the first half of the nineteenth century, modernity had no such ontic power. Modernity was something one chose to participate in, a worldview one adopted.

⁵ See Jürgen Osterhammel, *The Transformation of the World: A Global History of the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Patrick Camiller (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), esp. 59-67; Christopher Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1914: Global Connections and Comparisons* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Pub., 2004); Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007); Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution 1789-1848* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996); idem, *The Age of Capital, 1848-1875* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996); and idem, *The Age of Empire, 1875-1914* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1987).

⁶ Jonathan Hess, *Germans, Jews and the Claims of Modernity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 20-1 (emphasis in original).

⁷ Louis Dupré, *Passage to Modernity: An Essay in the Hermeneutics of Nature and Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 6.

Still, defining modernity as a method or a discourse does not in itself justify calling the nineteenth century the modern era. What I believe makes the nineteenth century unique is the potent combination of three inter-related factors: its specific timeline (1800-1900); the breadth and magnitude of change within that timeline; and the stark difference in individual human lives at the timeline's beginning and end. When looking at the year 1800 one can immediately identify many of the threads that would eventually become modernity. But each of those threads arose at a different historical moment, and had yet to come together to constitute widespread change at the most individual level. In 1800 it was still possible (and mostly still normal) to live a life very nearly identical with that of one's parents, grandparents, or great grandparents. (This will be very clear when we look at the Jewish community of Moravia in Chapter 2. But it applies equally to farmers in Prussia, blacksmiths in Budapest, or merchants in Leipzig.)

By 1900, such seamless historical consistency was almost impossible anywhere in Central or Western Europe. Not in a single village from the borders of the Russian Empire to the coast of the Atlantic Ocean could an individual live a social or economic life unaffected by the developments of the previous century. What were those developments? To name a few: government-mandated primary and secondary education; Jewish inclusion in the civil judiciary; the mechanization of essential industries like sewing, farming, and transportation; political assumptions influenced by the liberal ideas of Enlightenment; reforms in university curricula and scientific study; and massive urban migration. No previous century witnessed this number of fundamental daily-life changes affecting so many people in such brief a timeframe. It was in the nineteenth century that many earlier developments and ideas found their fullest flower and fruition, affecting not only the physical environment (jobs, homes, villages) of the daily European experience, but instantiating and codifying an entire regime of social and intellectual ideologies that together forced a reconsideration of much that Europeans had traditionally thought and assumed. By the end of the century, modernity was the

communal creed that fostered these changes and gave them the simulacrum of new truth. It was the shared dogma that gave to Europeans the immense energy that made possible the physical, emotional, and spiritual transformation of their world--and of ours.

Why Central Europe? This is a reasonable historiographical question. For any number of reasons this region and era hold little space in the imagination of the Anglophone world. Not until one begins a conversation about the 1880s and 1890s do Viennese music and science begin to compete with Parisian art and literature in the tales recounted of “old Europe.” Such is also the case for Jewish history in this region, where early nineteenth century Central Europe is but a few bars in the much longer symphony of *La Belle Époque*, Weimer, and the Holocaust. Without Moses Mendelssohn and his Haskala followers in mid-to-late eighteenth-century Berlin, Central Europe would be a niche topic in the history of Judaism, the sometimes-mentioned forbearer of the American Reform Movement but of very little else.

Yet it remains a fact that Central Europe from the 1820s to 1860s was at the forefront of modernity, engaging with and being shaped by most of the larger economic and social forces that affected the entire Western world by the early twentieth century. This is as much the case in the spheres of industrialization as in philosophy, in imperialism as in post-imperialism, in immigration as in liberalization. Politically and militarily weaker than their neighbors to the east and west, neither the German states nor the princes in Vienna maintained serious colonial possessions beyond the borders of geographic Europe.⁸ For Germans and those subject to the Habsburg crown, imperialism was a homegrown commodity, as was its resultant: large urban metropolises filled with people who spoke and acted differently one from another. In 1860, London and Paris were almost entirely

⁸ In the seventeenth century, Prussia and the Habsburgs maintained small colonial possessions overseas, including Ghana, Mauritania, Benin, and various islands in the East Indies. Following the establishment of the German Empire in 1871, however, Berlin ruled territories in the Pacific and sub-Saharan and East Africa.

populated by native English and French.⁹ Vienna had Austrians, certainly, but also large communities of Hungarians, Czechs, Romanians, Serbs, Italians, and Jews. Every kind of people over which it ruled came to live at the doorstep of its palaces. What we now know to be the constituents of European modernity--mass urban migration, ethnic cosmopolitanism, the give and take of liberalism and conservatism, religious adaptation and innovation--were all first seen in the capitals and provinces of Central Europe.

The Historiography of Jewish Modernity

Histories of Jewish modernization often note the significant differences between the role of the rabbi and the synagogue in, for example, 1750 and 1850, or 1600 and 1900.¹⁰ But in many of these accounts, while there is an assumption of divergence in practice and philosophy between the rabbinate and synagogues of the pre-modern and modern periods, there is no authoritative description or analysis of when that distinction arose, what it entailed, or why its implications are so profound.¹¹ The image of a rabbi standing at a lectern before a multitude of people whose extended

⁹ For an overview of urban migration in Britain and France in the second half of the nineteenth century, see Friedrich Lenger, *European Cities in the Modern Era, 1850-1914*, trans. Joel Golb (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 67-94. What Lenger shows is that most urban migrants in the nineteenth century came from the same province as their destination city. For example, London and Paris drew settlers from the vast rural regions surrounding them. Even Berlin drew from the predominantly German regions of Brandenburg and greater Prussia (called the Mark) to its east. The ethnic crowding of the Habsburg Rhine valley necessarily made for greater immigrant diversity.

¹⁰ See for example Frederick Beiser, *The Genesis of Neo-Kantianism, 1796-1880* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); Simon Schwarzfuchs, *A Concise History of the Rabbinate* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993); Jacob Neusner, ed., *The Rabbinate in America: Reshaping an Ancient Calling* (New York: Garland Publishers, 1993); and Jack Wertheimer, ed., *The American Synagogue: A Sanctuary Transformed* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

¹¹ There are some very good biographies of nineteenth-century rabbis, all of which comment on the evolving role of rabbis and religious institutions as it contextualizes their subject. But none of these works attempts to make a larger claim about the transformation of the rabbinate *an sich* during this period. See Michał Galas, *Rabbi Marcus Jastrow and His Vision for the Reform of Judaism: A Study in the History of Judaism in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Anna Tilles (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2013); Roland Tasch, *Samson Raphael Hirsch: Jüdische Erfahrungswelten Im Historischen Kontext* (Berlin: De

families he (and increasingly now, she) does not know, and who are themselves each descended from a different tradition with its own liturgy, music, languages, clothing, and food, has little historical precedent before the middle of the nineteenth century.¹² It was only beginning with the decades of mass urban migration from about 1850 onward that large numbers of culturally distinct Jews encountered one another in a single religious setting.¹³ Put plainly, there is no analysis of the creation of the modern rabbinate that contextualizes it within the economic, intellectual, and demographic transformation (often newly possible because of liberal political reforms) taking place

Gruyter, 2011); Susannah Heschel, *Abraham Geiger and the Jewish Jesus* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Sefton Temkin, *Creating American Reform Judaism: The Life and Times of Isaac Mayer Wise* (Portland, Or.: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1998); and Noah Rosenbloom, *Tradition in an Age of Reform: The Religious Philosophy of Samson Raphael Hirsch* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1976).

¹² See Max Gruenewald, “The Modern Rabbi,” *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 2 (1957): 85–97, here 90-1: “Already towards the end of the [nineteenth] century rabbis and large communities encountered excessive demands on their time...[Abraham Geiger noted that] in a small *kehillah* [community] the rabbi is not only a teacher but also peacemaker in family quarrels, initiator and founder of charitable associations, in short, here he is in the true sense a *seelsorger* [chaplain]. During the second decade of our [twentieth] century, the rabbi who was a student above all, became a faint memory. Henceforth, he had to fight for leisure in order to continue with his studies or to fill the gaps in his background. In addition to his representative duties, to speechmaking and a heavy teaching and lecturing schedule a large part of his time was spent in helping needy people and coming to the aid of an ever increasing number of distressed families that had met with the business failure and face ruin...For the orthodox rabbi there has to be added supervision of *Shechitah* [kosher butchering] and *Kashruth* [all food preparatory laws], the stream of ritual questions some of which came before his Beth Din [rabbinical court]. Considering the tasks to be shouldered, the heavy programme [sic] and short holidays of the rabbi, it is the more remarkable that so many of the rabbis continued to study and to publish.”

¹³ During the pre-modern period, especially in trading center, it was not uncommon for small numbers of culturally distinct Jews to live in the same neighborhood. In the centuries after the establishment of the Venice Ghetto (1516), the Jewish community in that city had at least half a dozen synagogues maintained by culturally distinct Jewish communities: the Scuola Italiana for the Venetian locals; the Scuola Grande Tedesca for the Ashkenazim, or German Jewish merchants who had made their home in the republican city-state; the Scuola Canton for Jews from Southern France; and the Scuola Levantina and the Scuola Spagnola for Sephardic Jews from other parts of the Mediterranean. What we do not see until the middle of the nineteenth century are the large numbers of culturally distinct Jews coming together to practice in the same synagogues and listen to the same rabbis.

in post-Napoleonic Europe. Nor is there a study that describes such a direct line between the practices of contemporary Anglo-American Jewry and the innovations and contingencies created by mid-nineteenth-century Central European rabbis.¹⁴

This project is interested in Jewish religious practice as we see it evolve and transform in Central Europe in the middle of the nineteenth century. By focusing on practice, I avoid the theoretical pitfalls of defining “religion,” or of explaining individual belief or notions of cosmology. In the chapters to come, “theology” means the public exegesis of traditional texts (most often the Bible and Talmud) from the rabbinic canon. As the nineteenth century progressed, the rabbi increasingly took on the role of being a public preacher, someone who conveyed a theological and moral message to his community. Being a rabbi became about the public performance of Jewish ritual and belief.¹⁵ The urban communal synagogue with which the rabbi became intimately associated by the end of the nineteenth century was a place for the display of religion, in a context in which the outward demonstration of piety or commanded practice was rapidly lessening.¹⁶ For Jews

¹⁴ A number of earlier works have examined various aspects of this phenomenon. See Margit Schad, *Rabbiner Michael Sachs: Judentum Als Höhere Lebensanschauung* (Hildesheim: Olms, 2007); Carsten Wilke, *“Den Talmud Und Den Kant”: Rabbinerausbildung an Der Schwelle Zur Moderne* (Hildesheim: Olms, 2003); Andreas Brämer, *Rabbiner Zacharias Frankel: Wissenschaft Des Judentums Und Konservative Reform Im 19. Jahrhundert* (Hildesheim: Olms, 2000); and David Ellenson, *Rabbi Esriel Hildesheimer and the Creation of a Modern Jewish Orthodoxy* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1990).

¹⁵ For a recent work concentrating just on the importance of the rabbinical sermon in modern Judaism, see Naomi Cohen, *What the Rabbis Said: The Public Discourse of Nineteenth-Century American Rabbis* (New York: New York University Press, 2008). She makes no attempt, however, to stress the novelty of the rabbinic sermon and its place in the fundamental restructuring of communal Judaism. Similarly, half a century ago Max Gruenewald made a study of the modern rabbi, but his focus was narrowly on theological and teaching seminaries and did not address any of the broader demographic or cultural issues central to this work. See Gruenewald, “The Modern Rabbi.”

¹⁶ This was true in Central Europe by the 1870s, and eventually across the continent and the whole Anglo-American world in the twentieth century. Jews in any number of national settings could find a religious space in the synagogues of foreign towns and cities. “In todays postmodern era, religious communities have become vigorous creators of an emergent transnational civil society.” Susanne Hoeber Rudolph, “Introduction: Religion, States, and Transnational Civil Society,” in *Transnational*

in Central Europe, from the start of the nineteenth century to its end, the public practice of sacredness--of declaring the presence of God in one's midst--became ever more confined to private homes and communal synagogues. The rabbi took on the role of performing traditional belief and action. And as a weekly preacher, a wider segment of the community heard his message. But on the other side, he became mainly associated with the synagogue and its communal bureaucracy, and his intimate presence in the lives of particular families diminished.

A major instigator of this shift in religious practice and the rabbinical role was the migration of Central European Jewish communities to cities.¹⁷ With this movement, the loss of village-based religious societies forced a radical restructuring of normative religious practices and assumptions, some of the outcomes of which were the creation of central synagogues, pulpit rabbis, and weekly sermons. As Jews began dressing and acting more like their gentile neighbors, synagogues transformed from being temporary places for men's prayer to locations where Judaism could be most forcefully and openly expressed. Because urban Jewish neighborhoods were not like their rural counterparts, the synagogue began to represent one of the last places where Judaism could always be found. City streets did not have the same sort of Jewish character as those in villages. The shops did

Religion and Fading States, ed. Susanne Hoeber Rudolph and James Piscatori (Boulder, Co.: Westview Press, 1997), 1.

¹⁷ On a theoretical level, what we see happening during this Jewish demographic shift was what some scholars have called the 'transnational migration of identity.' As Peggy Levitt writes: "In [modernity], religion's fundamental universality and globalism often take precedence over its national forms. Religion, like capitalism or politics, is no longer firmly rooted in a particular country or legal system...God needs no passport because faith traditions give their followers symbols, rituals, and stories they use to create alternative sacred landscapes, marked by holy sites, shrines, and places of worships." Peggy Levitt, *God Needs No Passport: Immigrants and the Changing American Religious Landscape* (New York: New Press, 2007), 12-13. See also Peggy Levitt, "'You Know, Abraham Was Really the First Immigrant': Religion and Transnational Migration," *The International Migration Review* 37, no. 3 (2003): 847-73.

not all close on the Sabbath. Families did not have generations-long histories with their neighbors.¹⁸ To many liberal-leaning governments, urban Jews were not a semi-autonomous community, viewed as a group, but were instead semi-citizens, viewed as individuals. The synagogue became a marker of continued Jewishness and Jewish presence, a place to go to experience Jewish continuity.¹⁹

As part of this urban shift, one of the key innovations was the development of the rabbinic sermon. For most of medieval and early modern history, rabbis were concerned with the inner workings of Jewish law and belief, and synagogues were places predominantly for men's prayer and study. With the advent of the new style sermon, for the first time in Jewish history the rabbi gained a mass public forum. The idea of the preacher is itself a Christian concept, tied to a theological notion that words rather than deeds are the way humanity corresponds with divinity. The sermon gained traction through the Reformation and the Enlightenment because it suggested that ideas were the most powerful actors in human culture. Jewish preachers read Christian ones, and to a limited extent, vice versa. Yet when the content of those Jewish sermons became about the history of Israel, about Jewish ritual and practice, and about the stories of the rabbis, then we begin to observe a historical transformation. The sermon became a way of using a Christian and Enlightenment medium to promote the particularities of Jewish morality and philosophy. It evolved into the main organ through which rabbis argued for a deep connection between Jewish beliefs and non-Jewish

¹⁸ Though it is important to remember that the memory and relationship with historic towns and villages has a strong impact on their recreation and adaptation in new settings. "[S]ometimes migration is as much about the people who stay behind as it is about people who move... The immigrant experience is not a linear, irreversible journey from one membership to another. Rather, migrants pivot back and forth between sending, receiving, and other orientations at different stages of their lives." Levitt, *God Needs No Passport*, 23-4.

¹⁹ Carsten Wilke's work focuses on the dramatic change in the Central European rabbinate, but almost strictly from the perspective of rabbinical education and yeshiva culture. Little attention is paid to the broader economic movements that uprooted Jewish communities across the continent. See Wilke, "Modern Rabbinical Training: Intercultural Invention and Political Reconfiguration," in *Rabbi - Pastor - Priest: Their Roles and Profiles through the Ages*, eds. Walter Homolka and Heinz-Günther Schöttler (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013): 83-110; and idem, "Den Talmud Und Den Kant."

cultures, histories, and practices. Importantly, these sermons were directed at everyone: men and women, young and old, learned and unschooled. The sermon was not the single cause of the new communal values, but it is one of the most obvious and useful markers for tracking the evolution of Jewish thought and practice at the beginning of its modernity.

Jellinek and Europe: This Project's Narrative

Narratively constructed around the life of Adolf Jellinek, this dissertation seeks to examine a much larger transformation in the social and religious practice of Central European Jewry. In some chapters (3 and 5), Jellinek is the central force, and we will watch him creating new ideas and implementing new religious practices. In other chapters (2, 4, and 6), Jellinek is a minor character, framing the discussion of larger social and political transformations but only occasionally directly involved in political decision-making or policy implementation. Jellinek was not the first to do or think many of the strands that comprise Jewish modernity as I trace it here. Instead, in the cases where Jellinek does appear to have been the first (such as in combining a particular vision of midrash with that of public sermonizing), I seek to tell that story. But more interestingly, I think, is how involved Jellinek was in a particularly catalytic moment for the Jews of Central Europe, when a whole confluence of variables--chief among them the new urban milieu--forced religious leaders to take dramatic and unprecedented steps in the reconstruction of Jewish religious practice and ideology. This bigger story is ultimately the more important one.

The chapters that follow tell an interlocking story of Jellinek and his Central European world, one that will hopefully cast the man in a new light while likewise revealing a fascinating, overlooked, and pivotal juncture in the modern history of rabbinic Judaism. Born in a small rural village in the Habsburg Crown Land of Moravia, Jellinek moved to Prague and then Leipzig, following Jewish immigrants in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars as they made their way toward new urban hubs and centers of higher learning. Prague was already long known for its university and

Jewish school (yeshiva), and Jellinek studied at both. As a young student, Jellinek learned from the last generation of “traditional” Central European rabbinic leaders--those whose lives were defined far more by communal autonomy and provincial life than by the effects of political liberalism and industrialization. His early years were ones of immense opportunity and experimentation, but also of massive, and worrying, societal shift.

Chapter 2 traces the political and intellectual changes that accompanied Jewish modernization in the first half of the nineteenth century, interweaving it with a broad outline of Adolf Jellinek’s biography as a way of narrating the story of the rabbinical encounter with European modernity in the opening decades of the nineteenth century. It engages with the major themes that will be the focus of the later chapters: Jewish scholarship, the rabbinical sermon, the creation of urban synagogues, Jews and political liberalism, and the re-interpretation of Jewish history and thought through the lens of universalism. Chapter 3 is about Jellinek’s education in Leipzig and his entry into scientific scholarship, focused specifically on his critical study of rabbinic midrash and the methods of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*. As late as the 1840s, Leipzig was a relative newcomer in urban importance, growing in the middle part of the century into a commercial city and major European market (based around rail travel) as well as a center for book publishers. Jellinek was part of the first wave of Jewish urban migration that would fundamentally reshape the demographics of Jewish life in Europe. Importantly, Leipzig was also where Jellinek first entered the world of the communal rabbinate, presiding at the new central synagogue there from 1845-1856. The chapter concludes with an analysis of his early thinking into the reconstruction of the rabbinate and the synagogue for Jewish modernity.

The attraction of Vienna for Jewish immigrants from the rural Habsburg provinces is where we pick up in Chapter 4. Vienna is a case study in Jewish urbanism, as well as of the seminal encounter between Jewish religious practice and modern non-Jewish culture. The chapter focuses

specifically on the liturgical and theological negotiations occurring in newly urban communities, especially the “Vienna Rite” created in part by Isak Noa Mannheimer for the Viennese community after his appointment there in 1824. The chapter argues that the rabbinical sermon is not only an obvious example of religious reform but also one of the creators and solidifiers of a new sort of Jewish religious practice. These pages are also an analysis of the modern rabbi and the rabbinical sermon as they were taking shape in the first half of the nineteenth century. It describes the development of the sermon from the early modern period into its broadly accepted nineteenth-century form, and places the Jewish sermon into its Christian and Enlightenment context. The moralization of history, a concept developed by thinkers such as Kant and Hegel, became one of the first intellectual motivators for the new type of sermon. But the shifting demographics of Jewish communities, as well as the linguistic displacement of Yiddish by German, led to many other innovations as well, including the giving of weekly sermons and the focus on the relevance of Judaism in the creation of European ethics and culture.

To provide some examples of the new type of rabbinical sermon and its ideological impact on rabbinic Judaism, Chapter 5 analyzes Jellinek’s linguistic techniques and intellectual arguments to show how they represent a particular vision of Jewish religious culture in confluence with—and anticipation of—modernity. The chapter is a broad examination of the content and themes of Jellinek’s Vienna sermons, highlighting the ways Jellinek differed the most from his rabbinical colleagues across the German and English speaking worlds. It focuses on Jellinek’s sermons from Vienna and their key themes: the “other” and the stranger; truth, freedom, and justice. It likewise discusses the complex relationship that Jellinek had with *Bildung*, self-cultivation and moral education, a central motif in much German Enlightenment philosophy. I argue that Jellinek’s focus on community and history transformed the individualism of the original concept, calling instead upon the social space of the synagogue as the place for Jewish personal and moral development.

The dissertation concludes in Chapter 6 with a turn toward the future. What became of the reforms that Jellinek and his peers created in the religious life of urban Jewry? There is a direct line, I argue, between the reconstruction of Jewish religious life in mid-nineteenth-century Central Europe and the shape and values of Jewish religious practice and culture in the twentieth and twenty-first century Anglo-American world. Central European Judaism has mostly vanished, but many of its heirs found their way west. In the final decades of the nineteenth century, nearly every rabbi in the Conservative, Reform, and early American Orthodox movements (such as Young Israel and Yeshiva University) was educated in Central Europe. The great Eastern Jewish migration that frames so much of Anglo-American Jewish history encountered a religious bureaucracy and culture already well established in the Western lands, and--to an extent remarkable and rarely remarked upon--adapted itself to this existing framework. Rabbis, sermons, and central synagogues became the generally adopted religious practice of Eastern European Jewish immigrants to England and the United States, even when that system bore little resemblance to what they had experienced as children in Belorussia, Ukraine, Lithuania, or Poland. They stepped into a model already fabricated. Their co-religionists half a century prior had done no such thing. It is that first story--of innovation, imagination, and hope--that I tell in the pages that follow.

CHAPTER 2:
EMANCIPATION, MIGRATION, AND LIBERALISM:
ADOLF JELLINEK AND THE ORIGINS OF JEWISH MODERNITY IN HABSBURG
CENTRAL EUROPE

The Sages taught: Who is an *am ha'arteẓ* [an ignoramus]? Anyone who does not recite *shema* morning and evening with its blessings--[this is] the statement of Rabbi Meir. And the Rabbis say: anyone who does not don phylacteries. Ben Azzai says: Anyone who does not have ritual fringes on his garment. Rabbi Yonatan ben Yosef said: Anyone who has sons and does not raise them to study Torah. *Aberim* say: Even if one reads [Torah] and learns [Mishna] but does not serve Torah scholars, he is an *am ha'aretz*.

Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Sotah 22a.

Introduction

The changes brought about in European life over the course of the nineteenth century created many of the norms and witnessed the birth of many of the assumptions that have come to define the contemporary world. In Western and Central Europe, whole populations moved from the countryside to newly built urban centers. Across the continent, various forms of liberal and republican governance were developed and implemented, alongside the advent of state bureaucracies and new modes of transportation. Spiritual movements were born, often as branches of existing religions, sometimes as entirely new forms of belief. And machines came to replace animal and human labor in many of the most fundamental tasks of traditional life, such as farming and manufacturing. Through it all, the nineteenth century was in fact a relatively peaceful era--certainly so when compared with the destruction of the World Wars to come. Indeed, the age is primarily remembered for transformations and innovations in the social and economic spheres: urbanization,

industrialization, democratization, and a vast increase in access to secondary and university education.

This chapter examines the transformation of Jewish rural life in Central Europe through the biographical narrative of Adolf Jellinek. It describes rural traditional Jewish life in the Habsburg Czech lands and the early impact and reception of Enlightenment philosophy in the region's towns and schools. As Louise Hecht notes, traditional histories of Jewish modernization almost always begins in Berlin, or at least in Germany.¹ Frances Malino, in an attempt to complicate the picture of Berlin, compares the Prussian capital with Paris.² The work of Hillel J. Kieval and Michael L. Miller focus our attention on the importance of the Czech lands, and it is in their wake that this chapter follows.³ By tracing Jellinek's specific route, we come to see in detail the varied ways Jewish religious leaders and communities encountered modernity in Central Europe--and we see that their reactions to this form of modernity differed greatly from Jewish reformers in other parts of the German-speaking world.

Jellinek spent his school years in Ungarisch-Brod and the nearby city of Proßnitz, whose Jewish communities still mostly functioned like the traditional rural societies that had come before them. Yet change, both philosophical and political, was rapidly approaching. Moving to Prague in 1838 Jellinek joined one of Central Europe's most dynamic and innovative Jewish communities, led by rabbis who encouraged their students to study at the famed Charles University and read *maskilic*

¹ Louise Hecht, "Reevaluation of the Jewish Pantheon: Josepus Flavius and Jewish Historical Writings in Bohemia," in *Jewish Studies in the 21st Century: Prague-Europe-World*, ed. Marcela Zoufalá, (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2014), 95.

² Frances Malino, "Jewish Enlightenment in Berlin and Paris," in *Jewish Emancipation Reconsidered: The French and German Models*, Schriftenreihe Wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen Des Leo Baeck Instituts 66, eds. Michael Brenner, Vicki Caron, and Uri R. Kaufmann (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003): 27-34.

³ Hillel J. Kieval, *Languages of Community: The Jewish Experience in the Czech Lands* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); and Michael Laurence Miller, *Rabbis and Revolution: The Jews of Moravia in the Age of Emancipation* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011).

tracts. In Prague, Jellinek learned with rabbis who sought to actively and peacefully integrate the newest philosophical developments emanating from universities in Berlin, Jena, Weimar, and Paris, with traditional Jewish texts and philosophical systems. Still, while its leaders were innovative and experimental, the social and political dynamics of the Prague community were very much those of a more traditional Judaism, and the rabbis at the city's main yeshiva were not the communal educators and activists that would, within a few decades, define modern urban Judaism.

Therefore, when Jellinek left Prague for Leipzig in 1841, he had yet to see a model of the rabbi as we might recognize it today--in fact, neither had Jellinek seen an exemplar of the man he would become nor had he yet realized the role he himself would play in the creation of modern Jewish rabbinic leadership. Instead (as discussed in the next chapter), in Leipzig Jellinek sought to become a scholar, and his early years there were devoted almost entirely to the causes of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, at whose practices and values he greatly excelled. Not until he was asked to take up leadership responsibilities for the growing Leipzig Jewish community in the late 1840s did his focus begin to shift away from scholarship and toward the future of the rabbinate. By his 1857 move to Vienna (the subject of Chapter 4), Jellinek was consumed with the need to find a Jewish voice within European modernity, one that felt in congruity with Jewish tradition but was also honest about the importance and monumentality of the changes brought by advances in fields such as the natural sciences and liberal political philosophy.

This chapter is about the many valences and nuances of Central European modernity as Jews and Jewish communities experienced it in the first half of the nineteenth century. Specifically, it is about beginning to analyze the ways that Jewish religious practice developed as a reflection of changes in European social and intellectual life. The consummation of these religious reforms and political advances was--as I argue overall in this dissertation--the creation of the urban synagogue and the shift in the role of the rabbi from legal authority to communal preacher. As a way of tracing

the underlying historical context for that religious transformation, this chapter engages with the key themes of nineteenth century Jewish historiography--Enlightenment and the Haskalah; economic shifts; political liberalism and 1848--to trace and analyze the foundations of modern Jewish religious transformation. It establishes the underlying historical framework that explains many of the later developments discussed in these pages, laying out the factors and conditions that gave rise to Jewish modernity in the nineteenth century.

The Czech Lands Become Habsburg

Moravia and its neighboring province Bohemia lie in the heart of continental Europe, presenting a quintessential example of lands long buffeted by political and cultural upheaval. Perhaps because of this, their religious, economic, and social histories offer a textbook model for studying the changes that accompanied Europe's modernization, and especially of its impact on traditional rural communities. Dotted with towns, Bohemia's gem was and remains Prague, a medieval city whose illustrious castle staged some of history's grandest scenes of pageantry, diplomacy, and violence.⁴ Moravia boasts no imperial cities or centers of royal showmanship. Instead, it is composed almost entirely of fertile farmland dotted by small villages and churches. These two regions are now united into the Czech Republic and represent a Czech national homeland, but their contemporary ethnic and linguistic unity, as well as their paucity of Jewish communal life, belies a far more complex past. In the ten centuries before this one, Bohemia and Moravia were host to some of the

⁴ For an in-depth history of the Czech lands, see Derek Sayer, *The Coasts of Bohemia: A Czech History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998). For scholarship on Prague's architectural heritage, see Zdeněk Hojda, Lubomir Pořízka, and Jiří Pešek, *The Palaces of Prague* (New York: Vendome Press, 1994); and Jane Pavitt, *Prague* (Manchester, U.K.: Manchester University Press, 2000). For its culture and history, see Heinrich Pleticha and Wolfgang Müller, *Unvergängliches Prag: Die Goldene Stadt in Geschichte Und Gegenwart* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1991). For a history of medieval Moravia, see Maddalena Betti, *The Making of Christian Moravia, (858-882): Papal Power and Political Reality*, East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 450-1450, vol. 24 (Boston: Brill, 2014).

most decisive actions and home to some of the most important personages in the long succession of events that created modernity.

Governed together intermittently in the late 900s, Bohemia and Moravia were permanently united under the same crown in 1055 by Bretislaus I (1005?-1055), who bequeathed the joint provinces to his son and heir. Jewish merchants and their families had begun arriving in the region as early as the 800s, settling mainly in Prague and its outlying villages, but they also made the journey into Moravia by way of its rivers and country highways.⁵ What these Jewish migrants found was a mixture of German and Czech speaking inhabitants, alongside French, Hungarian, and Slavic traders plying the routes on their way between the continent's larger imperial cities.⁶ Of predominantly Catholic faith until Martin Luther's Reformation, many from the German peasantry were quick to take up the Protestant cause. The Jews observed these religious tumults with varying degrees of interest and apprehension.⁷ Warily eying the Protestant reformers, the small Jewish communities most often sided politically with the ruling Catholic lords, who were better able—and often more inclined—to offer them special protections in exchange for higher taxes and their peaceful loyalty.⁸

⁵ For a brief account of the history Jewish Moravia, see Bohuslav Eliáš, "Zur Geschichte Der Israelitengemeinde von Prostějov (Proßnitz)," *Husserl Studies* 10 (1994): 237–48.

⁶ Robert A. Kann and Zdeněk V. David, *The Peoples of the Eastern Habsburg Lands, 1526-1918* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1984). Writing about the latter half of the nineteenth century, Hillel J. Kieval sought to "[emphasize] the multiethnic character of the region, the linguistic dexterity and cultural ambiguity of its Jewish population..." Hillel J. Kieval, *The making of Czech Jewry: national conflict and Jewish society in Bohemia, 1870-1918* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 3.

⁷ See Zdeněk V. David, *Realism, Tolerance, and Liberalism in the Czech National Awakening: Legacies of the Bohemian Reformation* (Washington, D.C.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010); Christian Wiese, "'Let His Memory Be Holy to Us!': Jewish Interpretations of Martin Luther From the Enlightenment to the Holocaust," *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 54 (2009): 93–126.

⁸ For a brief overview of Jewish history in the Czech lands, see Alexandr Putík, Olga Sixtová, and Anita Franková, *History of the Jews in Bohemia and Moravia: Exhibition Guide*, 2 vols. (Prague: Jewish Museum in Prague, 2006).

The duchies of Bohemia and Moravia fell under Habsburg (Catholic) control in 1526 when Ferdinand I (1503-1564), then ruling prince of Austria, claimed the lands following the death of his brother-in-law, Louis II (1506-1526), King of Bohemia and Hungary.⁹ Ferdinand had married Louis's sister, Anne Jagellonica (1503-1547) in 1515 (when they were both twelve years old), the eldest daughter of Vladislaus II (1456-1516), King of Bohemia and Moravia, and a direct descendent of the illustrious Jagiellonian dynasty of Poland.¹⁰ Before her death at the age of forty-four, Anne birthed fifteen children for Ferdinand, of whom, remarkably, only two died in childhood. Anne and Ferdinand's eldest son, Maximilian (1527-1576) became, upon his father's death, Maximilian II, Holy Roman Emperor.¹¹ Anne and Ferdinand's eldest daughter, Elisabeth (1526-1545), returned to her family's native Poland and married the prince who became Sigismund II Augustus (1520-1572), the last Jagiellonian king to rule in the European east.¹²

⁹ Robert A. Kann, one of the foremost historians of the Habsburg Empire of the previous generation, begins his history of the storied kingdom with "the union of the Alpine hereditary lands and the crowns of Bohemia [and Moravia], Hungary, and Croatia in 1526-1527." Robert A. Kann, *A History of the Habsburg Empire, 1526-1918* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), xi. For religious difficulties at the beginning of Habsburg rule, see James R. Palmitessa, "The Prague Uprising of 1611: Property, Politics, and Catholic Renewal in the Early Years of Habsburg Rule," *Central European History* 31, no. 4 (1998): 299–328. On many eighteenth and nineteenth century maps of the region, what is now the Czech Republic (the rounded fist of land that pushes up into Germany) is labeled "Austria," and what is now Slovakia is labeled "Hungary." For an interesting analysis of the idea of Bohemia and Moravia for Austrian Germans in modernity, see David S. Luft, "Austrian Intellectual History and Bohemia," *Austrian History Yearbook* 38 (2007): 108–21.

¹⁰ The prestigious Jagiellonian University of Krakow, with its long list of notable alumni including Nicolaus Copernicus, owes its name to this family.

¹¹ See Paula Sutter Fichtner, *Emperor Maximilian II* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001).

¹² Sigismund's reign led to the creation of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, one of the most interesting experiments in bicameral elective monarchic rule in history. For an account of the rise and ultimately bloody destruction of the lands comprising the Commonwealth, see Timothy Snyder, *The Reconstruction of Nations: Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus, 1569–1999* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003).

The nineteenth century German historian Leopold von Ranke noted that, having been born and raised in Spain, “[Ferdinand] found it very difficult to reconcile himself to living in Germany.”¹³ But after gaining the crown of Bohemia and Moravia, “Affairs of such universal importance henceforth gave interest and significance to his life. They put an end to his uneasiness and discontent by opening a career for his activity.”¹⁴ Of Maximilian Ranke had only the highest praise: “The contemporaries of Maximilian II know of not how to praise him enough for the high degree of general cultivation he had attained...It seems as if all that was new, noble, and peculiar to the time was displayed in his single person.”¹⁵ More recent historians have been less kindly to Maximilian, due not to any sort of inhumanity on his part (he was apparently a deeply thoughtful and moderate human being), but for his incoherent religious beliefs and his ineptitude at leadership in an age of internecine Habsburg struggle.¹⁶ Still, his promotion of the German Renaissance and his role in (even if only briefly) ameliorating the schism between Catholicism and German Lutheranism left

¹³ Leopold von Ranke, *Ferdinand I and Maximilian II of Austria: An Essay on the Political and Religious State of Germany Immediately after the Reformation*, trans. Duff Gordon (London: Longman, 1853), 24.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 25.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 63. A more contemporary appraisal of Ferdinand and his times can be found in Martina Fuchs et al., eds., *Kaiser Ferdinand I.: Ein Mitteleuropäischer Herrscher*, Geschichte in Der Epoche Karls V, Bd. 5 (Munich: Aschendorff, 2005). The best English introduction might still be Kann, *A History of the Habsburg Empire*, esp. 1-53.

¹⁶ Fitchner opens her book with the sentence: “By virtually all standards, including his own, Emperor Maximilian II...was a failure.” Paula Sutter Fichtner, *Emperor Maximilian II* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 1. She goes on to list all the terrible epithets applied by recent historians to the Emperor: “Scholars who admire principled commitment have called Maximilian disappointing at best, and ethically bankrupt at worst. Crypto-Catholic, crypto-Lutheran, compromise Catholic, Catholic “Christian” (the last in the widest sense of the word), hypocrite, dissembler, vacillator, weakling...” *Ibid.*, 3. But as Fichtner notes, “principled” and “dissembler” do not mean the same thing in all centuries. In many ways—to apply a term I do not use but that should be considered appropriate nonetheless—the rabbis I write about here were debating the best ways to advance a “principled” Judaism, and their vociferous, often highly vitriolic disagreements prove that smart and thoughtful people can hold quite divergent views on what appear to be the same set of facts.

some legacy of Habsburg restraint and cultural temperance and likely kept the most egregious actions of the Counter-Reformation out of Central Europe.¹⁷

Importantly, the political stability brought by Habsburg rule to the Czech lands, as well as the generally cosmopolitan atmosphere cultivated by Maximilian II, was an incentive for Jews to move into the region from provinces farther west. In 1541, Ferdinand I had ordered the expulsion of the Jews from Prague, ostensibly for their actions as Ottoman agents in igniting a large fire that destroyed part of the city. Ferdinand mostly reversed the order in 1554, allowing the Jews safe return, but expelled them again in 1557. Maximilian officially revoked the expulsion and allowed the Jews to return to the Bohemian capital a decade later. Throughout this time (and perhaps in some part because of it), scores of small Jewish communities were founded in the two regions during their first century of united rule by Austria.¹⁸ In these decades Jews likewise moved onto dozens of manorial demesnes controlled by local lords.¹⁹

Ferdinand could claim control of Bohemia and Moravia in 1526 because of Louis II's defeat at (and death in) the Battle of Mohács in August of that year. Named for the town along the Danube River (less than twenty miles from the tripartite border of today's Croatia, Serbia, and Hungary), the battle gave the Ottomans control over much of Hungary—at that time a larger kingdom than its present day namesake.²⁰ Led by Suleiman the Magnificent (1494-1566), Sultan of the Ottomans, the

¹⁷ See Howard Louthan, *The Quest for Compromise: Peacemakers in Counter-Reformation Vienna* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

¹⁸ To note just a few using their modern Czech names: Třešť, Čkyně, Brandýs nad Labem, Miroslav, Nová Cerekev, Bzenec, Hranice, Velké Maziřiči, Heřmanův Městec, Bechyně, Golčův Jeníkov, Tábor, and Pelhřimov.

¹⁹ See Arno Pařík, ed., *Symbols of Emancipation: Nineteenth-Century Synagogues in the Czech Lands* (Prague: Jewish Museum in Prague, 2013).

²⁰ See James D. Tracy, "The Road to Szigetvár: Ferdinand I's Defense of His Hungarian Border, 1548–1566," *Austrian History Yearbook* 44 (2013): 17–36.

victory at Mohács also spurred the Muslim army on toward Vienna, Ferdinand's capital. When Suleiman began his siege of the Austrian city in 1529, Ferdinand's accession to the kingship of Bohemia provided him with a safe Prague refuge, during which time he regrouped his army and launched a counter-offensive. Slowly repulsing the Islamic invaders in the early 1530s, Ferdinand made peace with Suleiman in 1533, dividing Hungary between himself and the Ottomans.²¹

In 1556 Charles V (1500-1558), Holy Roman Emperor, abdicated the throne.²² Charles's empire encompassed lands spanning almost the entire breadth of Europe, from the Polish frontiers

²¹ See James D. Tracy, "The Habsburg Monarchy in Conflict with the Ottoman Empire, 1527–1593: A Clash of Civilizations," *Austrian History Yearbook* 46 (2015): 1–26. In 1540, Ferdinand made a half-hearted attempt to retake all of Louis's original Hungarian territories. When that failed, the House of Habsburg settled into a prolonged peace with Suleiman. Only a century and a half later, in 1683, would the Ottomans again reach the gates of Vienna in what proved to be the high water mark of Islam in Europe. The conflict, however, lasted until 1698. Called The Great Turkish War, when it was over the Islamic invaders had lost nearly all of their lands in Central Europe, with the Habsburgs gaining territory in the north Balkans and along the Adriatic coast. Continued acquisition of Ottoman territories in southeast Europe led to the Habsburg's occupation of present day Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1878; the assassination of Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand in 1914; and the fall of the Empire in 1918. For an excellent account of the Serbian and broader Balkan struggles in the nineteenth century that led to the outbreak of World War One, see Christopher Clark, *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914* (New York: Harper, 2013), 3-118. For a discussion of the shadow of the Ottomans in Austrian-Habsburg politics and culture, see the "Forum" in *Austrian History Yearbook* 40 (2009). See also Darin Hayton, "Astrology as Political Propaganda: Humanist Responses to the Turkish Retreat in Early-Sixteenth-Century Vienna," *Austrian History Yearbook* 38 (2007): 61–91.

²² Charles V has long been of interest to historians of early modern Europe. For newer histories see Martyn C. Rady, *The Emperor Charles V* (London: Longman, 1988); William S. Maltby, *The Reign of Charles V* (New York: Palgrave, 2002); Wim Blockmans, *Emperor Charles V, 1500-1558* (London: Arnold, 2002); Harald Kleinschmidt, *Charles V: The World Emperor* (Stroud, U.K.: Sutton Publishers, 2004); M. J. Rodríguez-Salgado, *The Changing Face of Empire: Charles V, Philip II, and Habsburg Authority, 1551-1559* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); and James D. Tracy, *Emperor Charles V, Impresario of War: Campaign Strategy, International Finance, and Domestic Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). For histories of Charles V and his Spanish possession, see Aurelio Espinosa, *The Empire of the Cities: Emperor Charles V, the Comunero Revolt, and the Transformation of the Spanish System* (Leiden: Brill, 2009); Sean T. Perrone, *Charles V and the Castilian Assembly of the Clergy: Negotiations for the Ecclesiastical Subsidy* (Leiden: Brill, 2008); and Hugh Thomas, *The Golden Empire: Spain, Charles V, and the Creation of America* (New York: Random House, 2010). For Charles V and the Ottomans, see James Reston, *Defenders of the Faith: Charles V, Suleyman the Magnificent, and the Battle for Europe, 1520-1536* (New York: Penguin Press, 2009).

in the east to the Atlantic waters off the coast of Spain in the west. At his abdication, however, Charles made the decision to divide his empire between two family lines, that of Ferdinand, his younger brother, which would rule Central Europe, and that of Charles's own son, Philip II, which would rule the Netherlands and Spain. From this point forth, until the abdication of Austro-Hungarian Emperor Karl I in 1918, following his army's defeat at the hands of the Allies in the First World War—a total of three hundred and sixty two years—the fates of Bohemia and Moravia were intertwined with that of Austria and her Catholic Habsburg monarch in Vienna.²³

Living alongside but culturally distinct from their German and Czech speaking neighbors, and denied most of the basic civil rights of their Christian brethren, the small Jewish communities of

²³ Between Ferdinand's accession and Jellinek's birth in 1821, all was not peaceful in Bohemia and Moravia. The Thirty Year's War (1618-1648), which decimated whole regions of Central Europe, enveloped the lands between Vienna and Prague as well. (For overviews of the Thirty Year's War, see C. V. Wedgwood, *The Thirty Years War*, ed. Anthony Grafton (New York: New York Review Books, 2005); and Peter H. Wilson, *The Thirty Years War: Europe's Tragedy* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap, 2009). Moravia was again invaded in the eighteenth century, this time by the Habsburg's co-linguists to the north, the Prussians under Frederick II (1712-1786, called "the Great"). (Frederick was a member of the Hohenzollern family, a competing dynasty vying to rule over the Germans and other peoples of Central Europe. It, too, fell from power in 1918, through the (forced) abdication of Wilhelm II following the German Empire's defeat in World War One.) Attacking in 1741 and 1744, Frederick's campaigns in the Czech lands were part of a larger attempt to protect his conquered territory in Silesia (captured from Austria in the First Silesian War, 1740-1742). As part of what is now known as The Seven Years' War (1756-1763, in the United States it is most commonly referred to as The French and Indian War), in 1758 Frederick attacked Moravia, besieging the village of Olmütz (Czech: Olomouc) in the center of the country. Later that year, Austrian forces defeated their Prussian enemies at the Battle of Domstadt (Czech: Domašov), named for the town fifteen miles northeast of Olomouc. The Habsburg victory repelled Frederick's army from Moravia and left the Crown Lands mostly free of international machinations until the coming of Napoleon a half century later. For an account of nationalist and imperial disputes over the governance of the Czech lands after 1848, see Jeremy King, "The Municipal and the National in the Bohemian Lands, 1848-1914," in *Nationalism and the Reshaping of Urban Communities in Europe, 1848-1914*, ed. William Whyte and Oliver Zimmer (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011): 17-46. For an account of Proßnitz during the War of 1805, see Walther Obrist, *Proßnitz in den Kriegstürmen des Jahres 1805: ein Quellenbeitrag zur Geschichte des III. Koalitionskrieges*, (Proßnitz: [Self-published] 1912).

Bohemia and Moravia functioned as semi-autonomous political units.²⁴ As Michael L. Miller describes, “Until [1848], Moravian Jewry was characterized by its dense settlement pattern, relatively uniform socioeconomic status, high degree of communal self-government, and a venerable supracommunal organization with a chief rabbi at its head.”²⁵ Working overwhelmingly as small-scale traders, peddlers, moneylenders, brewers, and local manufacturers (by the late eighteenth century mostly of fabrics and garments), poverty and laws kept their travel limited. Their contact with other Jews was gained mainly through passing merchants, at fairs, and in daily prayers.²⁶

Jewish Social Inclusion in Nineteenth-Century Central Europe

For the governments, citizens, and assorted ethnic and religious groups of Europe, the realignment that followed the 1815 Congress of Vienna was one of the largest since the Peace of Westphalia (1648) that ended the Catholic-Protestant wars of the seventeenth century.²⁷ After the Congress of Vienna, the Holy Roman Empire disappeared from maps, leaving Prussia the strongest

²⁴ It is important to note the difference between the rural villages where Jews resided in Central Europe, and the mythologized *shtetl* of Poland and Russia. For a wide-ranging survey of small town Jewish life in Eastern Europe, see Antony Polonsky, ed. *The Shtetl: Myth and Reality* (Oxford; Portland, Or.: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2004). See also Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern, *The Golden Age Shtetl: A New History of Jewish Life in East Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014); and Steven Katz, *The Shtetl: New Evaluations* (New York: New York University Press, 2007).

²⁵ Michael L. Miller, *Rabbis and Revolution: The Jews of Moravia in the Age of Emancipation* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 9.

²⁶ For an overview of various economic and professional restrictions placed on Jews before Emancipation, see Stefi Jersch-Wenzel, “Population Shifts and Occupational Structures,” in *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*, vol. 2, *Emancipation and Acculturation, 1780-1871*, ed. Michael Brenner, Stefi Jersch-Wenzel, and Michael A Meyer (New York, 1996), 59. See also Glenn Dynner, *Yankel’s Tavern: Jews, Liquor, and Life in the Kingdom of Poland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). For a continuation of the story of Bohemia through to the First World War, see Jeremy King, “The Municipal and the National in the Bohemian Lands, 1848–1914,” *Austrian History Yearbook* 42 (2011): 89–109.

²⁷ For an account of continued diplomatic maneuverings after 1815, see Miroslav Šedivý, “Metternich’s Plan for a Viennese Conference in 1839,” *Central European History* 44, no. 3 (September 5, 2011): 397–419.

of a fractious alliance of German kingdoms and principalities.²⁸ The House of Habsburg expanded its territories in Central and Southern Europe--the Italian Tyrol, including the cities of Trieste, Venice, and Verona, came under Austrian rule.²⁹ Britain and France, Europe's dominant international powers, expanded their presence across the globe through both direct imperial control and the forces of market capitalism. For the first time in its history France all but ceased its expansionary policies on the European continent, turning its attentions to North and West Africa and Southeast Asia. Britain, having definitively lost most of its North American possessions and become once again uninterested in the squabbles of mainland Europe, exploited recent naval victories to become the dominant force on the world's oceans--and therefore, in international trade.³⁰ And the Russian Empire, recovered from the destruction rained upon it by French forces, focused its attentions toward the Ottomans, whose control over the Balkans and the southern coast of the Black Sea caused much consternation to the Orthodox Czar and his ministers in Petersburg.

The Jews, as much or more than other peoples, exemplify the broad diversity of responses one can observe to the upheavals of the nineteenth century.³¹ In 1800, the vast majority of Central European Jewry lived in small rural or semi-rural communities, and, barring a few notable exceptions, participated in forms of non-Jewish culture (theology, music, art, literature) only along

²⁸ See the forthcoming book, Peter H. Wilson, *Heart of Europe: A History of the Holy Roman Empire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap, 2015).

²⁹ See Alan Sked, "Austria, Prussia, and the Wars of Liberation, 1813–1814," *Austrian History Yearbook* 45 (2014): 89–114.

³⁰ See Arthur Herman, *To Rule the Waves: How the British Navy Shaped the Modern World* (New York: Harper, 2004); and Robert K. Massie, *Dreadnought: Britain, Germany, and the Coming of the Great War* (New York: Random House, 1991). The latter volume has an especially enthralling account of the Battle of Trafalgar and its importance for British dominance at sea in the nineteenth century.

³¹ A recent series of volumes has sought to develop a sourcebook (in English-language translation) of texts related to nationalism and the effects of modernity on the various peoples of Central Europe. See Ahmet Ersoy *et al.*, eds., *Discourses of Collective Identity in Central and Southeast Europe (1770-1945): Texts and Commentaries*, 4 vols. (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006).

the margins.³² If, simply for the sake of setting a boundary, we call the “early modern” the years from Westphalia (1648) to the French Revolution (1789), then we can say that, during Europe’s early modern period, only a handful of Jewish thinkers made substantive contributions to the intellectual culture of European Christianity.³³ Until the middle of the nineteenth century, Jews in German-speaking or German-dominated lands contributed mainly—continuing the musical metaphor from above—in a minor key to the broader cultural lives of their host nations.

There were, of course, exceptions to the general exclusion of the broader Jewish community from European culture. In the realms of banking, medicine, and commerce there were individual Jews in positions of relatively high social or political power already in the early modern period.³⁴ In the history of philosophy, Benedict (Baruch) Spinoza (1632-1677) was a public figure even in his lifetime, and remained eagerly cited as a major voice in European thought by non-Jews in the

³² Michael Graetz describes the slow breakdown of Jewish autonomy over the eighteenth century, arguing that this led to a rising Jewish middle class before the reforms of Emancipation. It remains true, however, that the numbers of bourgeois Jews was extremely limited. Most of the community remained outside of cities in traditional rural communities, regardless of the political autonomy granted to their leaders. See Michael Graetz, “From Corporate Community to Ethnic-Religious Minority, 1750-1830,” *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 37, no. 1 (1992): 71–82. Important individuals include David Gans (1542-1613) of Prague; Raphael Levi (1685-1779) of Hanover; Marcus Herz (1747-1803) of Berlin; and Marcus Bloch (1723-1799) of Berlin.

³³ Pointedly, during the Renaissance and in the following centuries, a few Jews engaged non-Jewish audiences, but they proved unique. See Anthony Grafton and Joanna Weinberg, *I Have Always Loved the Holy Tongue: Isaac Casaubon, the Jews, and a Forgotten Chapter in Renaissance Scholarship* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap, 2011); and Allison P. Coudert and Jeffrey S. Shoulson, eds., *Hebraica Veritas?: Christian Hebraists and the Study of Judaism in Early Modern Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

³⁴ See David Ruderman, *Early Modern Jewry: A New Cultural History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010) and Dean Bell, *Jews in the Early Modern World* (Lanham, M.D.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008). For more specific studies of Jewish-Christian exchange in the early modern period, see also Vivian B. Mann, Richard I. Cohen, and Fritz Backhaus, eds. *From Court Jews to the Rothschilds: Art, Patronage, and Power 1600-1800* (Munich; New York: Prestel, 1996); Daniel Swetschinski, *Reluctant Cosmopolitans: The Portuguese Jews of Seventeenth-Century Amsterdam* (London: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2000); and Joseph Shatzmiller, *Cultural Exchange: Jews, Christians, and Art in the Medieval Marketplace* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013).

centuries after his death. But generally, as Jonathan Israel attests, the impact of Jewish thinkers, as compared with their Catholic and Protestant counterparts, remained limited well into the nineteenth century.³⁵ Further, Ronald Schechter has shown that even when a nation's literary and philosophical culture focused inordinately on the question of the Jews, the near-absence not just of Jewish voices but of actual Jews in the population as a whole is striking.³⁶

Narratives of modern Central European Jewish history often begin with Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786), whose successful friendships with the Gentile élite of mid-eighteenth-century Berlin marked the start of a Jewish presence in the European intellectual sphere.³⁷ Understood as the beginning of something new, the relative inclusion experienced by Mendelssohn and his immediate disciples certainly marked a shift in the attitudes of Germany's intellectual class, one no doubt owing

³⁵ See Jonathan Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity, 1650-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); idem, *Enlightenment Contested: Philosophy, Modernity, and the Emancipation of Man, 1670-1752* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); idem, *A Revolution of the Mind: Radical Enlightenment and the Intellectual Origins of Modern Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010); idem, *Democratic Enlightenment: Philosophy, Revolution, and Human Rights 1750-1790* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); and idem, *Revolutionary Ideas: An Intellectual History of the French Revolution from the Rights of Man to Robespierre* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014).

³⁶ Ronald Schechter, *Obstinate Hebrews: Representations of Jews in France, 1715-1815* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

³⁷ For the most authoritative biography of Mendelssohn, see Alexander Altmann, *Moses Mendelssohn: A Biographical Study* (Mobile, Ala.: University of Alabama Press, 1973). The most popular history to begin with Mendelssohn is Amos Elon, *The Pity of It All: A History of Jews in Germany, 1743-1933* (New York: Metropolitan Books/Henry Holt, 2002). Recent scholarly works that imply Mendelssohn as a beginning include Shmuel Feiner, *Haskalah and History: The Emergence of a Modern Jewish Historical Consciousness*, trans. Chaya Naor and Sondra Silverston (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2002); and David Sorkin, *The Religious Enlightenment: Protestants, Jews, and Catholics from London to Vienna* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008). Interestingly, the literary connection between Spinoza and Mendelssohn says much about the changing role of Jewish law and communal autonomy in the century between their respective births: the former's ouster from the Amsterdam Jewish community played a key role in the latter's magnum opus, wherein Mendelssohn outright rejected the rabbinical communal right to excommunication (*cherem*) as part of the Jew's integration into European civil society. Many Jewish thinkers after Mendelssohn, in an attempt to solidify Jewish gains in the sphere of civil rights, would follow this denunciation of religious *cherem*. See Michael Graetz, "From Corporate Community to Ethnic-Religious Minority, 1750-1830," *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 37, no. 1 (1992): 71-82, here 74-5.

to the liberalizing influences of the Enlightenment.³⁸ Still, it would take until long after Napoleon's invasion of Central Europe to fundamentally alter the second-class status of Jewry in the German-speaking lands. For the great majority of Jews living between France and the Russian Empire, the inclusion of a few elite philosophers into the salon culture of Berlin did little to alter the character of their daily lives, which had remained more or less the same for centuries.

For these rural non-saloniers, the political structure of the various Jewish communities of Central Europe depended heavily on the situation of the non-Jewish populations in which they resided—each government dealt with its Jewish residents in a different way. What remained fairly consistent across time and geography were the central pillars of rural Jewish life: the contents of religious practice (e.g. prayer book liturgy, biblical readings); the role of religious and lay leadership (rabbi, gabbai, community heads); and the diversity of spaces in which some form of religion was expressed (e.g., home, shop, synagogue, field). In these rural communities, when rabbis were available, or when they journeyed through, or when Jews could afford to hire them, rabbis mainly acted as arbiters of religious law (which was, to a high degree, nearly universally relied upon) and as teachers to young boys and a handful of advanced Talmud students.³⁹ Jewish prayer services, which

³⁸ It also represented a notable resurgence in Hebrew literature. Dating from the first Babylonian exile, Jews maintained a continuous tradition of Hebrew writing and publishing for both religious and non-religious texts. The modern period, however, does appear to represent a shift in the form and content of Hebrew literature. See Moshe Pelli, "When Did *Haskalah* Begin? Establishing the Beginning of *Haskalah* Literature and the Definition of 'Modernism,'" *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 44 (1999): 55–96.

³⁹ Hasidism, the form of mystically inspired Judaism that became the dominant mode of worship practiced among Jewish communities in Eastern Europe, did in fact have a different role for the rabbi than did other forms of Ashkenazik (European) Judaism. However, the role of the Hassidic rabbi, often called a *rebbe*, bears little resemblance to the new rabbinical role created by German Jews in the nineteenth century, and, outside Hassidic communities today, has had little impact on the model of the rabbi in contemporary religious Judaism. This is surprising considering that the vast majority of American Jews today are descendants of Hassidic-practicing families. But the dominant movements of Anglo-American Jewry took as their models the nineteenth century German rabbis discussing in the coming chapters.

traditionally required only the presence of ten men, had no legal need for any form of ordained clergy. The title “rabbi” imparted neither a superior nor an indispensable role in Jewish life, though rabbis acted as the main arbiters of civil disputes (e.g. contracts, loans, etc.).⁴⁰ Most of the Jews of Central Europe lived their Judaism through rituals and customs learned from their families. The core principles of Jewish practice—the male and female obligations—were taught when a child came of age; the rest of what constituted Jewish “difference” was the result of local convention and historical precedent.

It is therefore all the more extraordinary that by the year 1900 Jews constituted sizable minorities in most major cities in Central Europe, held respected positions as members of nearly every social class, and received their Jewish educations from community-sponsored religious schools. In the cities of Central Europe, Jews adopted the clothes, affects, speech patterns, and professions of their fellow non-Jewish urbanites, slowly shedding many of the physical and cultural distinctions that had maintained the (semi-) official wall between Jews and Christians from medieval times. Families that had once been small-scale rural laborers came to cities and opened shops, worked in factories, and joined the civil service. They lived in apartments instead of village houses, no longer beside a family that could trace its residence in that place five or six generations, but across a stairwell and landing from one that originated many villages, perhaps even many provinces, away. Their interactions with religious professionals--rabbis, cantors, pedagogues--no longer happened on quiet streets, in personal homes, or in centuries-old study halls, where the traditions of the leader and his community were entirely in accord. In the modern cities of the late nineteenth century, Jewish religious or educational activity occurred at large synagogues, or at various schools spread across multiple Jewish neighborhoods. These new urban institutions brought together families with diverse religious customs and different native languages and dialects. They emphasized

⁴⁰ See Israel Bartal, *The Jews of Eastern Europe, 1772-1881*, trans. Chaya Naor (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005).

Judaism as a religious practice and a moral philosophy and taught it as a subject to be studied as well as (and sometimes instead of) a routine to be lived.

The Three Brothers Jellinek

Adolf (Aron) Jellinek was born 26 June 1821 in Drslawitz (Czech: Drslavice), a small town northwest of Ungarisch-Brod (Czech: Uherský Brod) in what was the Ungarisch Hradisch (Czech: Uherské Hradiště) region of the Habsburg Crown Land of Moravia (German: Mähren; Czech: Morava, the southern portion of today's Czech Republic).⁴¹ Jellinek was the oldest of three brothers in a family we might now consider of lower middle class means. The boys were raised in a characteristically traditional Jewish home: the family celebrated the sabbath and festivals, and the children attended the local *cheder*, or Jewish boys school, in Ungarisch-Brod, where they learned to read and write in Hebrew and memorized passages from Torah and Mishna.⁴² As late as the 1820s the life of a Jewish family in Moravia more or less resembled that of one from any of the preceding four or five centuries, and Adolf's parents, Isak Löw and Sarah Back, were typical members of this rather unpretentious Jewish community spread across the southern Czech lands. Isak and Sarah,

⁴¹ For overviews of Jellinek's life, see Klaus Kempter, *Die Jellineks 1820-1955: eine familienbiographische Studie zum deutsch-jüdischen Bildungsbürgertum* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1998); and Moses Rosenmann, *Dr. Adolf Jellinek: Sein Leben und Schaffen* (Vienna: Schlesinger, 1931). For those who read Czech, see Josef Bartoš, *Uherský Brod: minulost i současnost slováckého města* (Brno: Blok, 1971). For an overview of Czech history, see Jaroslav Pánek and Oldřich Tůma, *A History of the Czech Lands* (Prague: Charles University Karolinum Press, 2009). For scholarly accounts of Czech Jewry, see Martin Joachim Wein, *History of the Jews in the Bohemian Lands* (Leiden: Brill, 2015); Hillel J. Kieval, *Languages of Community: The Jewish Experience in the Czech Lands* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Hillel J. Kieval, *The Making of Czech Jewry: National Conflict and Jewish Society in Bohemia, 1870-1918* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); and Michael L. Miller, *Rabbis and Revolution: The Jews of Moravia in the Age of Emancipation* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011). For a collection of primary sources (translated into English) about Judaism in Bohemia and Moravia from the eighteenth to twentieth centuries, see Wilma Abeles Iggers, ed., *The Jews of Bohemia and Moravia: A Historical Reader* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1992).

⁴² For an account of traditional *cheder* education, see Ephraim Kanarfogel, *The Intellectual History and Rabbinic Culture of Medieval Ashkenaz* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2013).

therefore, had little reason to suspect that theirs would be the last generation where historic norms prevailed: by their boys' teenage years, the social climate of Moravian Jewry had changed so drastically that it was not unusual for the brightest sons of rural Jews to go to school in Prague or Berlin, or for young men born to peddlers and cloth-makers to run businesses in Budapest. The generational transformation that occurred during this period was dramatic simply on this individual scale. If rabbinical Judaism itself were to survive in modernity, it would need to change as well.

Sarah never lived to see the world her sons would come to have a significant hand in building. She died in 1826, leaving Isak, a brewery attendant, to care for their three children. Sarah was the granddaughter and daughter of two Moravian rabbis, Tzvi Hirsch Broda and Aron Back, respectively, and her marriage exemplified the mostly classless society that existed among Moravia's Jewish families at the turn of the nineteenth century.⁴³ Denied many of the rights that would have allowed industrious individuals to accumulate wealth, and without the major cities that often create economic divisions between urban and rural communities, the Jews of Moravia lived more or less on equal measure with one another.⁴⁴ While religiously observant, Isak had likely not received an extensive Jewish education himself, though he clearly still knew its value: he sent all three boys to

⁴³ Zvi Hirsch Broda, who was born in Ungarisch-Brod, died in 1820, unmet by his grandsons. He was the son of David Broda, rabbi in Szenitz (Slovak: Seneca), Slovakia and in Burgenland, Austria in the closing decades of the eighteenth century. (Before the formation of the modern Hungarian and Slovak republics, the lands known as Hungary extended farther north and west than on today's map of Europe, encompassing all of what is now Slovakia. The people from what is today most of Slovakia would have been under Hungarian political control. Bratislava, formerly Pressburg, the capital of contemporary Slovakia, was at that time deep inside Hungarian lands.)

⁴⁴ Adolf Frankl-Grün, *Geschichte Der Juden in Ungarisch-Brod: Nebst Biographien von R. Moses Perls, P. Singer, Ad. Jellinek, P.F. Frankl &c. Nach Archivalien Dargestellt* (Vienna: Waizner, 1905), 49-51. As Grün explains the family tree: "Rabbi Pessach Singer had two sons-in-law: Simon Hamburger, the father of the family Hamburger-Singer in Proßnitz; and Aron, son of his sister, the wife of Rabbi Hirsch Broda in Kittsee. After the death of his first wife, Rebekka, R. Aron married the daughter of his brother-in-law, Isak Löw [no relation to Adolf's father.] He was head of the Jewish schools in Brod, later rabbi in Kojetein, and the grandfather of Dr. [Adolf] Jellinek, who bore his name [...] [Adolf's] mother, Sarah, was the granddaughter of Rabbi Hirsch Broda in Kittsee and the daughter of Rabbi Aron Back."

grade school and university, encouraging their interests and intellectual causes both at home and through extensive correspondence.

As in many families that found themselves caught up in broader cultural upheavals, sibling rivalries and petty antagonisms played out against the backdrop of international politics and shifting social opportunities. Adolf and his younger brothers Hermann (1822-1848) and Moritz (1823-1883) were, each in his own way, emblematic of the diverging paths that European modernity was creating for its Jewish minority. All three boys received their educations in Ungarisch-Brod, Proßnitz (Czech: Prostějov), Prague (Czech: Praha), and Leipzig. Adolf stayed on in Leipzig, earning his doctorate in Near Eastern languages and becoming a leading scholar of the early *Wissenschaft des Judentums*. The youngest of the three, Moritz, studied economics in Leipzig and then in Vienna before settling permanently in Budapest. In the Hungarian capital Moritz quickly rose to prominence, helping to found the city's first streetcar system and running it as its president, as well as organizing a Budapest stock exchange. For his successes, he was named a member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.⁴⁵

After his initial schooling, Hermann, the middle son and most boisterous of the brothers, traveled across Central Europe in a peripatetic life of writing and campaigning for the cause of political liberalism.⁴⁶ In Prague he studied philosophy and theology, and then economics, politics, and socialism in Leipzig.⁴⁷ After receiving his doctorate, he left Saxony for Vienna in 1847. Arriving

⁴⁵ For more about Moritz Jellinek, see Michael L. Miller, "Going Nature: Moritz Jellinek and the Modernization of the Hungarian Economy," in Jonathan Sperber, *The European Revolutions, 1848-1851* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

⁴⁶ Hermann's story is told in detail in Klaus Kempter, *Die Jellineks*.

⁴⁷ In this era, the connection between Socialism and Judaism (and therefore with anti-Semitism) had not yet been made. See Robert S. Wistrich, "Socialism and Judeophobia - Antisemitism in Europe Before 1914," *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 37 (1992): 111-45.

in a city on the brink of turmoil, his polemical style and sharp mind were highly regarded by the capital's liberal intelligentsia.⁴⁸ Participating in the failed March 1848 revolution, in the following months he authored a long treatise, *Kritische Geschichte der Wiener Revolution vom 13. März bis zum constituirenden Reichstag* (Critical History of the Vienna Revolution from the 13th of March to Its Constituent Parliament, 1848), linking the Enlightenment ideals of the French Revolution of 1789 to those promoted by Hermann and his compatriots in Vienna in 1848. A harsh critic of Austrian politics and culture ("Austria has produced no philosophers, no politicians, no economists who have any creativity. Its poetry cannot be attacked since its only object of pleasure is the factual, and it exercises no influence on the masses of the nation"⁴⁹), the book's ringing credo was "We have translated the feelings of the Revolution into thoughts,"⁵⁰ by which he meant that, despite setbacks in achieving changes to policy or governance through action, the ideology of liberalism had to persist. Tragically and no-doubt needlessly, in November 1848 Hermann, along with a handful of his compatriots, was executed in a Viennese prison, purportedly for actions committed against the Habsburg crown. They were some of the very few agitators to lose their lives in what was (by comparison with the response of other municipalities in Europe) a fairly bloodless insurgency.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Many works have been published about 1848 and its impact in Vienna, Germany, and across Europe. Some introductory texts are Hans-Joachim Hahn, *The 1848 Revolutions in German-Speaking Europe* (Harlow, U.K.; Longman, 2001); Robert John Weston Evans and H. Pogge von Strandmann, eds., *The Revolutions in Europe, 1848-1849: From Reform to Reaction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Mike Rapport, *1848: Year of Revolution* (London: Little, Brown, 2008); and Jonathan Sperber, *The European Revolutions, 1848-1851* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

⁴⁹ Hermann Jellinek, *Kritische Geschichte der Wiener Revolution vom 13. März bis zum constituirenden Reichstag* (Vienna: Sommer, 1848), iv-v.

⁵⁰ H. Jellinek, *Kritische Geschichte der Wiener Revolution*, v.

⁵¹ The relationship between Adolf and Hermann became increasingly strained throughout the 1830s and 1840s. Hermann felt that Adolf was insufficiently devoted to the liberal cause, and of the personal notes he wrote his family before his execution, Adolf appears to have received nothing. Still, Adolf's love for Hermann overrode their mutual grievances, and he named the youngest of his three sons after his departed middle brother. Max Hermann Jellinek (1868-1938) followed in his

It is clear that, in his own way, each of the brothers Jellinek spent their lives engaged with the questions raised by political activism and intellectual liberalism. Yet what is as astounding as the arc of each of their careers is the fact that such options were open to them at all. That three young Jewish boys, born in the early 1820s in rural Moravia, could grow up to attend university, publish books in German, become political activists, city planners, stock-brokers, and scholars was nearly inconceivable just two decades before their birth. This Jewish social revolution--of such great magnitude and short duration--had profound effects on the religious and cultural life of the Jewish community in Central Europe. To gain a fuller and more detailed understanding of this transformation, we will turn to look at Adolf's life specifically. His path wound through the major centers of the Central European Enlightenment, Jewish and non-Jewish, and his writings reveal a keen mind alert to modernity's dangers and possibilities.⁵² But first, we must examine the shifting idea of religion at the dawn of the nineteenth century.

Modernity and the Idea of Religion

A broad range of social, intellectual, and economic factors came together in the first half of the nineteenth century to create this transformed Jewish experience. Any list will certainly remain incomplete, but Michael Meyer provides one with which to begin. For Meyer, Jewish modernity is defined by the amalgamation of these factors: an idea of "religious autonomy of the individual"; the

father's scholarly footsteps, pursuing a doctorate in philology at the University of Vienna. In 1900 he was appointed assistant professor, and from then until his death received numerous honors and awards. In 1968, the street "Max-Jellinek-Gasse" was named in his honor in the Floridsdorf neighborhood of Vienna. (Alongside letters to their father, Isak Löw, Adolf Jellinek retained in his collection letters from his brother Hermann's youth. On one scrap, on the back of a letter written in Hebrew-German, Hermann had practiced his signature, writing "Jellinek" again and again, sometimes with large flowery J's and K's, sometimes in miniscule cursive. NLI ARC 4* 1588 (folder 58).

⁵² For a fuller treatment of the modernization of Czech Jewry, see Ruth Kestenberg-Gladstein, *Neuere Geschichte der Juden in den böhmischen Ländern*, Erster Teil: Das Zeitalter der Aufklärung 1780-1830 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1969).

need for “freedom from religious control”; the pursuit of economic and professional advancement; the expansion of educational opportunities; the institutionalization of communal governance; and the rationalization and moralization of theology.⁵³ With this list, we see already the emphasis on the individual over the collective that so defines modernity--the civil and cultural acceptance of Jews without an analogous social sanction of Judaism. Even the institutionalization of communal governance and the expansion of education were, counter-intuitively, innovations that promoted the individual over the collective. In rural Central Europe, interlocking networks of families formed the core of Jewish communities, responsible for the education of children and the upholding of traditional norms and values. With the creation of overarching communal polities in cities, the family unit was no longer the responsible party for the continuation of Jewish tradition and practice. Jewish children, as individuals, became the focus of organized education, with parents ceding oversight to elected or appointed institutional boards. Overall, families became members of communities that existed without their direct contribution, and prayed at synagogues that were maintained regardless of their personal, financial, or temporal investment.⁵⁴

What was taught in these new educational institutions (often with heavy government mandate and oversight) was also changing, though educational reforms concerning what Jewish children must learn had already been enacted in the preceding centuries. With the spreading influence of the Enlightenment, governments and intellectuals began wholesale reevaluations of the core forms of knowledge. The result was, among other things, an entirely new set of ideas about religion and its place in society. As Jonathan Sheehan writes, Enlightenment was

⁵³ Michael A. Meyer, “Reflections on Jewish Modernization,” in *Jewish History and Jewish Memory: Essays in Honor of Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi*, ed. Elisheva Carlebach, John M. Efron, and David N. Myers (Hanover, N.H: University Press of New England, 1998), 372-375.

⁵⁴ All of these families did, however, pay a Jewish tax, part of which went to fund the community’s various institutions.

the new constellation of practices and institutions—including scholarship and scholarly techniques, translations, book reviews, salons, academies, new communication tools, and new or revived techniques of data organization and storage...used to address a host of religious, historical, and philosophical questions inherited from the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the Scientific Revolution.⁵⁵

Enlightenment began a fundamental reordering of knowledge and its relationship to truth, a process that continued through the nineteenth century and into the twentieth and twenty-first.⁵⁶ Most of the institutions or practices Sheehan lists did not rely on traditional methods or chains of transmission when creating and validating knowledge. Instead, they sought new methods of inquiry and sources of historical or analytical proof.⁵⁷

In *A Secular Age*, Charles Taylor provides a framework for understanding the way the Enlightenment and its intellectual offspring reconstituted the idea of God and the practice of religion in modernity. He is interested, he writes, in the “nature of the human ethical predicament,”⁵⁸ and he describes the modern belief in God as being of one choice among a series of conditional possibilities. By the nineteenth century, multiple options for the pursuance of truth had arisen in

⁵⁵ Jonathan Sheehan, *The Enlightenment Bible: Translation, Scholarship, Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), xi-xii. See Peter Hanns Reill, *The German Enlightenment and the Rise of Historicism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975). Reill distinguishes between the German Enlightenment and its more Western cousins, the French and British Enlightenments, noting the uniquely “*bürgerlich*” mentality of the German Enlightenment: “Piety, respect for education, moderation in speech and dress, disdain for the extravagances of the feudal code of honor, and, sometimes, frugality were the hallmarks of the *bürgerlich* mentality.” Ibid., 5. Alongside their non-Jewish peers, we see a cultivation of this set of characteristics reflected in writings of early German Jewish maskilim.

⁵⁶ Which is not to say that the Enlightenment was a “secularizing” phenomenon. Rather, it was the slow development of a new idea of religion. For an account of the theological vibrancy of one Enlightenment thinker, see David Sorkin, “Reclaiming Theology for the Enlightenment: The Case of Siegmund Jacob Baumgarten (1706–1757),” *Central European History* 36, no. 4 (2003): 503–30.

⁵⁷ “The transition from medieval to...modern science and thought was not only a transition of ideas, methods, and arguments; the very ideals of science changed.” Amos Funkenstein, *Theology and the Scientific Imagination from the Middle Ages to the Seventeenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 18.

⁵⁸ Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap, 2007), 563.

Western society. God and the Bible were no longer the only (or even the preeminent) sources of ethical authority. History, biology, psychology--each of these new disciplines made a claim that it could provide the sources of truth for--and therefore answers to--the problems of the human condition.⁵⁹ “Modernity,” Louis Dupré wrote, “is an event that has transformed the relationship between the cosmos...and its human interpreter.”⁶⁰

As part of this process, over the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries religious faith came increasingly to be defined as personal and interior, with its justifications reliant not on external factors or historical traditions but on individually held beliefs. This transformation in the social conception of religion Taylor calls the “background of belief,” which by the end of the nineteenth century had led to a culture in Europe where faith in God could no longer be justified on its traditional grounds. “We have,” Taylor writes, “changed from a condition in which belief was the default option, not just for the naïve but also for those who knew, considered, talked about [God]; to a condition in which for more and more people unbelieving construals [i.e., truths that arise outside of theologies] seem at first blush the only plausible ones.”⁶¹ In other words, widespread but subtle social mores and practices are greatly responsible for sustaining individual religious belief. For Taylor, a strong and enduring faith in God is not, on the whole, something that humans intrinsically possess. Instead, when a culture is predicated on God’s being, faith remains the baseline categorical assumption of both intellectuals and “naïve” believers. When individuals are increasingly confronted with historical or moral truths that do not rely on the presence of divinity, there is a shift in the cultural context (“the background”) in which one has beliefs. Religious practice, therefore, which

⁵⁹ See Bettina Dietz, “Making Natural History: Doing the Enlightenment,” *Central European History* 43, no. 1 (March 2010): 25–46.

⁶⁰ Louis Dupré, *Passage to Modernity: An Essay in the Hermeneutics of Nature and Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 249.

⁶¹ Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 12.

had under previous backgrounds been coterminous with normal activity, in modernity became one choice among a number of seemingly equivalent options.

What were these other options for historical or social truth? In the nineteenth century, disciplines outside of theology began to assert claims to moral or ethical knowledge.⁶² The result was a near-complete redefinition of religion.⁶³ As Wilfred Cantwell Smith wrote, for intellectuals in

⁶² Already in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, among a certain branch of the intelligentsia, other branches of philosophy began to reassess the sources of moral and ethical truth. For an analysis of Spinoza and religion, see Leo Strauss, *Spinoza's Critique of Religion*, trans. E.M. Sinclair (New York: Schocken, 1965). An early critic of theology was David Hume: "What a noble privilege it is of human reason to attain the knowledge of the supreme Being; and, from the visible works of nature, be enabled to infer so sublime a principle as its supreme Creator? But turn the reverse of the medal. Survey most nations and most ages. Examine the religious principles, which have, in fact, prevailed in the world. You will scarcely be persuaded, that they are anything but sick men's dreams: Or perhaps will regard them more as the playsome whimsies of monkies in human shape, than the serious, positive, dogmatic asseverations of a being, who dignifies himself with the name of rational." David Hume, *Principle Writings on Religion including Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion and The Natural History of Religion*, ed. J.C.A. Gaskin (London: Oxford University Press, 2008), 184. John Locke searched for moral truth in legal and political agreements: "To understand political power right and derive it from its original, we must consider what state all men are naturally in, and that is a state of perfect freedom to order their actions and dispose of their possessions and persons as they think fit, within the bounds of the law of nature, without asking leave or depending upon the will of any other man." John Lock, *The Second Treatise of Government*, ed. Thomas P. Peardon (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1997), 4. And Thomas Hobbes asserted that religion was an unreliable source of truth because of its origins in human fear and scientific ignorance: "And in these four things, opinion of ghosts, ignorance of second causes, devotion towards what men fear, and taking of things causal for prognostics, consisteth the natural seed of religion; which by reason of the different fancies, judgments, and passions of several men, hath grown up into ceremonies so different, that those which are used by one man, are for the most part ridiculous to another." Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan, or the Matter, Forme and Power of a Commonwealth Ecclesiasticall and Civil*, ed. Michael Oakeshott (New York: Touchstone, 1997), 90. See also "Religion" in Voltaire, *Philosophical Dictionary*, ed. and trans. Theodore Besterman (New York: Penguin Books, 2004).

⁶³ See Guy G. Stroumsa, *A New Science: The Discovery of Religion in the Age of Reason* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2010), 8-9: "The secularization of modern times is usually seen as having permitted, or imposed, a privatization of religion, together with religion's progressive disappearance from the public space. Religion now became more and more the affair of the individual, whose choices need no longer be shared by the whole community. This is certainly true. But it is also true, although less commonly recognized, that secularization also transformed religion into a major facet of any society. In that sense, ethnology would now replace theology on the front stage of the study of religion. From the individual's point of view, religion was now privatized, meaning that one was free to choose among different possibilities of religious--or, for that matter, nonreligious--behavior...From the point of view of religious scholarship, however, the progressive weakening of

modernity “a religion is something that one believes or does not believe, something whose propositions are true or not true, something whose *locus* is in the realm of the intelligible, is up for inspection before the speculative mind.”⁶⁴ In his commentary on the Pentateuch (1867-1878), Samson Raphael Hirsch (1808-1888) sought to directly contradict this growing sentiment about religion. Commenting on Genesis 11:7 he wrote:

Every European language speaks of ‘religion.’ We, the people of religion *par excellence*, have no term for ‘religion.’ If religion is just one aspect of life, it can be assigned a name; its name defines it and delimits it, isolating it from other things. The other aspects of life are not included in religion, which has its own separate realm. If, however, all of life is connected with religion, from birth until after death, then no one can fathom the character of religion or assign it a name, inasmuch as it informs everything, and everything is included in it.⁶⁵

Following Smith and Hirsch, Tomoko Masuzawa notes that, to European thinkers in the middle of the nineteenth century, “it suddenly appeared that Christianity [i.e., religion] could be at odds with the rest of what it meant to be European, rather than being its defining characteristic. This may be as much as to say that the very idea of Europe—or, as we say today, the West—was struggling to emerge as an entity apart from the hitherto defining notion of Christendom [i.e. Taylor’s “background” of religion].”⁶⁶ (We will see this idea again in the section on liberalism and politics in Chapter Five.) Religion became identified with divine revelation and creedal beliefs, and culture took its prior place, focused on history and shared moral values centered on individual rights in a normative mode. Much of what had earlier constituted revealed religion was transformed into universalistic normative values.

Christian revelation as the only form of truth meant the opposite: in all cases religion should be studied, rather, as an individual endeavor, but within its social context.”

⁶⁴ Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 40 (emphasis in original).

⁶⁵ Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch, *The Hirsch Chumash: The Five Books of the Torah: Sefer Bereshis*, trans. Daniel Haberman (New York: Feldheim, 2006), 275.

⁶⁶ Tomoko Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions, Or, How European Universalism Was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 148.

Ungarisch-Brod and Proßnitz: Jewish Society and Moderate Religious Reform

To an outside observer, Moravian Jewish life in the early decades of the nineteenth century would have appeared remarkably similar to that of a century or more previous. Yet some parts of modernity--in the guise of philosophy, the whisperings of Emancipatory ideas, and technological innovations--was, even in the rural villages, already a part of the conversation. As early as the 1790s Habsburg political reforms dictated that modern subjects be taught in Jewish primary schools in Bohemia. As Hillel Kieval describes it, despite “deep-seated suspicions on the part of Prague’s rabbinical leadership of both the motives and effects of [modernization], figures such as Ezekiel Landau (1713-1793) and Elazar Fleckeles (1754-1826) ultimately gave their approval to the educational reforms. Between 1790 and 1831...some 17,800 children received a Western-style education at the Prague [Jewish] school.”⁶⁷ Though Moravia differed from Bohemia in its lack of central Jewish authority and its exceedingly rural character, the effects of these educational reforms nevertheless made their way to the small towns and villages of the southern half of the Czech lands. By Jellinek’s birth, the rabbis at the Proßnitz yeshiva had already been writing about Enlightenment for the better part of three decades.⁶⁸

Because the village of Drslawitz, where the three Jellineks were born, was too small to host a synagogue of its own, the family travelled to Ungarisch-Brod to attend services, the larger town three miles to the southeast.⁶⁹ It was in Drslawitz that the family could have availed itself of

⁶⁷ Kieval, *The Making of Czech Jewry*, 6.

⁶⁸ For a discussion of early (around 1800) maskilic activities in Prague, see Ruth Kestenberg-Gladstein, “A Voice From the Prague Enlightenment,” *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 9 (1964): 295–304.

⁶⁹ An image of a later synagogue constructed in 1875 in neo-Romanesque style) from the region of Ungarisch Hradisch (Czech: Uherské Hradiště) can be found in Pařík, *Židovské muzeum v Praze*, and Galerie Roberta Guttmanna (Prague, Czech Republic), *Symbols of Emancipation*, 60. For a history of the Jews of the town, see Frankl-Grün, *Geschichte Der Juden in Ungarisch-Brod*.

rabbinical services, had such been warranted, though the Jewish school was also likely run not by the rabbi but by a learned lay-member of the town's Jewish community. Still, as the sons grew older, and as Adolf showed promise and interest in rabbinic learning, the town's resident rabbi would have become an increasingly central presence in the family's life. It is important not to import the contemporary vision of "communal rabbi" onto these figures: they were neither community leaders nor activists, and certainly not particularly central in creating the cultural "Jewishness" that made these people distinct from their non-Jewish Czech neighbors.

We can get an interesting picture of rural Jewish life in the pre-Emancipation period by tracing the places of employment of the rabbis of Ungarisch-Brod. Adolf Frankl Grün demonstrated in his pamphlet on the history of the Jews of Ungarisch-Brod that the Moravian rabbinate was something of a world unto itself.⁷⁰ Often spending their entire lives in the one province, they married daughters of other rabbis or local respected families, and moved between the villages and towns of the countryside. The three rabbis who held court in Ungarisch-Brod while the Jellineks were children provide a simple example of this much wider phenomenon. Moses Jehuda Rosenfeld (1755-1828) was rabbi in Ungarisch-Brod from 1806-1828. Born in Piesling (Czech: Písečné), he was probably raised in Jamnitz (Czech: Jemnice), after which he lived in Proßnitz (where he was a private tutor alongside Moses Sofer [1762-1839]) before moving to Ungarisch-Brod--all Moravian towns.⁷¹ In 1829 Israel Wolf (d. 1830), originally from the little village of Koritschan (Czech: Koryčany) in

⁷⁰ Frankl-Grün, *Geschichte Der Juden in Ungarisch-Brod*, 46-75. The capital of Moravia, Brünn (Czech: Brno), hosted one of the more sizable Jewish communities in the territory.

⁷¹ See Michael Brocke *et al.*, eds., *Biographisches Handbuch Der Rabbiner*, 2 vols. (Munich: Saur, 2004), 751. Rosenfeld had close ties to the Back family. He is likely the rabbi who married Isak and Sara, presided over the births of Adolf, Hermann, and Moritz, and said kaddish at Sara's untimely funeral. Moses Sofer (born Moses Schreiber), also called the Chatam Sofer, was one of the most influential rabbis in Central Europe. A sharp critic of modernity, his writings and responsa continue to influence Orthodox Judaism today.

Moravia, succeeded Rosenfeld.⁷² David Buchheim (d. 1841), rabbi from 1830-1841, replaced Wolf after the latter's death. Buchheim was born in Proßnitz and studied at the yeshiva there. He married a woman from the Moravian town of Kremsier (Czech: Kroměříž) and was rabbi in the nearby villages of Kojetein (Czech: Kojetín) and Hranice before moving to Ungarisch-Brod. (One of Buchheim's few known publications is a response, published in German, to the writings of Moses Sofer.)⁷³

These three brief summaries represent dozens of others and exemplify how truly small the world of Moravian Jewry was in the centuries before modernity. The near distances of these locations (especially by American standards) and the relative infrequency of long-distance travel not only reveals the difficulty of movement in that era, but also emphasizes the vastly different expectation of what a human life was or should be. All of which should underline the enormous social disruption that accompanied the first generation of Jewish sons who engaged the new possibilities of travel in modernity. Starting in the 1820s, the brightest children of Moravian Jewry were leaving for universities and professional careers elsewhere in Central Europe--sometimes even to different kingdoms or empires. Instead of using their talents to help their neighbors, or devoting their attentions to the betterment of their own communities, they were far away, thinking about lofty ideals or building new machines.

For its size, Ungarisch-Brod was unusually fertile ground for Jewish life in the decades before Jellinek's birth. In glowing terms Grün wrote: "The rabbis [of Ungarisch-Brod] first discovered the abilities of gifted children of the community to the study of the law... Their contributions are why it has long been recorded that Ungarisch-Brod was 'a city full of sages and

⁷² Ibid., 911.

⁷³ Ibid., 215.

scribes.”⁷⁴ The senior rabbi of Ungarisch-Brod at the time of Jellinek’s birth, Moses Rosenfeld, undoubtedly played a role in this intellectual vibrancy.⁷⁵ Rosenfeld maintained the town’s tradition of cultural exchange with Proßnitz, the larger city fifty miles to the northwest, which housed a famed yeshiva long dedicated to a form of traditional rabbinic education that engaged in the debate and study of non-Jewish philosophy and writing.⁷⁶ (All three Jellinek children, because they showed intellectual promise, were sent to study at the yeshiva in Proßnitz. As Adolf remembered much later, however, he was the only one of the brothers who demonstrated an interest in Torah study.⁷⁷) Rosenfeld’s intellectually vibrant court certainly provided the young Adolf with a chance to see and hear much about the changes coming to European Jewry.

Until age thirteen Jellinek continued both his Jewish and German educations in Ungarisch-Brod, after which he left to live and study at the Proßnitz yeshiva, under the tutelage of Rabbi Moses Katz Wanefried (d. 1850), a disciple of Moses Sofer.⁷⁸ When Jellinek left Ungarisch-Brod in 1833, Buchheim had been the town’s rabbi for three years, most significantly during Adolf’s bar mitzvah, the celebration of his attainment of Jewish adulthood. That Jellinek would come of age under a series of rabbis with close ties to both the (comparatively) progressive yeshiva in Proßnitz and the

⁷⁴ Frankl-Grün, *Geschichte Der Juden in Ungarisch-Brod*, 47.

⁷⁵ See Brocke *et al.*, *Biographisches Handbuch der Rabbiner*, 751.

⁷⁶ See the extensive index listing for “Uherský Brod” in Adolf Frankl-Grün, *Geschichte Der Juden in Ungarisch-Brod: Nebst Biographien von R. Moses Perls, P. Singer, Ad. Jellinek, P.F. Frankl &c. Nach Archivalien Dargestellt* (Wien: Waizner, 1905).

⁷⁷ Moritz Eisler, “Feuilleton: R. Moses Katz Wanefried. Eine Reminiscenz Aus Dem Leben Des Herrn Dr. Adolf Jellinek Von Einem Jugendgenossen,” *Die Neuzeit* 21 (Friday, May 22, 1891): 207.

⁷⁸ For a brief history of the Jewish community of Proßnitz through the early twentieth century, see Bohuslav Eliáš, “Zur Geschichte der Israelitengemeinde von Prostějov (Proßnitz),” *Husserl Studies* 10 (1994): 237–48.

anti-modernist thought of Moses Sofer, offers a compelling metaphor for the promises and hazards of modernity. In this respect, Hillel Kieval writes,

[The Czech] lands provide a kind of historical laboratory in which to observe both the power and the limits of traditional Jewish authority and of conservative responses to transformative change. [A yeshiva like Proßnitz's offered] not the reactionary conservatism of [Moses] Sofer's Hungary; its resistance operated, rather, as a succession of brakes on the pace and extent of change...an effort to maintain a strict separation between educational streams without standing in the way of state-mandated progress, a valiant endeavor to marry Jewish Enlightenment to halakhic observance and respect for rabbinic authority.⁷⁹

In Proßnitz and later in Prague, Jellinek had a chance to see how the first generation of religious leaders had responded to the call of religious reforms, the opportunities afforded by modernity, and the new demands of “enlightened” states. Though many of the factors that would lead to the immense changes of the middle nineteenth century and that would make his decades as a rabbi so significant (economic reforms, large-scale urban migration, the emergence of a German-speaking Jewish bourgeois class) were still some decades off, nevertheless, a new *shulchan aruch*, a set table of Jewish intellectual modernity, was most certainly being laid out.

During Jellinek's residency there, Proßnitz was a thriving commercial town with a (relatively) large Jewish population whose leaders were central figures in a moderate form of the Haskalah-- what Michael L. Miller calls the “rabbinic Haskalah.”⁸⁰ Observing the ways that yeshivot like the one in Proßnitz responded to the Enlightenment is one of the key factors in differentiating the histories of Central and Eastern European Jewry in the early decades of modernity. Miller notes that “the students who flocked to Wanefried's yeshiva found an environment that was particularly open to

⁷⁹ Hillel J. Kieval, “The Unforeseen Consequences of Cultural Resistance: Haskalah and State-Mandated Reform in the Bohemian Lands,” *Jewish Culture and History* 13, no. 2 (November 2012): 12.

⁸⁰ “Proßnitz was not only a center of traditional Jewish learning but also a center of the conservative ‘rabbinic Haskalah’ and of moderate religious and educational reforms.” Miller, *Rabbis and Revolution*, 9.

secular studies.”⁸¹ In 1891, six decades after his years in Proßnitz, an interview with Moritz Eisler allowed Jellinek, by then an old man, the chance to recall his student days learning under Wanefried. According to Eisler, “the yeshiva of Rabbi Moses Wanefried differed from other yeshivot: besides its excellent performances in the Talmud, its advantage was that it allowed the students to deal with disciplines other than the Talmud...Here young people came together to study Jewish literature as well as the ancient and modern languages.”⁸² In the interview, Jellinek reminisced that Wanefried “was a tall figure, with large eye that exuded of spirit. He lectured before about forty young people, and the students looked at their teacher as a higher being. [On Jellinek’s first day at the yeshiva, Wanefried] threw a question to the students, only one of whom had the courage to dare shyly to try an answer.”⁸³ That student, of course, was Jellinek, and over the next three years the two grew close, with Wanefried calling Jellinek “my Ahronle” [a diminutive, friendly, nickname]. Jellinek also credited Wanefried with fostering his interest in kabbalah, even when many of the leading Jewish intellectuals of the age—including Elijah of Vilna (1720-1797), a staunch Talmudist, and the maskilim (members of the Jewish enlightenment) who saw it as naïve belief--were opposed.⁸⁴

Wanefried’s stewardship of the Proßnitz yeshiva, especially his embrace of modern languages and literature, was not, however, the only route taken by Jewish leaders in Europe at the dawn of modernity. In an example of an almost entirely opposite approach, Shaul Stampfer describes the

⁸¹ Ibid., 91. It was also from Proßnitz that Mortiz Steinschneider (1816-1907) emerged, who would sojourn briefly in Leipzig before Jellinek’s arrival there, and whose work in Oriental studies and Jewish history greatly influenced Jellinek throughout his life. On moving to Proßnitz, Jellinek had begun studying secular subjects--French, Italian, the sciences--with the doctor and private tutor Gideon Brecher.

⁸² Moritz Eisler, “Feuilleton: R. Moses Katz Wanefried. Eine Reminiscenz Aus Dem Leben Des Herrn Dr. Adolf Jellinek Von Einem Jugendgenossen.,” *Die Neuzeit* 21 (Friday, May 22, 1891): 206.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Eliyahu Stern, *The Genius: Elijah of Vilna and the Making of Modern Judaism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013).

reorganization of the Lithuanian yeshivas in the early nineteenth century. As modern ideas and values began to enter Eastern Europe, those rabbis sought

their complete organizational and sometimes even physical isolation from the local Jewish community. In the past, yeshivas had been communal institutions, but the new type of Lithuanian yeshiva was independent of the community...[W]hile all the great yeshivas of the past had been located in large cities, some of the most important of the Lithuanian yeshivas were to be found in small towns.⁸⁵

While rabbinic thought and practice was fairly uniform from the Seine to the Vistula until the latter half of the eighteenth century, by the middle of the nineteenth century these communities were creating very different religious responses to European Enlightenment.⁸⁶

Such a contrast between the rabbis of Eastern and Central Europe is striking. Previously allowed only to live in small towns or provincial villages, once granted access to larger urban centers the Jews of Germany and the Habsburg lands never returned to their rural heritage. The few yeshivot that already existed in cities (e.g., Prague) grew in size and number of students, and the seminaries founded in Central Europe in the nineteenth century were all built in major urban centers (e.g., Berlin, Breslau, Vienna, Budapest). These new schools professed to speak to and for the larger Jewish community--ironically, they did this at the very moment the Jewish culture they existed in was fracturing in historically unprecedented ways. The rhetoric emanating from these new, often progressive, liberal, or moderate, yeshivot was one of universal inclusion, which is logical, since, as Hillel Kieval notes, "The 'generation of the 1840s' was the first in the history of Bohemian Jewry to pursue gymnasium and university education in a sustained fashion; the first also to pass through the

⁸⁵ Shaul Stampfer, *Lithuanian Yeshivas of the Nineteenth Century: Creating a Tradition of Learning* (Oxford: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2012), 3.

⁸⁶ For recent studies of Lithuanian rabbinic modernity, see Gil Perl, *The Pillar of Volozhin: Rabbi Naftali Zevi Yehuda Berlin and the World of Nineteenth-Century Lithuanian Torah Scholarship* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2012); and Stampfer, *Lithuanian Yeshivas of the Nineteenth Century*.

revived and expanded system of German-Jewish primary schools dominated by committed *maskilim*.⁸⁷

This fact--that many, if not yet quite a majority, of young Jewish men were pursuing more advanced secular educations--had a profound effect on the composition of the rabbinical elite in Central Europe by the middle of the nineteenth century.⁸⁸ Many in the new generation felt tied to the social communities that existed around universities and in urban spaces, where salon and café culture dominated, rather than to their rural hometowns. Even in a small place like Proßnitz, the impulse of the rabbis was to engage modernity in the city, rather than retreat into the countryside. This decision would prove fateful for Jellinek's life: Jewish learning, he came to believe, followed the Jewish people. And when a majority of Israel was moving to the city, so too should their religious leaders and institutions.⁸⁹

The Haskalah

Brought together by a shared ideological commitment to philosophical progress, in the latter decades of the eighteenth century a group of Jewish intellectuals began to coalesce around their mutual attraction to the new ideas of Enlightenment.⁹⁰ The movement, called the Haskalah, and its

⁸⁷ Hillel J. Kieval, "The social vision of Bohemian Jews: intellectuals and community in the 1840s," in Frankel and Zipperstein, eds., *Assimilation and Community*, 247. See Carsten L. Wilke, "Modern Rabbinical Training: Intercultural Invention and Political Reconfiguration," in *Rabbi - Pastor - Priest: Their Roles and Profiles through the Ages*, eds. Walter Homolka and Heinz-Günther Schöttler (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013): 83-110.

⁸⁸ Hassidism did not gain many adherents in Bohemia or Moravia. Rabbi Samuel Shmelke Hurwitz (1726-1778), chief rabbi of Moravia, appears to have been one of the few rabbinic leaders in the region to fully devote himself to the movement.

⁸⁹ For a history of Jewish education in Moravia after 1848, see Marsha L. Rozenblit, "Creating Jewish Space: German-Jewish Schools in Moravia," *Austrian History Yearbook* 44 (2013): 108-47.

⁹⁰ For an overview of various definitions of Enlightenment, see Simon Grote, "Review-Essay: Religion and Enlightenment," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 75, no. 1 (2014): 142-44.

adherents, called maskilim, came from across the ideological spectrum of Judaism, and for most of the eighteenth century remained a small but vibrant group of likeminded scholars, writers, doctors, and teachers--a Jewish Republic of Letters.⁹¹ Born predominantly in villages along the German and Polish borderlands, these men and women sought to establish a place for Jews and Jewish ideas in the traditionally hostile or forbidden intellectual circles of cities like Berlin, Frankfurt, and Vienna. By publishing articles, starting journals, and engaging in public debates, these early maskilim inserted themselves into the cultural world of late eighteenth-century imperial Prussia and Austria.

Maskilim were not, however, Jews simply interested in joining non-Jewish intellectual circles. They also hoped their ideas would reform Judaism in ways practical and theological. As Shmuel Feiner and Natalie Naimark-Goldberg write, “as a new intellectual élite, the maskilim set themselves up as educators, providing alternative ideological leadership in competition with the rabbinical, scholarly élite that thus far had held a complete monopoly over knowledge, books, values, education, supervision over norms and behaviors, and guidance of the public.”⁹² Contesting the

⁹¹ One must be careful, of course: “The concentration on regional studies (whether of a specific city, locality or country), rather than on overall analysis, has made it logical to emphasize the high degree of autonomy which characterized the [Haskalah] movement in different areas.” Jonathan Frankel, “Assimilation and the Jews in nineteenth-century Europe: towards a new historiography,” in *Assimilation and Community: The Jews in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, eds. Jonathan Frankel and Steven J. Zipperstein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 19. For literature on the Haskalah, see Shmuel Feiner and David Jan Sorkin, eds., *New Perspectives on the Haskalah* (London: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2001); Shmuel Feiner, “Mendelssohn and Mendelssohn’s Disciples: A Re-Examination,” *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 40 (1995), 133–67; Shmuel Feiner, *Haskalah and History: The Emergence of a Modern Jewish Historical Consciousness*, trans. Chaya Naor and Sondra Silverston (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2002); Shmuel Feiner, *The Jewish Enlightenment*, trans. Chaya Naor (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); Shmuel Feiner, *Moses Mendelssohn: Sage of Modernity*, trans. Anthony Berris (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010); Shmuel Feiner, *The Origins of Jewish Secularization in Eighteenth-Century Europe*, trans. Chaya Naor (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010); and Natalie Naimark-Goldberg, *Jewish Women in Enlightenment Berlin* (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2013).

⁹² Shmuel Feiner and Natalie Naimark-Goldberg, *Cultural Revolution in Berlin: Jews in the Age of Enlightenment* (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2011), 1-2.

preeminence of the rabbis in matters of Jewish education, many of the leading teachers in the growing cities of Central Europe were in some way associated with the maskilim.

Such a “liberalism in mind” that characterized the Haskalah was, to an extent remarkable within the strictures of the period, also a liberalism in ideas about gender roles. The Haskalah was the first instance in modern Jewish history where women played a key role both in contributing to and in disseminating progressive ideas.⁹³ Henriette Herz, Rachel Varnhagen, and Fanny von Arnstein, among a score of others, were integral members of Germany’s maskilik community. Their homes were frequented by the leading minds of the late eighteenth-century, both Jewish and Gentile. As Natalie Naimark-Goldberg writes,

these women consciously cultivated their minds and attempted to exercise their own judgment, in order to analyze not only cultural products such as books and plays, sweeping political events such as the French Revolution or the Napoleonic wars, or trends in contemporary thought such as vogueish pedagogical theories, but also the prevailing gender norms that were intended to shape the world in which they lived.⁹⁴

Not allowed to formally attend gymnasium or university (though usually having received excellent private tutoring as children), these women embraced the tradition of the salon, or private intellectual gathering, which allowed them to learn from and contribute to intelligent debate. They devoted their names, reputations, and fortunes to the ideas and scholars whose works advanced their reformist agendas.

At its start, the maskilim lived primarily in cities in Central Europe--most famously in Berlin--but by the turn of the nineteenth century their works were being read as far afield as Warsaw, Padua, and London. Mendelssohn was famous in the Jewish world already by his death in 1786. But the next generation of maskilim probably made a greater sociological impact, disseminating their

⁹³ See Julius Carlebach, ed., *Zur Geschichte Der Jüdischen Frau in Deutschland* (Berlin: Metropol, 1993); Iris Parush, *Reading Jewish Women: Marginality and Modernization in Nineteenth-Century Eastern European Jewish Society* (Waltham, Mass.: Brandeis University Press, 2004); and Naimark-Goldberg, *Jewish Women in Enlightenment Berlin*.

⁹⁴ Naimark-Goldberg, *Jewish Women in Enlightenment Berlin*, 8.

works to the major centers of Jewish learning (i.e., towns hosting important yeshivot) in the German, Czech, Slovak, Austrian, Hungarian, and Polish lands. Still, there was something unique about the maskilim of Central Europe, and of Berlin in particular. They lived under benevolent monarchs, in a region where numerous wars had carved out a political landscape of borders that bore little correspondence to the languages, religions, or ethnicities of their inhabitants. This meant that the sorts of liberal reforms or institutions that could be created in Western Europe simply had no equivalents in the politics of the continent's center. Therefore, as David Sorkin wrote,

In [France and England] the symbols of Jewish self-representation were primarily political, even if the causes of resettlement and the criteria for integration patently were not. In the politically belated German nation, in contrast, culture could be the foundation for citizenship and politics. It could serve as compensation for an incomplete emancipation, consolation for an imperfect social integration, or a secure anchorage when the social and political waters turned rough.⁹⁵

Such a focus on cultural integration--as opposed to political emancipation--perhaps accounts for the turn away from religion that often accompanied the biographies of Central European maskilim. From its start, the dedication of individuals to the more traditional aspects of religious Judaism was highly variable. Moses Mendelssohn followed the usual strictures of Jewish law.⁹⁶ His friend Hartwig (Naphtali Herz) Wessely (1725-1805) did as well.⁹⁷ But their contemporaries Solomon Maimon (1753-1800), Saul Ascher (1767-1822), Lazarus Bendavid (1762-1832), and David

⁹⁵ David Sorkin, "Jews, the Enlightenment and Religious Toleration - Some Reflections," *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 37 (1992): 3.

⁹⁶ Solomon Maimon has a very loving chapter about Mendelssohn. See Solomon Maimon, *An Autobiography*, trans. J. Clark Murray (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 221-33.

⁹⁷ "Wessely's interest in the *Phaedon* [Moses Mendelssohn's translation of Plato's dialogue concerning the soul] took Mendelssohn quite by surprise. He had assumed, mistakenly, that Wessely, a man steeped in piety and in a passion for Hebrew, would look askance on one who had become so deeply involved in the German Enlightenment." Altmann, *Moses Mendelssohn*.

Friedländer (1750-1834), to name a few, did not.⁹⁸ Indeed, Mendelssohn can (rightly) be claimed as the intellectual founder of both Reform Judaism and Modern Orthodoxy. But the influence of Maimon, Ascher, and Bendavid is probably more accurately traced to the Weimar generation of Jewish philosophers: Franz Rosenzweig, Hermann Cohen, and Martin Buber. Still, because of the overwhelmingly rural and traditional nature of Jewish life in Central Europe and the relatively few maskilim in comparison, well into the early twentieth century new adherents of the Haskalah were often the first generation to leave their ancestral religious homes and lifestyles. But even for these later generations the pattern held: few maskilim remained both practicing Jews and committed philosophical reformists.⁹⁹

More importantly, though, than the religiosity of particular maskilim was the profound effect that Enlightenment ideas had on traditional Jewish theological assumptions. By the latter decades of the eighteenth century, biblical and rabbinic texts were increasingly being subject to critical readings based on rationalist explanations. In regard to religion in general, Kant famously remarked, “Hence on its own behalf morality in no way needs religion (whether objectively, as regards willing, or subjectively, as regards capability) but is rather self-sufficient by virtue of pure practical reason.”¹⁰⁰ Even for Protestantism, Kant’s complete separation of morality from revealed religion was a radical and problematic undertaking. For rabbinic Judaism, the intimacy between divine commandment and ethical action had never been disentangled. For example, biblical passages such as those in the

⁹⁸ Solomon Maimon’s autobiography is particularly interesting on this point, how a learned Talmudist became enamored of Enlightenment. Maimon, *An Autobiography*.

⁹⁹ This is not true for *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, a related but not identical movement discussed in Chapter 3.

¹⁰⁰ Immanuel Kant, *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason and Other Writings*, trans. Allen Wood and George Di Giovanni (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 33

Holiness Code of Leviticus had kept rabbinical authorities from justifying an ethical choice based on anything but divine writ.¹⁰¹

You shall not cheat in measuring length, weight, or quantity. You shall have honest balances, honest weights, an honest ephah, and an honest hin: I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt. You shall keep all my statutes and all my ordinances, and observe them: I am the Lord...You shall be holy to me; for I the Lord am holy, and I have separated you from the other peoples to be mine. (Leviticus 19:35-7, 20:26) (NRSV)

These verses do not represent a rational argument for ethical behavior. They are theological statements of truth: this is the way to act, because it is holy, and God, your god, is holy. Any philosophical position that seeks to separate the human pursuit of goodness from the Bible's mimetic position of human goodness as reflective of ultimate divine goodness is a break not only from the Bible but from the rabbinic position as well.

Yet that is precisely what much of maskilik writing sought to do. The Haskalah played a key role in undermining the traditional rabbinic narrative of Judaism at the beginning of modernity. Even for men like Mendelssohn and Wessely, whose commitment to law and practice was strong, the ideas of the Enlightenment, especially concerning the place and role of religion in public versus private life, led them to espouse ideas in strict contrast with historic modes of Jewish learning and exegesis. In his famous treatise *Jerusalem*, Mendelssohn quite clearly rejected the assertion that morality was revealed at Sinai to Israel alongside the Mosaic Law: "*I recognize no eternal truths other than those that are not merely comprehensible to human reason but can also be demonstrated and verified by human powers...no doctrinal opinions, no saving truths, no universal propositions of reason [were revealed*

¹⁰¹ This went so far as to exclude even those explanations that are expressly described in the Bible, such as why one should care for a stranger ("because you were strangers in the Land of Egypt" [Ex. 22; Lev. 19; Deut. 10]) or why one must kill an Amalekite ("Remember what Amalek did to you on your journey out of Egypt, how he attacked you on the way, when you were faint and weary, and struck down all who lagged behind you; he did not fear God" [Deut. 25]). Maimonides expressly prohibits justifying divine commandments on anything but their revealed status.

to Moses]. There the Eternal reveals to us and to all other men, at all times, through *nature* and *thing*, but never through *word* and *script*.”¹⁰²

These lines, as much as any others, have irrevocably linked Mendelssohn’s name with that of the founding ideologies of the German and American Reform Movements. But Mendelssohn’s account of Judaism is deeper and more fundamental than that. As Jonathan Hess has argued, Mendelssohn in some sense created the philosophical vision of Judaism as a religion entirely antithetical to political (i.e., governmental, coercive) power in any guise.¹⁰³ Judaism, as Mendelssohn described it, projected outward a vision of universal morality (that is why Christians could preach ethics without needing to follow the Laws), yet retained at its core a traditional communal structure. In this double step, Mendelssohn both created a definition of Judaism as a “religion”--a system of beliefs and values whose adoption one must make personally and without coercion--but likewise retained its historic peoplehood, separated from gentiles by lineage and unique, revealed responsibilities (albeit not moral codes).

Andreas Gotzmann argues that Mendelssohn’s embrace of this core Enlightenment separation--between religion (defined as belief accorded to each individual) and civil society (defined as general ethical codes enforced by secular law)--had a uniquely devastating impact on Judaism: “This general development...had a special effect on Judaism because it crushed its foundation: the

¹⁰² Moses Mendelssohn, *Jerusalem, Or On Religious Power and Judaism*, trans. Allan Arkush (Waltham, Mass.: Brandeis University Press, 1983), 89-90 (emphasis in original).

¹⁰³ See Hess, *Germans, Jews and the Claims of Modernity*, 91-135. Hess writes: “When Mendelssohn wrote to Dohm that Christians had become world conquerors, oppressors and slave traders despite the doctrine of their founder, then, he was stressing the disparity between Christian actions and Christian doctrine. But he was also setting the project of Christian imperialism in opposition to the universal, global tolerance he claimed as Jesus’s Jewish legacy, presenting Judaism as antithetical to colonial expansion. Judaism as it was taught by Mendelssohn’s Jesus, indeed, is incompatible with any form of temporal power; nothing could be further from the spirit of true religion as Mendelssohn envisions it than attempts to convert subject peoples and intervene in the realm of conscience.” Hess, *Germans, Jews and the Claims of Modernity*, 125.

definition of all aspects of life according to the *Halakhab* as God-given law.”¹⁰⁴ Mendelssohn’s ideas became the foundation for a philosophical conception of Judaism, one that unmoored the moral and ethical wisdom of the tradition from its foundations in divine commandment and regimes of enforced practice. Not only did it open the door to the creation of a philosophical Judaism. It also began the marginalization of the traditional rabbi--and of rabbinic texts in general--in the formulation of a modern, Enlightened Judaism.¹⁰⁵

Yet in no way did the publication of Mendelssohn’s *Jerusalem*, or any of the other tracts and treatises of the Haskalah, precipitate a mass Jewish attraction to the Enlightenment or a widespread forsaking of traditional practice. In their first decades, the maskilim made very little impact in the wider, more mundane world of Central European Jewry--in the lives and beliefs of the hundreds of thousands of individuals whose communities continued to exist as they had for centuries. The magnitude and importance of maskilik reforms came to fruition only a century after their first texts were written. Instead of having an immediate impact, their ideas and teachings percolated slowly through the urban élite of Jewish Europe. Only when Jews began arriving in cities in the 1850s and 1860s, with the freedom to attend gymnasium and join the professional classes, did the Haskalah’s ideology of ethics as separate from that of religious legality begin to find a broader base of adherents and promulgators.

¹⁰⁴ Andreas Gotzmann, “The Dissociation of Religion and Law in Nineteenth-Century German-Jewish Education,” *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 41 (1998): 106. For a general overview of this topic see Leora Batnitzky, *How Judaism Became a Religion: An Introduction to Modern Jewish Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011).

¹⁰⁵ I argue in the coming chapters that to combat such rabbinic marginalization, men like Adolf Jellinek created a new role for the rabbi and a new ideology of rabbinic interpretation, one that sidestepped the presumed divide between revealed religious practice and rational philosophical investigation. Jellinek, as we will see in Chapter 5, relied heavily on the revealed texts of Judaism as the foundations of moral law. But what he also said was that that morality was meant for all people. Torah was the bedrock of Enlightenment’s moral universalism, and Judaism the first incarnation of a modern liberal society.

The relatively late influence of maskilik ideology is one of the many reasons the relationship between the eighteenth-century Haskalah and Jewish communal modernity remains a complex subject. The history of nineteenth century Judaism has often been told as that of intellectual discontent--Haskalah against traditionalism. But Jewish modernity was actually a very slow paradigm shift, one focused mainly on the way Jews conducted their daily lives--more about what they ate, how they travelled, and where they prayed than about what they believed. In this respect, Jonathan Frankel wrote:

A clear example of this trend [in seeing the advent of Jewish modernity as not coterminous with the Haskalah] is the fact that in recent studies the Haskalah movement is no longer treated as necessarily a—let alone the—basic centrifugal force in a process leading from community to assimilation.¹⁰⁶ Thus, once modernization is perceived as primarily a socio-economic phenomenon, ideology becomes only one among the many varied factors of change. Urbanization, industrialization, migration, market forces and the opportunities (educational, occupational, cultural) available all combined to undermine the traditional life of the Jewish people in nineteenth-century Europe.¹⁰⁷

By its earliest historians, the Haskalah was understood to be a movement of religious reform. Scholars in the decades following the Second World War often painted it as a project of Jewish assimilation. As more contemporary studies of Enlightenment, secularism, and modernity have embraced a materialist approach, the movement's complex religious ideologies have sometimes been ignored. Religion (theology, practice, belief, ritual) and its institutions continued to play central roles in the organization of Jewish communities throughout the modern period. Only in the decades following the Second World War have we witnessed a wholesale abandonment of organized Jewish

¹⁰⁶ This quotation is now two decades old, and the term “assimilation” has mostly been replaced with “acculturation” or “secularization.” For the most part, I avoid both those terms in this dissertation, opting instead to describe transforming patterns of practice and ideologies of belief, all “authentically” Jewish in its own ways. The term “assimilation,” or even “acculturation,” implies an abandonment of an a priori Judaic core, which I do not think is justified, even when discussing the factors that “undermine” traditional Jewish life in nineteenth-century Europe.

¹⁰⁷ Jonathan Frankel, “Assimilation and the Jews in Nineteenth-Century Europe: Towards a New Historiography,” in *Assimilation and Community: The Jews in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, eds. Jonathan Frankel and Steven J. Zipperstein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 18.

life by large portions of the community in the Diaspora.¹⁰⁸ Well into the twentieth century, the number of Jews who lived outside majority-Jewish neighborhoods, did not marry Jewish, and never stepped foot inside a synagogue, was quite small.

Beginning with the Haskalah, the central ideologies of Jewish life undoubtedly began to shift. But the fact that they did not disappear is of equal importance. Michael Meyer notes that “this drive toward modernization did not simply produce the desire of the individual [Jew] to jump on board [non-Jewish forms of modernization] but also [produced] the wish to create a parallel modernization of the Jews as Jews and of Judaism as a religion that, in drawing on its own resources, had nothing to fear from modernity.”¹⁰⁹ And Shulamit Magnus writes that it is characteristic of the Jewish response to modernity that there be “an organized Jewish response to the challenge that entry into the non-Jewish world posed to Jewish continuity.”¹¹⁰ Amid the transformation of modernity, nineteenth-century Jewish leaders came to realize that religious innovation was something they were both able and expected to do. Some leaders embraced this task; some shunned it; and some pretended that their originalities were in fact simple continuations of historical precedents. What the Haskalah gave them all was the beginning of a tradition of Jewish reform, one that proactively embraced non-Jewish modes of knowledge while also seeking to retain the particular insights and values of historical Judaism.

¹⁰⁸ The recent Pew study puts this into fascinating perspective. See “A Portrait of American Jews,” Pew Research Center, accessed March 28, 2016, <http://www.pewforum.org/2013/10/01/jewish-american-beliefs-attitudes-culture-survey/>.

¹⁰⁹ Michael A. Meyer, “Reflections on Jewish Modernization,” in *Jewish History and Jewish Memory: Essays in Honor of Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi*, ed. Elisheva Carlebach, John M. Efron, and David N. Myers (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1998), 375.

¹¹⁰ Shulamit S. Magnus, *Jewish Emancipation in a German City: Cologne, 1798-1871* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 5.

Prague, the focus of the next section, was one of the most innovative centers of rabbinic Haskalah. Attempting to bring together traditional and modern texts, the rabbis in Prague encouraged their students to attend both their own lectures and those at Charles University, the city's famed institution of higher learning. Jellinek, we will see, embraced this dual mandate, and its legacy remained with him throughout his career.

Prague

After five years in Proßnitz Jellinek travelled north to Prague.¹¹¹ In 1800, Prague was home to the largest urban Jewish community anywhere in the German lands, numbering 8,500.¹¹² A third brief interruption (the first and second were in 1551 and 1557 under Ferdinand I) in Prague's Jewish occupation had occurred from 1744-1748, when Maria Theresa (1717-1780), then ruling sovereign of Bohemia and Moravia (nominally at the pleasure of her husband, Francis I [1708-1765], Holy Roman Emperor), promulgated an edict of expulsion for the Jews in the regions along the borders with Prussia (purportedly for their collaboration with the Habsburg's northern enemy). Rescinded after four years, only the Jews of Prague seem to have been displaced; those who lived on manorial estates or in villages remained materially unaffected. (On the return of the Jews to Prague in 1748, however, all Jews were forced to pay a Toleration Tax for the right to continue living in the two provinces.)¹¹³

¹¹¹ For a discussion of Jewish life in Prague during the Renaissance, see Hillel J. Kieval, "Jewish Prague, Christian Prague, and the Castle in the City's Golden Age," *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 18 (2011): 202–15.

¹¹² Stefi Jersch-Wenzel, "Population Shifts," 55.

¹¹³ For a detailed account of the activity by Jews in an attempt to halt the expulsion order, see Barouh Mevorah, "Jewish Diplomatic Activities to Prevent Expulsion of the Jews from Bohemia and Moravia in 1744-45," in Joseph Dan, ed., *Studies in Jewish History*, Binah, vol. 1 (New York: Praeger, 1989), 143-158.

A number of scholars have noted the peculiar social position of the Jews of Prague.¹¹⁴ As a population neither Czech nor German, the Jews occupied a liminal space in the city's ethnic and linguistic hierarchy--a social stratigraphy that was fast changing over the course of the nineteenth century. Prague's status as a German-speaking city, in a Czech-speaking countryside, in a German-culture dominated Empire, make it a unique geographical space with which to study the effects of modernity on Central European Jewry. Thomas Simons Jr. noted that, because of its large size, Prague's "unusual metropolitan character gave it an uncommon sensitivity to new developments elsewhere."¹¹⁵ He argued that such urbanity among the city's Jewish élite led to a number of high-profile conversions to Catholicism, and his work sought to uncover the Prague-specific milieu that made such social transitions possible (and, indeed, desirable). Still, while individual cases of conversion are fascinating, their statistical importance remains limited. What these incidents do reflect, however, was that by the turn of the nineteenth century the Prague Jewish élite were already mixing with non-Jewish society. By the 1840s, a sizable Jewish bourgeois class had developed, and it, too, learned to be similarly comfortable in gentile-dominated environments.

When Jellinek arrived in Prague in 1838, Solomon Judah Rappaport (1790-1867) had just recently been appointed head of the Landau yeshiva. The new rabbi expressed a deep interest in ensuring that his curriculum included both the newest developments of Wissenschaft alongside traditional Talmudic study.¹¹⁶ Yet Rappaport was not the first chief rabbi of Prague to inculcate a

¹¹⁴ See Eduard Goldstücker, "Jews Between Czechs and Germans Around 1848," *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 17 (1972): 61–71; Michael Anthony Riff, "Assimilation and Conversion in Bohemia: Secession From the Jewish Community in Prague 1868-1917," *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 26 (1981): 73–88; Kieval, *The Making of Czech Jewry*; and Hans Tramer, "Prague - City of Three Peoples," *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 9, no. 1 (1964): 305–39.

¹¹⁵ Thomas W. Simons, Jr., "The Prague Origins of the Güntherian Converts (1800-1850)," *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 22 (1977): 247.

¹¹⁶ We know that Rappaport's intellectual model remained forefront in Jellinek's mind for many years to come, for on November 15, 1867, the Viennese Jewish newspaper *Die Neuzeit* featured a

liberal view toward secular learning. The city had a series of rabbis whose views on gentile knowledge (especially concerning the natural sciences--investigations, they thought, into God's earth) diverged from mainstream rabbinic dogma. These included Judah Loew ben Bezalel (1520-1609), called the Maharal (*Moreinu ha-Rav Loew*);¹¹⁷ David Ben Abraham Oppenheim (d. 1736);¹¹⁸ Ezekiel ben Yehuda Landau (1713-1793), called the *Noda bi'Yebuda*;¹¹⁹ and Rappaport. Each of these rabbis left his unique imprint on the community--a historically important point, for as Ruth Kestenberg-Gladstein acclaims, "in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries [Prague] was the center of the Jewish world."¹²⁰ Beginning with Judah Loew, Prague's legacy was as an epicenter of traditional but moderate Jewish learning, a convention that continued well into the nineteenth century. Pavel Sládek describes two sides to Loew's philosophy: "the philosopher and Renaissance universalist is pushing here the limits set by...the Jewish theologian. [Loew] was re-defining Jewish tradition in the

multi-pages obituary for Rabbi Rappaport, with the lead essay penned by Jellinek. See Adolf Jellinek, "Erinnerungen an den verewigten Oberrabb. S. J. Rappaport," *Die Neuzeit* 46 (15 November 1867), 531-3. See also Adolf Kurländer, *Biografi S. L. Rapoport's* (Pest: [Self-published] 1869).

¹¹⁷ Born in Posen (Polish: Poznań), Poland, the Maharal was *Landesrabbiner* in Nikolsburg from 1553-1573 before spending the rest of his life in Prague. By the nineteenth century, his legendary creation of the Golem—a clay figure meant to protect the community from attacks during the reign of Rudolf II (1552-1612, son of Maximilian II), Holy Roman Emperor—had become a staple of Jewish mythology, and it remains so to the present day.

¹¹⁸ Oppenheim began as *Landesrabbiner* of Moravia in Nikolsburg. The Emperor named him chief rabbi of Prague in 1702.

¹¹⁹ Landau was appointed chief rabbi in 1754. See Sharon Flatto, *The Kabbalistic Culture of Eighteenth-Century Prague: Ezekiel Landau (the "Noda Bi'yehudah") and His Contemporaries* (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2010).

¹²⁰ Ruth Kestenberg-Gladstein, "A Voice From the Prague Enlightenment," *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 9 (1964): 135.

period when the existence and survival of Jewish society must have been perceived as extremely fragile in spite of its temporary economic and spiritual prosperity.”¹²¹

Two hundred years later, the Prague of Jellinek’s student days was likewise confronted with its own seeming crossroad in Jewish history. The opportunities witnessed under and afforded by the Napoleonic invasions—not only as they played out in Republican France but as they were implemented, to varying degrees of immediate success, across occupied Europe—gave Jews a sense of what it might be like to participate (almost as equals) in the broad civic life of their communities. But at what cost would that participation come? A cautious embrace of modernity seemed like a sensible approach for many of Rappaport’s generation. But as it turned out, Jellinek later discovered, modernity was not something that often arrived in moderation.

Modernity as Civil Emancipation and Changing Economies: Setting the Stage for Urban Migration

Modernity, as we have seen, is a large constellation of changes that together challenged and transformed Judaism in nineteenth century Central Europe. When for a brief few years the Napoleonic Code—which granted full citizenship to the Jews—was the reigning law over much of Europe, the possibility that something might be changed for the better in the status of the continent’s Jewish residents seemed almost conceivable.¹²² Yet the city was the place where many

¹²¹ “We can certainly say that the humanist tradition amongst Prague Jewry extended as far back as Judah Loew.” Pavel Sládek, “Judah Löw ben Betsalel—the Maharal of Prague: A Theologian with Humanist Bias,” in Marcela Zoufalá, ed., *Jewish Studies in the 21st Century: Prague—Europe—World* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2014), 82. See also Byron L. Sherwin, *Mystical Theology and Social Dissent: The Life and Works of Judah Loew of Prague* (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2006).

¹²² Simon Schwarzfuchs focuses extensively on Napoleon as the cause of the transformation of the nineteenth century rabbinate. See Simon Schwarzfuchs, *A Concise History of the Rabbinate* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 75-85. Following this discussion, however, he immediately moves to changes in rabbinical school practices, rather than continuing to discuss the social situation of European Jewry. *Ibid.*, 86-122. On Napoleon’s unique disruption of the European social order, see also Anders

Jews experienced the widest and most intrusive of modernity's developments, but the journey out of the countryside was itself an expression of economic modernism. The vast majority of those who moved to Vienna, Budapest, Leipzig, Berlin, Hamburg and dozens of other cities from the 1850s onward did not do so out of a desire to be modern. But changes in rural economies, legal rights of movement and settlement, and an interest in continued education--be it at university, trade school, or in the civil service--prompted Jews and non-Jews alike to uproot from their parents' and grandparents' villages and move to newly-built urban neighborhoods. This trend, repeated in every German and Habsburg province in the middle decades of the century, was a force for modernity itself, entirely irrespective of the ideological commitments of specific individuals.

Emancipation, we might credibly say, began for Habsburg Jews on two different dates, separated by a quarter of a century: January 2, 1782 and December 2, 1805. On the first date, Holy Roman Emperor Joseph II (1741-1790) issued an "Edict of Toleration for the Jews of Lower Austria," which granted to them a list of civil rights nominally equivalent to those enjoyed by their Christian co-inhabitants.¹²³ Extended to the Jews of Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia, and Hungary during the following months, Joseph's initial Edict signaled to Habsburg Jewry that their sovereign was willing to act on his promise of eliminating inequalities in the Empire's legal code.¹²⁴

Engberg-Pedersen, *Empire of Chance: The Napoleonic Wars and the Disorder of Things* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2015).

¹²³ The German Historical Institute in Washington DC has made the "Edict" available in English translation as part of its "German History in Documents and Images" series. It can be found at: <http://perma.cc/LW8J-AM3G>. Jacob Katz provides an analysis of the Edict and its historical implications, see Jacob Katz, *Out of the Ghetto; the Social Background of Jewish Emancipation, 1770-1870* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1973), 161-166.

¹²⁴ For a fascinating account of the implications of encroaching liberalism on the state regulation of Jewish religious observance, see Rachel Manekin, "Praying at Home in Lemberg: The *Minyan* Laws of the Habsburg Empire 1776-1848," in *Jews and Their Neighbors in Eastern Europe since 1750*, ed. Israel Bartal, Antony Polonsky, and Scott Ury (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2012), 49-69.

Though it would take until the reforms following the 1848 revolution to witness wholesale change in the Jews' civil status, and all the way until 1867 for full equality under law, Joseph's Edict suggested that the philosophical liberalism—at least where it concerned educational and employment opportunities—being advocated in the salons of Berlin and Paris was making an impact on the governance of the lands of Central Europe as well.¹²⁵ Ideals of republican liberalism, in combination with the various other elements of modernity, created the framework upon which fundamental change could be imagined and then instituted.¹²⁶ According to data collected by Stefi Jersch-Wenzel, by 1848 these reforms would have affected a Habsburg Jewish population of about 108,000 (out of 34 million total crown subjects), mostly concentrated in Bohemia and Moravia. As of that year, about 5,000 Jews resided in Vienna and Lower Austria, up from about 1,000 in 1817 (out of a total of 1.3 million).¹²⁷

The second date that modernity came to Central European Jewry was in December 1805, and this time it was through the barrel of a gun. On the second day of that month, outside the rural village of Austerlitz (Czech: Slavkov u Brna), Napoleon Bonaparte's Grand Army defeated the combined forces of the Russian and Holy Roman Empires. The House of Habsburg, accepting its defeat, signed the Treaty of Pressburg, granting Napoleon rule over its vast territories in the heart of Europe. In turn, as part of his consolidation of power, Napoleon imposed new laws on the conquered regions, including one of equal citizenship for the Jews.

¹²⁵ For a discussion of the disruptions of post-Napoleonic emancipation across the German lands, see Arno Herzig, "The Process of Emancipation: From the Congress of Vienna to the Revolution of 1848/1849," *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 37 (1992): 61–69.

¹²⁶ The lands of the Russian Empire, including those of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, lie outside this study. Their history, while in some ways reflecting that of Central Europe, is ultimately quite distinct. Generalizations made here should not be assumed to apply to lands east of the Habsburg frontier.

¹²⁷ Stefi Jersch-Wenzel, "Population Shifts," 51, 54.

Though an absolute monarch in practice, Napoleon's ideology had been informed by the French Revolution. As a young general he fought for the Republic in its wars against the Sardinians and the British in Egypt, and his vision of France was as the bringer of enlightened philosophy and moral law to the nations of the earth. In 1789 the new National Assembly in Paris debated the status of France's Jewish population, determining in the end that those Jews living within the borders of the Republic were to be granted equal citizenship under the constitution. Yet liberal philosophers, no matter how widely respected, cannot have as swift or as strong an influence as that of politicians and their armies. To the Central European Jews residing outside the sphere of Enlightenment influence in the major cities, the actions of revolutionary France, codified in military victories by Napoleon, played an outsized role in altering their perspective on the extent of civil change coming to the modern world.¹²⁸

Most Jews around the turn of the nineteenth century were born into a world of rural villages and small townships where Jewish families were deeply reliant upon one another to provide the religious and social backbone of communal life.¹²⁹ Yet by the 1820s, the French undoubtedly left behind cultures changed by occupation, and what for the Jews had been centuries of relative social segregation was rapidly dissolving. Napoleon's rule over Central Europe, though short, had given rise to a series of liberalizing reforms whose effects were quickly coming to transform the historical expectations of Jews and open possibilities for widespread educational and social advancement unprecedented in the history of Christendom. Certainly, many cities and principalities sought to turn

¹²⁸ Sorkin notes the "state-centeredness" of the Emancipation process across Europe. He credits this to the continuance of much of the old bureaucratic order between pre- and post-Emancipation times. Likewise, he considers Napoleon's invasion as being the first step toward widespread social change. See David Sorkin, "The Genesis of the Ideology of Emancipation: 1806-1840," *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 32 (1987): 11-40.

¹²⁹ For an example of Napoleon's influence on Hegel, see Ian F. McNeely, "Hegel's Württemberg Commentary: Intellectuals and the Construction of Civil Society in Revolutionary-Napoleonic Germany," *Central European History* 37, no. 3 (2004): 345-64.

back the Jewish emancipatory laws they felt had been illegally forced upon them during the occupation.¹³⁰ But with the brief implementation of Napoleonic law, as well as the unforeseen consequences of Europe's technological revolutions (only moderately felt and certainly little understood at the time of Napoleon), the forms of Jewish traditionalism highly dependent on semi-isolated rural life were in the process of vanishing forever.

What historians of European Jewry call "Emancipation" was the decades-long series of legal, political, and social reforms, which, from about 1780 to 1867, through fits, starts, reversals, and leaps, provided the Jews of continental Europe with the full equality of citizenship enjoyed by their Gentile neighbors. Christian Wilhelm Dohm's (1751-1820) influential 1781 treatise *Über die bürgerliche Verbesserung der Juden* (On the Civic Betterment of the Jews), taken up in Moses Mendelssohn's *Jerusalem, oder über religiöse Macht und Judentum* (Jerusalem, or on Religious Power and Judaism) of 1783, are considered by many historians to be two of the seminal intellectual markers on the road to Jewish social equality.¹³¹ Seen in the broader context of the Enlightenment, Jewish emancipation was part of an ideology of national growth and rejuvenation.¹³² "Bildung," the German concept of moral

¹³⁰ See Stefi Jersch-Wenzel, "Legal Status and Emancipation," in *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*, vol. 2, *Emancipation and Acculturation 1780-1871*, ed. Michael Brenner, Stefi Jersch-Wenzel, and Michael A Meyer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 7-49; and Reinhard Rürup, "German Liberalism and the Emancipation of the Jews," *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 20 (1975): 59-68. For a specific example, see Dagmar Herzog, "Anti-Judaism in Intra-Christian Conflict: Catholics and Liberals in Baden in the 1840s," *Central European History* 27, no. 3 (1994): 267-81.

¹³¹ See Hess, *Germans, Jews and the Claims of Modernity*. Much of the motivation, as Hess and others argue, for Christians in Germany turning to examine the "Jewish question," was the recognition on their part of the deplorable physical state of the Jewish community. Not particularly interested in the communal or religious wellbeing of Judaism, these reformers saw the Jews as a maligned under-class in need of education and welfare. Most Jewish advocates of "*Verbesserung*," needless to say, were less inclined to blame the tenets of Judaism for their people's social ills. See also Robert Liberles, "From Toleration to *Verbesserung*: German and English Debates on the Jews in the Eighteenth Century," *Central European History* 22, no. 1 (1989): 3-32.

¹³² For an analysis of this philosophy/ideology as it effected the Jews in Germany in the latter half of the nineteenth century (a period only marginally covered in this dissertation), see Reinhard Rürup,

self-education, became a leitmotif for the Central European Enlightenment, which, unlike its French relation, remained devotedly (if not always orthodoxly) Christian. The “German nation”—a term derived from the historic name of Central Europe (“The Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation”) and encompassing in ideology the peoples of the Habsburg lands as well—was said to be awakening to a newfound sense of self-importance. Therefore, Jews were not being given equal rights out of a sudden belief in their religion’s intrinsic worth. Instead, these German Enlighteners strove to give the Jews their individual humanity under a perceived universal ethical order while rejecting the possibility of Judaism’s own moral benefits.¹³³

The intellectual history of Emancipation is not enough, however, to explain the vast and rapid demographic transformations that overtook Jewish communities in the middle decades of the nineteenth century. As Reinhard Rürup put it, “Jewish emancipation was not an offspring of pure theory, but a product of the social changes which, beginning in the latter years of the eighteenth century, marked the transition from the old society to the new.”¹³⁴ Of these social changes, a combination of material factors associated with Europe’s economic modernization—trains, steamboats, and factories with hundreds of employees—is essential for explaining why Jewish life in 1800 looked so radically different from how it did a century later.¹³⁵

“Emancipation and Crisis: the ‘Jewish Question’ in Germany 1850-1890,” *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 20 (1975): 13–25.

¹³³ Mendelssohn engages this very argument in the first part of *Jerusalem*. As we will see, so too do many of the men who shaped the role of the rabbi in the nineteenth century.

¹³⁴ Reinhard Rürup, “Jewish Emancipation and Bourgeois Society,” *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 14 (1969): 69.

¹³⁵ For an example of the workings of a rural economy (albeit in France), see Philip T. Hoffman, *Growth in a Traditional Society: The French Countryside, 1450-1815* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 35-80.

Commenting on the Jews of Alsace, whom she argues are paradigmatic of rural Jewish populations across Central Europe, Paula E. Hyman writes:

While the dominant picture of the impact of emancipation upon European Jewry is of a rampant assimilation, a profound and rapid disruption of the traditional Jewish way of life, Alsatian Jewry presents an altogether different image. Within Alsace the village sustained traditional patterns of Jewish behavior, language, values and identity for at least two or three generations after emancipation. Only the decline of the village economy and the widespread introduction of modern educational institutions, both of which did not occur until the second half of the nineteenth century, stimulated cultural assimilation among the masses of Alsatian Jews.¹³⁶

What Hyman observes here is the seeming disconnectedness between the spread of emancipatory ideas, the enactment of those ideas, and the dissolution of traditional Jewish life. Clearly something else was at play. The delay can be accounted for if we recognize that demographic changes in Jewish life were a function of urbanization and increased economic mechanization. It was the fact of Jews moving to cities in increasing numbers that upset traditional social categories and cultural relationships, not just (or even mostly) the influence of liberal philosophies and reformist ideologies.¹³⁷

¹³⁶ Paula E. Hyman, "The social contexts of assimilation: village Jews and city Jews in Alsace," in *Assimilation and Community: The Jews in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, eds. Jonathan Frankel and Steven J. Zipperstein, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 113.

¹³⁷ In this I disagree with the scholars Daniel Frank and Matt Goldish, who write: "Most of Ashkenaz...continued to be highly traditional until at least the middle of the eighteenth century [...]. Thus, when the enormous rifts of the later eighteenth century occurred in Ashkenaz, they seemed almost inexplicable [...]. A desire for change in rabbinic culture, however, was precisely what characterized the two great movements of later eighteenth-century Judaism. One of these was the Hasidic movement of eastern Europe [...] A much smaller movement, in a far corner of the Ashkenazi world, was the *Haskalah* or *Aufklärung*, the Jewish Enlightenment, based in Germany...German rabbis and their ideas were the hub to which liberal scholars from everywhere connected." Daniel Frank and Matt Goldish, "Rabbinic Culture and Dissent: An Overview," in *Rabbinic Culture and Its Critics: Jewish Authority, Dissent, and Heresy in Medieval and Early Modern Times*, eds. Daniel Frank and Matt Goldish (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2008), 36-7.

The importance of this demographic transition cannot be overstated.¹³⁸ Modernity is the confluence of philosophy, social policy, and economics. Notions of critical inquiry and transcendental moral philosophies arrived in Jewish communities before the advent of political reforms that allowed for easier travel, resettlement, and professionalization. Emancipatory regimes were enacted before economic conditions in small towns and on manorial estates made urbanization a financial necessity and village life untenable. For example, in the city of Cologne (German: Köln), Shulamit Magness describes how the French occupation ended four hundred years of Jewish exclusion from that Rhineland city.¹³⁹ By the late eighteenth century, other nearby towns had become centers of manufacturing and light industry. What drew Jews to Cologne was its predominance as a port of trade. Dependent on river commerce, Cologne offered the Jews employment in a profession with which they were already well acquainted. Emancipation made their move possible, but it was not until economic conditions made it attractive that Jews migrated in large numbers.

Leipzig presented a similar draw to Saxony's Jews. Not on a river, Leipzig was the main trade fairground in the kingdom, a gathering place for the exchange of local and imported goods. The growth in the city's publishing sector—a business reliant on the distribution of products and frequent meetings with clients—fostered a local intelligentsia that was attractive to a rising Jewish middle class which sought access to European culture through education and professionalization.

¹³⁸ For a recent and detailed argument that urbanization is both the central component of modernity and occurred much later than generally realized, see Friedrich Lenger, *European Cities in the Modern Era, 1850-1914*, trans. Joel Golb (Leiden: Brill, 2012). One of Lenger's interests is in the "interconnections between the social production of space and variations on social practice," but notes that the "amorphous temporal beginning [of his work], which is situated between 1850 and 1880, reflects the fact that the features of organized modernity became evident in European metropolises only in the 1880s." Ibid., 6, 7. Still, one of the surprising lacunae in this important book is Lenger's infrequent use of the case of Vienna. That will be partially addressed in Chapter 4.

¹³⁹ Shulamit S. Magnus, *Jewish Emancipation in a German City: Cologne, 1798-1871* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), esp. 27-45.

Emancipation, therefore, made it possible for Jews to capitalize on the changing winds of economics. But moving for economic reasons is different than moving for philosophical ones. On the whole, it does not appear as if Jews moved to cities because they disliked the religious or social contents of their lives in small towns, in rural villages, or on manorial estates. They moved because the opportunities for economic advancement were far greater in cities.

Still, simply because Jews were not fleeing from traditional Jewish life did not mean that it was possible to take their religious or cultural customs with them either. If the Jews of the nineteenth-century city were going to maintain a sense of Jewishness and Jewish community, new institutions and processes had to be established. It is in this way that the deconstruction of one mode of traditional Jewish life led to its replacement by another. So long as Jews remained a rural people, little about their lifestyle could be (or needed to be, or was desired to be) altered by rationalism or historical criticism. When economic factors led to the urbanization of communities, Jewish cultural practices, including higher rates of literacy and primary education, made Jews more adaptable to changing economic environments.¹⁴⁰

The relatively high education and literacy levels of Jewish communal leaders might also have insulated their communities from the more jarring effects of Enlightenment rationalism. Jewish intellectuals—rabbis foremost among them—had been, from the very earliest moments of Enlightenment, actively formulating responses and integrating its ideas into their writings and teaching. Marsha Rozenblit remarks:

It is impossible to measure the extent to which the Jews who migrated to Vienna [after 1848] had already Europeanized. Some of the Jews (including those from small towns) who migrated from Bohemia, Moravia, Hungary and even Galicia had adopted the German

¹⁴⁰ For an argument about the importance of this phenomenon across Jewish history, see Maristella Botticini and Zvi Eckstein, *The Chosen Few: How Education Shaped Jewish History, 70-1492* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012).

language and modern culture before their arrival. Their urbanization therefore only augmented modernization and economic enterprise already initiated.¹⁴¹

Indeed, quite interestingly, instead of retreating from traditional religion, what these migrating Jews did instead was build institutions that could manage the transition and keep intact much of the religious life that was, perforce, lost in urban settings. Drawing on pre-existing religious offices and ideas, urban Jewish communities retrofitted Judaism for modern needs. (It was in this way that the rabbi went from being an arbiter of law to a teacher of masses, which we will examine in greater depth in Chapter 4.)

A question of utmost importance remains, however. Why rebuild religious institutions in cities at all? By the decades of urbanization, Jewish civil emancipation was widely accepted among the intellectual classes of Europe. Jewish social integration was beginning to seem inevitable. We might assume that changing economic and cultural mores would lead away from religious life—indeed, part of the Enlightenment promise to Jews was full citizenship and inclusion as individuals if they forsook their religious practice. As part of an explanation for the continued centrality of religious ritual and spaces, we might assume a particular nostalgia for religious life on the part of early waves of urban migrants. But by the second and third generations there is little reason to expect a commitment to a religiously infused society they had never experienced, or to ancient texts they could barely read, especially when loyalty to that society and those texts came at the expense of social and economic inclusion.¹⁴²

¹⁴¹ Marsha L. Rozenblit, “Jewish assimilation in Habsburg Vienna,” in Frankel and Zipperstein, eds., *Assimilation and Community*, 231.

¹⁴² The various ways Jews chose to express their continued religious traditionalism, however, led to ever deeper and more vociferous disagreements. For an account of the division between Orthodoxy and non-Orthodoxy in 1860s Budapest, see Jacob Katz, *A House Divided: Orthodoxy and Schism in Nineteenth-Century Central European Jewry*, trans. Ziporah Brody (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1998).

But that is not at all what we find. Emancipation and urbanization entirely changed the face of European Jewry, but Jews remained strongly committed to Judaism and its rituals. Again, Marsha Rozenblit writes:

The frequency of conversion to Christianity among the Jewish upper classes [in late nineteenth-century Vienna] has reinforced the notion of a rapidly assimilating Jewish population...[Perhaps more significant] was the fact that even when Jews in Vienna acculturated, they did not, for the most part, sever their ties with Jewish life. The urban environment encouraged Jews to abandon traditional Jewish life-styles, but Jews in [places like] Vienna created new forms of behavior that continued to mark them as Jews, both to themselves and to the gentiles in whose midst they lived.¹⁴³

Jewish acceptance would probably have been very much eased if Jews had rid themselves altogether of any vestiges of religious practice. That they did not do so, and more, that they went out of their way to build monumental synagogues, reform their liturgies, organize communal bureaucracies, send their children to religious schools, and create a thriving market for vernacular translations of ancient texts suggests that Judaism—as a religious phenomenon—continued to play a central role in the narrative of Jewish modernity all the way into the twentieth century.

Jellinek left Prague in 1842 with a first-tier education, and a vision of Jewish modernity that did not require him to draw stark lines between tradition and Enlightenment. His teachers, from Ungarisch-Brod to Proßnitz to Prague, were men of deep Jewish learning and remarkably open intellectual temperament. Jellinek's letters home from Prague corroborate his later memories. His correspondence—long notes to his father, shorter ones to Moritz—burst with excitement, full of what he was learning, reading, and thinking.¹⁴⁴ But the world of Jewish urbanism as we might understand it—of rabbis and monumental synagogues and weekly sermons—had not yet been developed. In none of the towns or cities of the Czech lands of the early nineteenth century would Jellinek have seen an example of the type of pulpit rabbi so common to the Anglo-American

¹⁴³ Rozenblit, "Jewish assimilation in Habsburg Vienna," 234.

¹⁴⁴ See the letters of Adolf Jellinek: NLI ARC 4* 1588, sub-series 1.3.

Judaism of our own era. Instead, Jellinek's early education had given him some of the intellectual resources to formulate a theology and practice that brought together modern learning and Jewish practice. In Leipzig, Jellinek would uncover the missing piece--midrash--which was to be his own contribution for how Judaism might retain its historic continuity but claim access to progressive values.

Conclusion

Though the new American and French constitutions were both written in the 1780s, their full impact took another half century to reach Central Europe and required developments in economics and communications before the majority of German and Habsburg Jews felt the full impact of this political shift. Still, by the end of the nineteenth century, arguing that Judaism was the root of universal morality was part of the role of the modern Jewish intellectual. Hermann Cohen (1842-1918) embodied this arrestingly in an essay from 1915:

Here, it is manifest once again how much Germanism [i.e., the German Enlightenment and modernity] and Judaism have in common. For the German idea of mankind has its origins in the Messianism [read: Universalism] of Israel's prophets, whose spirit doubtlessly affected German humanism profoundly. And prophetic Messianism must be seen as the keystone of Judaism, its crown as well as its root... [The] Jew saw his Messianic idea revitalized in and through the German spirit. For Herder [1744-1803] ushered in the dawn of a new humanity so that the Messiah of the prophets, that most unique possession of the Jew, was restored to him [i.e. the Jew] in the idealistic postulate of German ethics, a united mankind.¹⁴⁵

What we see reflected in Cohen is that, as Jews were granted access to the rights and luxuries of Europe, they likewise sought intellectual and emotional inclusion in its historical narrative and moral system. (For Cohen, this meant his idea of Germans borrowing from Jews who learned again their heritage from Germans, a process he believed permanently intertwined the two peoples and their

¹⁴⁵ Hermann Cohen, *Reason and Hope: Selections from the Jewish Writings of Hermann Cohen*, trans. Eva Jospe (New York: Norton, 1971), 180, 182. This is from his essay *Deutschtum und Judentum I* of 1915. Cohen was a major figure in the German neo-Kantian school. For this history, see Frederick Beiser, *The Genesis of Neo-Kantianism, 1796-1880* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

histories. Gershom Scholem famously disagreed.¹⁴⁶) As civil equality was granted to individuals, Judaism became personalized, the better to align Jewish lives with the new Western narrative of universal individualism.

As we have seen throughout this chapter, the factors that led to Jewish modernity were numerous and varied, and by the end of the nineteenth century they had touched every aspect of Jewish daily life. Modernity resulted not just in changes to Judaism, but in ones equally profound (and fraught) for communities of Christians and the increasing segment of secular intellectuals and youths: the redefinition of religion in the intellectual and political spheres radically altered the justification for belief and practice in the nineteenth century; economic developments altered the landscape of communal demographics; and the ideas of the Haskalah offered an alternative philosophy to that provided by the traditional yeshivot.

For Jewish communities in Central Europe, the nineteenth century was an extraordinary turning point, representing the first time that, on a broad range of issues, Jews were guaranteed rights and given access to institutions previously barred to them. The result was a generation of Jewish youths whose lives were divided by the promises of 1848. Raised in the traditional rural communities of their parents and grandparents, suddenly the gates, classrooms, bookshops, cafés, salons, and civil employment of the cities were open to them. In Central Europe by the 1860s, whole families were migrating to urban centers in vast numbers. This demographic fact, coupled with the growing attraction to intellectual liberalism among Jewish élites, profoundly affected the nature and values of Jewish religious practice from the middle of the century onward.

As I argue in the chapters to come, historians can observe the impacts of Jewish modernization most directly when they examine the central social elements of religious life in that

¹⁴⁶ See Gershom Scholem, *On Jews and Judaism in Crisis: Selected Essays*, ed. Werner J. Dannhauser (Philadelphia: Paul Dry, 2012), esp. 61-64, 65-70, and 71-92.

period: the rabbi and the synagogue. With modernization came many changes to these two foundational institutions--changes both as responses to and as innovations on wider European social realignments (e.g., civil emancipation), innovative ideologies (e.g., the rationalization of academic disciplines), and altered economic conditions (e.g., urban migration). The pages that follow lay out in greater detail the precise way these new forms of the rabbi and the synagogue were developed in the first half of the nineteenth century. They are about the detailed process by which Jewish leaders and communities experimented with forms of ritual practice and ideological alignment as they searched for ways of keeping Judaism historically continuous but socially and intellectually relevant.

CHAPTER 3:

“THE COURAGE IN SCIENCE TO SINCERITY AND TRUTH:”

ADOLF JELLINEK AND THE JEWISH SCHOLARLY TRADITION IN LEIPZIG

For in those long forgotten times the university...was still surrounded with a certain romantic nimbus. To be a university student accorded definite rights to the young academician and conferred upon him privileges far beyond those of the others of his own age.

Stefan Zweig, *The World of Yesterday*

Introduction

After a four-year residence in the Golden City on the Moldau (Czech: Vltava), in 1842 Jellinek moved again, this time to Leipzig, then the second largest city in the Kingdom of Saxony and a rapidly growing metropolis. As much as any other Central European Jewish leader of that era, Jellinek's biography embodies the potentials, transitions, and fears of modernity. But more than that, he himself was one of the chief architects of the values and practices that have come to shape modern religious Judaism. Jellinek's childhood town in rural Moravia was just beginning to experience the changes described in the pages above. The rabbis he studied with, both there and in Prague, had read the maskilik tracts and encouraged the study of languages and mathematics. But their lives and their religious practices were still fundamentally the same as those of the generations before them.

Only when Jellinek moved to Leipzig and began his studies at its university did he begin to see that a new ritual practice, with an emphasis on the synagogue, might be necessary in order to keep Judaism relevant, as well as connected with its long tradition of meaning-making and community, in the coming emancipatory age. But it was not only a new practice that was necessary,

he believed. Ritual needed to be coupled with a different theology and ideology than the one on which he was raised, a new way of interpreting Judaism that made it relevant in an age of liberalizing values and spreading philosophies of universal ethics.

This chapter examines the various elements that led to Jellinek's conception of Jewish modernity, placing him in the context of a university town experimenting with new philosophies and sciences. The following two chapters will trace in specific detail the ways Jellinek's experience (and the experiences of many of his interlocutors and co-religionists) in Leipzig and Vienna fundamentally altered Central European Jewish religious practice. This chapter is concerned with a period of transition, with the introduction of future-Jewish leaders into a still-modernizing university. Jellinek's studies in the new disciplines of philology, Orientalism, and biblical criticism gave him a language that had previously been absent from Jewish religious debate. Yet Jellinek was not content to join the ranks of Jewish scholars. Instead, by the end of his years in Leipzig he sought a return to communal religious leadership. He worried that there was no space in the new sciences for a commitment to religious values, traditions, narratives, and discourses.

Seeking to bring together the post-Enlightenment university and the rabbinical tradition as he had received it, the final two sections of this chapter focus on Jellinek's major innovations, ones that would eventually become *de rigueur* in the job of a modern rabbi. First, Jellinek looked to the non-halakhik (non-legal) traditions of rabbinic Judaism for a set of narratives and vocabularies that could be translated into a Jewish-German religious idiom. He found them in midrash, the folkloric, somewhat esoteric, always imaginative discussions of the rabbis. Beginning as a scholar, Jellinek turned away from academia and toward communal leadership, but the subjects and interests he developed in his early works remained essential to his philosophy of the modern rabbinate throughout his life. Second, in his public writings Jellinek interwove those traditional midrashic narratives with writings from contemporary German philosophy--major figures such as Goethe,

Hegel, and Kant. His early sermons and pamphlets in Leipzig, directed toward a modernizing but not university-educated Jewish community, provide the first glimpse of a new rabbinical ideal, a model unique for its time but ubiquitous in ours. In Leipzig, Jellinek was formulating a new idea of the rabbinic persona.

As we saw in Chapter 2, the strands of Jewish religious modernity were all in place in the early decades of the nineteenth century. But what we also saw was that the religious leadership in Central Europe had no pressing sociological need to engage in a major religious transformation. Jewish daily life in 1820s and 1830s Central Europe remained roughly coterminous with its historical precedents. By Jellinek's move to Leipzig in the 1840s, that was changing. His final years in the Saxon city, in the early 1850s, were part of a new sort of demographic and social tumult for the Jews of Central Europe. Families were moving in unprecedented numbers from rural towns to urban centers. It is this period--the early 1850s--that corresponds with Jellinek's focused reformulation of the rabbinic ideal of communal leadership. Instead of being compelled by the religious legality of Jewish social life in a new urban world, Jellinek focused on the moral and philosophical outlook of Judaism and its historical narratives. Just as the Germans were writing a romantic account of their past, so too should the Jews, Jellinek believed. And the Jewish narrative, he provocatively argued, was both older and wiser, and quite obviously an essential part of the universalizing story begun by the Enlightenment and carried out in politics by its liberal heirs.

This chapter opens with a discussion of the growth of Jewish life in Leipzig in the first half of the nineteenth century. Like many cities across Central Europe, from the 1830s to the 1850s Leipzig experienced a major influx of Jews, all originally from outside of Saxony, as liberal policies and economic opportunities drew families toward the urban center. The second half of this chapter is devoted to an analysis of Jellinek's contributions to Wissenschaft scholarship, including his

pioneering studies of Kabbalism and his seminal compilation of rabbinic midrashim. It concludes with an analysis of Jellinek's gradual formulation of the personae of the modern pulpit rabbi.

A Jewish Community Grows in Leipzig

Unlike Bohemia, Saxony had long been a quasi-independent territory (called an Electorate before 1806), with the princes in Dresden managing a difficult set of alliances in the shifting social and military landscape of Central Europe.¹ Saxony's wealth came primarily from trade and farming, but in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, with the coming of the Baroque Era, the ruling house invested heavily in the arts and humanities, and the capital gained great fame and honor through the splendor of its artistry. Considered one of the most beautiful cities in the world, at the turn of the nineteenth century Dresden boasted pleasure gardens along the Elbe River, an imperial museum displaying curiosities of natural history, and a fine arts gallery open to an inquisitive public.²

¹ For histories of the territory, see James N. Retallack, ed., *Saxony in German History: Culture, Society, and Politics, 1830-1933* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000). For a mid-nineteenth century account of Saxony, see Henry Mayhew, *German Life and Manners as Seen in Saxony at the Present Day with an Account of Village Life, Town Life, Fashionable Life, Domestic Life, Married Life, School and University Life, &c., of Germany at the Present Time* (London: Allen, 1864). Following the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo in 1814, the princes of Saxony sent representatives to the Congress of Vienna, which allotted them--until its absorption into the Prussian Empire in 1871--status as a fully autonomous kingdom.

² Dresden is mainly famous for its Baroque heritage. See Mary E. Frandsen, *Crossing Confessional Boundaries: The Patronage of Italian Sacred Music in Seventeenth-Century Dresden* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); Dirk Syndram *et al.*, *Princely Splendor: The Dresden Court, 1580-1620* (Dresden: Electa; Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, 2004); and Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly, *Court Culture in Dresden: From Renaissance to Baroque* (New York: Palgrave, 2002). For catalogues of Dresden's important Fine Arts collection, see Harald Marx *et al.*, *Masterpieces from Dresden* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2003); National Gallery of Art (Washington), Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York), and Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, *The Splendor of Dresden, Five Centuries of Art Collecting: An Exhibition from the State Art Collections of Dresden, German Democratic Republic* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1978); and Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister (Dresden), Staatliche Kunstsammlungen (Dresden), and Semper-Galerie (Dresden), *Picture Gallery Dresden, Old Masters* (Dresden: General Management of the Public Art Collections, 1968). Much of central Dresden, including a majority of its Baroque past, was destroyed in the Second World War. See Fred Taylor, *Dresden: Tuesday, 13 February 1945* (London: Bloomsbury, 2004). Many of these buildings were reconstructed after the war. See W. Jäger and C. A. Brebbia, *The Revival of Dresden* (Southampton, U.K.: WIT Press, 2000); Anthony Clayton and Alan Russell, *Dresden: A City Reborn* (Oxford: Berg,

Leipzig, seventy miles to the northwest, was the more demure neighbor. A center for trade and crafts from the end of the eighteenth century, the city is best known for its fairgrounds, which attracted merchants from across Central Europe.³ By the middle of the nineteenth century, those artisans and farmers were joined by book publishers, whose villa-like offices still line the streets of the city's leafy outlying neighborhoods. Today, Leipzig's most famous former resident is probably Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750), who was employed as music director at the city's St. Thomas Church from 1723 until his death.⁴ But the Leipzig Bach knew was one of few cultural attractions--especially when compared with Dresden--and its university (founded in 1409) remained a stronghold of medieval theology well into the latter decades of the eighteenth century.⁵

1999). In a melancholy tribute, W.G. Sebald wrote: "On the 27th Father's departure for Dresden, / of whose beauty his memory, as he / remarks when I question him, retains no trace." W. G. Sebald, *After Nature*, trans. Michael Hamburger (New York: Random House, 2002), 86. For a later discussion of internal Saxon politics, see Caitlin E. Murdock, "Tourist Landscapes and Regional Identities in Saxony, 1878-1938," *Central European History* 40, no. 4 (November 2007): 1-33.

³ For a discussion of the Leipzig fairs, and the Jewish part in them, see Wilhelm Harmelin, "Jews in the Leipzig Fur Industry," *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 9 (1964): 239-66; and Robert Beachy, "Reforming Interregional Commerce: the Leipzig Trade Fairs and Saxony's Recovery From the Thirty Years' War," *Central European History* 32, no. 4 (1999): 431-52. See also Exhibition Committee of the Textile Industry, *The Textile Industry of Saxony and Its Importance: Appendix: List of Exhibitors Interested in the Textile Industry of Saxony* (Leipzig: Leipziger Monatschrift für Textil-Industrie, 1893).

⁴ John Eliot Gardiner, *Bach: Music in the Castle of Heaven* (New York: Knopf, 2013). Leipzig's other music genius, Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (1809-1847), grandson of the famed Moses Mendelssohn, was, unlike Bach, already beloved in his lifetime. Like Bach, however, Mendelssohn was employed by the St. Thomas Church, and statues of both musicians grace its grounds, testaments to a musical cosmopolitanism that Leipzigers now assume as their birthright.

⁵ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) briefly attended the university to study law (1765-1768), and his tragic version of Faust was born in the bowels of the Auerbachs Keller, which lies along Grimmaische Straße in the center of the city. At the turn of the nineteenth century, the neighboring towns of Jena, Halle (Saale), and Wittenberg hosted universities far more prestigious than Leipzig's. And Weimar, in Thuringia to the west, had the Duchess Anna Amalia Library, a treasury that far surpassed anything available in central Saxony. For a comprehensive history of the university in commemoration of its six hundred years, see Franz Häuser *et al.*, *Geschichte der Universität Leipzig, 1409-2009: Ausgabe in fünf Bänden* (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2009-2010). An older volume commemorated the 500th Anniversary: Universität (Leipzig) and Universitätsbibliothek (Leipzig), *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Universität Leipzig im fünfzehnten Jahrhundert: zur Feier des 500 jährigen*

The mercantile character of Leipzig changed dramatically in the opening decades of the 1800s. Occupied by Napoleon, this brief foreign rule was enough to introduce the city's inhabitants to the more urbane pleasures of cosmopolitan life.⁶ So, too, did the subsequent rise of a local bourgeoisie, whose adoption of salon and café culture, with its prodigious consumption of literary periodicals, stimulated the rapid expansion of the city's schools and intellectual institutions. By the 1830s, Leipzig University (along with the university in its neighboring city, Halle/Saale) had become a leader in key areas of modern scholarship, including Orientalism and higher biblical criticism.⁷ It had also liberalized its admittance requirements, allowing Jews to study and earn degrees. The rise of these new disciplines, as well as the reformed policies toward Jews, attracted the young Jellinek away from Prague--with its centuries-old libraries and yeshivot--to the relatively modest but rapidly modernizing Leipzig.

The Jewish community of Leipzig was small and new when Adolf Jellinek arrived in the city in 1842.⁸ Unlike what we saw in Moravia in the previous chapter, for many centuries there were no Jews in Saxony at all. The Jews who populated Leipzig after Napoleon's departure arrived from farther afield, primarily the German principalities directly abutting Saxony. Jews had, however, been

Jubiläums der Universität (Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1909). For an excellent account of the German university in the early modern period, see William Clark, *Academic Charisma and the Origins of the Research University* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

⁶ This victory that was marked (in somewhat garish fashion) a hundred years later by German Kaiser Wilhelm II with a monumental building and park—called the *Volkerschlachtdenkmal*—on the eastern outskirts of Leipzig.

⁷ Halle (also called Saale) is now home to the library of the Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft (German Orientalist Society), founded in Leipzig in 1845.

⁸ For an overview of the history of the Leipzig Jewish community, see *Judaica Lipsiensia: Zur Geschichte der Juden in Leipzig*, ed. Ephraim Carlebach Stiftung (Leipzig: Edition Leipzig, 1994); Kerstin Plowinski, *Die jüdische Bevölkerung Leipzigs 1853, 1925, 1933: Sozialgeschichtliche Fallstudien zur Mitgliedschaft einer Grossgemeinde* (Leipzig, 1991) (Diss.); and Stephan Wendehorst, ed., *Bausteine einer jüdischen Geschichte der Universität Leipzig* (Leipzig: Leipziger Universität, 2006).

allowed to commute to the major Saxon cities during seasonal fairs. By the 1820s the few urban Jewish communities that existed in the principality were located in or around Dessau and Dresden, where the chief rabbis resided.⁹ As Wilhelm Harmelin noted, the first Jewish cemetery was not allowed in Leipzig until 1811, and the Jewish population in the city continued to be just semi-permanent--rising and falling with the cycle of city fairs--well into the 1820s.¹⁰ The first permanent synagogue building to be constructed in Leipzig, the *Bet-Jacob Betschule* (completed in 1820), catered to these transient Jewish traders. It opened during the fairs but closed otherwise. Interestingly, the *Bet-Jacob Betschule* conducted services in the so-called "Berlin-Hamburg style," which meant that it followed a semi-reformed liturgy and allowed the playing of an organ on the Sabbath. (All instrumental music is forbidden on the Sabbath under traditional religious law.) Leopold Zunz (1794-1886, whom we will have occasion to meet again below), a seminal figure in the origins of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, gave the inaugural sermon.¹¹

The relative paucity of permanent urban Jewish life in Leipzig in the first decades of the nineteenth century was characteristic of the great majority of smaller, industrializing cities across

⁹ Neighboring regions, such as Brandenburg-Prussia, had many more families. This region of Germany, which includes Thuringia to the west, the post-1945 province of Saxony-Anhalt (formerly part of Saxony, also called Anhalt-Dessau) to the north, contains some of Germany's best-known cities (such as Weimar, Erfurt, Dessau, Chemnitz, and Wittenberg), each of which hosted small Jewish communities from the Middle Ages until the Second World War. The Jews of the western regions of Saxony, called Saxony-Meiningen, didn't fair nearly as well. As late as 1811 they faced expulsion, a recurring phenomenon for that community from the Middle Ages. See Franz Levi, "The Jews of Sachsen-Meiningen and the Edict of 1811," *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 38 (1993): 15-32.

¹⁰ Wilhelm Harmelin, "Jews in the Leipzig Fur Industry," *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 9 (1964): 242. Harmelin records a long history of strenuous opposition on the part of Gentile fair-goers and Leipzig residents to the Jewish presence, however minimal and transient, in the city. City officials appear to have enjoyed the high taxes and rents paid by Jewish merchants, and so been more tolerant of the Jewish presence. Dessau's most famous Jewish son is Moses Mendelssohn, born there in 1729. Almost nothing of its historic city (or its Jewish quarter) survived the Second World War.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

Central Europe.¹² But the rapid and widespread Jewish urbanization of the 1830s and 1840s created a growing Jewish presence in these historically non-Jewish spaces. While much is made of Moses Mendelssohn's participation in the Berlin Wednesday Club in the 1780s, Mendelssohn's conspicuousness as a public figure underscores the absence of Jewish social life across the German-speaking lands more generally.¹³ An increase in Jewish social inclusion in the nineteenth century was made partly possible by gains in legal civil rights in the 1810s and 1820s. Often, these changes allowed Jews greater freedom of movement into and out of urban spaces, as well as prompted (or enforced) educational reforms, with the result being that Jewish students spoke a form of Jewish German (as distinct from East European Yiddish) to their parents and German to their peers.

¹² In many places across the German lands of Central Europe, the gains toward emancipation (and therefor free movement) made by Jews under Napoleonic occupation were halted or reversed in the decades between the Congress of Vienna and 1848. Yet, as Arno Herzig writes: "It is not immediately apparent why, in their development towards becoming modern economic states, most German states chose to place restrictions on their economically active Jewish minorities and thereby, as in Prussia, incurred significant administrative expense. The reason for this lay partly, perhaps, in the role which the Jews played as an anti-symbol for broad sectors of the population during this turbulent period of economic and social upheaval. For most social groups, the Jewish minority was perceived as symbolically embodying the dark side of the new system and its insuperable difficulties." Arno Herzig, "The Process of Emancipation: From the Congress of Vienna to the Revolution of 1848/1849," *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 37 (1992): 64f. This can certainly be said for the treatment and view of the Jews of the Leipzig fairs. Governments found the Jewish traders productive and taxable, but the Christian merchants and their customers generally disliked the Jewish presence.

¹³ For a discussion of Mendelssohn and the Wednesday Club, see Deborah Sadie Hertz, *Jewish High Society In Old Regime Berlin* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2005), esp. 75-118. Saying that there was minimal Jewish presence in broader German society is, of course, different from saying that "Jews" or "Jewishness" as topics of intellectual life were likewise absent, since quite the opposite was the case. As Ronald Schechter notes about eighteenth-century France: "[After counting the texts,] the sheer number suggests that historians have vastly underestimated the importance of the Jews to non-Jewish writers, their readers, as well as to political actors and their audiences in eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century France. They suggest that Jews mattered or, more precisely, that images and perceptions of Jews mattered." Ronald Schechter, *Obstinate Hebrews: Representations of Jews in France, 1715-1815* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 6-7. Similar numbers can be found for Germany. The "Jewish Question" was addressed by all the major figures of the German Enlightenment, even when few of them spent any time with actual Jews, or showed particular interest in other aspects of Jewish life or thought.

Further, Jewish access to the public sphere was made possible by the widespread disruption in urban social spaces more generally. This was caused principally by economic developments across the continent, including the growing industrialization of manufacturing, and, eventually, the advent of the train, which relied on central depots for the continuous assemblage and reception of goods.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, Jews were not the only Europeans reacting to modern educational reforms and economic changes, and certainly not the only populations migrating toward cities. But the noticeable cultural differences of Jews from rural Christian migrants, as well as the Jews' historic exclusion from daily urban life, made their growing numbers an obvious marker of profound social and demographic transformation. Perforce, as Uri R. Kaufmann writes, by 1815, "a Christian-Jewish public sphere came into being...[where] Jewish lay leaders saw themselves as part of the larger German society, believing that the time had now arrived when 'Israel should not dwell alone'...Such social interactions between Jews and Christians did not exist before 1800."¹⁴

Such a profound transition--from relative Jewish absence in the public sphere to an overt Jewish presence in it--had many effects, not least of which was on the opportunities afforded to Jewish youths. By the 1830s, young Jews were participating in many of the same public activities as their gentile peers. Focusing specifically on Dresden, Christopher Friedrichs describes the life of a young Jewish man, Louis Lesser, which contained few distinctly "Jewish" elements.¹⁵ Lesser, Friedrichs tells us, worked at a bank, and spent his free hours in public parks and gardens, at home with friends, or in the various museums and galleries of the capital. While he did not work on the

¹⁴ Uri R. Kaufmann, "The Jewish Fight for Emancipation in France and Germany," in *Jewish Emancipation Reconsidered: The French and German Models*, ed. Michael Brenner, Vicki Caron, and Uri R. Kaufmann (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 81.

¹⁵ Christopher R. Friedrichs, "Leisure and Acculturation in the Jewish Community of Dresden, 1833-1837," *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 56 (2011): 137-62.

Sabbath or festivals, Lesser appears to have spent little time thinking about religion, and, except for the inherited fact of his Jewishness, lived a life not dissimilar from that of many other twenty-something gentile Dresdeners. (Nevertheless, Lesser's family would have all been Jewish; except for in extraordinary circumstances he would have married a Jewish woman; and he would have lived in a neighborhood specifically for Jews.)

By the middle 1840s, the experience of Jewish youths in Leipzig came ever more to resemble that of Louis Lesser. Jewish students attended the university by the score. Jewish publishing houses were established, inaugurating what became one of the most important centers for the Jewish book trade in Europe until the middle twentieth century. Jewish merchants and their families also settled permanently in the city, allowing the opening of perhaps half a dozen small synagogues catering to the various migrant populations and their particular village traditions. These new Jewish families lived primarily in the neighborhoods being constructed west of the historic center, and it was there, in 1855, off Gottschedstraße, that the community consecrated its first central synagogue, called the Neue Israelitische Tempel (later called the Große Gemeindesynagoge).¹⁶ In fact, until the middle 1840s, Leipzig had no permanent resident rabbi of its own. Through the turn of the century the rabbi in Dessau would follow Jewish merchants to the fairs and preside over their religious activities. In the 1830s and 1840s, Zacharias Frankel (1801-1875), who was chief rabbi in Dresden (1836-1854), would make semi-frequent trips to Leipzig to see to the community's needs.¹⁷ But by the late

¹⁶ For a description of the synagogue, as well as architectural images and drawings, see Otto Simonson, *Der Neue Tempel in Leipzig: Entworfen und Ausgeführt* (Berlin: Riegel, 1858). This synagogue was destroyed on November 9, 1938. A memorial now occupies part of the square where the building once stood, and in recent years the neighborhood has become trendy, catering to millennials seeking spacious apartments and low rent.

¹⁷ A copy of the Leipzig Jewish community's logbook is kept at the city's *Stadtarchiv*. It records the various births, celebrations, and decisions of the community. When he was in town, Frankel would write notes in the book as well.

1840s, the community had become settled (and wealthy) enough to build a grand central synagogue and hire a chief rabbi--the young Adolf Jellinek.

In these same decades, Leipzig itself was greatly expanding, partly because, very early, the city government recognized the economic importance and political power of the railroad.¹⁸ In 1833, Friedrich List (1789-1846), a German-American industrialist and economic philosopher, proposed a pan-German railway system.¹⁹ While residing in Leipzig as the American consul, List became instrumental in establishing the Leipzig-Dresden rail line, which officially opened in 1839.²⁰ In 1842 the city inaugurated its Bayerischer Bahnhof, the first of many grand terminals that would solidify the town's importance as a center for industry, commerce, and travel conducted by rail.²¹ (Building terminals--where tracks end--instead of stations--where trains pass through--meant that Leipzig became a shipment and transit as well as a market center.) Located outside the historic walls, the new Bahnhof anchored a set of neighborhoods stretching south and east, linked to the city by streetcars and wide promenades. By 1851, the rail lines outside of Dresden had been completed,

¹⁸ Rainer Fremdling et al, eds. *Statistik der Eisenbahnen in Deutschland 1835-1989* (St. Katherinen: Scripta Mercaturae Verlag, 1995), 26, 33; and Albert Wiedemann, *Die sächsischen Eisenbahnen in historisch-statistischer Darstellung* (Leipzig: Thomas, 1902).

¹⁹ Rainer Fremdling et al., eds. *Statistik der Eisenbahnen in Deutschland 1835-1989* (St. Katherinen: Scripta Mercaturae Verlag, 1995), 33. Friedrich List, *Ueber ein sächsisches Eisenbahn-System als Grundlage eines allgemeinen deutschen Eisenbahn-Systems und insbesondere über die Anlegung einer Eisenbahn von Leipzig nach Dresden* (Leipzig: Liebeskind, 1833).

²⁰ Roy E. H. Mellor, *German Railways: A Study in the Historical Geography of Transport* (Aberdeen, U.K.: Dept. of Geography, University of Aberdeen, 1979), 10. The German Democratic Republic (East Germany) issued a 150-year commemorative stamp of List and the Leipzig-Dresden line in 1989.

²¹ See Rolf Bayer, *Die bayerische Bahnhof in Leipzig: Entstehung, Entwicklung und Zukunft des ältesten Kopfbahnhofs der Welt* (Berlin: Transpress VEB, 1895).

connecting passengers and goods in Leipzig with such major Central European cities as Prague, Budapest, and Vienna.²²

During Jellinek's sixteen-year residence in Leipzig, he witnessed not a demographic transformation but a demographic creation. Where formerly there had been no permanent community, no synagogue building, and no Jewish presence in public life except as merchants during fairs, by his departure in January 1857 Jews had sizable representations among the students at the university, in the mercantile classes, and in the publishing industry.²³ Importantly, however, as Steven M. Lowenstein argued, the urbanization of European Jewry was not necessarily coterminous with its religious liberalization.²⁴ Lowenstein wrote: "Jewish life in urban communities was at least as heterogeneous as life in the villages."²⁵ This is an observation that points in two directions. First, traditional rural Judaism did not exemplify a unified religious orthodoxy. Prior to modernity (and certainly to conventional accounts of "shtetle" life), a high level of diversity existed within local Jewish communities. Second, Jewish urbanization was not concurrent with Jewish secularization. Jews migrated to cities for many reasons, some of them ideological, but many others social or economic. The diversity of Jewish religiosity encountered in a place like Leipzig in the 1840s would therefore have been comparable to that found among the rural towns of Moravia. What differed, of course, was everything else. The lifestyle and the legal system that sustained an autonomous and

²² For statistics on the Leipzig-Dresden line between 1837 and 1875, see Fremdling, *Statistik der Eisenbahnen*, 101, 167, 233, 324, 448.

²³ The Leipzig Jewish community was mostly entirely destroyed in the Second World War. A Leipzig Jewish diaspora exists, mainly resident in Israel and the United States. The current community numbers in the hundreds, composed primarily of immigrants from the former Soviet Union. It's current rabbi, Zsolt Balla, a native of Budapest, was educated at the Lauder Yeshiva in Berlin.

²⁴ See Steven M. Lowenstein, "Was Urbanization Harmful to Jewish Tradition and Identity in Germany?" *Studies in Contemporary Jewry* 15 (1999): 80–110, esp. 82–3.

²⁵ See Steven M. Lowenstein, "Was Urbanization Harmful to Jewish Tradition and Identity in Germany?" *Studies in Contemporary Jewry* 15 (1999): 82.

coherent religious Jewish identity in rural Central Europe was entirely absent in industrializing Leipzig. As we will see at the end of this chapter and into the next, the task of creating a new form of Jewish religious life that reflected urban modernity was something that took time, creativity, and an immense amount of faith in the inherent, enduring power of Jewish texts, stories, and rituals.

Developing *Wissenschaft des Judentums*

Jellinek's years in Leipzig exemplified the evolving and dynamic world of early Jewish studies.²⁶ Called "*Wissenschaft des Judentums*", or the Science of Judaism, the discipline was founded on the idea that Judaism could be (and needed to be) studied in the same ways as one would study other great civilizations, like Rome or Babylonia. *Wissenschaft* was part of the same intellectual movement that created such academic disciplines as Orientalism, biblical criticism, archaeology, and philology.²⁷ Its pioneers believed in Enlightenment-style learning, and were trained at universities in the newest forms of scientific, historical, and linguistic scholarship. Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, in his book on the meaning and consequences of this new Science of Judaism, wrote:

For the first time it is not history that must prove its utility to Judaism, but Judaism that must prove its utility to history, by revealing and justifying itself historically. [*Wissenschaft*]

²⁶ During the middle 1840s, Jellinek acted as the unofficial chief rabbi of the community, from which he collected a salary. He likely also acted as a private tutor, and made small royalties from his books and articles.

²⁷ The importance of philology to the development of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* remains to be more thoroughly investigated. See Kerstin von der Krone and Mirjam Thulin, "*Wissenschaft* In Context: A Research Essay on the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*," *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 58 (2013): 249–80, esp. 261–2. For some preliminary research, see Anthony Grafton, "Juden und Griechen bei Friedrich August Wolf," in *Friedrich August Wolf: Studien, Dokumente, Bibliographie*, ed. Reinhard Markner and Giuseppe Veltri (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1999), 9–31; idem., *Defenders of the Text: The Traditions of Scholarship in an Age of Science, 1450–1800* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1991); Dirk Hartwig, "Die 'Wissenschaft des Judentums' und die Anfänge der kritischen Koranforschung: Perspektiven einer modernen Koranhermeneutik," *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte* 61, issue 3 (2009), 234–256; and Gregor Pelger, *Wissenschaft des Judentums und englische Bibliotheken: zur Geschichte historischer Philologie im 19. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: Metropol, 2010). As German interest in Arabic and Farsi grew, so too did the study of Sanskrit and the Indian sub-continent. See Pascale Rabault-Ferhahn, Dominique Bach, and Richard Willet, *Archives of Origins: Sanskrit, Philology, Anthropology in 19th Century Germany* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2013).

has in mind specifically the new critical historical spirit and historical methodology that were sweeping Germany and that would soon become one of the hallmarks of nineteenth century European thought.²⁸

As Yerushalmi noted, the creation and shape of the other new, modern disciplines was fundamental in determining the scope and character of *Wissenschaft*. Around the turn of the nineteenth century, German universities began to systematically overhaul their research methodologies, philosophical ideologies, and bureaucracies based on the Enlightenment's premise that rational investigation, definition, categorization, and philological precision could reveal deep, inerrant truths about the world. Pioneered in Germany by the University of Berlin under the leadership of Wilhelm von Humboldt, these educational reforms emphasized the concepts of rationalism and objectivity in scientific study.²⁹ They likewise reorganized the hierarchy of disciplines, accentuating philosophy (which included all of what we now call the Humanities) and the practical disciplines (law and medicine) over theology--the traditional focus of (medieval) university curricula.³⁰

As part of these Enlightenment-inspired changes, *Wissenschaft* was at once both a cultural and ideological creation. As a cultural phenomenon, Jews in the early nineteenth century were participating in the Enlightenment in much the same way as were other educated members of European society. Often looking to distance themselves from what they perceived to be the insularity of rabbinic (and specifically yeshiva-centered) culture, these young Jewish men sought another way of interacting with Judaism, one that would be more in line with--and better able to

²⁸ Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor, Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1982), 84.

²⁹ "...science, or rather the German appreciation [of] *Wissenschaft*, intended a historical, application-oriented understanding of knowledge based upon measurable, verifiable and objective standards and judgments." Kerstin von der Krone and Mirjam Thulin, "*Wissenschaft* In Context: A Research Essay on the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*," *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 58 (2013): 249.

³⁰ For an ideological introduction to Enlightenment reforms of the university, see Immanuel Kant, *Der Streit der Facultäten: in drey Abschnitten* (Königsberg: Nicolovius, 1798).

contribute to--the many philosophical and methodological developments being discussed in the scholarly circles of Europe.

As ideology, Wissenschaft was about integrating Judaism into the larger narrative of European history--a history, it should be noted, that was itself just then being constructed by thinkers in Western Europe.³¹ Wissenschaft was not about dismantling Judaism, or about proving it false. Rather, it was about subjecting it to the same intellectual rigors as Christian scholars were doing to the classical world. It was also about demonstrating the innumerable links between Christianity and Judaism, going back to the time of Jesus and the Gospels.³² Wissenschaft, many of its early adherents believed, could prove to be the intellectual knot that tied Judaism together with Christianity, and therefore justified the Jews' presence in Europe and their moral and intellectual equality in a gentile-dominated society.

The early figures of Wissenschaft--Leopold Zunz (1794-1886), Immanuel Wolf (also called Immanuel Wohlwill, 1799-1847), and Julius Fürst (1805--1873)--began publishing in the field in the 1820s and 1830s. Zunz did pioneering work on Jewish liturgy and edited the *Zeitschrift für die Wissenschaft des Judentums*, the discipline's inaugural journal.³³ Wolf was a preacher and philosopher.³⁴

³¹ "In response to the assertions of Johann Gottfried Herder, and especially of Georg W. F. Hegel, that the contribution of Judaism to world history had come to an end with the Hebrew Bible, Jewish students at the University of Berlin formed a debating circle to reject this standpoint." Kerstin von der Krone and Mirjam Thulin, "Wissenschaft In Context: A Research Essay on the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*," *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 58 (2013): 261.

³² See Susannah Heschel, *Abraham Geiger and the Jewish Jesus* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

³³ See Nils H. Roemer, *Jewish Scholarship and Culture in Nineteenth-Century Germany: Between History and Faith* (Madison; London: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005); Henri Soussan, *The Science of Judaism: From Leopold Zunz to Leopold Lucas* (Brighton, U.K.: Centre for German-Jewish Studies, University of Sussex, 1999); Ismar Schorsch, "From Wolfenbüttel to Wissenschaft: The Divergent Paths of Isaak Markus Jost and Leopold Zunz," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 22 (1977): 109-128; Michael A. Meyer, "Jewish Religious Reform and Wissenschaft des Judentums: The Positions of Zunz, Geiger and Frankel," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 16 (1971): 19-41; Nahum N. Glatzer, *Leopold Zunz: Jude,*

Fürst wrote a series of important dictionaries on ancient Near East languages; a history of the Jews and the Greeks; and edited the journal *Der Orient*.³⁵ Perhaps more than any other publications from that period, *Zeitschrift* and *Der Orient* created the context out of which an independent discipline of Jewish studies could be formed.³⁶ The men who published in these journals, or whose books were reviewed in them, were almost all university trained Jews, with academic credentials that--if allowed--would have granted them professorships across Germany. (Zunz, Wolf, and Fürst themselves

Deutscher, Europäer : ein jüdisches Gelehrtenchicksal des 19. Jahrhunderts in Briefen an Freunde (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1964); Samuel Solomon Cohon, "Zunz and Reform Judaism," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 31 (1960): 251-276; Luitpold Wallach, *Liberty and Letters: The Thoughts of Leopold Zunz*, (London: East and West Library, 1959); Nahum N. Glatzer, *Leopold and Adelheid Zunz: an account in letters, 1815-1885*. (London: East and West Library, 1958); E. D. Goldschmidt, "Studies on Jewish Liturgy by German-Jewish Scholars," *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 2 (1957): 119-35; and Fritz Bamberger, *Zunz's Conception of History, a Study of the Philosophic Elements in Early Science of Judaism* (New York: Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research, 1941). Zunz's most important scholarly works are Leopold Zunz, *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden, historisch entwickelt* (Berlin: Asher, 1832); idem, *Zur Geschichte und Literatur*. (Berlin: Veit, 1845); and idem, *Die synagogale Poesie des Mittelalters*, 2 vols. (Berlin: Springer, 1855-1859). Zunz also translated the Hebrew Bible into German. The *Zeitschrift für die Wissenschaft des Judentums* only published three volumes (1822/23), but it nevertheless made a decisive impact on the future course of Jewish studies.

³⁴ The Leo Baeck Institute (LBI) Archives at the Center for Jewish History (CJH) in New York City contain the Immanuel Wohlwill Family Collection, 1812-1965 (AR 2671). For his works, see Immanuel Wohlwill, *Die Bedeutung des Lebens, geknüpft an den Anfangs- und Schlussatz Kobleths (des Predigers): eine Predigt* (Leipzig: Kollmann, 1822); idem, *Grundsätze der religiösen Wahrheitsfreunde, oder Philalethen*. (Kiel: Universitäts-Buchhandlung, 1830); and idem, *Beiträge zur Theorie des Armenwesens. Veranlaßt durch des Herrn Carl Godeffroy "Theorie der Armuth"* (Hamburg: Hoffmann & Campe, 1834).

³⁵ Fürst's works include: Julius Fürst, *Hebräisches und Chaldäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament, mit einer Einleitung, eine Kurze Geschichte der Hebräischen Lexicographie Enthaltend*. (Leipzig: Tauchnitz, 1851); and idem, *Geschichte der Biblischen Literatur und des jüdisch-hellenistischen Schriftthums* (Leipzig: Tauchnitz, 1867). See Ismar Schorsch, "Converging Cognates: The Intersection of Jewish and Islamic Studies in Nineteenth Century Germany," *The Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 55 (2010): 29-30; Holger Preißler, "Heinrich Leberecht Fleischer. Ein Leipziger Orientalist, Seine Jüdischen Studenten, Promovenden Und Kollegen," in *Bausteine Einer Jüdischen Geschichte Der Universität Leipzig*, ed. Stephan Wendehorst (Leipzig: Leipziger Universität, 2006), 254; Holger Preißler, "Die Anfänge der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 145 (1995): 241-327, 290-1; and Kempter, *Die Jellineks*, 39-48. *Der Orient* was published from 1840-1851.

³⁶ Eduard Gans (1797-1839) was also a founding member of the *Verein für Kultur und Wissenschaft der Juden*, and a friend and colleague of Jost and Zunz.

received some of the first degrees granted to Jews following the initial period of emancipation: from Halle, Kiel, and Halle, respectively.) Their efforts created a thriving, and at times biting, community of university-trained Jewish intellectuals, whose (mostly) shared ideology fostered a continuous stream of students and contributors well into the twentieth century.

As something of an opening coda for the discipline, in 1822 Immanuel Wolf penned the front essay for Zunz's *Zeitschrift*. Published in Berlin for the Verein für Cultur und Wissenschaft der Juden (Club for the Culture and Study of Jews, whose opening in 1819 is often identified as the founding moment in Jewish Studies), the *Zeitschrift* (which published only one volume, in three installments between 1822-23) included articles on (among other things) Jewish legislation in the Roman Empire (Edward Gans), the Jewish idea of the messiah (Lazarus Bendavid), Rashi (Zunz), and the psychology of the Jews in the Talmudic era (Bernhardt). Wolf's opening essay gave form and substance to this varied content, as well as an overarching ideology to what had until then remained a relatively informal gathering of like-minded scholars. Wolf's article, entitled "On the Concept of a Science of Judaism," began with a definition:

If we are to talk of a science of Judaism, then it is self-evident that the word "Judaism" is here being taken in its comprehensive sense—as the essence of all the circumstances, characteristics, and achievements of the Jews in relation to religion, philosophy, history, law, literature in general, civil life and all the affairs of man—and not in that more limited sense in which it only means the religion of the Jews.³⁷

With these words Wolf built on the philosophical and cultural foundation established by the early Haskalah, whose members had sought to bring together Judaism and modern philosophy.³⁸ Yet philosophy was never really the primary focus of Wissenschaft. Instead, in the view of the *Zeitschrift*, Judaism was a culture and not just a philosophy, and Wissenschaft was not a competing theological

³⁷ Immanuel Wolf, "On the Concept of a Science of Judaism (1822)," *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 2, no. 1 (1957): 194. Originally published as Immanuel Wolf, "Ueber den Begriff einer Wissenschaft des Judentums," *Zeitschrift für die Wissenschaft des Judentums* 1, no. 1 (1822): 1-24.

³⁸ See Chapter 2 for further treatment of the importance of the Haskalah in Jewish modernity.

claim but a scientific method aimed at uncovering the past.

Zacharias Frankel (1801-1875), born and raised in Prague, was another central early figure in the conceptualization of Wissenschaft and one of the most outspoken voices of religious moderation in the discipline.³⁹ In 1851, while living in Dresden, he became the founding editor of the journal *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums* (Monthly Journal for the History and Science of Judaism). Aimed at both educated lay readers and scholars, *Monatsschrift* proved to be the most enduring publication to arise during the early period of the movement. (It was continuously published until 1939.) Being a rabbi and scholar in Dresden and Breslau, Frankel had no interest in seeing Wissenschaft become a conflicting ideology with religious Judaism.⁴⁰ It was Frankel, Ismar Schorsch notes, who introduced to Wissenschaft the phrase “positive, historical Judaism” in a speech in 1845. As Schorsch explains it: “By choosing the adjective ‘positive’ to describe his conception of Judaism, Frankel defiantly reasserted its fundamentally legal character and rejected any effort to dilute it. In Judaism, religious sentiments and eternal truths were expressed in prescribed behavior.”⁴¹ Such was Frankel’s defense of Judaism, not only against Christians who denigrated Judaism as simply legalistic, but against radical Jewish reformers who saw in Wissenschaft’s historicization of Judaism the potential to dismantle historical rabbinical religious

³⁹ See also Esther Seidel, “Zacharias Frankel und das Jüdisch-Theologische Seminar - Zacharias Frankel and the Jewish Theological Seminary (Berlin: Hentrich & Hentrich, 2013); and David Rudavsky, “The Historical School of Zacharia Frankel,” *Jewish Journal of Sociology* 5, no. 2 (Dec. 1963): 224-244.

⁴⁰ For a firsthand account of the Breslau Seminary, see Caesar Seligmann, “Breslau Seminary 1881,” *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 5 (1960): 346–50. See also Max Gruenewald, “The Modern Rabbi,” *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 2 (1957): 85–97; and Moshe Carmilly-Weinberger, “The Similarities and Relationship Between the *Jüdisch-Theologisches Seminar* (Breslau) and the Rabbinical Seminary (Budapest),” *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 44 (1999): 3–22.

⁴¹ Ismar Schorsch, “Zacharias Frankel and the European Origins of Conservative Judaism,” *Judaism* 30, no. 3 (June 1, 1981): 346.

power.⁴²

For the founders of *Wissenschaft*, Jews were the creators of a body of texts and practices that could be studied alongside the cultures created by other national groups, with their own multifaceted complexity and ancient chronology. “At the core of modern Jewish scholarship there is a new way of thinking about Judaism. Emancipation exposed Jews inexorably to the historical perspective: to understand the present in terms of the past and the past in terms of itself,” wrote Ismar Schorsch.⁴³ Similarly, Michael A. Meyer notes that, in these early *Wissenschaft* texts, “Attention was drawn away from the ‘eternal verities’ of metaphysics toward the individual and empirical facts of history. Philosophy was employed to explain the course of human events.”⁴⁴ For

⁴² About Frankel’s conception of *Wissenschaft* as an academic pursuit (as opposed simply to “history”--*Geschichte*), Schorsch writes: “On occasion, it appears as if *Geschichte* was restricted to the external history of the Jews, the unedifying tale of Jewish persecution and passivity, whereas *Wissenschaft des Judentums* was meant to designate the internal realm of cultural and spiritual creativity. Frankel readily concurred with the widely held conviction that the Jews had no history in the conventional sense of the word. External history written on the basis of non-Jewish sources amounted to little more than a history of gentile animosity. The meaning and secret of Jewish existence inhered in how Jews lived and what they wrote, rather than what was done to them. Genuine *Wissenschaft* concerned itself with the realm of cultural history which revealed the vigor, originality, and resilience of the Jewish spirit.” Schorsch, “Zacharias Frankel and the European Origins of Conservative Judaism,” 350 f. It is not clear to me that Jellinek weighed in specifically on any aspect of the *Geschichte*-verse-*Wissenschaft* debate. As we will see, many of Jellinek’s *Wissenschaft* writings actively sought out non-Jewish sources in their contextualization and analysis of Jewish writings. And certainly, by Jellinek’s Vienna years, he had come to see all of history as central to the Jewish story, with Israel--in his conceptualization--playing an active and primary role in the creation of European society and its values. See also David H. Ellenson, *Wissenschaft Des Judentums, Historical Consciousness, and Jewish Faith: The Diverse Paths of Frankel, Auerbach and Halevy*, The Leo Baeck Memorial Lecture 48 (New York: Leo Baeck Institute, 2004).

⁴³ Ismar Schorsch, *From Text to Context: The Turn to History in Modern Judaism* (Waltham, Mass.: Brandeis University Press, 1994), 152.

⁴⁴ Michael A. Meyer, *The Origins of the Modern Jew: Jewish Identity and European Culture in Germany, 1749-1824* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1967), 144. See also Shmuel Feiner, *Haskalah and History: The Emergence of a Modern Jewish Historical Consciousness*, trans. Chaya Naor and Sondra Silverston (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2002); Amos Funkenstein, *Perceptions of Jewish History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 220-256; Michel Brenner, *Propheten des Vergangenen: Jüdische Geschichtsschreibung im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Munich: Beck, 2006); and Nils H. Roemer, *Jewish Scholarship and Culture in Nineteenth-Century Germany: Between History and Faith* (Madison:

Wissenschaft, philosophy was a research methodology and not a goal in itself. Wissenschaft was not an attack on revealed religion, but it was also not a capitulation to accepted traditional narratives about the history of the Jews or their cultural practices. Wissenschaft was, no more and no less, meant to be an objective investigation of the world of the Jews.

With their early journals, Zunz, Fürst, and their fellow contributors sketched the foundations of a new academic discipline.⁴⁵ But that was to be only the beginning. In the 1840s and 1850s, dozens of young Jews (among them Heinrich Graetz [1817–1891],⁴⁶ Ludwig Philippson [1811–1889], Abraham Geiger [1810–1874], Moritz Steinschneider [1816–1907], and Adolf Jellinek), would take up the mantle of Wissenschaft, forming a second generation of scholars. In 1855, Jellinek defined the still-nascent field as “the scientific treatment of vast, comprehensive, and manifold subjects, written down in various languages and hidden in remote libraries of Jewish literature.”⁴⁷ But the discipline was, he went on, “still very young, and the resources for its pursuance still very few.”⁴⁸

University of Wisconsin Press, 2005). See also Georg G. Iggers, “Historicism: the History and Meaning of the Term,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 56, no. 1 (January 1995): 129–52.

⁴⁵ Isaak Markus Jost (1793–1860) warrants mention here in the founding generation of Wissenschaft. He is perhaps best remembered for writing the first comprehensive history of post-Biblical Judaism: *Geschichte der Israeliten seit der Zeit der Maccabäer bis auf unsre Tage*, 10 vols. (Berlin: Schlesinger, 1821–47); and *Geschichte des Judenthums und seiner Secten* (Leipzig: Dörffling & Franke, 1857–8). He also wrote a brief treatise on Jellinek’s work: *Adolph Jellinek und die Kabbala: ein Literatur-Bericht* (Leipzig: Colditz, 1852).

⁴⁶ “Graetz was the first to compile a Jewish historiographical paradigm that outshone former attempts. His *Geschichte der Juden* (1853–1876) made the allegedly disconnected and incoherent Jewish history accessible and graspable for both Jewish and gentile readers. Graetz’s work also stimulated research into local Jewish history and family research that developed from the 1830s.” Kerstin von der Krone and Mirjam Thulin, “Wissenschaft In Context: A Research Essay on the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*,” *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 58, no. 1 (2013): 266. See also Joseph Dan, “Jewish Gnosticism?” *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 2, no. 4 (1995): 309–28.

⁴⁷ Adolph Jellinek, *Bet ha-Midrash. Sammlung kleiner Midraschim und vermischter Abhandlungen aus der ältern jüdischen Literature*, vol. 3 (Leipzig: Vollrath, 1855), viii.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

Overwhelmingly trained in Central European yeshivot but eager to participate in the wider discussion of the German Enlightenment, this second generation was drawn to study at universities and make their way in the world outside of traditional rabbinic structures. Their college years, spent in places like Halle, Berlin, and Leipzig, also provided them with some of their first consistent encounters with Christians, Christianity, and a host of newly developing urban social institutions, like the coffee house and literary salon.⁴⁹ Still mostly excluded from the more rarefied gatherings and private events of German intellectual life, Jewish university students banded together, founding magazines, journals, and reading groups, and forming lasting friendships with one another and the handful of professors who expressed an interest in their education.

In a remarkable demonstration of its transformation from regional market town to modern city, nearly every Wissenschaft scholar of the middle decades of the nineteenth century (with the exception of Geiger, who only passed through for brief visits) either learned at or spent significant time in Leipzig. This is not a surprise. Leipzig in the first half of the nineteenth century offered the perfect milieu for the discipline of Wissenschaft to take root. Its university accepted Jewish students through the doctoral level. A number of its professors were interested in the Jewish contribution to modern scholarship--especially the advanced linguistic training in Hebrew and Aramaic their students possessed.⁵⁰ Leipzig's history as a trading center provided the ready-made infrastructure for its rapidly multiplying publishing houses, as well as guaranteed that the university library would contain the newest writings from across the continent. And the absence of an established Jewish

⁴⁹ See Robert Liberles, *Jews Welcome Coffee: Tradition and Innovation in Early Modern Germany* (Waltham, Mass.: Brandeis University Press, 2012).

⁵⁰ It was in Leipzig, in the newly founded department of Oriental Languages and Literature, that many of Wissenschaft's second generation encountered the famed orientalist Heinrich Leberecht Fleischer (1801–1888).

community meant that arriving students encountered no entrenched politics or ideologies—they were free to form their own Jewish associations on fully modern terms.

Still, Leipzig's university and those like it across the continent remained as much an intellectual impediment as a resource for young Jewish scholars. German universities were (and to some extent remain) confessional institutions, meaning that, historically, one needed to profess the same faith as the theological orientation of the school to be hired as a professor.⁵¹ In the middle of the nineteenth century there was simply no way for Jews to receive professorial appointments anywhere in the German lands. Aside from the obvious social implications of this fact, it also had profound scholarly reverberations. In German universities the work being done on “Jewish” topics (e.g. Hebrew Bible, Second Temple literature, the Apocrypha) overwhelmingly originated from Christians. And Christian academics focused almost exclusively on ancient Israel and its related literature. Christian interests in and knowledge of later Judaism and its languages and sources generally ended within a century of the birth of Jesus.

The years following Jesus, however, as well as the next millennium and a half, were precisely the ones during which rabbinic Judaism had its greatest flowering. The almost complete disinterest of even the most Judeo-philic Christian scholars in the study of Judaism after the death of Christ meant that rabbinic history was entirely open to young *Wissenschaft* scholars. And they were eager to fill the niche, not least because it provided a way of reinserting rabbinic Judaism into the European story—a central project of both the *Haskalah* and *Wissenschaft*.⁵² Salomon Munk used

⁵¹ Following the First World War, the German parliament passed laws that superseded this requirement. But as late as the twentieth century, to be considered for an academic appointment Jews were made to convert to Christianity.

⁵² Notably, Jellinek's first two *Wissenschaft*-genre publications were forays into this aspect of Jewish intellectual politics. In these brief works, Jellinek meditated on the core of Judaism and its relation to Christendom. In the first, a pamphlet entitled *Elischa ben Abuja, gennant Acher* (Leipzig: Hunger, 1847), a play about the Portuguese Jewish intellectual Uriel de Acosta—whom history often recalls as a Jewish heretic—Jellinek offered a meditation on the second-century sage Elisha ben Abaya,

Maimonides to demonstrate the Jewish presence in the reception history of Aristotelian thought in Europe.⁵³ Abraham Geiger, perhaps the most celebrated early proponent of Jewish centrality in the European narrative, wrote avidly (if somewhat polemically) of the Jewishness of Jesus.⁵⁴

The notion that Jewish ideas have been part of the European story all along does not appear particularly innovative in our own time. But for the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, these were radical sentiments. Indeed, as the findings of *Wissenschaft* came to be ever more greatly assimilated into the discourse of Europe's urbanizing and acculturating Jewish communities, such political-scholarly discussions took on new valences and had far-reaching implications. With the development of *Wissenschaft*, Judaism and Jewish society in Central Europe gained a new class of learned and honored person--the university-trained intellectual. By the 1840s, no longer were the only leading figures of Jewish thought rabbis or heads of yeshivot. Historians, philologists, and editors, all in some way associated with the new field of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, were creating another sort of Jewish "gaon", one with cosmopolitan, scholarly credentials and a dedication to participating in the wider conversation of modern German culture.⁵⁵

referred to as "Other" (*acher*) in the Talmud, and who is likewise reported to have left Judaism ignominiously. (Adolf's pamphlet coincided with his brother's own substantive treatise on Uriel de Acosta: Hermann Jellinek, *Uriel Acosta's leben und lehre. Ein beitrag zur kenntniss seiner moral, wie zur berichtigung der Gutzkow'schen fiktionen über Acosta, und zur charakteristik der damaligen Juden*. (Zerbst: Kummer, 1847).) Six years later, Adolf came out with *Thomas von Aquino in der jüdischen Literatur* (Leipzig: Colditz, 1853), an unapologetic attempt to see Christian and Jewish theology as deeply interrelated.

⁵³ See Salomon Munk, *La philosophie chez les juifs* (Paris: Bureau des Archives Israelites, 1848); and idem, *Mélanges de philosophie juive et arabe*, (Paris: Franck, 1857).

⁵⁴ See Heschel, *Abraham Geiger and the Jewish Jesus*.

⁵⁵ One of the key indicators of the difference between the earlier generation of maskilim--Jewish participants in Enlightenment--and the founders of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, was the language of their inaugural journals. For the Haskalah, its first publication was *Ha'measeph*, printed in Hebrew. For *Wissenschaft*, it was the *Zeitschrift für die Wissenschaft des Judentums*, printed in German.

The following two sections describe Jellinek's Jewish studies scholarship and trace the connection between that work and his early formulations of how Wissenschaft could complement traditional religious Judaism. At first, Jellinek's advocacy for a fully independent Jewish scholarly tradition would seem incongruous with his advocacy for religious traditionalism. But what set Jellinek apart from many of his peers, and what affirms his vision of the modern rabbinate as worth exploring in greater depth, is how eminently contemporary his ideas seem the more we study them.⁵⁶ The next section ("Jellinek's Early Scholarship and the Assembling of *Bet ha-Midrash*") traces Jellinek's groundbreaking research in the history of Kabbalah and the assembling of his major work, *Bet ha-Midrash*. The final section ("Under the Changing Play of Its History") begins the discussion of Jellinek's role as a communal rabbi.

Jellinek's Early Scholarship and the Assembling of *Bet ha-Midrash*

Defining Midrash

Jellinek's most enduring contribution to scholarship, and in many ways the summation of his vision of Wissenschaft des Judentums, was his six-volume work *Bet ha-Midrash* (1853-1877).⁵⁷ Twice

⁵⁶ As one example, Jellinek re-imagined midrash as a popular genre through which modern urban Jews could engage with the less rigorous and more nuanced and metaphoric parts of Jewish history—an innovation that has many parallels in our own world of Judaic thought and practice. For another example, Jellinek began many of his sermons with quotations from influential philosophers and writers, explicitly linking Judaism to the larger cultural conversation about liberal ethics, philosophy, and history—what Jonathan Sheehan called “the cultural Bible.” Jonathan Sheehan, *The Enlightenment Bible: Translation, Scholarship, Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005). Indeed, far beyond his trailblazing scholarship, it was Jellinek's innovative ideology of the rabbinate that remains his principal—yet mostly unknown—legacy.

⁵⁷ It is unclear if Jellinek originally envisioned a six-volume work when he set out the initial publication. More likely, he thought of the project as somewhat open-ended. There is also a sixteen-year gap between the fourth and fifth volumes (1857 and 1873, respectively), corresponding precisely the period of Jellinek's move to Vienna and his assumption of communal rabbinic duties in that city. It seems clear that volume four was never intended to be the work's final one, but it also seems likely that the length of the gap between the two volumes was the result of circumstance and not planning. Respective publications are: vol. 1 (Leipzig: Vollrath, 1853); vol. 2 (Leipzig: Vollrath, 1855); vol. 3 (Leipzig: Vollrath, 1855); vol. 4 (Leipzig: Vollrath, 1857); vol. 5 (Vienna: Winter, 1873); vol. 6 (Vienna: Winter, 1877).

reprinted in Jerusalem (Bamberger and Wahrman, 1938/1967), this seminal compilation brought together previously uncollected rabbinic texts with a scholarly apparatus that contained explanations of manuscript variation, elucidations of theological and philosophical ideas, and clarifications of archaic or obscure linguistic references. *Beit ha-Midrash*, in other words, was a prototypical example of the dedication to detailed and careful study espoused by the founding Wissenschaft generation. It combined a love and reverence for classical Jewish sources with an academic focus on textual lineage, philological precision, and intellectual historicism.

As a genre and a historical concept, midrash is notoriously difficult to define. The word has come to apply to almost every aspect of Jewish religious engagement, and in many ways represents the entire project of Rabbinic Judaism itself. Perhaps the simplest way of understanding Jellinek's title is as a literary pun. On one level, it meant simply "place of study," as the phrase *beit ha-midrash* commonly refers to schools or academies of higher religious education. In this way, the books are like little academies in print, spaces in which to engage in Jewish study. On another level, *beit ha-midrash* also means, literally, "house of midrash," that is, "a container full of midrash." The title is indicative of the genre of writing that Jellinek was collecting: "midrashic" texts.⁵⁸

As a subset of Jewish literature, midrash refers to a particular form of biblical exegesis roughly divisible between midrash halakhah (interpretations of divine law) and midrash aggadah (interpretations of biblical legends). Both forms unite theological exploration, hermeneutical investigation, and mythological or folkloric storytelling (although the latter--midrash aggadah--is often what is meant colloquially by the shortened form "midrash"). As Daniel Matt describes it, "Midrash is the ancient technique of searching for the meaning of passages, phrases, and individual

⁵⁸ For excellent studies of midrash, see Michael A. Fishbane, ed., *The Midrashic Imagination: Jewish Exegesis, Thought, and History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993); and Michael A. Fishbane and Joanna Weinberg, eds., *Midrash Unbound: Transformations and Innovations* (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2013). See also Geoffrey H. Hartman and Sanford Budick, eds., *Midrash and Literature* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986).

words of the Bible. It included philology, etymology, hermeneutics, homiletics, and imagination.”⁵⁹

The willingness of midrash aggadah to invent stories, or to create entire narratives of divine and human action based on what might appear as scant textual evidence, has given the genre its association with folktale. But for the rabbis, midrash was about far more than ancient lore. Midrash was an expression of the Oral Torah (*torah sheh be'al peh*), the verbal half of the Teaching (*torah*) that God is traditionally believed to have given Moses at Sinai. As David Stern notes, “what midrash continually demonstrates is that Scripture may mean something other than what it says. But there is also a way in which the playfulness of midrash may be interpreted as the Rabbis’ sense of the playfulness of Scripture itself.”⁶⁰ God’s truth, the rabbis believed, was hidden among the letters, accent marks, and scribal inflections of the Written Torah (*torah sheh bi’khtav*), and it was their responsibility to discover it. In an attempt to convey the importance and widespread acceptance of this sort of thinking in Judaism, Gershom Scholem wrote: “The more genuinely and characteristically Jewish an idea or doctrine is, the more deliberately unsystematic it is. Its principle

⁵⁹ Daniel C. Matt, *Zohar, the Book of Enlightenment* (Minneapolis: Paulist Press, 1983), 7.

⁶⁰ David Stern, “Midrash and Jewish Interpretation,” in *The Jewish Study Bible*, ed. Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 1871. Michael Fishbane says something similar: “Therefore across the breadth of Judaism, it is not only the insistent recourse to the Bible that marks its creativity, but the very midrashic mode of correlating Scriptures among themselves and with new values, virtues or events. From this perspective, “Midrash” is not only a (multifaceted) literary genre but itself a generic structure of Jewish tradition.” Fishbane, *Midrashic Imagination*, 1. Scholars in the last few decades have been increasingly vocal in their arguments about the centrality of the midrashic experience to historical rabbinic Judaism. There is certainly a political angle to this message: the tenets of neo-Orthodoxy in nineteenth-century Germany, and of Ultra- and Modern Orthodoxy today, view the midrashic and halakhik systems of Judaism as closed. As scholarship increasingly demonstrates the openness and fluidity of rabbinic exegesis across the centuries, we see the formation of an intellectual-historical bulwark against just such claims by modern forms of Orthodoxy. This scholarship makes space for the ideological positions of more “liberal” branches of Rabbinic Judaism, which desire a dynamic and adaptive religious tradition. Though this most recent scholarly re-assessment of midrash dates from the 1990s and onward, it has a corollary in Jellinek’s work from the 1850s. As we will see in a Chapter Five, Jellinek was overt in his argument that the midrashic tradition was essential to both the historic and present functioning of Rabbinic Judaism.

of construction is not that of a logical system.”⁶¹ Midrash, then, is a form of storytelling where each detail is potentially revelatory of the true nature of Judaism’s hidden but beguiling God.

It is clear from Jellinek’s writings that his dedication to the midrashic form arose from his belief that its elasticity toward scriptural exegesis was precisely what modern Jewish theology was in need of most.⁶² In a set of sermons from 1865, Jellinek argued for the centrality of midrash as a living philosophical system for the Jewish religious experience. Using the etrog (a citrus fruit that is part of the ritual associated with Sukkot—the Feast of Weeks/Pentecost) as metaphor, Jellinek argued that midrash was what kept Jewish knowledge and ritual alive and vital in the world: “The fragrance of the etrog is the oldest image of the invisible Spirit, through which the common breath of humanity is gladdened and invigorated, and the midrash pleases and refreshes Israel through its spiritual wealth, its wit, its wordplay, and its incisive and striking answers.”⁶³ Midrash as etrog, therefore, represents the heart of Judaism, where (just as in the human body) it acts as the source and original beating pulse of the tradition’s vibrancy.

Jellinek’s defense of midrash was an attempt to argue that Judaism’s seemingly archaic theology and practice—with its pagan-like rituals and readings in ancient languages, so different from the stripped down Christianity of German Lutheranism—was not only applicable to the struggles of the present age, but actually in line with (and at times ahead of) its most progressive elements.

Joseph Dan writes: ‘While a definition of a midrash is a difficult task, its function can be explained

⁶¹ Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Knopf Doubleday, 2011), 158.

⁶² In a less central way, Ismar Schorsch comments that Zacharias Frankel made much the same argument: “[It] is quite apparent that Frankel never politicized classical Rabbinitism, for which he spoke, by denying its inherent responsiveness to the dictates of the age. Utilizing creative biblical exegesis, the Rabbis were able to preserve an inner dynamic that ensured legal growth and flexibility.” Ismar Schorsch, “Zacharias Frankel and the European Origins of Conservative Judaism,” *Judaism* 30, no. 3 (June 1981): 347.

⁶³ Adolf Jellinek, *Der Talmud. Zwei Reden, am Hüttenfeste 5625 (am 16. und 22. October 1864)* (Vienna: Herzfeld & Bauer, 1865), 7.

quite clearly...The midrash (from a functional point of view) is the result of the inherent paradox which haunts a religion based upon a body of sacred scriptures: the conflict between the wish and the need to innovate, and the religious maxim which states that all truth is to be found in the scriptures.”⁶⁴ Jellinek wrote similarly: “Freedom of spirit is the source of midrash, and we can invent freely and without coercion, without all having to repeat the same creed. In general it is the midrash that is the lovely fruit of a magnificent tree.”⁶⁵

Midrash, in Jellinek’s conception, is the pathway to freedom of thought. It is not simply the hallmark of liberalism and Enlightenment but actually a mode of thinking, one that has continually freed Judaism from the constraints of creed and doctrine. In a jab at the self-satisfaction of Protestant rationalism, which conceived of itself as having been the first to shed the garb of Popish scholasticism and medieval sentiment and folklore, Jellinek—through midrash—was declaring that the Jews had always been thusly free. As Jonathan Hess notes, “Typically cast as a clannish and coercive form of legalism irreconcilable with the Enlightenment’s insistence on individual autonomy, freedom of conscience and the very power of reason itself, Judaism seemed to provide the perfect point of contrast for [Christian] intellectuals wishing to imagine a secular political order grounded in the principles of rationalism and universalism.”⁶⁶ Jellinek rejected just this sort of anti-Judaism in liberal modernity. Having studied at Leipzig with some of Germany’s most eminent Orientalists, Jellinek—not unremarkably—was decidedly opposed to those who singled out Judaism for unique theological or ritual disdain. His defenses of midrash were, to continue quoting Hess, an example of the fact that “[f]rom Mendelssohn on, Jews also offered up Jewish critiques of modernity.

⁶⁴ Joseph Dan, “Midrash and the Dawn of Kabbalah,” in *Midrash and Literature*, eds. Geoffrey H. Hartman and Sanford Budick (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 127.

⁶⁵ Jellinek, *Der Talmud*, 10-11.

⁶⁶ Jonathan Hess, *Germans, Jews and the Claims of Modernity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 6.

Repeatedly calling attention to those elements of Judaism that Enlightenment culture typically viewed as most antithetical to the spirit of the modern age, Jews reformulated and reclaimed dominant visions of universalism by grounding them in Judaism's own normative tradition."⁶⁷ Midrash, for Jellinek, was an essential part of Judaism's "normative tradition," and its remarkable variety and not-infrequent elegance provided for him an argumentative bulwark against Christian opinions of Judaism that portrayed it as legalistic and spiritually deadened.

Jellinek hoped that through midrash he could convince the community of urbanizing and acculturating Jews that the resources for adapting and understanding a changing and conflicted modernity already existed within the Jewish tradition itself.⁶⁸ He wrote: "We want today to restore to us the hope of renewal. That, from the confusion and contradictions of modern times—from the battle against external foes who slander [Judaism], and against its blind friends, for whom its essence remains locked⁶⁹—Judaism will emerge radiant in splendor through the divinely blessed weapons of spirit [midrash] and truth [law and ritual]."⁷⁰ By Jellinek's conception, the rabbinic system, which had negotiated the problems of the Jewish world for nearly two thousand years, could continue to

⁶⁷ Hess, *Germans, Jews and the Claims of Modernity*, 8-9.

⁶⁸ Interestingly, Jay Harris argued that much of modern Jewish denominationalism can be traced to differing ideas about midrash. Jay M. Harris, *How Do We Know This?: Midrash and the Fragmentation of Modern Judaism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995).

⁶⁹ This is probably a remark about philo-Semitic Christians, who saw Jews as living remnants of the Old Testament and culture of Jesus. Jellinek's point here (and of any deeper or more nuanced account of Rabbinic Judaism itself) is that modern Judaism (Judaism after the destruction of the Second Temple) is both heir to its ancient texts and entirely transformed since (and by) them.

⁷⁰ Jellinek, *Der Talmud*, 18.

function in the present age. In midrash he found a key that could make Jewish texts applicable to the questions of contemporary human life.⁷¹

Early Texts and Friendships

While important for its evidence as to how his understanding of the rabbinic role eventually developed, the 1865 sermon on the etrog represents Jellinek's mature thinking on the subject of midrash and its essential place in modern Judaism. We can gain a different sense of the importance of midrash in Jellinek's formative intellectual years by examining the writings that preceded his *Beit ha-Midrash*, when he was just beginning to work in Wissenschaft, using methods from textual criticism, biblical studies, and philology. What we see when analyzing these early works is that Jellinek came to his broader theories of midrash through the study of the medieval Jewish mystical tradition, especially the *Zohar* and its related texts. The *Zohar* was one of the most astounding products of the midrashic imagination. Jellinek's *Beit ha-Midrash* and his later theories about midrash and modernity were the happy consequence of his investigations into Jewish mysticism during a formative period in his academic life.

Begun in the 1850s after his extensive training at Leipzig University, Jellinek's first set of projects amounted to a critical-historical accounting of the major texts of Jewish mystical literature from the medieval period. (Based on his inclusion of sources, Jellinek's timeline of interest extended from the eighth through thirteenth centuries.) The first fruits of this labor were extraordinary. In 1851, Jellinek published *Moses ben Schem-Tob de Leon und sein Verhältniß zum Sohar* (Moses ben Shem-Tov de León and his Relationship to the Zohar), a detailed argument about the authorship of the

⁷¹ This belief that midrash is a key to the modern Jewish experience has become one of the central motifs of post-modern Jewry. So-called midrashic writing abounds in contemporary Jewish literature, but almost entirely within non-religious or non-traditional segments of the community.

Kabbalistic masterpiece *The Zohar* (Book of Splendor).⁷² Based on linguistic analysis and cultural context, Jellinek claimed that the work was not written by its purported author, the rabbinic sage Simeon bar Yochai (Second Century CE), but rather authored by the Spanish rabbi Moses ben Shem-Tov de León (d. 1305).⁷³ As a product of the Wissenschaft movement, Jellinek's *Moses ben Schem-Tob de Leon* is a fascinating document. As a piece of investigative scholarship, it is nearly brilliant. Citing Hebrew, Aramaic, and Arabic sources, Jellinek sought in careful detail to trace the development of Zoharic mystical philosophy through centuries of preceding texts. His contention about the *Zohar*'s more recent construction was groundbreaking for its time. It remains all the more so for the fact that his conclusions were not widely accepted by scholars until the middle of the twentieth century.⁷⁴

The following year, 1852, Jellinek published *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Kabbala* (Contributions to the History of Kabbalah),⁷⁵ a two-volume work that continued to track the history and

⁷² Jellinek's theory of the *Zohar*'s primary authorial origins was accepted by Heinrich Graetz (1817-1891) in his magisterial *Geschichte der Juden* (History of the Jews, 1853-1875), but not fully embraced by scholars until Gershom Scholem (1897-1982) gave it his imprimatur a century later. The fifth lecture of *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, entitled "The Zohar I: The Book and Its Author," is in part devoted to explaining how Scholem forwent his initial belief in the *Zohar*'s multi-authorship for Jellinek's theory--which Scholem credits to Graetz--of Moses de Leon's sole authorship. Daniel Matt likewise supports the single-authorship theory. (Interestingly, the Leo Baeck Institute in New York City contains the copy of Jellinek's *Moses ben Schem-Tob de Leon* personally owned by Britain's famed Chief Rabbi J. H. Hertz. Jellinek dedicated the original work to his father-in-law, Marcus Bettelheim, "as a sign of love and thankfulness.")

⁷³ See Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Knopf Doubleday, 2011), 156-204; Daniel C. Matt, *Zohar, the Book of Enlightenment* (Minneapolis: Paulist Press, 1983), 4-10. Also Moses de Leon, *The Book of the Pomegranate: Moses De Leon's Sefer Ha-Rimmon*, ed. and trans. Elliot R. Wolfson (Atlanta: Scholars, 1988).

⁷⁴ For a longer account of Jellinek's work on Abraham Abulafia and Jellinek's importance to the field of Jewish mystical studies generally, see Ronald Kiener, "The Vicissitudes of Abulafia in Contemporary Scholarship," in *Gershom Scholem's Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism 50 Years after: Proceedings of the Sixth International Conference on the History of Jewish Mysticism*, ed. Peter Schäfer and Joseph Dan (Tübingen: Mohr, 1993): 145-162.

⁷⁵ Adolph Jellinek, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Kabbala* (Leipzig: Fritzsche, 1852).

development of cabalistic literature from before the time of the *Zohar*. Part one was a systematic analysis of the extant scholarship and historical evidence related to key texts of the medieval cabalistic period, including *Sefer Yetzirah* (Book of Formation), the *Zohar*, and works by Rabbi Sa'adia ben Yosef Gaon (d. 942 CE). Citing Hebrew textual variances from manuscripts of different centuries, as well as Arabic discrepancies or supplements, Jellinek carefully established an account of the development and transmission of cabalistic imagery and archetypes. In part two, referencing the works of the scholar Samuel David Luzzatto (1800-1865) of the Padua Rabbinical College, the Italian Jewish book collector Joseph Almanzi (1801-1860), and the Dresden Jewish leader Bernhard Beer (1801-1861), Jellinek again attempted to connect cabalistic texts and manuscripts across centuries. Citing “families,” or interconnected webs, of pre-*Zohar* literature, Jellinek theorized a genealogy of mystical theology linking the Islamic context of men like Sa'adia Gaon with the Spanish one of Moses de León. Alongside a handful of his contemporaries, Jellinek's treatises on cabalistic history proved to be some of the most important work done in that field until after the Second World War.⁷⁶

A Community of Jewish Manuscript Collectors and Modern Commentators

No book is a work of independent genius, and it is worth discussing a number of the friends and intellectual correspondents whom Jellinek cultivated as a young scholar and who aided his acquisition and emerging understanding of uncollected rabbinic midrashim. Many of their names appear throughout *Beit ha-Midrash*, and their work created much of the framework for Jewish Studies as it exists today. As Jonathan Sheehan writes, by exploring the work of eighteenth and nineteenth century scholars, we can “open up the Enlightenment to possibilities of religious

⁷⁶ For recent scholarship on the genealogy of Jewish mysticism, see Roni Weinstein, *Kabbalah and Jewish Modernity* (Oxford: Littman Library Of Jewish Civilization, 2015); Rachel Elior, *The Three Temples: On the Emergence of Jewish Mysticism in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2005).

reconstruction and recuperation...[For] the Enlightenment [understanding of the] Bible was not built by attacks. Instead, it was built by a sustained and serious engagement with the place of the Bible in the modern world.”⁷⁷ Many of the men Jellinek corresponded with during this period in his life were fellow young Jewish scholars, whose love of and belief in Judaism is more complex than could be conveyed through a simple accounting of their daily ritual practice or personal beliefs. The men we will focus on here—Salomon Munk, Samuel David Luzzatto, and Marco Mortara—were all the first in their families to receive university educations, the first to leave their rural familial villages for the possibilities of urban life, and the first to pursue *Wissenschaft* as a part of their Jewish identities. As Sheehan said, Enlightenment (i.e., modernity) often meant far more than the rationalist dissembling of religious orthodoxy. It certainly was not that for any of these men. Nor for Jellinek, who in the early 1850s still appears to have thought of making a career in *Wissenschaft*. Rather, for these men and the dozens more they represent, Enlightenment, *Wissenschaft*, modernity, and rationalism were all part of what Sheehan called “reconstruction and recuperation”—of Jews making Judaism a part of the world being newly created, not passive bystanders or defenders of increasingly archaic beliefs.

One of Jellinek’s closest intellectual mentors during this period in his career was the German Jewish French Orientalist Salomon Munk (1803-1867).⁷⁸ Citations to the Frenchman’s works appear

⁷⁷ Jonathan Sheehan, *The Enlightenment Bible: Translation, Scholarship, Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), xii.

⁷⁸ For scholarship on Munk, see Adolf Jellinek, *Salomon Munk, Professor am Collège de France: Vortrage im Wiener Bet ha-Midrash am 21. Januar 1865 gehalten* (Vienna: Herzfeld & Bauer, 1865); Moïse Schwab, *Salomon Munk: membre de L’Institut Professeur au Collège de France. Sa vie et ses oeuvres* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1900). For Munk’s works, see Salomon Munk, *Palestine: Description géographique, historique, et archéologique*, (Paris: Firmin Didot frères, 1845); idem, *La philosophie chez les juifs* (Paris: Bureau des Archives Israelites, 1848); and idem, *Mélanges de philosophie juive et arabe*, (Paris: Franck, 1857). Munk’s Arabic edition of Maimonides’ *Guide for the Perplexed* remains the authoritative text today: Moses Maimonides, *Le guide des égarés; traité de théologie et de philosophie par Moïse ben Maimoun, dit Maïmonide*, Salomon Munk (Paris: A. Franck, 1856) (French and Arabic); Salomon Munk, *et al.*, *Manuscripts*

throughout Jellinek's books on Kabbalah and midrash, and Munk's spirit of scholarly inquiry—which combined a tremendous gift for languages with a keen interest in the relationship between differing philosophical and theological traditions—deeply impacted Jellinek's mode of critical analysis. Importantly, Munk believed that Jewish mystical literature was worthy of modern scholarly analysis, and it seems likely that this opinion supported Jellinek's own interests in that subject, giving him the courage to pursue his research. Jewish engagement with mystical practice is probably as old as the theology of Israel itself, and certainly appears already in texts dating to the transition from Temple-centered worship to diasporic communities. It was not until the medieval period, however, that works like the *Zohar* and its commentaries came to reside at the center of practice for widespread communities of Jews. By the nineteenth century, Hasidism, with its emphasis on spiritual cultivation, had swept the Jewish communities of Russia's Pale of Settlement. With the Hasidim, knowledge that had once been confined to an élite and secretive realm was re-conceptualized as the rightful inheritance of all Jews.

Wissenschaft scholars in the German lands often deplored what they saw as the pietistic irrationality of these Eastern Jews, refusing to treat Hasidism's devotional literature as worthy of serious academic study. Mysticism, with its heavenly chariots and divine enumerations, was not seen as proper for study in the modern university. Jellinek disagreed with such sentiments, as did Munk. What Munk also believed was that Jewish history was part of the forgotten (or we might say, purposefully neglected) history of European thought. Alfred L. Ivry, writing about Munk's great work *Mélanges De Philosophie Juive Et Arabe* (Paris, 1857-1859) notes that Munk's presentation of his materials makes it apparent that “Jewish philosophy is integral...to Western civilization, to the Jews

orientaux: catalogues des manuscrits hébreux et samaritains de la Bibliothèque Nationale (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1866).

being contributors and custodians of much the West holds dear.”⁷⁹ This exact theme emerges pointedly in Jellinek’s writings following his move to Vienna. But Jellinek was a sophisticated reader of his contemporaries’ works, and it seems far from likely he would have overlooked this piece of Munk’s agenda.

Like Munk, Samuel David Luzzatto (called the Shadal) was a seminal figure in the origins of Jewish Wissenschaft--and the man to whom Jellinek dedicated the second volume of his *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Kabbala*.⁸⁰ A scion of the famed Luzzatto family, his great uncle was Rabbi Moses Hayim Luzzatto (1707-1746, called the Ramchal), considered by many to be among the founders of modern Hebrew literature and poetry and around whom developed a circle of mystical disciples.⁸¹ Born more than half a century after the Ramchal’s death, Samuel David took a very different path from his esteemed forbearer. Born and raised in Trieste, Samuel David went to Padua to pursue his

⁷⁹ Alfred L. Ivry, “Salomon Munk and the *Mélanges De Philosophie Juive Et Arabe*,” *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 7, no. 2 (2000): 121.

⁸⁰ For scholarship on Samuel David Luzzatto, see Ephraim Chamiel, Asael Abelman, and Yaacov Jeffrey Green, *The Middle Way: The Emergence of Modern Religious Trends in Nineteenth-Century Judaism: Responses to Modernity in the Philosophy of Z.H. Chajes, S.R. Hirsch, and S.D. Luzzatto* (Brighton, Mass.: Academic Studies Press, 2014); Marc Gopin, “The Religious Ethics of Samuel David Luzzatto,” Dissertation, Brandeis University, 1993; Morris B. Margolies, *Samuel David Luzzatto, Traditionalist Scholar* (New York: Ktav Pub. House, 1979); **and** Noah H. Rosenbloom, *Luzzatto’s Ethico-Psychological Interpretation of Judaism; a Study in the Religious Philosophy of Samuel David Luzzatto*, (New York: Yeshiva University, Dept. of Special Publications, 1965). Many of Luzzatto’s works are available in Hebrew, see Samuel David Luzzatto, *Igrot Shadal*, trans. Eisig Graeber (Przemyśl: Druk Zupnik ‘et Knoller, 1882) (Hebrew). For works in Italian, see Samuel David Luzzatto, *Grammatica della lingua ebraica*, (Padova: Co’ tipi di A. Bianchi, 1853); and idem, *Elementi grammaticali del caldeo biblico e del dialetto talmudico babilonese* (Padova: Co’ tipi di A. Bianchi, 1865). For German translation, see idem, *Israelitische moral-theologie*, trans. Lazar Elias Igel (Breslau: Schletter'sche Buchhandlung, 1870).

⁸¹ For a collection of technical essays on the Ramchal’s works, see Isaiah Tishby, *Messianic Mysticism: Moses Hayim Luzzatto and the Padua School*, trans. Morris Hoffman (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2008). See also Yirmeyahu Bindman, *Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto: His Life and Works* (Northvale, N.J.: Aronson, 1995). The Ramchal’s most famous works are *Mesilat Yesharim* (Path of the Upright, 1740), a work of practical ethics, and *Derech Hashem* (Way of God, 1730s), a work of systematic philosophy.

education in Judaics and the secular sciences.⁸² A student and then teacher at the Rabbinical College of Padua (founded by Isaac Samuel Reggio [1784-1855, called the Yashar] in 1829), the school was founded on Wissenschaft principles, and meant to be a fully modern institution dedicated to Jewish learning and contemporary philosophy.⁸³

Jellinek cited Luzzatto's *Lezioni di storia giudaica* (Lessons of Jewish History [Padua, 1852]), an early scientific treatise on the culture and literature of ancient and modern Judaism. A generation older than Jellinek, as a friend Luzzatto's knowledge and authority were undoubtedly instrumental in securing for Jellinek copies of texts from libraries in northern Italy. (In the early 1850s, the whole region was governed as the Habsburg province of Lombardy-Venetia.) Unlike Jellinek, however, Luzzatto had little interest in mysticism. Instead, he studied Syriac, and made some of the first contributions to Biblical criticism, including offering emendations to the Masoretic Hebrew. Through careful textual analysis he also claimed that Ecclesiastes was a late First Temple text, and therefore not likely written by King Solomon, to whom it is traditionally attributed.

One of the students who passed through the Padua rabbinical college, and who eventually became one of Luzzatto's closest students, was Marco Mortara (1815-1894).⁸⁴ After graduating from

⁸² In 1797 Padua became part of the Habsburg Empire. It was briefly ruled by Napoleon between 1806 and 1814, after which it was returned to Austria. It was annexed into the newly formed Kingdom of Italy in 1866. For a history of Padua, see Lorenzo Braccisi and Francesca Veronese, *Padova Prima Di Padova: La Città E L'universo Veneto* (Sommacampagna: Cierre, 2013).

⁸³ For an image of the original "Regulations" of the College, contained in the Library of Congress (Washington, D.C.), see Abraham Karp, *From the Ends of the Earth: Judaic Treasures of the Library of Congress* (Washington, D.C.: Rizzoli, 1991).

⁸⁴ There is almost no scholarly literature on Marcus Mortara outside of the *Encyclopedia Judaica* and a few other scattered reference works. Mantua's Jewish community was always very small, though it grew in the latter part of the nineteenth century following the pattern of Jewish migration across Europe. For Mantua's early modern Jewish history, see Gianfranco Miletto and Giuseppe Veltri, *Rabbi Judah Moscato and the Jewish Intellectual World of Mantua in the 16th-17th Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2012). The Jewish community in Mantua was mostly destroyed in the Second World War. See Shlomo Simonsohn, *History of the Jews in the Duchy of Mantua* (Jerusalem: Kiryath Sepher, 1977).

Padua, Mortara became the rabbi in Mantua, at that time one of the so-called Quadrilateral fortresses (the other three being Peschiera, Legnago, and Verona) constructed by the Austrians after the Congress of Vienna.⁸⁵ From Mortara, Jellinek acquired a number of the texts that later appeared in *Bet ha-Midrash*, mostly in the third volume. Later in life we have records of Jellinek making somewhat frequent trips to Italy, and it is possible that his love for that country and knowledge of its Jewish community arose out of these early interactions with Luzzatto and Mortara.⁸⁶

Mortara is an interesting though unfortunately mostly forgotten figure in the history of Central European Wissenschaft. He, like Luzzatto, opposed the study of Kabbalism, seeing it as a heterodox outgrowth of the rabbinic system, and therefore spent his academic career collecting and editing rabbinic manuscripts--his contributions to Jellinek's volumes are representative of the immense body of unedited texts that confronted early Wissenschaft scholars.⁸⁷ The medieval and early modern periods created a trove of Jewish documents and papers. Many resided, unsorted, in libraries, thanks to the foresight of librarians and humanists who collected and deposited them there

⁸⁵ Mantua became an official territory of the Habsburg crown in 1708. Between 1797 and 1814, the territory traded hands a number of time between the Austrians and Napoleon, but at Napoleon's defeat in 1814 it rejoined the Habsburg Empire. At Austria's defeat by Prussian forces in 1866, Mantua (as part of the larger territory of Lombardy) was incorporated into the newly re-united Kingdom of Italy, which had been proclaimed in 1861 by Victor Emmanuel II of Sardinia. For Mantua in the Napoleon Wars, see Phillip Cuccia, *Napoleon in Italy: The Sieges of Mantua, 1796-1799* (Norman, Okl.: University of Oklahoma Press, 2014). For histories of the Italian Wars of Independence, see Frank Coppa, *The Origins of the Italian Wars of Independence* (London: Longman, 1992); and Henry Frendo, ed., *L'unificazione Italiana e le Politiche Europee* (Msida: Malta University Press, 2012). Lucy Riall, *The Italian Risorgimento: State, Society, and National Unification* (London: Routledge, 1994).

⁸⁶ The Jellinek collections in Jerusalem and Koblenz contain dozens of postcards Jellinek sent to his family (primarily to his eldest son, Georg) during trips to Italy in the 1870s and 1880s.

⁸⁷ For Mortara's works, see Phillip Cuccia, *Napoleon in Italy: The Sieges of Mantua, 1796-1799* (Norman, Okl.: University of Oklahoma Press, 2014); and Marco Mortara, *L'epistolario di Marco Mortara (1815-1894): un rabbino italiano tra riforma e ortodossia*, ed. Asher Salah (Florence: Giuntina, 2012). These letters show the wide variety of Mortara's correspondents, including Luzzatto, Mortiz Steinschneider, Sabato Morais, and Alexander von Humbolt.

in great bulk. But unknown numbers more survived only in private collections. Because of the efforts of men like Mortara (and later, of Moritz Steinschneider in Germany and England), thousands of these works were catalogued, edited, and published, opening their contents to future generations of scholars.

Friendships with men like Munk, Luzzatto, and Mortara were important for Jellinek's early Wissenschaft work of collecting, editing, and publishing rabbinical texts. Jellinek gathered the writings printed in *Bet ha-Midrash* from libraries and personal collections across Europe. These were, on the whole, not unknown works but rather uncollected ones. The need for a series like *Bet ha-Midrash* arose from the rather eccentric history of record keeping and writing within Judaism itself. Since the late rabbinic period Jews have created a tremendous number of physical texts of varying importance, sanctity, and authority. Down the generations, Jews likewise devised a series of unique systems for ordering and studying this growing body of work. At the beginning of the early modern period, Jewish (and non-Jewish) publishers began to develop systems for the collection and display of this long textual history in printed form. The most famous of these is represented by the Talmud *daf* (page), which involves placing a text whose authority and sanctity are widely accepted at the center of the printed folio, and surrounding it with various strata of commentary and notation.⁸⁸ The most commonly known work in this style is the Vilna (Vilnius) Edition of the Babylonian Talmud (codified as late as the 1880s), but the style has been used in many other places in Jewish religious literature as well.

There are a number of compendia that collect midrashic works: Midrash Rabbah, Midrash Tehillim, the Mechilta, the Sifrei, and Midrash Tanhuma are among the best known. But scattered

⁸⁸ At the core of Talmud is Mishna. But other sources existed as well, called *baraita* and *tosefta*, and their authority can be greater or lesser than that of the Mishna. The Gemara adds a layer of commentary that attempts both to elucidate and reconcile these scattered sources. Often, the Talmudic redactors simply left discrepancies *in situ*.

throughout rabbinic literature remain works in this genre that can only be found if one knows where to look, or chances upon them by happenstance. David Stern writes:

As anthologies of interpretations, with multiple interpretations recorded side-by-side with no comments and few attempts to navigate between them [...] midrashic collections embody the delight of midrash in always yet *another* additional interpretation [...] [M]ultiple interpretation as found in midrash is actually a sign of its stability, the guarantee of a belief in Scripture as an inexhaustible font of meaningfulness.⁸⁹

Jellinek's *Bet ha-Midrash*, too, did nothing to reconcile conflicting accounts. He was compiling and adding another layer of commentary. His volumes were designed to mirror the 'Talmudic redactors' own self-conscious sense of over-abundant collection.

The Contents of *Bet ha-Midrash*

From its very first pages, *Bet ha-Midrash* was an eminently scientific pursuit. The theological satisfaction of making available in a single book writings from Jewish history that had formerly been scattered was not the only reason Jellinek devoted so many hours of his life to this project.

Gathering midrashim from a wide variety of rabbinic sources, Jellinek's editorial introductions (in German) reveal both a deep linguistic knowledge and critical-historical education. His writing is academic, not theological. For each text he explains its manuscript sources, its contents, the locations of its variant texts, and its relevant philological and theological background. For words, themes, and philosophical concepts that originate in languages other than Hebrew, he provides translations and elucidations. For Greek concepts, he provides Greek-language originals; similarly for Arabic. His introductions conclude with pages that compare lines in these midrashim with those in existing compilations, such as *Midrash rabba* and the various *Targumim*. In its six-volume totality, *Bet ha-Midrash* is both a remarkable accomplishment and precisely the sort of scholarly project that epitomized the early work of Wissenschaft.

⁸⁹ David Stern, "Midrash and Jewish Interpretation," in *The Jewish Study Bible*, ed. Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 1874.

Jellinek's notes in the introductory texts attested to the wide range of his scholarly interlocutors; he quoted or cited many of the major works of German biblical criticism, and firmly grounded his scholarship on medieval Jewish texts in the nascent academic disciplines of textual criticism and Orientalism.⁹⁰ Of the non-Jewish sources he referenced, they include: Constantine von Tischendorf (1815-1874), German biblical scholar, textual critic, and professor at Leipzig;⁹¹ Friedrich Nies (1804/1808-1870), Leipzig typographer and book publisher, whose work on printing Egyptian hieroglyphics make possible the dissemination of scholarly work on the ancient Near East; Johann Christoph Wolf (1683-1739), Christian Hebraist and compiler of *Bibliotheca Hebraea* (Hamburg, 4 vols., 1715-1733);⁹² Heinrich Ewald (1803-1875), professor of Oriental languages at the University of

⁹⁰ *Bet ha-Midrash* and its precursors were part of what was then still the new academic discipline of higher biblical criticism. Often associated with Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918), the German scholar who first described in detail a theory of the compositional history of the Hebrew Bible (called the Documentary Hypothesis), by the year of Wellhausen's birth the field of biblical studies was already at least a century old. (Benedict Spinoza and Thomas Hobbes both theorized about the Bible's possibly composite origins in the seventeenth century.)

⁹¹ See Stanley Porter, *Constantine Tischendorf: The Life and Work of a 19th Century Bible Hunter, Including Constantine Tischendorf's When Were Our Gospels Written?* (London; New York: Bloomsbury, 2015); Kurt Aland, *Konstantin von Tischendorf (1815-1874): Neutestamentliche Textforschung Damals Und Heute* (Berlin: Akademie, 1993). In 1859, on a trip to the Middle East, Tischendorf found the *Codex Sinaiticus*, one of the world's oldest extant Greek bibles. See Jürgen Gottschlich, *The Bible Hunter: The Quest for the Original New Testament*, trans. John Brownjohn (London: Haus, 2013); David C. Parker, *Textual Scholarship and the Making of the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); David C. Parker, *Codex Sinaiticus: The Story of the World's Oldest Bible* (London: British Library, 2010); Scot McKendrick, *In a Monastery Library: Preserving Codex Sinaiticus and the Greek Written Heritage* (London: British Library, 2006); James Bentley, *Secrets of Mount Sinai: The Story of the World's Oldest Bible--Codex Sinaiticus* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1986); and Matthew Black and Robert Davidson, *Constantin von Tischendorf and the Greek New Testament* (Glasgow: University of Glasgow Press, 1981).

⁹² Moritz Steinschneider's *Bibliotheca Hebraica Bodleiana* (1852-1860) owes much to Wolf's pioneering efforts. And alongside his bibliographical efforts, Wolf is perhaps best remembered for this travel writing. See Johann Christoph Wolf, *The Life and Adventures of John Christopher Wolf: Late Principal Secretary of State at Jaffanapatnam, in Ceylon; Together with a Description of That Island, Its Natural Productions, and the Manners and Customs of Its Inhabitants. Translated from the Original German. To the Whole Is Added, a Short, but Comprehensive Description of the Same Island, by Mr. Eschelskroon.* (London: Robinson, 1785).

Göttingen;⁹³ and August Dillmann (1823-1894), German Orientalist, professor, and bibliographer, best known for his work on Ethiopic manuscripts.⁹⁴ Jellinek's Jewish sources included: Zunz; Frankel; Fürst; Moritz Steinschneider, Jewish Orientalist, bibliographer, and Talmudist;⁹⁵ Menachim Lonzano (d. 1608), bible critic and poet; Abraham Geiger (1810-1874), German Jewish scholar and leading rabbi of the reform;⁹⁶ and Adolf Neubauer (1831-1907), sub-librarian at the Bodleian Library at Oxford.⁹⁷ Jellinek gathered texts (both printed and manuscript) from Oxford's Bodleian Library,

⁹³ See Hans Conon von der Gabelentz, *Hans Conon von der Gabelentz (1807-1874) und sein Umkreis: linguistische Briefwechsel mit Hermann Brockhaus, Heinrich Ewald, Karl Friedrich Neumann, August Friedrich Pott, Wilhelm Radloff und Karl Andree*, ed. Hartmut Walravens (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2015); Georg Schmidt, "Das Prophetenbild des Heinrich Georg August Ewald," Dissertation (University of Marburg, 1986); Peter H. A. Neumann, *Das Prophetenverständnis in der deutschsprachigen Forschung seit Heinrich Ewald* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1979); T. Witton Davies, *Heinrich Ewald, Orientalist and Theologian, 1803-1903: A Centenary Appreciation* (London: Fisher Unwin, 1903); Julius Wellhausen, *Heinrich Ewald* (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1901). For his important works published during Jellinek's early career, see Heinrich Ewald, *Kritische Grammatik der hebräischen Sprache* (Leipzig: Hahnschen Buchhandlung, 1827); idem, *Abhandlungen zur orientalischen und biblischen literatur: erster theil* (Göttingen: Dieterich, 1832); idem, *Die Psalmen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1835); and idem, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der aeltesten Auslegung und Spracherklärung des Alten Testaments* (Stuttgart: Krabbe, 1844).

⁹⁴ See Wolf Wilhelm Baudissin, *August Dillmann* (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1895). For his Ethiopic research, see August Dillmann, *Grammatik der äthiopischen sprache*, (Leipzig: Weigel, 1857); and idem, *Verzeichniss der abessinischen handschriften* (Berlin: Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1878). He published his important works in Biblical criticism in the 1870s and 1880s. See August Dillmann, *Das Buch der Jubiläen* (Leipzig: Fues, 1874); and idem, *Die Bücher Numeri, Deuteronomium und Josue* (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1886).

⁹⁵ See Reimund Leicht and Gad Freudenthal, eds., *Studies on Steinschneider: Moritz Steinschneider and the Emergence of the Science of Judaism in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2012); Petra Figeac, *Moritz Steinschneider: 1816-1907, Begründer der wissenschaftlichen hebräischen Bibliographie* (Berlin: Hentrich & Hentrich, 2007). For Steinschneider's most lasting bibliographical work, see idem, *Bibliotheca Hebraica Bodleiana* (Berlin: Friedländer, 1852-1860).

⁹⁶ From 1835-1847 he edited the *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift für jüdische Theologie*, and from 1862-1875 edited *Jüdische Zeitschrift für Wissenschaft und Leben*.

⁹⁷ See Elliott S. Horowitz, "'A Jew of the Old Type': Neubauer as Cataloguer, Critic, and Necrologist," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 100, no. 4 (2010): 649-56; Herbert M. J. Loewe, *Adolf Neubauer, 1831-1931* (Oxford: Johnson, 1931); and J. Morgenstern, *Die französische Academie und die "Geographie des Talmuds"* (Berlin: Schlesinger, 1870). For his important works, see Adolf Neubauer, *Catalogue of the Hebrew Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library and in the College Libraries of Oxford, Including Mss. in Other Languages, Which are Written with Hebrew Characters, or Relating to the Hebrew Language or Literature; and a*

the Imperial Library in Munich, the Imperial Library in Paris, the Leipzig City Library, the Leipzig Municipal Library, and the private collections of men in Jerusalem, Hannover, and Mantua.

In *Bet ha-Midrash* and its associated works, Jellinek made it a point to collect cabbalistic manuscripts that were otherwise overlooked by his Wissenschaft peers. Kabbalism was, Jellinek believed, one of the most important and creative developments in Jewish literary and theological expression during the medieval period. As he assembled the first and second volumes of *Bet ha-Midrash*, he edited two more short volumes, *Auswahl kabbalistischer Mystik* (A Selection of Kabbalistic Mysticism, 1853) and *Philosophie und Kabbala* (Philosophy and Kabbalah, 1854). The former book was a collection of four mystical texts printed from manuscripts in libraries in Paris and Hamburg. Jellinek wrote critical introductions for each text, which included a discussion of the identity and personality of the purported author, particular characteristics of the work itself, and a genealogy of the extant manuscripts. The second half of the volume was given over to the texts themselves--printings of Jellinek's corrected Hebrew editions. The latter volume, *Philosophie und Kabbala*, likewise brought together two manuscript texts, one by Abraham Abulafia and one a Hebrew translation of a work by Thomas Aquinas. In many obvious ways, this latter volume was an early attempt to uncover the interwoven intellectual histories of Jews and Christians in Europe.⁹⁸

What is clear from these books is that Jellinek, thirty-two years old when he began the *Bet ha-Midrash* project, wanted to make a series of corrections in the world of Wissenschaft des Judentums.

few Samaritan Mss. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1886-1906); and idem, *La géographie du Talmud: mémoire couronné par l'Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres* (Paris: Lévy, 1868). One of his most important contributions came at the end of his life, when he acquired for Oxford fragments from the Cairo Geniza (a majority of which reside at Cambridge University).

⁹⁸ Both of these books reveal Jellinek's fascination not only with mysticism in general, but also with Abraham Abulafia (1240-1291) specifically, the founder of a highly influential school in Spain. Abulafia was thought by some to be the author of the *Zohar*, though Jellinek does much in his various introductions to dissuade his readers from that belief. Instead, Jellinek's interest in the Spanish Kabbalist appears to have been both deeply scholarly and genuinely personal.

Perhaps this is no more clearly stated than in the introduction to the third volume (1855), which, while short, is a fascinating glimpse into the social world of the young scholar.⁹⁹ No other volume contained anything quite like these few paragraphs, which excoriated his fellow Jewish studies scholars for their pettiness and querulousness. “I should have failed to preface this third part of my “Bet ha-Midrash” at all, Jellinek wrote, “if I had not felt urged to utter a serious word about the sad situation in which Jewish Studies finds itself. I must mention the despicable meanness and smallness of spirit that prevails in the circle of Jewish scholars, and that complicates any cooperation or cooperative pursuits.”¹⁰⁰ Jellinek’s introductions to the other volumes of *Bet ha-Midrash* are exactly what one would expect: overviews of the included material, explanations of particular themes or genres, and expressions of gratitude to those who lent him manuscripts. Only volume three contains such an emotional outburst.

This sort of highly pointed writing, aimed at a specific Jewish establishment, is rare among Jellinek’s publications. (We will see one more example at the end of Chapter 5.) Something must have occurred on or about 1855 to make Jellinek this upset. Unfortunately, we can only conjecture. But in the 1850s, Leipzig was full of Jewish scholars frustrated by the lack of opportunities available to them in the German university system. They could be educated, but they could not be employed. There seems little doubt that this could have led to an intense amount of bickering. “Often one finds that influential men lack the ability to be objective about that which lies outside his specialty,” Jellinek noted.¹⁰¹ By 1854, Zacharias Frankel had decamped from Saxony to Breslau, there to assume the presidency of a new Jewish Theological Seminary. Steinschneider was spending summers in

⁹⁹ Adolph Jellinek, *Bet ha-Midrash. Sammlung kleiner Midraschim und vermischter Abhandlungen aus der ältern jüdischen Literature*, vol. 3 (Leipzig: Vollrath, 1855). A complete translation appears in Appendix 1.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., vii.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., viii.

Oxford. Zunz was in Berlin. For nearly a decade Leipzig and Halle together had hosted one of the greatest concentrations of Wissenschaft scholars, Orientalists, Biblical critics, and publishers anywhere in Europe. It seems more than likely that the pressures and egos were no match for the generally meager strength (especially, it often seems, around one's co-religionists) of human kindness.

The introduction to volume three might also be understood as a sort of public declaration by Jellinek of his frustrations with the priorities and aims of the discipline, and an announcement of his decision to leave the ranks of professional Wissenschaft scholars. By the latter half of the 1840s, Jellinek had assumed a greater role in the Leipzig Jewish community. With his turn to the rabbinate Jellinek was joining a different sort of Jewish pioneer. In Jellinek's view, the nineteenth century was changing too rapidly for traditional assumptions and expectations to entirely define Judaism's future. Instead, he believed that a new role for the rabbi was needed, one still educated in the classical texts but with an eye toward a European future. In the same way that Jellinek excoriated his fellow scholars, years later he would do the same to the community at large as a rabbi in Vienna. Modernity was too momentous for the Jews to bicker amongst themselves, to form tribes, factions, alliances, movements, or ideologies. It was also too exciting. David Stern writes:

[T]he Rabbis are also the closest 'readers' of Scripture imaginable, with an almost preternatural sensitivity to the least 'bump' in the scriptural text—an unnecessary repetition or superfluity, any kind of syntactical or lexical peculiarity, a mere hint at something unseemly in the way of behavior, or the smallest possibility of an inconsistency between verses or even between a verse and what the Rabbis believed to be the case.¹⁰²

This unflinching dedication to truth in the text, to discovering every bit of the Bible's subtlety and strangeness, was the legacy on which Jellinek sought to build his Wissenschaft scholarship and his rabbinical career. The science of the nineteenth century, he believed, need be no more destabilizing

¹⁰² David Stern, "Midrash and Jewish Interpretation," in *The Jewish Study Bible*, ed. Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 1870.

to traditional Judaism or accounts of God than were the rabbis' own long history of un-blinkered readings. This was just the sort of argument Jellinek was beginning to formulate during his final years in Leipzig, and its analysis forms the next and last section of this chapter.

“Under the Changing Play of Its History”

By the early 1850s, Jellinek was moving away from an all-consuming focus on scholarship. His school years were behind him. The 1848 revolutions had come and gone. A series of emancipatory reforms made large-scale Jewish settlement in the city of Leipzig possible, and innovations in economics and transportation made the move desirable. Finally, in the very middle of the nineteenth century, the diverse elements of Jewish modernity that had been spreading across European Jewish culture for the better part of a century were finally arrayed together: intellectual revolutions stemming from the Enlightenment and Haskalah; political reforms following the Napoleonic invasion and the 1848 revolutions; and economic and transportation innovations that made centralization monetarily appropriate, and therefore rural-urban demographic transitions necessary.

Observing these historic confluences, Jellinek took the insights from his scholarship and sought to apply them to the religious needs of the community, beginning to create and implement practical reforms that would respond to the needs of this new urban Judaism. These migrants were displaced of almost everything. The paradigm of individualism, so often assumed by contemporary readers, makes it difficult for us to understand the jarring effects that this mass Jewish migration must have had on families and communities. Jewish life in the pre-modern period was defined to an extraordinary extent by social circumstances, and the continuity of historical norms dictated most personal interactions and decisions. As was discussed in the preceding chapter, the various economic and intellectual transformations that defined Jewish modernity were not equivalent to a mass secularization. Instead, many of the same diversities that had existed in pre-modern villages

continued to permeate the modern period. Jellinek recognized that religious institutions and traditions would persist but require reform compelled both a new paradigm of historical consciousness and a traditionalist assumption that theology and ritual practice were essential parts of Jewish life.¹⁰³

With the breakdown of traditional community during the migration to cities, new religious structures had to be devised to replace them. In a city like Leipzig, with no historical Jewish community, that meant that, in many ways, a leader like Jellinek had a free hand in crafting a vision of the rabbinate that diverged greatly from the small town yeshivot of pre-modern Central Europe. As we will see in the coming pages, Jellinek created for himself a new model of the rabbi, centered on public sermons and anchored by the central community synagogue. He was not alone in seeing the newfound importance of preaching and the synagogue for urban Jewry. Instead, Jellinek's historical importance arises from his rhetorical craft, his integration of Wissenschaft scholarship (by him and others), and his eventual fame. His writings are some of the most sophisticated and nuanced attempts to unite a particular vision of Jewish moral history with the most contemporary and respected texts of the German Enlightenment. Designed for an educated but not an intellectual audience, his prose told a continuous and thoughtful story about the Jewish contribution to European history, and about the biblical underpinning of modern society and its values. Jellinek's fame--especially following his move to Vienna--gave his rabbinic practices a unique importance as a model for young rabbis across German-speaking Central Europe.

¹⁰³ This is why calling Jewish modernity a "Protestantization" of Judaism is incorrect. Jews encountered modernity in many of the same ways as religious Christians, and at many of the same times. The transformations that swept through rabbinic Judaism were much more often innovative responses to a changing world than they were parodies of Christianity.

In 1845 Jellinek began to take an active role in the city's Jewish religious community, preaching in the town's Leipzig-Berlin Synagogue.¹⁰⁴ In 1847 he was appointed teacher in the newly founded religious school, and by the early 1850s had taken over as the community's chief rabbi, presiding from the Community Synagogue. (When Frankel left Dresden in 1854, Leipzig officially ended its relationship with the Dresden rabbinate.) In 1855, with much of the political and social organizing orchestrated by Jellinek, the Leipzig community inaugurated its New Israelite Temple on Gottschedstraße. As community rabbi, Jellinek's religious ideology flowed naturally from his earlier education. He was at home in both Jewish and German texts. He could write in multiple genres—critical histories, academic reviews, homiletic sermons. His respect for the traditional Jewish canon was without question.

In the early 1850s, Jellinek began to view the position of community rabbi as being as much a public intellectual as an arbiter of religious law and custom. The rabbi, he believed, should be dedicated to interpreting Jewish texts for the modern era. Less concerned with law, the rabbi's new role was as the proponent of a particular philosophy or creed, one that sought to bring together Jewish wisdom, modern politics, and the Enlightenment's universalist ethic. A series of sermons Jellinek delivered in 1849 in Leipzig, and later published as separate pamphlets, illustrated this new philosophy of the modern rabbi. They revealed how Jellinek sought to weave together various threads of Jewish and secular learning as he began to create what we now think of as the modern rabbi.

Jellinek's 1849 sermons began with philosophical quotations, often from Goethe, Hegel, Kant, or midrash. In this way, right at the beginning, the young rabbi was showing his listeners and readers that Jewish content was at once relevant to the larger philosophical project of the German Enlightenment, as well as equal to it. One sermon, entitled "Jericho: An Image of Israel's Freedom,"

¹⁰⁴ Kempter, *Die Jellineks 1820-1955*.

written for the holiday of Passover, opened with four quotations, three from Goethe and one from Hegel.¹⁰⁵ Then, in eleven pages of florid prose, Jellinek described the transition of Israel from a tribe of wanderers in the desert to an established nation in the Land of Canaan. He ended the sermon with a personal prayer, extolling the freedoms that Jews were allowed in the present age under King Friedrich August II of Saxony. In its Passover context, the sermon presented the conquering of the city of Jericho and the Hebrews' entry into the Promised Land as a metaphor for the attainment of freedom and the struggles of nationhood in the new post-1848 era of Emancipation. Hegel, Goethe, and the Saxon king bookend the Jewish narrative, as if to prove that Judaism was integral to European self-identity and patriotism, and to provide context for a new modern Jewish understanding of the Jews' role in a (semi-) liberal nation-state.

For Jellinek, the freedom gained by the Israelites after their departure from Egypt was not one of individual rights or liberties, as we might suspect a man dedicated to the liberal Enlightenment might promote. Instead, in a way perhaps more closely aligned with the biblical text itself, for Jellinek Passover was about freedom from a human master so that Israel might assume the yoke of a divine one. "For it is to me that the Israelites are servants. They are my servants, whom I freed from the land of Egypt. I, the Lord your God." (Leviticus 25:55) Because Passover is designed as a liturgical reenactment of the Exodus, its rituals assume the role of transferring memories. "When you enter the land which YHWH will give you, as he said, you shall observe this rite. And when your children say to you, what does this rite mean to you? you shall say, it is a Passover sacrifice to YHWH who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when he struck the Egyptians but spared our homes." (Exodus 12:25-27) Participation in the Passover celebration is, according to the Bible and the rabbis, what creates the bond between those who came out of Egypt and those alive today: "I am making this covenant, with its oath, not only with you who are standing

¹⁰⁵ Adolf Jellinek, *Jericho. Ein Bild von Israel's Freiheit* (Leipzig: Fritzscher, 1849).

here with us today in the presence of YHWH our God, but also with those who are not here today.”
(Deuteronomy 15:14-15)

For Jellinek, Passover was about a freedom to assume the burden of nationhood. In this sermon, like many others, Jellinek sought to convey how the idea of nationhood was both a burden and a gift, and how it demanded a responsibility of one individual for another, and all those individuals for their god. The nation, in the biblical conception, was the primary means toward which God becomes manifest in the world. Jellinek’s was an understanding of divinity wherein God appeared mainly in the fellowship of humanity. He quoted Hegel at the sermon’s opening: “World history is the process of the development of the actual idea, namely the idea of freedom, and is the real Will of the Spirit under the changing play of its history. This is the true theodicy, the justification of God in history.”¹⁰⁶ Jellinek was turning away from the politics of individual rights and liberties. Instead, he was invoking an older model of nationhood, one with its origins in the philosophy of the Bible, and one that squares the circle he saw growing larger every day: how to retain Judaism’s unity when the offering of civil rights in the modern period came only at the level of the individual. He also quoted Goethe: “Nobody can make judgments about history except those who have experienced it for themselves. This goes for whole nations.”¹⁰⁷

What Jellinek imagined as the promises of emancipation could only be fully realized if the continuity of Judaism remained unbroken. Emancipation only existed if there were Jews—and a Jewish nation—to be emancipated. Jericho, to Jellinek in 1849, was not a city to be conquered but a metaphor of unity in a time of transition and engagement. The Jews wandered alone in the desert; there were no other peoples around to entice them to abandon their identity. Canaan was full of

¹⁰⁶ This quotation appears slightly differently in Hegel’s collected works: Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Werke in 20 Bände*, ed. Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michel (Frankfurt a/M: Suhrkamp, 1986), vol. 12, 540. However, the ultimate meaning appears to be the same.

¹⁰⁷ *Goethe’s poetische und prosaische Werke in Zwei Bänden* (Stuttgart: Gotta’scher, 1845).

other nations, each with its own tempting elixirs. Jericho, as a place to settle but also assimilate, was the challenge to be fought--not against armies but against disappearance; not against kings but against promises of equality that were dependent on cultural conformity.

In the end, the sermon's citations of Goethe and Hegel, and the prayer that closed it, suggested the beginning of a sort of negotiated interweaving that Jellinek would seek to formulate throughout the 1850s.¹⁰⁸ In placing these quotations on his opening page, he worked to connect the Biblical and rabbinic understandings of the festival of Passover to the words of the great sages of German culture, and to bring together the ritual aspects of Jewish life with the philosophical ideas of the Enlightenment.

Conclusion: From Wissenschaft to the Modern Rabbinate

The pride of place that Wissenschaft has come to assume in the history of nineteenth-century Jewry is not misplaced. The work of Wissenschaft scholars, as well as of their contemporary heirs in Jewish Studies, has created a powerful and nuanced account of Jewish culture and its historical accomplishments and foibles. It has likewise done much to integrate the Jews into the broader narratives of Near Eastern, Mediterranean, and European civilizations, systematically deconstructing the Christological account of Judaism's divinely rejected status and its survival as a mere rump descendant of former Davidic glory. It is certainly true that already in the sixteenth century, Christian Hebraists were beginning to look at works like the Talmud and the poetry of Judah Halevi (1075-1141) with newfound cultural respect. But Wissenschaft, nearly all of whose original scholars were of Jewish origin, went still further.¹⁰⁹ It not only placed the study of Judaism

¹⁰⁸ They also contrast with the form of revolutionary politics advocated by his brother, Hermann.

¹⁰⁹ A study recently published by the Association for Jewish Studies (AJS), the "guild" of Jewish Studies scholars in North America, counts 85% of the profession of Jewish religion, 5% of various Christian denominations, 1% Muslim, 1% "Other", and 8% without (or refusing to supply) religious affiliation. Steven M. Cohen, "Profiling the Jewish Studies Profession in North America: Highlights from the Survey of AJS Members," Association for Jewish Studies, accessed March 29, 2016, <http://>

alongside that of other ancient and venerated civilizations, it actively sought to integrate Jewish ideas and innovations into the mainstream narrative of European cultural development.

With the growing importance of academic scholarship on the intellectual life of the Jewish community in Central Europe, it is all the more essential that we trace the impact of *Wissenschaft* on the formation of the modern rabbinate. Over the nineteenth century, rabbis increasingly became the intermediaries between historic Jewish religious ideas and the beliefs of contemporary Jewish congregants. The rabbis' perceptions and depictions of the relationship between Judaism and its academic study, therefore, gained immense importance. Whereas what Christian Hebraists said or wrote about Jewish texts mattered almost none at all to the overwhelming majority of Jews, by the middle of the nineteenth century that was certainly not the case concerning *Wissenschaft*. By the turn of the twentieth century, most of Central European and Anglo-American Jews had migrated to urban centers. They attended non-Jewish schools and universities. They witnessed daily the accomplishments and triumphs of modern scientific culture. In such a context, the voice of the rabbi and his reconciliation of Jewish religion and modern life took on immeasurable importance.

One result of the urban migration was the increased attendance of Jews at Leipzig University, and by the 1820s and 1830s Jewish students and graduates of the university had made the city a major center for *Wissenschaft des Judentums*. As we saw, Jellinek was a key figure in the second generation of *Wissenschaft* scholars, and his circle of friends in Leipzig and beyond were instrumental in giving the discipline a shape and momentum all its own. By adopting into his preaching elements of midrashic exegesis (explored at greater depth in Chapter 5), Jellinek created a new version of the rabbi: a religious leader whose responsibility was as interpreter and moralizer of non-Jewish culture, and it remains a central function of the rabbi in the contemporary world. The modern rabbi, Jellinek came to believe, was responsible for being a mediator and translator of Jewish

www.ajsnet.org/surveys/AJS-2014-Full-Survey-Report.pdf.

history and practice, able to formulate a language that retains an interest in and love of Judaism for the new urban, emancipated Jewish communities.

In some sense, then, we can say both that Jellinek created a new form of rabbinic Judaism, but also that he exemplified a trend that was very much already in the making. The sort of leader that Jellinek started to become in Leipzig, and the one that he became in Vienna and that defines his legacy and sets him at the forefront of Jewish modernity, was different in almost every respect from the models of the rabbinate set before him in his youth. By the close of his tenure in Leipzig in January 1857, Jellinek had begun to formulate a vision of the rabbinate markedly different from the one he had experienced as a child in Ungarisch-Brod, or as a student in Proßnitz, or as a young man in Prague. Jellinek's turn away from scholarship appears to have been out of a deeply felt empathy toward the community of Jews newly migrated to Leipzig. Wissenschaft was not the place, Jellinek believed, that he could make his greatest contributions to the future of Jewish life in Central Europe. Instead, it was in developing a new form of rabbinic leadership, one that sought to unite the traditional values of Judaism with a language and philosophy that felt authentically contemporary. Jellinek recast midrash as the moral and philosophical underpinning of Judaism, linking it in his writings with the Enlightenment project in Germany, and thereby framing the Jew's religious experience within the broader narrative of European history.

The next chapter is a history of the Jewish community of Vienna at Jellinek's arrival, meant as a portrait of the larger experience of the first generation of urban Jewish settlers. As Jewish migration became a major demographic phenomenon, elements of traditional Judaism began to be adapted to meet new needs and answer new questions. The intellectual developments of Enlightenment and Wissenschaft that we have traced in the last two chapters preceded these demographic and economic transformations. To define Judaism in 1800 it would be almost enough to describe the life of a Jewish family or rural community. By 1860 or 1870, for the Jews of Vienna

and their urban compatriots across Europe and America, Judaism was no longer reflected in every aspect of their family lives. Instead, much of their Jewish experience was contained in the synagogue, and their knowledge of Jewish history told to them by the rabbi. Vienna under Jellinek was one of the earliest and clearest examples of this transition. What he created spread rapidly outward, and has become, for the vast majority of Anglo-American Jews, the model for religious Judaism in their lives today.

CHAPTER FOUR:
BUILDING AND PREACHING: VIENNA AND THE ORIGINS OF MODERN
JUDAISM IN AN URBAN SETTING

But here, on the southern bank of the Danube, the mountains were haunted by the ghost of a different sovereignty.

Patrick Leigh Fermor, *The Broken Road*

Introduction

As we follow Adolf Jellinek to Vienna, we turn to examine the pivotal moment in the transition of rabbi, sermon, and synagogue for nineteenth-century Central European Jewry. Beginning after 1848, Jewish urban migration across the German and Habsburg lands increased rapidly. Not just a lucky handful but suddenly scores of young men from every village in Central Europe were attending university and seeking access to the professional classes and its bourgeois lifestyle. With the 1848 revolutions suppressed and the government of Franz Joseph firmly in control of the empire's political hegemony, new forms of civil rights were rapidly promulgated to the various ethnic groups across the Habsburg kingdom. In the 1850s and 1860s, legal restrictions for Jews were lifted on property ownership, membership in professional guilds, and access to education at every level.

By 1867, when Jews attained full legal equality following the treaty between the governments in Vienna and Budapest that created the Austro-Hungarian dual monarchy, Jewish life in Central Europe had changed fundamentally. As Jacob Katz notes, "When the framework of traditional society all over Europe disintegrated, the more traditional a society had been, the deeper was its

transmutation.”¹ No longer was Jewish society identifiable or coterminous with that of the small towns or rural byways Jews had inhabited for centuries. The newfound rights of Jews as citizens of the Austrian kingdom reduced their religious communal autonomy by placing them under the jurisdiction of political bureaucracies and nominally elected élites deciding business for a legally determined community in coordination with city and federal councils. However, this transition in political leadership allowed them to become a deeply integrated thread within the fabric of the empire’s urban and commercial life. The result of this mid-nineteenth century urbanization on Jewish social activity and cultural affiliation has been widely documented. By 1867 Jews were a sizable minority in most of the larger cities in the Austrian Empire. Jewish entrance into the bourgeois class proved rapid and trenchant: within a single generation of migration, Jews had firmly established themselves in a wide diversity of professions, and by the end of the century--the grandchildren’s generation--they were highly successful artists and writers as well.²

Equally as remarkable as the Jewish urban acculturation in the middle decades of the nineteenth century, but much less discussed, were the religious reforms implemented and institutions established by these migrants. Within a few years of the first post-1848 migrations, Jews had created a functional communal bureaucracy that supported a vibrant religious and educational infrastructure. As Jonathan Hess notes, “Religious reform was the avenue Jews often chose in which to seize political agency for themselves, reclaiming the Jewish tradition as their own in such a way as to issue fundamental challenges to Protestant Orientalism and the politics of civic improvement

¹ Jacob Katz, *Out of the Ghetto: The Social Background of Jewish Emancipation, 1770-1870* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1973), 6.

² This was true nowhere more so than in Vienna and Budapest, a story wistfully told in Stefan Zweig, *Die Welt von Gestern* (Stockholm: Bermann-Fischer, 1942).

alike.”³ Especially important were their reforms to two of the main institutions of rabbinic Judaism, the rabbi and the synagogue. These changes sought to ensure the survival of a type of rabbinic Judaism that proved to be a fascinating and somewhat haphazard mixture of the traditional and modern. In one way, the mid-nineteenth century reforms maintained the centuries long habits and attitudes of Jews toward their traditions and texts. In another, they fundamentally reshaped this inheritance in many and unique ways. Essential for this new sort of rabbinic Judaism was the construction of monumental communal synagogues and the presence of a rabbinic clergy within them. The decades after 1850 were the first to witness this alliance of what had formerly been quite separate religious institutions. By 1900, for most Jews in Central Europe, it had become impossible to imagine the rabbi and the synagogue apart.

The shift in the rabbi’s role in the 1850s and 1860s was subtle but profound. As discussed in Chapter 2, the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries reimagined the definition of religion and the place of God, theology, and ritual practice in European culture. Adopting these definitions, urbanizing Jews in Central Europe created the figure of the rabbi as that of premier religious authority. No longer was he primarily an arbiter of civil law, concerned with such things as contracts between shopkeepers or monetary loans. In the modern city, the rabbi became a minister and a preacher, the exemplar of theological virtue and traditional teaching, emphasizing religious practices based in the synagogue and focusing on the ritualization of events in the individual and family lifecycle. Through the implementation of the weekly sermon, the rabbi became both communal pedagogue and modern prophet, responsible for interpreting contemporary events through the lens of classical Jewish texts.

³ Jonathan Hess, *Germans, Jews and the Claims of Modernity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 17. For a similar discussion of in the internal dialogue of the Jewish community toward questions of modernity, see Moshe Zimmermann, “Zukunftserwartungen der deutsch-jüdischen Gesellschaft im langen 19. Jahrhundert,” *Aschkenas - Zeitschrift Für Geschichte Und Kultur Der Juden* 18/19 (2008/2009): 25–39.

Likewise, in the new urban spaces of the nineteenth century the synagogue was similarly reimagined. No longer a small, local gathering place for men to pray, it became the central institution embodying the practices and beliefs of Jewish civilization. Often called a “temple” by German Jews, the term drew upon the special relationship developed in the Bible between the Land of Israel, the Temple in Jerusalem, and the Jewish People. Reworking that formula, German and Habsburg Jews began to speak about their synagogues as permanent homes for the presence of God, rather than as mere prayer spaces looking toward an idealized future in the Promised Land. Projecting the bourgeois project of family and hearth onto the synagogue, middle class Jews in Central Europe idealized their new synagogues as permanent dwelling places, the final stop on the Jews’ millennia-long diasporic journey.

This chapter brings together the narratives of the transformation of the rabbi, the sermon, and the synagogue, the threads of which we have been tracing separately in the preceding chapters. Adolf Jellinek appears only as a minor character throughout these pages. His story is continued in the next chapter, where we focus on the specifics of his sermons and the unique qualities he brought as one of the first and greatest of the modern Jewish preachers. These next pages, like Chapter 2, are primarily social history, focused on Jewish urbanization and the subsequent transformation in liturgical worship, with Vienna as the premier example. This chapter discusses the origins of the urban monumental synagogue; the traditional approach of Jewish culture to the built environment; and the new rhetoric that arose in modernity to account for changing social expectations and desires concerning religious buildings. What took place in Vienna is indicative of cities across Central Europe in the middle nineteenth century. What occurred there was repeated in cities great and small across the continent between the middle and end of the century. Its story is the story of an age.

The City of Vienna and its Jewish Migrants in the Middle Nineteenth Century

Jellinek left Leipzig in the early months of 1857. Accepting the post of community preacher in the Viennese suburb of Leopoldstadt, the move positioned him to become one of the foremost rabbis in the German-speaking lands.⁴ The post, officially described as that of preacher, would be second in importance only to the one held by Isak Noa Mannheimer, who had presided over the community, mainly from the Seitenstettengasse synagogue in the center of town (also called the *Stadttempel*, built 1826), since 1825.⁵ Though the Viennese community of 1856 was still comparatively small, with the relaxing of Jewish settlement laws after 1848 the community government was planning for major growth. In 1800, the city was home to only about 600 tax-paying Jews (the

⁴ The issue of Jellinek's official beginning in Vienna is somewhat a matter of interpretation, and therefore involves some confusion about dating. As part of the official hiring process by the Viennese Jewish community (the *Gemeinde*), Jellinek gave a sermon in the Seitenstettengasse Tempel. Originally scheduled for May 3, 1856, the sermon was moved back to November 1, 1856. Because of this, Jellinek took up his duties in Vienna at the beginning of 1857, although the position had officially been awarded him at the end of the 1856. Scholars, therefore, have variously dated the beginning of his tenure in Vienna to 1856 or 1857 (with one outlier, dating it to 1858). For a history of these negotiations and the discussions between Jellinek and the Viennese *Gemeinde*, see Moses Rosenmann, *Dr. Adolf Jellinek: Sein Leben Und Schaffen* (Vienna: Schlesinger, 1931), 68-9, 76-78. For further discussion and dating, see Björn Siegel, "Facing Tradition: Adolf Jellinek and the Emergence of Modern Habsburg Jewry," *Simon Dubnow Institute Yearbook* 8 (2009), 323, n.17; Holger Preißler, "Heinrich Leberecht Fleischer: Ein Leipziger Orientalist, seine jüdischen Studenten, Promovenden und Kollegen," in *Bausteine einer jüdischen Geschichte der Universität Leipzig*, ed. Stephan Wendehorst (Leipzig: Leipziger Universität Verlag, 2006), 254; and Robert Wistrich, *The Jews of Vienna in the Age of Franz Joseph* (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1990), 111. For the outlier, see Marsha L. Rozenblit, "Jewish Identity and the Modern Rabbi. The Cases of Isak Noa Mannheimer, Adolf Jellinek, and Moritz Güdemann in Nineteenth-Century Vienna," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 35 (1990): 110. I follow the 1857 date here.

⁵ Between the 1670 expulsion of the Jews from Vienna by Leopold I and the appointment of Moritz Güdemann to preside at the Leopoldstädter Tempel in 1869, the term "rabbi" was not used for leaders of the Jewish community in Vienna. Instead, the term *prediger*, or preacher, was employed, and was meant, first, as a sign of the Jews' second-class status (they were not allowed official religious representation in the city) and later, as a sign of religious reform ("preacher" being more modern than "rabbi"). Jellinek never assumed the title of Chief Rabbi, though it was officially presented to him at the very end of his life. Mannheimer likewise remained *prediger* throughout his tenure in Vienna. Güdemann began to use it once he succeeded Jellinek as head of the Viennese community, though likely this was motivated as much by intra-Jewish politics as out of reverence for the title itself. See Wistrich, *The Jews of Vienna*, 122.

province hosted about 5,000 Jews). That number of registered Jews in the Viennese municipality rose to 4,000 by 1848.⁶ But in the second half of the century tens of thousands of Jews moved to Vienna, and on the eve of the Second World War there were as many as two hundred thousand, ten percent of the city's population.⁷

As Jellinek prepared to relocate, his travel was made considerably easier by the numerous improvements in transportation that had occurred since his move to Leipzig from Prague in 1841, a decade and a half before. By 1857, both railroads and horse-drawn coaches were carrying passengers through the vast rolling farmlands of central Europe.⁸ Perhaps Jellinek saw what Patrick Leigh Fermor did on his own journey through Central Europe by train about three-quarters of a century later:

There were only a few peasants on board, all with that bewildered refugee look that overcomes country people in trains: women with colored kerchiefs and Anna Karenina bundles on their laps, and men with their hands--blunt instruments temporarily idle--hanging sadly between their knees, with the looseness of turtle's fins.⁹

Or as Jellinek would say in 1863:

⁶ See Stefi Jersch-Wenzel, "Population Shifts and Occupational Structures," in *German-Jewish History in Modern Times Volume 2, Emancipation and Acculturation, 1780-1871*, ed. Michael Brenner, Stefi Jersch-Wenzel, and Michael A Meyer, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 55, 57.

⁷ Marsha L. Rozenblit, *The Jews of Vienna, 1867-1914: Assimilation and Identity* (Albany, NY: The State University of New York Press, 1983), 17-18; and Idem, "Jewish assimilation in Habsburg Vienna," in *Assimilation and Community: The Jews in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, eds. Jonathan Frankel and Steven J. Zipperstein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 225-245.

⁸ For general histories of railroad development, see Patrick O'Brien, *Railways and the Economic Development of Western Europe, 1830-1914* (New York: St. Martin's, 1983); Micheline Nilsen, *Railways and the Western European Capitals: Studies of Implantation in London, Paris, Berlin, and Brussels* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the 19th Century* (Leamington Spa, UK: Berg, 1986); Allan Mitchell, *The Great Train Race: Railways and the Franco-German Rivalry, 1815-1914* (New York: Berghahn, 2000); and David F. Good, *The Economic Rise of the Habsburg Empire, 1750-1914* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 65-6.

⁹ Patrick Leigh Fermor, *The Broken Road*, ed. Colin Thubron and Artemis Cooper (New York: New York Review Books, 2015), 201.

Let us just consider the freedoms painfully gained, about which our age [already] speaks so smugly and complacently...A person can travel from one city to another, from one country to another, and can move his own residency without having to identify himself at the gates or barriers, [say] where or when he was born, who he is, or what compels him and of which religion he is of.”¹⁰

The middle decades of the nineteenth century were bull years for infrastructure development. City councils across the continent, including in the various German states, were approving the construction of rail stations, and governments and private investors were building hundreds of miles of track each year.¹¹ The continent wedded itself together to an unprecedented degree, while at the same time maintaining the traditionally minimal police and military presence at international frontiers--a situation that changed dramatically after the First World War.

Whichever form of travel taken, these routes had been plied for centuries, often as not by Jewish merchants, and Vienna's importance was based on its geographic accessibility (especially its position on the Danube River), as well as the relatively stable history of the Habsburg kingdom and its borderlands with Saxony.¹² As Jürgen Osterhammel notes, “The history of relations with a neighboring country takes material shape in borders. The limits of sovereignty are nearly always expressed in symbols: frontier posts, watchtowers, border architecture. Political boundaries are therefore concrete: physical reifications of the state, symbolic and material condensations of political

¹⁰ Adolf Jellinek, *Predigten*, vol. 3 (Vienna: Herzfeld & Bauer, 1866), 49.

¹¹ “The railway sector was the ‘pace maker’ of economic growth in [the late 1840s] of German industrialization, and surpassed all other sectors until the 1880s.” Keith Neilson and T.G. Otte, “‘Railpolitik’: An introduction,” in *Railways and International Politics: Paths of Empire, 1848-1945*, ed. T.G. Otte and Keith Neilson (New York: Routledge, 2006), 3. Until the middle of the century, private corporations constructed the majority of German railroads, including the Leipzig-Dresden line. See Dieter Ziegler, *Eisenbahnen und Staat im Zeitalter der Industrialisierung: die Eisenbahnpolitik der deutschen Staaten im Vergleich* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1996), especially 93; Lothar Gall and Manfred Pohl, eds., *Die Eisenbahn in Deutschland: von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (Munich: Beck, 1999), 19-39; and Ralf Roth, *Das Jahrhundert der Eisenbahn: Die Herrschaft über Raum und Zeit 1800-1914* (Stuttgart: Thorbecke, 2005).

¹² Caitlin E. Murdoch, *Changing Places: Society, Culture, and Territory in the Saxon-Bohemian Borderlands, 1870-1946* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010).

rule.”¹³ The borders of Saxony and Habsburg Bohemia were no exception, and the political expressions of state rule were all the more important there, since the intellectual and linguistic connections between nineteenth-century Vienna and the various German cities along the frontier were numerous.¹⁴

As Jellinek headed south and east, already no-doubt with scores of other migrants (Jewish and gentile) beginning the great mid-century move, he left the small kingdom of Saxony for the much larger and more powerful Austria--and no doubt somewhat of a feeling of returning home. No one on the train would have noticed the shifting frontiers, dotted as they were with small towns, medieval church steeples, and unassuming synagogues. No major geographic marker separated Saxony from what was then the Habsburg Crown Land of Bohemia. Instead, the border passed over numerous tributaries of the Elbe river, which itself separates from the Moldau (Czech: Vltava) north of Prague at the town of Melnik (Czech: Mělník). After crossing the border Jellinek surely would have noticed the different uniforms on the guards, whose insignia of twin black eagles facing outward and wearing a single crown represented the House of Habsburg-Lorraine, his imperial sovereign once again. When Jellinek left Prague in 1841 Ferdinand I had been emperor. After the 1848 revolutions and Ferdinand's abdication, his nephew, Franz Joseph I took the throne, and reigned until his death in 1916.¹⁵

¹³ Jürgen Osterhammel, *The Transformation of the World: A Global History of the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Patrick Camiller (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 110.

¹⁴ See Hillel J. Kieval, *Languages of Community: The Jewish Experience in the Czech Lands* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); and Michael Lawrence Miller, *Rabbis and Revolution: The Jews of Moravia in the Age of Emancipation* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011).

¹⁵ Karl, Franz Josef's grandnephew, became the last emperor of Austria-Hungary, reigning until 1918. The House of Habsburg-Lorraine remains, however. Otto, Karl's son, was head of the family until his death in 2011. Otto's son, Karl (b. 1961) is now the titular head of the House of Habsburg.

From a likely Prague layover, Jellinek continued on to Vienna and his new home in Leopoldstadt, a rapidly growing neighborhood just east of the old city center that was being settled by migrants from across the Empire, though disproportionately by Jews. These Jews came from a wide portion of central Europe and from milieus that varied greatly in religious observance, local custom, and interaction with non-Jewish culture. Arriving in Leopoldstadt, Jellinek was no longer the central rabbinic figure in a small commercial city. He was about to become the preacher in what was fast becoming one of the largest, most dynamic, and most influential Jewish communities in all of Europe.

When discussing urban migration, there are two categories of migrant that need to be kept separate. The first stems from the long history of human movement. We are a migratory species. This means that, in every country, there are periods of increased and decreased migration, and growing and fading urbanism. With the spread of the Italian Renaissance northward, artisans, artists, and merchants were attracted toward towns and cities, interested in the latest innovations and ideas.¹⁶ Port cities, too, have always had their ebbs and flows of economic migrants. Amsterdam grew rapidly in the sixteenth century only to shrink again in the eighteenth. The same was true for Alexandria, Trieste, Marseille, Constantinople, Beirut, and Lisbon. This first category of migration is really about the attraction of one or another mercantile class or guild to a particularly flourishing city. It does not, however, involve major demographic shifts either in the overall population of the city itself or in the surrounding rural agricultural regions or the broader imperial provinces. From the fifth to the nineteenth centuries in Western and Central Europe, there are important periods of population movement and transfer, but the continent as a whole retained its predominantly rural character.

¹⁶ For an example of this in Central Europe, see Jaroslav Miller, "Early Modern Urban Immigration in East Central Europe: A Macroanalysis," *Austrian History Yearbook* 36 (2005): 3–39.

The second category of urban migration is what took place in the middle of the nineteenth century and became one of the fundamental elements of European and Jewish modernity. The demographic shifts that shaped the modern period occurred on an unprecedented scale. Cities doubled and tripled in size in single decades. Towns and villages were emptied, and those near to larger urban centers were annexed as suburbs. Trains made it possible to bypass much of the landscape and therefore their small marketplaces and inns. Economies transformed and expanded, and a professional class came to replace landed gentry as the political élite. This new social strata spent their time in offices and at cafés instead of in the countryside. When we see the relaxation of voting laws and their dissociation from land ownership at the end of the nineteenth century, this is because much of the new wealth was, for the first time, no longer tied to estates or manors. A robust governmental and educational bureaucracy developed alongside these changes, and the autonomy once extended to isolated rural communities vanished along with their means of economic subsistence.

No region epitomizes the migratory patterns of modernity more than Habsburg Central Europe. Many different peoples moved to Vienna and its new suburbs in the middle of the nineteenth century.¹⁷ At first they came from the nearer provinces: upper and lower Austria, Slovakia, Bohemia and Moravia. By the 1870s they were arriving from farther afield: Hungary, Croatia, Bosnia, Silesia. Christian peasants comprised the majority of these migrants, divided among Lutheran Germans, Catholic Austrians and Hungarians, and Orthodox Slavs. Jews, though outsized

¹⁷ Not all of them melded into the growing bourgeois culture of the city. See Matthew Rampley, “Peasants in Vienna: Ethnographic Display and the 1873 World's Fair,” *Austrian History Yearbook* 42 (2011): 110–32.

in their influence and the discourse allotted them in Vienna's intellectual culture, remained a relatively minor percentage of total urban immigrants.¹⁸

Still, in terms of the total Jewish population of Central Europe, the numbers who migrated were significant. Those who moved sought to capitalize on newly enacted Emancipatory laws as well as the promises of “*embourgeoisement*” (as David Sorkin calls it) offered by transformations in all aspects of nineteenth century life.¹⁹ Leopoldstadt, long a neglected outlying region, was one of the first areas to be heavily settled by immigrating provincials in the middle nineteenth century. But the town already had an interesting early-modern Jewish history.²⁰ A medieval village located on the islands between the Danube Canal and the Danube River east of the city center, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Leopoldstadt was the only area around Vienna in which Jews could live legally. From as few as a hundred residents at the beginning of the seventeenth century, by the Edict of Expulsion in 1670 the neighborhood contained as many as two thousand Jewish families.²¹

¹⁸ See Steven Beller, “Patriotism and the National Identity of Habsburg Jewry, 1860-1914,” *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 41 (1996): 215–238.

¹⁹ David Sorkin, *The Transformation of German Jewry, 1780-1840* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987). For broader studies of this moment in Austrian and Austrian Jewish history, see Rozenblit, *The Jews of Vienna*; Robert A. Kann, *A History of the Habsburg Empire 1526-1918* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 318-342; and Simone Lässig, *Jüdische Wege Ins Bürgertum: Kulturelles Kapital Und Sozialer Aufstieg Im 19. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004). For a broad and wide-ranging analysis of transformations in nineteenth century life generally, see Jürgen Osterhammel, *Die Verwandlung der Welt: Eine Geschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Munich: Beck, 2009).

²⁰ For an overview of construction and ordinances in pre-1848 Leopoldstadt (including three re-created survey maps of the suburb and its Danube island region), see Robert Meßner, *Die Leopoldstadt im Vormärz: Historisch-topographische Darstellung der nordöstlichen Vorstädte und Vororte Wiens auf Grund der Katastralvermessung* (Vienna: Verband der Wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaften Österreich, 1962). For a general introduction, including a brief account of medieval Jewish settlement in the area before 1670, see Helga Gibs, *Leopoldstadt: Kleine Welt am großen Strom* (Vienna: Mohl, 1997).

²¹ Gerson Wolf, *Die Juden in der Leopoldstadt (“unterer Werd”) im 17. Jahrhundert in Wien* (Vienna: Herzfeld & Bauer, 1864), 3; Wistrich, *Jews of Vienna*, 7. For another history of the Jewish community of pre-1670 Leopoldstadt, see Hans Rotter and Adolf Schmieger, *Das Ghetto in der Wiener Leopoldstadt* (Vienna: Burg, 1926).

Originally referred to simply as the *Unterer Werd* (roughly “the lower quarter;” in Middle High German: “lower island”), after the 1670 expulsion the town was renamed in honor of Holy Roman Emperor Leopold I (1640-1705), at whose order the Edict was promulgated.²²

Leopoldstadt’s geography—in a Danube River floodplain, outside Vienna’s defensive fortifications—provides something of a metaphor for the relation that the capital’s poorer Jewish immigrants (as well as many of its other working-class citizens) had with the city’s traditional brokers of power. The first new (official) synagogue in Vienna since the Jewish expulsion of 1670 was constructed on Seitenstettengasse in the center of town in 1826. Seitenstettengasse was where the chief rabbi presided and the Jewish lay-leadership kept its offices.²³ Yet Leopoldstadt was less a satellite of the city center than a unique urban fabric in its own right.²⁴ With its dense Jewish population by the late nineteenth century, Leopoldstadt retained those Jews who desired to live around other Jews. “Against the background of embourgeoisement, the Jews’ emancipation and encounter with German culture and society produced a new kind of Jew, the ‘German Jew’, who

²² Kann, *Habsburg Empire*, 125, 189; Gibs, *Leopoldstadt*, 12-13. See John P. Spielman, *Leopold I of Austria* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977). Museum für Naturkunde und Vorgeschichte Dessau, Museum für Stadtgeschichte Dessau, and Museum Schloss Mosigkau, eds., *Fürst Leopold I. von Anhalt-Dessau (1676-1747): “Der Alte Dessauer”: Ausstellung Zum 250. Todestag* (Dessau: Die Museen, 1997).

²³ A history of the Seitenstettengasse Synagogue (or *Stadttempel*), as well of the slow Jewish migration back into Vienna after the 1670 expulsion, is recounted in Wistrich, *Jews of Vienna*, 3-61. A catalogue of religious objects and essays on the Jewish community of Vienna is Karl Albrecht-Weinberger and Heimann-Jelinek, eds., *Judentum in Wien: “Heilige Gemeinde Wien”* (Vienna: Museen der Stadt Wien, 1987).

²⁴ This was similarly true for places like Berlin. See Kristin Poling, “Shantytowns and Pioneers Beyond the City Wall: Berlin’s Urban Frontier in the Nineteenth Century,” *Central European History* 47, no. 2 (July 9, 2014): 245–74; and Eli Rubin, “From the Grünen Wiesen to Urban Space: Berlin, Expansion, and the Longue Durée,” *Central European History* 47, no. 2 (July 9, 2014): 221–44.

lived in a new kind of Jewish community, a primarily voluntary one.”²⁵ Well into the latter decades of the nineteenth century, when more neighborhoods were made available for Jewish settlement, Leopoldstadt retained its distinctive mores and conventions. Indeed, while never being more than about thirty-six percent Jewish, by the turn of the twentieth century the area had gained the nickname *Mazzeinsel* (Matza Island), and remained until the Second World War the Viennese neighborhood with the highest density of Jewish inhabitants.²⁶

The Jews in Leopoldstadt came from all across the empire, but in the 1850s and 1860s the largest numbers originated from the Habsburg crown lands of Bohemia and Moravia and rural Austria.²⁷ Contrary to some accounts, Galician Jews did not arrive in large numbers until the 1880s and 1890s.²⁸ As Helga Gibs writes, the cultural life in Leopoldstadt reflected the desire of its

²⁵ David Sorkin, “The impact of emancipation on German Jewry: a reconsideration,” in *Assimilation and Community: The Jews in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, eds. Jonathan Frankel and Steven J. Zipperstein, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 177. He makes a similar argument in a slightly earlier article: David Sorkin, “Emancipation and Assimilation: Two Concepts and Their Application to German-Jewish History,” *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 35 (1990): 17–33.

²⁶ Rozenblit, *Jews of Vienna*, 78. See also Ruth Beckermann, ed., *Die Mazzeinsel: Juden in der Wiener Leopoldstadt 1918-1938* (Vienna: Löcker, 1984).

²⁷ Robert Waissenberger, “Judentum in Wien bis 1938,” in *Judentum in Wien*, 18-28. On Bohemian and Moravian Jewry see Michael L. Miller, *Rabbis and Revolution*; Wilma Abeles Iggers, ed., *The Jews of Bohemia and Moravia: A Historical Reader* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1992); Michael Brock and Julius Carlebach, eds., *Die Rabbiner der Emanzipationszeit in den deutschen, böhmischen und großpolnischen Ländern 1781-1871* (Munich: Sauer, 2004); Hillel J. Kieval, “Autonomy and Interdependence: The Historical Legacy of Czech Jewry,” in *The Precious Legacy: Judaic Treasures from the Czechoslovak State Collections*, ed. by David Altshuler (New York: Summit; Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Travelling Exhibition Service, 1983); idem, “Imperial Embraces and Ethnic Challenges: The Politics of Jewish Identity in the Bohemian Lands,” *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies* 30, no 4 (2012): 1-17; idem, “Choosing to Bridge: Revisiting the Phenomenon of Cultural Mediation,” *Bohemia: A Journal of History and Civilization in Central Europe* 46 (2005): 15-27; idem, *The Making of Czech Jewry: National Conflict and Jewish Society in Bohemia, 1870-1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988); and idem, *Languages of Community: The Jewish Experience in the Czech Lands* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

²⁸ See Israel Bartal and Antony Polonsky, “Introduction: The Jews of Galicia under the Habsburgs,” in *Focusing on Galicia: Jews, Poles, and Ukrainians 1772-1918*, ed. Israel Bartal and Antony Polonsky (London: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1999), 3-24.

population for upward mobility and entrance into the bourgeois classes. The neighborhood contained the largest dancehall in pre-1848 Vienna; its concert house hosted some of the most famous conductors in Europe; and it was the site of Vienna's Nordbahnhof, one of the city's most important rail terminals.²⁹ Nonetheless, for many of the Jews in Leopoldstadt, some form of traditionalism remained the more natural religious disposition.³⁰

Vienna and the Liberal Tradition

Jews began arriving in Vienna at the beginning of the city's experiment in political and social liberalism. Since the latter decades of the eighteenth century the autocratic nature of the Austrian government had been waning. In the year 1800, the various duchies and feudal principalities that composed the empire were still some of its strongest political actors.³¹ That would all change with the invasion of Napoleon, which made apparent the vulnerabilities of Austrian military strength. Further, one part of the Habsburg's political undergirding never recovered from Napoleon: the Holy Roman Empire vanished from maps, and with it the agreements that had kept scores of fractious German states in a somewhat functional defensive alliance. With the demise of the Holy Roman Empire, Austria's German Catholic rulers were left alone to govern the historic Habsburg lands and

²⁹ Gibs, *Leopoldstadt*, 30-44. See Klaus Hödl, *Als Bettler in die Leopoldstadt: Galizische Juden auf dem Weg nach Wien* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1994). Robert Wistrich argues that before 1880, it seems unlikely that the largest percentage of Jews to migrate to Vienna were so-called "Ostjuden" from Galicia. Wistrich, *Jews of Vienna*, 43. The Nordbahnhof opened in 1838. It was rebuilt in 1865 in magnificent style. For a history of the terminal and its surrounding neighborhood, see Evelyn Klein and Gustave Glaser, *Peripherie in der Stadt: das Wiener Nordbahnviertel—Einblicke, Erkundungen, Analysen* (Innsbruck: Studien, 2000). During the Second World War the Nordbahnhof became the main site for the deportation of Vienna's Jewish community. After receiving heavy damage during Allied bombing in the final months of the war, the station fell into disrepair and torn down in 1965. The new Wien Nord station was built a few blocks south, on the Praterstern roundabout.

³⁰ Waissenberger, "Judentum in Wien," Hödl, *Als Bettler in die Leopoldstadt*, 147-165.

³¹ William D. Godsey, "Habsburg Government and Intermediary Authority Under Joseph II (1780–90): The Estates of Lower Austria in Comparative Perspective," *Central European History* 46, no. 4 (2014): 699–740.

their enormous non-German populations. The various German states whose allegiances formerly fell to the Holy Roman Emperor fractured into competing kingdoms and principalities, the weakness of which was seized upon by Prussia under Wilhelm I and his chancellor Otto von Bismarck half a century later.

To be sure, liberalism was slow in coming to the government of the Habsburg Empire. In an attempt to stabilize the kingdom after Napoleon's defeat, Austria's ruling élite relied on a combination of harsh military reprisals and slow progressive reforms. Still, liberalism was the overriding characteristic of the post-Napoleonic era, and we can derive "a panorama of different concepts of liberalism that have arisen as innovative responses to the upheavals of the turn of the [nineteenth] century," as Joachim Salecher notes³² We can clearly observe that the French Revolution ended the age of "benevolent despots" in Central and Western Europe. National assemblies began demanding greater powers from their sovereigns. The remaining vestiges of feudalism ended in the countryside as the landed aristocracy and rural network of guilds were replaced by a bourgeois professional class and an urban intelligentsia.

To focus the work of these assemblies, and to motivate rulers to increase the pace of emancipatory change, Jewish leaders in the first half of the nineteenth century worked to create bridges between Jewish and non-Jewish culture. Their attempts were aided by the formation of a large professional class, which occurred in the 1850s and 1860s, and whose interest in modern German culture led to a social mixing of Jews and gentiles in bourgeois society. In mid-century Prague, for example, Hillel Kieval notes that,

the strange career of Jewish cultural mediation first gained expression in the 1840s among the first generation of secularly-oriented intellectuals...These Bohemian Jews belonged to a generation whose quest for social advancement and integration took place at a time when nationalism was seen as a by-product of liberalism, rather than its opposite, and in an

³² Hans-Joachim Salecker, *Der Liberalismus und die Erfahrung der Differenz: über die Bedingungen der Integration der Juden in Deutschland* (Bodenheim: Philo, 1999), 70.

atmosphere in which promoting the interests of the nationalities with the Habsburg monarchy appeared to be perfectly compatible with both the larger cause of democratic reform and the particular struggle for Jewish emancipation.”³³

In these early years of urban settlement, Jewish immigrants to places like Prague and Vienna were not forced to choose their Jewish identity over their German or Austrian one. But that did not mean their religious lives were made simpler. Full Jewish citizenship remained in question until 1867, and well into the twentieth century many city-dwelling Jews kept company primarily with other Jews. Indeed, by the 1860s and 1870s, after the face of Europe’s cities had been indelibly remade, the question of nationalism resurfaced in vengeance.

The concept of liberalism has many definitions, and has long carried various social and political assumptions. It is, however, central to any discussion of Jewish history in Central Europe, and therefore must be traced in all its various formulations. Reinhard Rürup suggests a broad cultural definition:

[Liberalism is] the idea of progress and the perfectibility of man and society; the belief in the victorious power of reason; the notion of human and civic rights; the principle of constitutional government and the rule of law, separation of state and Church and the participation of the citizen through a system of representation.³⁴

As Rürup describes it, this was the definition employed by many Jewish writers and intellectuals, and it was the one they relied upon when petitioning for increased civil rights. It is also, however, limited in its scope to the sphere of ideology and policy. Liberalism was more than that, however. It was also a building regime, and it changed the layout and texture of the nineteenth-century metropolis. Just as the City Beautiful movement would do half a century later, the post-1848 liberal ideology reshaped the urban map. City councils tore down medieval walls, built grand avenues, constructed

³³ Hillel J. Kieval, “Choosing to Bridge: Revisiting the Phenomenon of Cultural Mediation,” *Bohemia: A Journal of History and Civilization in East Central Europe* 46, no. 1 (2014): 19.

³⁴ Reinhard Rürup, “German Liberalism and the Emancipation of the Jews,” *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 20 (1975): 60.

whole neighborhoods of bourgeois apartment blocks, and stitched it all together with street trams and railway terminals. The imagination required was immense, but at its conclusion it had utterly transformed the fabric of European cities.

In this vein, in the spirit of political and social liberalism, the symbolic moment of Vienna's transformation from medieval capital to modern urban center came in 1858, the same year as the completion of the new synagogue in Leopoldstadt. The 1850s was the beginning of liberal dominance in Viennese government, a two-decade period that witnessed the massive reconstruction of the capital and an attempt to permanently solidify a new sort of enlightened bourgeois ethic.³⁵ Over the course of 1858, the city's public works department demolished the remaining sections of the capital's medieval fortifications, which, almost exactly two centuries before, had withstood the siege of the Ottomans and halted Islamic military expansion into Central Europe, solidifying Habsburg rule in the middle of the continent.³⁶ Yet even more than in its physical impact, the razing of the walls must be seen as part of a larger political transformation. A decade after the failed 1848 revolution, and a century into the intellectual foment of the Enlightenment, the inhabitants of Vienna were no longer merely crown subjects but rather bourgeois individuals in their own right.³⁷

³⁵ See Anthony Alofsin, *When Buildings Speak. Architecture as Language in the Habsburg Empire and Its Aftermath, 1867-1933* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006); and Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York: Vintage, 1981), 24-115.

³⁶ "The moment of retrospective defeatism [what if the Muslim's had won?] set off new speculations: that wall--fortifications two and a half miles in length and sixty yards wide--had once enclosed the Inner City with a girdle of rampart and fosse. Like the fortifications of Paris which gave way to the outer boulevards in the last century, they were pulled down and replaced by the leafy thoroughfare of the Ring. Very much in character, the Viennese of the late '50's whirled and galloped about their ballrooms to the beat of Strauss's new 'Demolition-Polka,' composed in celebration of the change." Patrick Leigh Fermor, *A Time of Gifts: On Foot to Constantinople: From the Hook of Holland to the Middle Danube* (New York: New York Review Books, 2005), 230.

³⁷ See David Tarot, *Vienne et l'Europe central* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2012), 171-188. For a discussion of liberalism in the Austro-Hungarian unification of 1867, see Jonathan Kwan, "Austro-German Liberalism and the Coming of the 1867 Compromise: 'Politics Again in Flux,'" *Austrian History Yearbook* 44 (2013): 62-87.

In many ways, the new buildings in Vienna offer in stone an interpretation of modernity very much in concert with those that Jewish religious leaders, and especially Jellinek, would come to espouse in their writings. “[T]he modern world in all its aspects,” Egbert Klautke writes, “was created in urban contexts.”³⁸ As Vienna spread outward, construction and conglomeration of suburban towns and neighborhoods occurred along axes that fed into the city’s new main artery, the Ringstraße.³⁹ Even after the agreement dividing the houses of Austria and Hungary was signed in 1867, Vienna remained one of the most important centers of political and economic power in Central Europe, with Franz Joseph’s military presiding over territories stretching from the borders of Russia to those of France, and from the Mediterranean Sea to the frontiers of Prussia.

Cultural and intellectual life in Vienna in the middle decades of the nineteenth century varied as greatly as the immigrants streaming into the metropolis. A Catholic city by tradition, Vienna’s history of artistic and literary creativity masked a conservative core among the city’s political and religious establishment. The powers that control a multinational empire can scarcely be as heterogeneous as their subjects if they wish to maintain a firm rule. Still, Vienna, like other cities across Europe, was changing enormously, and the growth of the city was forcing on Austria the same questions about national character that were engaging intellectuals and policymakers elsewhere on the continent.⁴⁰ As liberalism ran its course in Europe, nationalism began to take its place.

³⁸ Egbert Klautke, “Historiographical Overview: Urban History and Modernity in Central Europe,” *The Historical Journal* 53, no. 1 (2010): 177.

³⁹ Ilisa Barea, *Vienna: Legend and Reality* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1966), 238-244. See also Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna*, 24-115. For a socio-political account of the dismantling of walled cities in central Europe, see Yair Mintzker, *The Defortification of the German City, 1689-1866* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

⁴⁰ See Friedrich Lenger, *European Cities in the Modern Era, 1850-1914*, trans. Joel Golb (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

But in the middle of the nineteenth century, the twin concepts of liberalism and nationalism still included much that was complementary. Such conversations quite naturally played out differently amongst subjects of the Habsburg crown as between thinkers elsewhere in Europe. The Austrian Empire was multi-ethnic, multi-national, and multi-religious. Its borders contained German and Slav, Jew and Magyar, Romanian and Turk. Its thousands of miles of internal borders divided such places as Austria and Slovakia, Hungary and Galicia, Croatia and Serbia. Its peoples were Eastern Orthodox, Greek Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, and Muslim. Its frontiers were not ordained by God or naturally occurring but defined by ancient wars, feudal agreements, royal weddings, imperial purchases, and no small amount of historical happenstance. The encounter with nationalism in the Habsburg Empire, therefore, was quite simply awash in complication and contradiction.⁴¹

Still, the relation between liberalism and nationalism is no accident, even in the Habsburg context.⁴² Jews began moving to cities in vast numbers in the 1840s and 1850s, but they were not the only ones, and the general influx of rural migrants created an unprecedented level of human cultural heterogeneity across the continent. By the 1870s dozens of European cities boasted populations in the many hundreds of thousands, only a fraction of whom had been born or raised there. This demographic shift caused tensions between the various ethnic and religious groups. In Central Europe, as Prussia began to assert its military dominance in the 1860s and 1870s (waging--and winning--wars against the Habsburgs [1866] and the French [1870-1]), German nationalism became

⁴¹ Unfortunately, to eliminate much of this complexity, historians have grouped together everyone of the German tongue, ignoring the distinctions not only among the pre-German Empire principalities but between Austria and Germany altogether. This tendency also overlooks the fact that German-speaking peoples in, say, the Czech lands or Hungary, often looked to Vienna before Berlin.

⁴² For an example of this in Prussia, see Kris Pangburn, "The Religious Underpinnings of Early Prussian Liberalism: The Case of Wilhelm Grävell," *Central European History* 46, no. 4 (April 2014): 779–814.

a fundamental point of contention. Czech, Magyar, and Slav all found themselves in opposition to German claims as the century progressed. Jewish communities, numerically insignificant and culturally diverse, addressed these national questions with varying degrees of trepidation. Across Central Europe, Jews took up the German banner, adopting its language and values as they sought increased economic and cultural access to the upper echelons of Habsburg society.

The next section begins the discussion of the origins and transformation of the rabbi and the rabbinic sermon. It is followed by a discussion of the idea and construction of the monumental central synagogue. The Jewish immigrants flocking to cities like Vienna brought with them a deep vein of traditional religious practice. But as we saw in Chapter 2, their religious experience was as much dependent on the social milieu of rural European life as on a set of laws and ritual actions. With Jewish urban migration, generations of site-specific social contexts were lost, as was the existing religious infrastructure (schools, bath-houses, synagogues, rooms for the poor). The intimate spaces that had previously provided the richness and thickness of traditional Jewish experience could not be transferred to the new city. Jews who had lived in small individual homes or on narrow lanes now settled in tall apartment blocks and walked on wide avenues. Everything was new. Everything was under construction.

What was religious Judaism, then, for these new migrants? For the first generation it remained something of what it had always been: a set of traditions, a lifestyle, a daily repetition of prayers, actions, movements, ideals. It was the stuff of jokes, of poetic ditties, of moral formulas and wisdom-laden solutions. Those who were raised in the villages were one more link on a long chain of Jewish communal experience, bearers of a history only just cursorily their own. But what of their children, born in or brought to the city at a young age? For them, there was barely any dust on the mantle; the synagogue benches were new, unworn from centuries of daily sitting; the school curriculum seemed to change every year; there were a thousand unknown voices in the marketplace.

It was in this new urban setting, for these new urban (especially younger) Jews, that the role of the rabbi and the synagogue began to take on its modern form. The pages below trace the sermon genre from its early modern antecedents to its use and development in the first half of the nineteenth century. As Jewish communities throughout the German-speaking lands were moving into urban settings, and as Jewish communal leaders were faced with the question of preserving some form of Jewish cultural life in the midst of rapidly expanding and modernizing cities, the genre of the weekly rabbinical sermon came to occupy a central (and historically unprecedented) place in the religious life of Jewish community members and their rabbis.

The Development and Transformation of the Rabbinical Sermon

The Early History

The rabbi and his words have long figured centrally in both the mythology and practice of Judaism. Nineteenth-century rabbinic sermons are important because the innovations and accommodations hidden within them tell us a great deal about the social context of Jewish religious practice in the middle of that century. Jewish religious culture went from being one mainly reliant on local tradition and custom to one highly dependent on the neighborhood synagogue, the figure of the rabbi, and the broader governance of centralized Jewish councils. Instead of marginalizing the synagogue and the rabbi, nineteenth century Jewish communities utterly transfigured them. The sermon provides a way of uncovering and analyzing that transformation.

The opening verses of the Mishnaic tractate known as *Pirkei Avot* (Sayings of the Fathers) trace an idealized genealogy for rabbinic Judaism: “Moses received the Torah from Sinai and gave it to Joshua. Joshua [gave it] to the Elders, the Elders to the Prophets, and the Prophets gave it to the men of the Great Assembly.” (*Pirkei Avot* 1:1) Though historically unverifiable as an account of the transmission of Jewish tradition, the Mishna’s statements are interesting for their sociological observation. For the Mishna, the role of the rabbi (equated here with “the men of the Great

Assembly”) is multifaceted. At the core, the rabbi is an exegete of divine law. Just as Moses wrote and taught the Torah, so too the rabbi is to learn and teach Torah. But Joshua was the next to receive the tradition, and he is remembered not for his wisdom but for his military strength and political acumen--for his faith in God’s word that the Jewish people would settle the Land of Israel, and for his will to see that project to completion. And finally, the prophets were neither scholars nor warriors. They were moral exemplars and interpreters, harkening to the people to desist from their unclean ways, warning of the dangers that arise from cultural complacency, ethical degeneracy, and religious apathy.

In a remarkable way, these lines provide a portrait of the Mishna’s version of a well-rounded individual and of a successful leader of the Jewish people. “Simon the Righteous was among the last members of the Great Assembly. He would say: On three things does the world stand: on Torah, on the service of God, and on deeds of kindness.” (*Pirkei Avot* 1:2) In other words, wholeness comes only through the unification of Moses, Joshua, and the Prophets. The rabbis who composed the Mishna, and the generations of students who learned it after them, saw in it a moral lesson for rising leaders, and made it an enduring part of the liturgy. As Daniel Frank and Matt Goldish remark, “Rabbinic culture is founded upon a literature—its interpretation, the imperative to study it, and the authority of its leading interpreters.”⁴³ The Mishna in *Pirkei Avot* enumerates and instantiates this authority, while also providing a mechanism by which succeeding generations could account for and build upon the insights of their teachers.⁴⁴

⁴³ Daniel Frank and Matt Goldish, “Rabbinic Culture and Dissent: An Overview,” in *Rabbinic Culture and Its Critics: Jewish Authority, Dissent, and Heresy in Medieval and Early Modern Times*, eds. Daniel Frank and Matt Goldish (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2008), 1.

⁴⁴ For an overview of rabbinic Judaism through specific case studies, see Jacob Neusner, *Understanding Rabbinic Judaism, from Talmudic to Modern Times* (New York: Ktav, 1974).

Importantly, of course, the Mishna is neither a beginning nor an end in the history of rabbinic Judaism. It is merely a useful example of rabbinical self-understanding, as well as a central authority for those who see themselves as part of the post-Biblical Jewish exegetical experience.⁴⁵ Just as true, however, is that from classical times onward, the authority of the rabbi in Jewish religious life has been consistently debated, witness to ebbs and flows as Jewish society cycled through periods of lesser and greater autonomy and integration.⁴⁶

Nor was rabbinic authority ever absolute. While rabbinic scholars might seek to normalize Jewish practice and belief, they necessarily remained responsive to the communities they served. Their rulings were tempered by local customs (*minhag*) and usage, which in turn were often shaped by socioeconomic conditions and relations with non-Jewish populations.⁴⁷

Plasticity is a fact of rabbinic history. It was also one of its greatest strengths.

Historically, the rabbi's public role was quite different from what we find today. Jewish communities were often highly autonomous, with Jewish texts acting as the civil law for the entire community. The rabbi presided mainly over the civic and ritual responsibilities and obligations (as well as disputes) of his people, something akin to a town's mayor⁴⁸ He gave lessons to his students and a *shir* (an elucidation of that week's biblical reading) on Sabbath afternoons to the community, but was not likely to give a sermon during morning prayers. Instead, the rabbi might make a formal

⁴⁵ See Michael S. Berger, *Rabbinic Authority* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

⁴⁶ See Jack Wertheimer, *Jewish Religious Leadership: Image and Reality* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 2004).

⁴⁷ Daniel Frank and Matt Goldish, "Rabbinic Culture and Dissent: An Overview," in *Rabbinic Culture and Its Critics: Jewish Authority, Dissent, and Heresy in Medieval and Early Modern Times*, eds. Daniel Frank and Matt Goldish (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2008), 6.

⁴⁸ For the many-faceted role of the rabbi as community leader, see Marc Saperstein, *Leadership and Conflict: Tensions in Medieval and Early Modern Jewish History and Culture* (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2014); Shaul Stampfer, *Families, Rabbis and Education: Traditional Jewish Society in Nineteenth-Century Eastern Europe* (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2010); Daniel Frank and Matt Goldish, eds., *Rabbinic Culture and Its Critics: Jewish Authority, Dissent, and Heresy in Medieval and Early Modern Times* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2008); and Simon Schwarzfuchs, *A Concise History of the Rabbinate* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993).

sermon a few times per year, as well as during the High Holidays (*Shabbat Shuva*) and on the Sabbath before Passover (*Shabbat HaGadol*).⁴⁹ His position outside of the study hall was primarily civil and psychological, dealing with the daily needs of the people while extensively educating only a few.

The traditional role of the rabbi likewise extended to the functions of the synagogue structure itself.⁵⁰ Mainly a gathering place for men's prayer, the space might be sumptuously or modestly appareled depending on the wealth of the community. In rural Central Europe, where communities were small, synagogues were often modest one-story buildings, with wooden benches or desks, the most extravagant piece of furniture being a carved ark for the Torah scrolls.⁵¹ The women's gallery--if there was one--was behind a window or (if the building was large enough) in a balcony overhanging the main prayer space. The services that occurred in these synagogues were organized and led by members of the community, and not every synagogue had a rabbi in near-constant attendance. The civil and political functions of the rabbi would have been run out of his home or another communal space, not the prayer hall of the synagogue. Even on the Sabbath the

⁴⁹ For an example of a rabbinic contract that specified days of preaching, see Schwarzfuchs, *Rabbinate*, 51-53.

⁵⁰ For a new and thoughtful analysis of medieval and early modern synagogues in Europe and the Mediterranean, see Barry L. Stiefel, *Jews and the Renaissance of Synagogue Architecture, 1450-1730* (London: Routledge, 2014).

⁵¹ For most people accustomed to sumptuous picture books of European synagogues, this description is surprising. An enormous number of these communal synagogues were re-built in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as communities grew wealthier and more architecturally assertive. For histories of synagogue architecture across Europe, see Stiefel, *Jews and the Renaissance of Synagogue Architecture*; Saskia Coenen Snyder, *Building a Public Judaism: Synagogues and Jewish Identity in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2013); Meir Ben-Dov, *The Golden Age: Synagogues of Spain in History and Architecture* (Jerusalem: Urim, 2009); Thomas C. Hubka, *Resplendent Synagogue: Architecture and Worship in an Eighteenth-Century Polish Community* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 2003); Rivka Dorfman and Ben-Zion Dorfman, *Synagogues Without Jews* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 2001); Carol Herselle Krinsky, *Synagogues of Europe: Architecture, History, Meaning* (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 1985); and Rachel Wischnitzer, *The Architecture of the European Synagogue* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1964).

synagogue was not a meeting place for the community; that would have been a private home or other public structure. The synagogue was an intimate and guarded space for the men of the community, whether for prayer and contemplation, or griping, joking, and gossiping. These spaces often lacked a rabbinical figure altogether, or hosted one only on special occasions or holidays. Similarly, the children and wives were elsewhere.

With such different roles for the rabbi and the synagogue in communal and religious life, Jewish tradition and values were passed down by families and taught through local communal rituals.⁵² “The synagogue was the center of life, but it was not the custodian of thought,” noted the historian Israel Abrahams a century ago.⁵³ As Elisheva Baumgarten has recently shown, the synagogue was often not even the center of life. Instead, the interactions of Jewish mothers and their children account for much of the continuity and change seen in Jewish culture and religious practice across the centuries.⁵⁴ In other words, though histories of Judaism have often traced the shifting role of men in the public sphere, much of the pattern of daily life for pre-modern Jewry was directed by the internal affairs of families and kin groups.⁵⁵ Religious education rarely extended past the age of ritual adulthood (twelve for girls, thirteen for boys), except for preparations related to marriage. Because of this, traditional Jewish culture in the pre-modern period was driven less by the

⁵² See especially Ivan G. Marcus, *Rituals of Childhood: Jewish Acculturation in Medieval Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

⁵³ Israel Abrahams, *Jewish Life in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1896), xvii.

⁵⁴ See Elisheva Baumgarten, *Mothers and Children: Jewish Family Life in Medieval Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

⁵⁵ For works related to Jewish daily life in the pre-modern period in Europe, see Robert Chazan, *Reassessing Jewish Life in Medieval Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010); David Ruderman, *Early Modern Jewry: A New Cultural History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010); Norman Roth, *Daily Life of the Jews in the Middle Ages* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood, 2005); and Chava Weissler, *Voices of the Matriarchs: Listening to the Prayers of Early Modern Jewish Women* (Boston: Beacon, 1998).

rules of the study house and more by the norms and historical associations of Jewish individuals themselves. The rabbi played almost no role in fostering a religious culture. The rabbi was a resource for questions of ritual law, and an essential mediator for civil needs (disputes, contracts, etc.). But the community itself, through daily activity, created the milieu for Jewish cultural transmission down the generations.

The rabbi's sermon takes on new and unprecedented significance as part of the major shift in Jewish religious experience that occurred in the middle period of the nineteenth century. Though rabbis had distinctly important functions in Jewish life in the pre-modern period, it was not mainly in the public pronouncement of religious philosophy. Still, the sermon did not arise *ex nihilo*. As we noted above, from the medieval period forward there were existing precedents for the rabbi to deliver a sermon at least twice during the yearly festival cycle. Further, pre-modern liturgical additions also foreshadowed the themes and roles the modern sermon has come to play. For example, the liturgical hymn has been a part of Jewish ritual practice from at least the late classical period. Tracing the interplay between broader cultural developments and the composition of these hymns, Leon J. Weinberger describes the way rabbis encouraged their communities to write religious songs and poems that reflected their emotions and desires: "The immense volume of Jewish liturgical writing is undoubtedly related to its dialogic focus...A constant feature of the Jewish experience emerged with the hymnic ritualization of the great events of human life."⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Leon J. Weinberger, *Jewish Hymnography: A Literary History* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1998), 4. The "dialogic focus" to which Weinberger refers is central to Jewish ritual and theological experience. Israel and its God are imagined as the two halves of a divine relationship. Yet the Hebrew of the traditional liturgy is overwhelmingly oriented toward the community. Grammatical endings often take the form of the common plural ("we") for petitionary prayer. The personal hymn, therefore, added the individual into the communal relationship. The rabbis who encouraged this form of piety and reflection made the synagogue space one of personal identity as well as communal creation, a theme accentuated in the modern period. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, women, too, began to write liturgical hymns (called *tkhines*).⁵⁶ From these prayers we see the interior world of a more common sort of Jew, devout but only moderated educated, one individual link in a very long cultural chain.

The Nineteenth-Century Sermon

The sermon, as it appeared in the services of mid-nineteenth century Central European synagogues, represents all that was changing about the rabbinate.⁵⁷ Beginning in the first decades of the century, the rabbi's sermon became one of the formative mechanisms by which Jewish religious leaders engaged with the problems and possibilities posed by Europe's intellectual, technological, and cultural modernity. The sermon played a double role in this history. First, it was a cultural object in its own right. The rise of the sermon among religious communities, and especially within Judaism, was a fascinating mark of transition, and signaled a set of shifting social and theological expectations that might otherwise go unnoticed. Second, the sermon was a carrier of a specific message, an intellectual notification. The reinvention of the sermon represented a profound revolution in the way Jewish history and belief was spoken about in the public sphere. This was a shift that fundamentally separated the experience of Judaism before and after the nineteenth century. As we saw above, Jewish life in pre-modernity was composed mostly of inherited customs, certainly in line with but rarely dictated by rabbinic decree. By the end of the nineteenth century the synagogue service and the rabbi's leadership represented much of the ritual content of Jewish life in Central Europe.

In an attempt to explain the sudden importance of the sermon in Jewish religious practice, David Sorkin describes it as part of an "ideology of emancipation" on the part of Jews in the German-speaking lands following the Napoleonic invasion.⁵⁸ Early maskilic texts, except for a few exceptions (such as Mendelssohn's *Jerusalem*), were accessible only to Hebrew-readers, which not

⁵⁷ See Marc Saperstein, *Jewish Preaching, 1200-1800: An Anthology* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

⁵⁸ David Sorkin, "The Genesis of the Ideology of Emancipation: 1806-1840," *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 32, no. 1 (1987): 11-40.

only excluded almost all non-Jewish German intellectuals but most Jews as well. An “ideology of emancipation,” in Sorkin’s view, was the attempt to do away with all structural distinctions between the Jewish community and its gentile neighbors.

It was only with the appearance of the *Sulamith* [a German-language Haskala journal, published in Dessau starting in 1806] and the German-language sermon that there were distinct organs in which the distinction between internal [Hebrew] and apologetic [German] no longer obtained. The journal and the sermon were structurally beyond the autonomous community’s dualism in that they were as accessible to non-Jews as to Jews: not only was their language German, but their forms were borrowed from the *Aufklärung* [German Enlightenment].⁵⁹

While in the latter decades of the eighteenth century the tone and substance of what Jewish maskilim wrote depended on their choice of language (German for polemics, Hebrew for philosophy), by the first decades of the nineteenth century that division no longer held.

This idea certainly accounts for some of the increased importance placed on the sermon. Given in German, it began the process of translating Jewish concepts into the vernacular. Relatedly, the similar structural form of Jewish sermons and their Christian counterparts proved essential for the acculturation of migrating Jews in the middle decades of the nineteenth century. By adopting some of the Christian models, the sermon itself became a site of Jewish modernism. As Alexander Altmann noted,

The sermon had evolved into a type of pulpit oratory decidedly different from the genre of the homily. It was not to be an exegetical discourse on Scriptural verses loosely strung together but was to be a disquisition on some definite theme based on a text and presented according to a well-defined pattern of component parts.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Ibid., 16.

⁶⁰ Alexander Altmann, “The New Style of Preaching in Nineteenth-Century German Jewry,” in: Alexander Altmann, ed., *Studies in Nineteenth-Century Jewish Intellectual History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1964), 68. He also noted: “An analysis of the theology of the sermon is still a desideratum.” Ibid., 65.

Sorkin called these new sermons “edification sermons” (*Erbauungspredigt*), noting their model as similar to that developed among German Protestants.⁶¹ Still, instead of understanding the rabbinical sermon as derivative from the Protestant model, we can actually observe a similar innovation evolving within both Christian and Jewish religious leadership. The German Enlightenment focused on moral uplift. The sermon became therefore an important theological tool for identifying and amplifying the moral message of traditional religious texts.

We can get a sense of the new ethical expectations place on rabbis in the middle of the nineteenth century by looking at the case of Vienna. Adolf Jellinek was hired not as a legal authority but as a neighborhood preacher and community organizer, someone who could control and placate the various political factions of the growing community. His sermons praised the autonomous Jewish past while looking toward a joint German-Jewish future. His language was proud and complementary, polemical and poetic. He sought a strong Jewish communal identity within the concert of Habsburg nations: a Jewish peoplehood, a German cultural affinity, and a Habsburg identity. Marsha Rozenblit writes:

Jews articulated ideological justifications for separate Jewish identity. In the early and middle years of the nineteenth century they conceived this identity in religious terms. Rabbis like Isak Noah Mannheimer, Adolf Jellinek and Moritz Güdemann all propounded the notion that the Jews constituted a people with a religious mission to spread the word of God in the world.⁶²

What we see with Jellinek was not so much a desire to spread the word of God as to solidify the presence of God and Judaism in the canon of Western self-narration. Jellinek hoped that more Jews would seek out their ancient texts as sources of modern wisdom, and thereby rekindle their relationship with Jewish religious practice.⁶³ But of equal importance was his desire to solidify a

⁶¹ Sorkin, “The Genesis of the Ideology of Emancipation: 1806-1840.”

⁶² Rozenblit, “Jewish assimilation in Habsburg Vienna,” 238.

Jewish claim within the European story.

One of the most insidious anti-Jewish claims made throughout the medieval and early modern periods was that Jews were a foreign people within Europe. (In a related way, this was the claim of late nineteenth century racial anti-Semitic science, which saw Jews as Oriental peoples unrelated to Europeans.) By describing the underlying Biblical origins for (and in some cases superiority to) Enlightenment morality, Jellinek was both noting the important Jewish contribution to the Western ideal and pointing toward the conspicuous absence of (positively portrayed) Jews in the historical narrative of Christian Europe. The New Testament was not the primary source for Biblical morality, Jellinek argued. In fact, with its hardline adherence to pacifism and faith, it was in many ways the wrong document to inform the more ethically complex discussions of modernity. Especially in an empire like Austria's, with its multi-ethnic political unions and anxious alliances, the nuanced tribal politics of the Jewish Bible and the philosophical stories of the Talmudic rabbis sounded--in Jellinek's rhetoric--truly modern.

Jellinek was the beginning of the search for new rhetorical strategies that would make Judaism relevant in a fast-changing world. By the end of the nineteenth century Jewish leadership in all the major cities of the Habsburg Empire saw it as their responsibility to bring together Jewish tradition and secular culture, and to do so within a national narrative of German values. In Vienna after Jellinek, this meant that rabbis used their communal time in the synagogue to address questions and events of national importance. As Marc Saperstein notes,

[During times of national crisis or upset], there was a clear expectation that the rabbi would respond publicly and appropriately to circumstances of critical importance not only to Jews but also to non-Jewish fellow citizens. Especially on national days of prayer and thanksgiving mandated by the government, the rabbi's delivery of sermons expressing solidarity with fellow citizens of different religious backgrounds was enthusiastically supported by the lay

⁶³ While in Prague, Jellinek had almost certainly encountered Rabbi Michael Sachs, whose residence in the Bohemian capital (1836-1844) made him one of the most famous preachers among German Jews, and a leading advocate of a form of traditional-but-modern Judaism. See Margit Schad, *Rabbiner Michael Sachs: Judentum Als Höhere Lebensanschauung* (Hildesheim: Olms, 2007).

leadership of their congregations.⁶⁴

With the rabbi engaged in the politics of his time, speaking in German to a mixed communal audience, the role of the rabbi already in the 1850s was vastly different from that of half a century before. We see here also one of the most important shifts that this change in synagogue practice brought about: that of gender roles, most especially of the place of women in Jewish ritual and intellectual life.⁶⁵ There was, indeed, a profoundly egalitarian undercurrent in many of these ritual reforms.⁶⁶ One might say that the sermon became the first means of mass Torah education, fulfilling the Talmudic wish that every Jew learn Torah from a sage.

These city rabbis, then, were creating an entirely new version of rabbinic Judaism, one that differed greatly from what had been the only model of rabbinic practice across the whole of Central Europe just a couple of decades prior. These new rabbis were known as *predigers*, preachers. For someone like Jellinek, such a role was uniquely suited to his personality and intellectual goals. That is no coincidence. A man who could not give weekly sermons or who had little appetite for political activism would not have been attracted to the rabbinate as it was being redefined in the nineteenth century. Wrote Nahum Glatzer:

the preacher, or rabbi, though well acquainted with the subject of his particular sermon... was, with some exceptions, no longer the scholar in the Hebrew tradition. What counted now was rhetoric.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Marc Saperstein, "Rabbis as Preachers, 1800-1965: Regensburg Conference Lecture," in *Rabbi - Pastor - Priest: Their Roles and Profiles Through the Ages*, eds. Walter Homolka and Heinz-Günther Schöttler (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013): 120-1.

⁶⁵ See Benjamin Maria Baader, *Gender, Judaism, and Bourgeois Culture in Germany, 1800-1870* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006).

⁶⁶ Julius Carlebach, "The Forgotten Connection: Women and Jews in the Conflict Between Enlightenment and Romanticism," *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 24 (1979): 107-38.

⁶⁷ Nahum N. Glatzer, "On an Unpublished Letter of Isaak Markus Jost," *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 22 (1977): 129-30.

Jellinek certainly was a “scholar in the Hebrew tradition.” But he was not a pious, lonely man to whom pilgrims came for a few soft-spoken words of truth--the sort of disposition held up for esteem by East European Hassidim. Nor was he a strict halachist, whose decisions were based on an exacting reading of the early modern Talmudic codifiers--the skill beloved of the so-called *mitnagdim* (Hebrew for “opponents,” named for their staunch anti-Hassidic views) of Ashkenaz, and especially of the schools in Vilna (Yiddish: Vilnius).

Jellinek was verbose. He was a public personality. He stood before a crowd in a monumental hall and argued for the superiority of Jewish moral traditions and the political righteousness of the Jewish cause. Though trained as a scholar in Leipzig, and still in correspondence with many of the leading academics of his age, in Vienna Jellinek almost entirely ceased to work in an academic genre. Instead, like Glatzer notes, Jellinek focused on his rhetoric, and on honing a language for his community of Jewish migrants, whose lives were, in effect, building modern Judaism, even if they did not quite realize it.

It was Jellinek’s commitment to the traditional Jewish sources that placed him in the middle of the liturgical and theological disagreements that were dividing the modern Jewish community in unprecedented ways. Unlike many of his fellow rabbis, whose reformist agendas put them at odds with the core values of historic Jewish practice, Jellinek could speak to the more conservative immigrants whose numbers were growing every year. On the one hand, Robert Wistrich is correct to note that “[Jellinek’s] sermons of the 1860s can be seen as a faithful mirror of the aspirations and ideas of liberal Austrian Jewry,”⁶⁸ as is Björn Siegel when he writes that “[Jellinek’s] view was similar to Mannheimer’s concept of moderate Reform.”⁶⁹ But on the other, much of what later came to be

⁶⁸ Wistrich, *The Jews of Vienna*, 120.

⁶⁹ Björn Siegel, “Facing Tradition: Adolf Jellinek and the Emergence of Modern Habsburg Jewry,” *Simon Dubnow Institute Yearbook* 8 (2009), 325.

associated with German-style liberal religion (a repudiation of the Talmud; the excision of large numbers of traditional prayers; the use of instrumentation and discouragement of communal participation during Sabbath services) was anathema to Jellinek.⁷⁰

Both Wistrich and Siegel underestimate the unique rabbinic epistemology that runs through Jellinek's writings. The Reform movement, epitomized by such bold figures as Abraham Geiger (1810–1874), Samuel Holdheim (1806–1860), and Ludwig Philippson (1811–1889), represented its own unique strand of Jewish intellectual innovation, one that Jellinek recognized and studied but did not adopt.⁷¹ Similarly, the forerunners of the Conservative movement, the rabbis of Zacharias Frankel's Jewish Theological Seminary in Breslau, also developed a set of critical methodologies and theological assumptions that, while vastly more influential as a school than anything Jellinek produced, likewise fail to capture either the spirit or purpose of Jellinek's work.⁷² (Interestingly, the rabbi who followed Jellinek at Leopoldstadt, Moritz Güdemann (1835–1918), was a product of the Seminary in Breslau, suggesting affinity—but not necessarily coterminous intent—between Jellinek's thought and the Breslau school's.)

These various movements of Jewish reform were political expressions. Jellinek was

⁷⁰ Still, we must acknowledge the immense debt Jellinek owed to Mannheimer. See Adolf Jellinek, *Festrede am LXX. Geburtstage Seiner Ehrwürden des Predigers Herrn Isaak Noa Mannheimer (17. October 1863) im alten israelitische Bethause gehalten* (Vienna: Jakob Schloßberg's Buchhandlung, 1863); and idem, *Rede bei der Gedächtnissfeier für den vereinigten Prediger Herrn Isak Noa Mannheimer, am 26. März 1865 im Tempel in der Leopoldstadt* (Vienna: Herzfeld and Bauer, 1865).

⁷¹ See Susannah Heschel, *Abraham Geiger and the Jewish Jesus* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Christian Wiese, ed., *Redefining Judaism in an Age of Emancipation: Comparative Perspectives on Samuel Holdheim, 1806-1860* (Leiden: Brill, 2007). See also Carsten Wilke, "Den Talmud und den Kant:" *Rabbinerausbildung an der Schwelle zur Moderne* (Hildesheim: Olms, 2003), especially 295-302.

⁷² See Ismar Schorsch, "Zacharias Frankel and the European Origins of Conservative Judaism," *Judaism* 30, no. 3 (1981): 344–354; Andreas Brämer, *Rabbiner Zacharias Frankel. Wissenschaft des Judentums und konservative Reform in 19. Jahrhundert* (Hildesheim: Olms, 2000); and idem, "The Dilemmas of Moderate Reform: Some Reflections on the Development of Conservative Judaism in Germany 1840–1880," *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 10 (2003): 73–87.

instantiating a new sort of urban religious practice. Reformers and those from the Breslau Seminary, and later adherents of Neo- and Modern Orthodoxy, would all differ with Jellinek over politics, but would adopt his style of modern rabbinical practice. Following Jellinek's model, they would focus their efforts on synagogue construction, sermonizing, and the centralization of religious schooling.

What made Jellinek unique among the early generation of urban rabbinical reformers was his widespread use of rabbinic sources. Unlike many of his more reform-minded counterparts, Jellinek believed that the Jewish answer to modernity lay within the Jewish texts themselves. From the time Jellinek began his religious innovations until the end of his life, his faith in it was unwavering. He felt free to quote Kant and Hegel, but he also wanted it known that, in many cases, he believed the Talmudic rabbis had grappled with the same principles or philosophical ideas long beforehand. (We will see many instances of this in the following chapter.) Jellinek was committed to the rabbinic storyline, to the quest for Jews to find answers using their particular historic languages and distinct methodologies. Many of the urban rabbis of the middle nineteenth century cultivated some form of this same view concerning the relationship between traditional texts and modern society. What made Jellinek unique was his vision of finding in the classical texts stories and examples of contemporary philosophical questions, and then of writing a narrative that placed Jews as the forerunners of European (and more so of German) culture. Jews, in Jellinek's vision, became both progenitors and recipients. He wanted to make into the ancient Jews what the Germans had made the Romans: European forebears whose legacy modern peoples were reconstructing in a greater and more universalistic mode.

Looking Toward the Synagogue

As we have seen in the pages and chapters above, the core elements of the modern Jewish experience were already beginning to be widely felt by the time Jellinek assumed his position in Vienna in 1857. Jews were migrating to cities in large numbers. The Jewish intellectual embrace of

European Enlightenment was more than half a century old. Liberal policies were allowing Jews to buy property and build new communal and private buildings. As we will examine in the next section, the built environment of nineteenth-century Central European Judaism was transforming as well. What made Jellinek important were the ways he addressed these transformations, and presented himself as someone who appeared to exist painlessly both in the world of religious texts and that of German culture.

In the end, it does not matter if, in a different era, Jellinek's talents would have allowed him to be as successful or respected as he ultimately became in Vienna. What we see here, at the end of our discussion of the origins of the modern rabbinic sermon, is that Jellinek's rhetorical talents positioned him to become the most famous and innovative Jewish preacher in Central Europe at precisely the moment when Jewish leaders across the German-speaking lands were making efforts to have the sermon integrated into their weekly religious services. Jellinek's example went a long way toward solidifying that bond, and giving it an early intellectual and social capital that it might otherwise have lacked.

The next section examines the changing face and role of the synagogue building in nineteenth century Judaism. Again taking Vienna as its case study, these pages are about the historic precedents and nineteenth century arguments that resulted in the construction of monumental communal synagogues. As we touched on above briefly, the synagogue was not a central intellectual or theological feature in pre-modern Jewish religious life. By the turn of the twentieth century, that had been entirely reversed. Between 1850 and 1900, urban Jewish communities in cities large and small expended million of dollars, francs, marks, and guildens in the construction of large, beautiful, and highly visible synagogue buildings. The shape these buildings took and the theological discourse surrounding them are the subjects of the next section.

The Leopoldstädter Tempel and the Changing Identity of the Synagogue

In the middle decades of the nineteenth century, urban Jewish communities created a new language about the value, authenticity, and sacredness of their synagogues. On the one hand, these buildings were merely expressions of newfound wealth, a confidence in the long-term viability of liberal reforms and their protection of Jewish citizenship. On the other hand, the buildings invited (and dictated) a different sort of synagogue practice than that previously fostered by Jewish religious spaces. As Saskia Coenen Snyder writes, “Before [the late nineteenth century], ‘being Jewish’ was not defined by attendance at a synagogue...The synagogue building itself played only a marginal role in Jewish life.”⁷³ By the end of the century the synagogue was a centerpiece of communal religious experience, with the rabbi creating a tone and language about its meaning that differed dramatically from anything previously expressed in Jewish religious discourse. By looking closely at the architecture and discourse around the new synagogue in Vienna, we can get a sense of broader trends in Central European Judaism in the middle of the nineteenth century.

On the eighteenth day of May 1858, a year and half into Jellinek’s rabbinic tenure, a new synagogue was dedicated in the Leopoldstadt neighborhood of Vienna. Eponymously named the Leopoldstädter Tempel, the building was located on Wallisch Gasse (now called Tempelgasse) and was (until its destruction on November 9, 1938) one of the grandest of Vienna’s Jewish houses of worship, representing the beginning of an era of wealth, affluence, and stability for the community.⁷⁴

⁷³ Snyder, *Building A Public Judaism*, 3.

⁷⁴ For overviews of these new modern urban synagogues, see Bob Martens and Herbert Peter, *Die zerstörten Synagogen Wiens: Virtuelle Stadtpaziergänge* (Vienna: Mandelbaum, 2009), 21-30; Krinsky, *Synagogues of Europe*, 191-195; and Snyder, *Building A Public Judaism*. Anthony Alofsin writes that, to correctly interpret the historical import of building forms, we must assume “that [the] social and political forces of architecture are transmitted through [a building’s] physical form and that the two inseparably create a dialectical realism. In other words, the visual manifestation of architecture—its space, light, color, texture, pattern—and its social and historical context must be considered inseparable if we, as receptors, are to grasp the messages of buildings.” He calls this sort of analysis “contextual formalism.” Alofsin, *When Buildings Speak*, 11. For a history of the early modern urban

The Leopoldstädter was among the first of the great monumental urban synagogues in Europe. This meant, as Snyder writes, that whereas historically synagogues had been

confined to the private domain, that is, spatially organized so that [the synagogue building] was not particularly visible to gentiles, [the new monumental] building itself became central to mediating Jewishness in a modern society, announcing the cultural sophistication, bourgeois affluence, and religious respectability of the Jewish community.⁷⁵

In the construction of the Leopoldstädter Tempel we can see many of these “mediations” at work.

Commissioned by the Viennese community, the synagogue was designed by the non-Jewish

German-born Viennese architect Ludwig von Förster (1797-1863), who, though now known mainly

for his majestic synagogue designs, was at the time a familiar and respected architect to the non-

Jewish Habsburg élite.⁷⁶ Förster contributed greatly to the plans for Vienna’s mid-century

reconstruction, and was the father of Emil von Förster (1838-1909), who designed a number of

important buildings on the Ringstraße.⁷⁷ In commissioning so esteemed an architect (and by having

the commission accepted), the Viennese community was signifying not only that its new synagogue

was to be the equal of the other grand buildings of modern Vienna, but that Jews could match the

synagogue, see Barry Stiefer, “The Architectural Origins of the Great Early Modern Urban Synagogue,” *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 56 (2011): 105-134. For an account of architectural culture concerning synagogue construction during the nineteenth century, see Helen Rosenau, “Gottfried Semper and German Synagogue Architecture,” *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 22 (1977): 237-244.

⁷⁵ Snyder, *Building A Public Judaism*, 2.

⁷⁶ Förster’s best-known synagogues are the Leopoldstädter Tempel in Vienna (dedicated 1858); the Dohány Street Synagogue in Budapest (also called the Great Synagogue, dedicated 1859); and the Kazinczy Street Synagogue of Miskolc, Hungary (dedicated 1862). The latter two remain standing, and all three were constructed in neo-Byzantine/Moorish-revival style. See Kinga Frojimovics and Géza Komoróczy, *Jewish Budapest: Monuments, Rites, History* (Budapest; New York: Central European University Press, 1999), 107-8.

⁷⁷ Janine Burke gives a brief account of Ludwig Förster’s role in the building of the *Ringstraße* as well as some common perception of Leopoldstadt. See Janine Burke, *The Sphinx on the Table. Sigmund Freud’s Art Collection and the Development of Psychoanalysis* (New York: Walker, 2006), 28-30.

fine taste, elegance, and aesthetic sophistication of their gentile neighbors--and that they could afford to.⁷⁸

With the push toward monumentality, a problem arose: except for the Bible's descriptions of Solomon's Jerusalem Temple (and the Talmudic rabbis' attempts to define its precise dimensions), Judaism possessed no overriding historical precedent for important communal architecture. This peculiar absence was an acute issue for the Jewish communities of Europe's nineteenth-century cities, especially at a time when governments across the continent were investing enormous sums in construction projects and architects were experimenting with new forms of design and material. The Leopoldstädter Tempel was, therefore, part of a growing movement to define a distinctly Jewish style of synagogue architecture.

Searching for a model for their buildings beyond the borders of northern Europe—where the symbolic representation of religion came mainly in the form of Romanesque and Gothic cathedrals—these new bourgeois Jewish communities looked both outward and backward for inspiration.⁷⁹ Whereas Ismar Schorsch argued that the memory of Jewish Spain (and its civilizational

⁷⁸ Vienna was one of the first cities in Europe to dedicate a monumental communal synagogue. Berlin's golden-domed Oranienburgerstraße Synagoge—perhaps the most famous example of this sort of grand Jewish architecture in Central Europe—was only completed in 1866. Often an even longer period of time elapsed between the dedication of the Leopoldstädter and similar edifices in other national capitals. Though Vienna was only one year ahead of Budapest (Dohány Street Synagogue, dedicated 1859 [they shared an architect]), it was fourteen years ahead of New York (Central Synagogue, 1872), sixteen years ahead of Paris (rue de la Victoire and rue des Tournelles, dedicated 1874 and 1876, respectively), nineteen years ahead of London (West End Synagogue, dedicated 1879), and forty-six years ahead of Rome (Tempio Maggiore di Roma, dedicated 1904). Despite their magnificence, Snyder warns against seeing monumental synagogues as the normative model for Jewish bourgeois self-expression: “Plurality and variability, rather than the monumental Moorish model, characterized the landscape of nineteenth-century synagogue building.” Snyder, *Building A Public Judaism*, 3. For a more comprehensive review of synagogue architecture, see Harold Hammer-Schenk, *Synagogen in Deutschland: Geschichte einer Baugattung im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert (1780-1933)*, 2 vols. (Hamburg: Christians, 1981).

⁷⁹ See John M. Efron, *German Jewry and the Allure of the Sephardic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016). The book jacket features an image of the then-newly built synagogue on Gottschedstraße in Leipzig, presided over by Jellinek before he left for Vienna. See also Ivan D.

accomplishments) could explain the new synagogue style that flourished in the mid to late nineteenth century, Ivan Kalmar argued that the turn toward “Moorish” style was associated with German Jews’ embrace of their Eastern heritage.⁸⁰ In what became an unusually common and widespread choice, Jewish communities in Europe and North America commissioned structures that invoked the memory of Moorish-dominated Spain. Kalman writes: “Throughout much of the nineteenth century, many Jews confidently asserted their “Oriental” origins and their “Oriental” race.”⁸¹ ⁸² In the case of synagogue architecture of the middle nineteenth century, the turn to a neo-Islamic style seems to have been more about a critique of East European Jews (with their makeshift synagogues and dark interiors) and Christians (whose Gothic masterpieces symbolized many centuries of anti-Jewish repression) than a turn toward the embrace of a mythic Spanish renaissance.⁸³

Kalmar, “Moorish Style: Orientalism, the Jews, and Synagogue Architecture,” *Jewish Social Studies* 7, no. 3 (2001): 68-100.

⁸⁰Schorsch writes: “The appeal of Moorish architecture for the emancipated synagogue derived from its Spanish connection. It answered the need for a distinctive style precisely because it dovetailed so completely with the overriding Spanish bias of German Jewry. There was nothing oriental about the Arabs; without them Greek philosophy would never have reached the West. One was fully entitled to draw on the inspiration of Spain to renovate both the interior and the exterior of the synagogue. What more powerful symbol of the rupture with [pre-Emancipation] culture than to build synagogues in the spirit of Spain!” Ismar Schorsch, “The Myth of Sephardic Supremacy,” *Leo Baeck Yearbook* 34 (1989): 57.

⁸¹ Ivan David Kalmar, “Moorish Style” Orientalism, the Jews, and Synagogue Architecture,” *Jewish Social Studies* 7, no. 3 (2001): 70.

⁸² For a treatment of this subject, see Carsten Schapkow, *Vorbild und Gegenbild: das iberische Judentum in der deutsch-jüdische Erinnerungskultur 1779-1939* (Cologne; Weimer; Vienna: Böhlau, 2011). As an important corrective to Schapkow’s work, see the book review by Florian Krobb, “Vorbild und Gegenbild: das iberische Judentum in der deutsch-jüdische Erinnerungskultur 1779-1939 (review),” *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies* 31, no. 4 (Summer 2013): 127-130.

⁸³ “The Jewish turn to neo-Islamic architecture...identified the Jews themselves as ‘oriental,’ though the ideological values were thereby inverted: the implicit claim was that the Jews were in the ‘Orient,’ indeed were the ‘Orient,’ long before the arrival of British steamships, and that their continuing presence in Europe stood as a reminder that not only was the ‘Orient’ civilized before Europe, but

The newfound centrality of the synagogue in congregational life made it all the more essential that the monumentality and physical experience of the synagogue convey something about the beliefs and attitudes of the community that inhabited it. The memory of Sephardic Spain, with its amalgam of secular languages, biblical philosophy, and Jewish literary creativity, suggested that, inside the Moorish walls of the Leopoldstädter Tempel and its siblings across the continent, Jewish communities could experience a type of Judaism new to Central Europe. Again, as Ismar Schorsch has noted, the turn toward Spain by Jewish intellectuals of both the Haskalah and Wissenschaft was as much a rejection of yeshiva Judaism (centered on the memorization and practice of religious law) as an embrace of a historically accurate accounting of Judaism in Islamic Iberia.

As construed by Ashkenazic intellectuals, the Sephardic image facilitated a religious posture marked by cultural openness, philosophic thinking, and an appreciation for the aesthetic. Like many an historical myth, it evoked a partial glimpse of a bygone age determined and colored by [contemporary] social need.⁸⁴

For someone like Jellinek, whose studies of Kabbalah already suggested a propensity for modeling contemporary problems on (a belief in) a more philosophically “open” Sephardic past, the Leopoldstädter Tempel offered in bricks and mortar just such an example of a different sort of Jewish reform.

The building designed by Förster fit the model of these new Sephardic-inspired imaginings, and in part was meant to invoke the image of Solomon’s Temple in Jerusalem. Förster’s building had “[h]orseshoe arches and wiry cast-iron columns,” an eastern wall “articulated with a monumental

also European civilization itself was built on that ‘oriental’ foundation.” Olga Bush, “The Architecture of Jewish Identity: The Neo-Islamic Central Synagogue of New York,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 63, no. 2 (June 2004): 193-4. See also Ivan D. Kalmar and Derek J. Penslar, eds., *Orientalism and the Jews* (Waltham, Mass.: Brandeis University Press; 2005).

⁸⁴ Schorsch, “The Myth of Sephardic Supremacy,” 47. He continues: “advocacy of secular education, the curbing of talmudic exclusivity and the resumption of studies in Hebrew grammar, biblical exegesis, and Jewish philosophy, and the search for historical exemplars led to a quick rediscovery of Spanish models and achievements.” *Ibid.*, 49-50.

arch,” and two minaret-like turrets framing the front entranceway.⁸⁵ If the Jews of Spain under the Caliphate, and the exiled Sephardim of Amsterdam, Constantinople, London, and elsewhere, had remained true to the traditional threads of rabbinic Judaism, then it surely seemed plausible that the Ashkenazi Jews of Vienna could likewise retain a balance between secular culture and traditional religion.⁸⁶

In attempting to explain why the 1850s, specifically, was witness to this turn toward monumentality in synagogue architecture, Olga Bush focuses on both the social and religious considerations of acculturating German Jews. She writes:

A theological shift formulated by the Reform movement also played a role in reconceiving synagogue architecture. According to the Reform movement, the Jews were no longer in exile, and therefore were not called to return to Zion and restore the Temple. In this light, every house of worship ought to be considered a temple, as holy as the original Temple in Jerusalem. This motivated the creation of synagogues as sumptuous spaces, where the worshipers did not have to mourn any longer, but rather could rejoice with music and singing.⁸⁷

Following a similar line of reasoning, Michael A. Meyer argued that the use of the word *Gotteshaus* by nineteenth-century Jewish communal leaders (instead of the word “synagogue”) signaled a larger attempt by acculturating Jews to pair the social roles of the synagogue with that of the Christian church.⁸⁸ Indeed, both the words *tempel* and *Gotteshaus* functioned to distinguish the modern

⁸⁵ H.A. Meek, *The Synagogue* (London: Phaidon, 1995), 189.

⁸⁶ An almost identical copy of the Leopoldstädter Tempel was constructed a few years later (1864-1866) in the Romanian capital of Bucharest (Romanian: *București*). (In 1862, the territories of Wallachia and Moldavia united to form the Principality of Romania. It was declared a kingdom by King Carol I [1839-1914, a member of the Hohenzollern-Sigmarigen dynasty of the House of Hohenzollern] in 1881.) Unlike the structure in Vienna, the Templul Coral (Choral Temple) on Strada Sfânta Vineri survived the Second World War and has recently been refurbished. See Krinsky, *Synagogues of Europe*, 153-4.

⁸⁷ Olga Bush, “The Architecture of Jewish Identity: The Neo-Islamic Central Synagogue of New York,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 63, no. 2 (June 2004): 193.

⁸⁸ Michael A. Meyer, “‘How Awesome is this Place!’ The Reconceptualization of the Synagogue in

synagogue from its historic precursors, the house of prayer or the house of study (*beit tefilla* or *beit midrash*, respectively). This was a conscious theological move, made apparent in the various sermons and pamphlets published around the dedication of each new communal synagogue.

The link between the new Jewish houses of worship and the Jerusalem Temple was a way of solidifying and proclaiming Jewish gains in the realm of civil rights, a connection not, in fact, altogether misguided. Following 1848, and especially 1867, the social and civil status of Jews in Europe was more equal to that of non-Jews than it had ever been under Christian political domination. Not since Jewish autonomy during the century of Hasmonean rule BCE had so many Jews possessed equivalent freedoms under law. Europe in the middle of the nineteenth century really did appear to be on the cusp of fundamental change.

We can observe this linguistic shift in Jellinek's writings.⁸⁹ In his sermon at the opening of the Leopoldstädter Tempel in Vienna, as in many other places, he made the rhetorical distinction between the "alten Bethaus" (the old prayer house) and the new Tempel. The latter, he said, was like the rebuilding of the destroyed "jerusalemische Gottestempel," the Temple in Jerusalem.⁹⁰ In almost every way, this was a historically unprecedented connection. The Temple in Jerusalem had been

Nineteenth-Century Germany," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 41 (1996): 51-63, here 56 f. As Meyer describes it, "For millennia the Jewish distinction had been temporal, not spatial, especially between the Sabbath and the rest of the week. In re-introducing spatial sanctity, the preachers were not simply following the cultural code of contemporary Christianity, they were returning to the paradigm of ancient Judaism and, consciously or not, describing their new houses of worship more on the model of the Temple than on that of Diaspora houses of prayer." Ibid. 59. Snyder likewise comments on this transformation, see Snyder, *Building a Public Judaism*, 5-6, esp. note 10.

⁸⁹ See Adolf Jellinek, *Rede zur Einweihung des israelitischen Tempels in Iglau, am 9. September 1863 (25. Elul 5623)* (Vienna: Bendiner & Schloßberg, 1863); idem, *Zwei Reden zur Schlußsteinlegung und zur Einweihung des neuen israelitischen Tempels in der Leopoldstadt am 18. Mai und 15. Juni 1858* (Vienna: Knöpfmacher, 1858); and idem, *Zur Feier des fünfzigjährigen Jubiläums des israelitischen Tempels in der inneren Stadt Wien. Zwei Reden am 26. März (1. Nisan 5636) und 9. April (1. Tage des Passah festes 1876)* (Vienna: Brüder Winter, 1876).

⁹⁰ Jellinek, *Zwei Reden zur Schlußsteinlegung*, 10.

more than just a space for communal prayer, more than just a sign of the relationship between God and Israel. As the biblical narrative recounts:

Then Solomon said, “The Lord has said that he would dwell in thick darkness. I have built you an exalted house, a place for you to dwell in forever.”...[I have built it so] that your eyes may be open night and day toward this house, the place of which you said, “My name shall be there,” that you may heed the prayer that your servant prays toward this place. Hear the plea of your servant and of your people Israel when they pray toward this place. Hear in heaven your dwelling place. Heed and forgive. (1 Kings 8: 12-13, 29-30)

Jerusalem was a home for God, an abode on Earth where God’s enduring presence could be sought day and night. For the Bible, Jerusalem is unique in the world. (The term “sanctuary,” often used in American synagogues to denote the prayer space, has some of the same theological connotations as the German *tempel*.)

Yet by resuscitating the term “temple” and by comparing the new synagogue in Vienna to its Solomonic predecessor in Jerusalem, Jellinek was doing much more than being rhetorically effusive. He was, instead, one of the early creators of an entirely new language of Jewish religious expression, one that imagined Jewish civil rights in a changing Europe as the harbinger of a new historical epoch. His words at the dedication were not mere German nationalism--Jews were not full citizens in Austria yet, and few of those who worshipped at these new synagogues had grown up in culturally German households. Instead, this theological rhetoric was aspirational, forward looking, and to some degree messianic. It was also self-justifying, reaching into the Jewish past for a language that would validate and rationalize Jewish desires in the present. At the opening of the new Temple in Iglau (Moravia) in 1863, Jellinek said: “From the nearby small towns the Jewish landowners gathered in the district, towns whose “Palestine” counted twenty [families], [...and] under flute playing and Psalm singing raised themselves a Temple of Jerusalem.”⁹¹

In his sermon for the Leopoldstädter, Jellinek used the metaphor of a holy rock to describe

⁹¹ Adolf Jellinek, *Predigten*, vol. 3 (Vienna: Herzfeld & Bauer, 1866), 120.

the new building, a symbol of God's enduring presence in physical space, "Yes, this stone, which is to form the keystone of this House, has sprung from Zion's holy and consecrated ground," he proclaimed.⁹² Jellinek called the new synagogue building a "Stein des göttlichen Beistandes," a stone of divine assistance—a somewhat poetic translation of a scene from 1 Samuel 7:12: "Then Samuel set up a stone...and he called it by the name *even ha-azzer* [stone of assistance], and he said, 'So far has God helped us.'" Indeed, the Bible is full of stone monuments signifying the eternal, benevolent presence of God in the life of Israel.⁹³ Following on these Biblical examples, Jellinek's phrase "a stone of divine assistance" was not only a hope that the Jewish experience in a new liberal Austria was long and enduring. The Biblical Samuel set his stone in the sacred ground of the Land of Israel, to stand for all time as a sign of God's enduring care for the People of Israel. So, too, the modern Jellinek was setting a stone into the ground, in a new Europe, a re-birthed Europe, whose extension of liberty to the Jews was akin to the fulfillment of the Biblical promise of a stable, prosperous homeland. It was a radical theological repositioning, an appropriation of a divine sacredness previously meant only for the Land of Israel but here placed on the soils of Central Europe. Not only were the Jews no longer in Diaspora, Jellinek appeared to be saying, they were no longer even threatened as they had always been. The new synagogue was a monument, a memorial (*a yad vashem* in the words of Isaiah 56), to the continued protection of the Jews by God, one that extended well beyond the limits of the biblical lands and would endure forever.

The idea that a new synagogue was a holy space, something as profound as a stand-in for the ancient Temple in Jerusalem, expressed the liberal idea that the Jews were a separate yet equal people living peaceably amongst the various nations of Europe. The yearning for Zion remained liturgically

⁹² Jellinek, *Zwei Reden zur Schlußsteinlegung*, 4.

⁹³ Jacob at Beth El (Genesis 28); Jacob meeting Esau (Genesis 31); Moses at Sinai (Exodus 24); Moses's instructions for the conquest of Canaan (Deuteronomy 27) Joshua across the Jordan (Joshua 4); Samuel at Miztpa (1 Samuel 7); and Solomon at his Temple (1 Kings 7).

important, but just as God had followed Israel into exile in the sixth century BCE, so too, then, this language implied that God resided among the Jews in their European homeland. As Jellinek said:

On this land a house of God rises, which—according to the saying of the ancients—is called like Benjamin: a friend, a favorite, and a chosen one of God. And so the annals of the Jews of Austria praise and glorify God as the favorite, and about their gracious sovereign it is now proven by scripture: *ha-'asiri yihje kodesch la-Adonai* (Lev. 27:32), ‘the tenth year of his reign is holy to the Lord.’⁹⁴

In this remarkable rhetorical display, Jellinek interwove the tenth year of Franz Joseph’s reign over Austria (1848-58) with the founding of the Leopoldstädter Tempel and God’s guidance of Israel in the desert. Jellinek was saying: just as the Jews built for themselves a home in Vienna, so too they built a home for their God; and just as the holy texts honor the Jewish nation, so too do they speak about the glory of the king who rules over the Jews—even though that king be not a Jew himself. If traditionally, then, God had only one house, and it was in Jerusalem, now, with the reimagining of the synagogue as a place for God’s continued domestic presence, Judaism’s distinct rituals could be reconciled with the Christian understanding of an ever-present and accessible God. With Europe’s turn toward liberalism, and the promise of a lasting peace between the Christian nations and their Jewish minorities, the permanence of the Jewish presence in the lands outside Zion could, finally, be firmly established.

As we have seen, the nineteenth-century reconnection with the memory and meaning of Solomon’s Jerusalem Temple was part of a larger intellectual transformation shaping modern German Judaism, one that fundamentally reoriented traditional religious practice away from the home and toward the built communal environment and the figure of the rabbi. In other words, just as the physical space of the synagogue was transforming in the nineteenth century, so too was the conception of the synagogue’s role in ritual life. With the Enlightenment’s growing influence in the intellectual world of Central Europe, a discourse of morality came to dominate discussions of

⁹⁴ Jellinek, *Zwei Reden zur Schlußsteinlegung*, 12.

religion, and Jews began to see something pedagogical in the beauty of the synagogue.⁹⁵ We will analyze in greater detail in the following chapter how, alongside the revival of the imagery and special holiness of the Solomonic Temple, there arose a moralization of history, an accentuation of ethics within the core narrative of religious development in the West. The new synagogue building expressed not only the economic and social security of the Jewish community, but also the moral uprightness and wisdom of the Jewish people--its glorious philosophical and aesthetic past, and its ability to embrace and promote the deepest insights and cultural flowerings of the present.

Conclusion: Modernity and Ritual in the Viennese Synagogue

The Vienna Rite

Debate over what sort of Judaism would be practiced inside the new synagogue in Leopoldstadt offers a picture of ideological moderation in an age of increasingly caustic denominational quarrels. In the opening decades of the nineteenth century, liturgical reforms became the focus of community disagreements across German-speaking Central Europe.⁹⁶ As Daniel Frank and Matt Goldish write, “the Haskalah and Reform movements aroused great consternation among traditionalist rabbis. The challenge to rabbinic power was open, and there was no mistaking

⁹⁵ “The old synagogue had failed in this task, the beautiful new one, with its aesthetic appeal to the cultured tastes (*gebildete Augen*) of the congregation, would succeed. But it was not only a matter of aesthetics, for in the eyes of at least one preacher the physical characteristics of the synagogue were themselves the transmitters of religious and moral messages. They were the external representation of internal qualities.” Michael A. Meyer, “How Awesome is this Place! The Reconceptualization of the Synagogue in Nineteenth-Century Germany,” *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 41 (1996): 62.

⁹⁶ See David Ellenson, “The *Israelitische Gebetbücher* Of Abraham Geiger and Manuel Joël: a Study in Nineteenth-Century German-Jewish Communal Liturgy and Religion,” *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 44 (1999): 143–64. See Jakob Josef Petuchowski, *Prayerbook Reform in Europe: The Liturgy of European Liberal and Reform Judaism* (New York: World Union for Progressive Judaism, 1968). See also E. D. Goldschmidt, “Studies on Jewish Liturgy by German-Jewish Scholars,” *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 2 (1957): 119–35.

the ideology of deliberate change.”⁹⁷ These movements emphasized reformed prayer services, often including numerous readings in the vernacular, and even excising long portions of the historic text. Yet we must see liturgical reforms as part of a larger set of institutional and religious changes accompanying Jewish modernity. For example, in 1800 the prayer book was a vessel for religious expression. By 1900, it was often one of the few commonalities holding fractured communities together.

In Vienna, as we noted, Jellinek arrived just as the community was growing from a small, cohesive group of families into a network of sprawling immigrant neighborhoods and divergent religious traditions. Carol Krinsky writes about how the Leopoldstädter Tempel was built with space for an organ, but “the fact that the congregation did not use [it...] showed that the more liberal Jews wanted to come to terms with the more orthodox.”⁹⁸ The rabbi in charge of communal affairs in Vienna, Isak Noa Mannheimer, was thoroughly against inclusion of an organ, on the grounds that it was too Christian.⁹⁹ Importantly, it was under his tenure that Vienna embarked in the 1830s and 1840s on a series of small but meaningful liturgical reforms (together called the “Vienna Rite”). Mannheimer preached weekly in the *Stadttempel* even before Jellinek’s arrival. Yet both Nikolaus Vielmetti and Marsha Rozenblit note that reform came slowly to the *Stadttempel*.¹⁰⁰ While nearly all of

⁹⁷ Daniel Frank and Matt Goldish, “Rabbinic Culture and Dissent: An Overview,” in *Rabbinic Culture and Its Critics: Jewish Authority, Dissent, and Heresy in Medieval and Early Modern Times*, eds. Daniel Frank and Matt Goldish (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2008), 38.

⁹⁸ Krinsky, *Synagogues of Europe*, 194. The other synagogues Förster designed also either included an organ or had space for one.

⁹⁹ For a further discussion of the controversy over organs in synagogues, see David Ellenson, “A Disputed Precedent: the Prague Organ in Nineteenth-Century Central-European Legal Literature and Polemics,” *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 40 (1995): 251–64.

¹⁰⁰ Nikolaus Vielmetti, “Reform und Tradition im Neuen Stadttempel in der Seitenstettengasse zu Wien,” in Albrecht-Weinberger and Heimann-Jellinek, eds., *Judentum in Wien*, 30–34; Rozenblit, “Jewish Identity and the Modern Rabbi,” 106.

the Jews who lived in the Habsburg capital before 1848 were from the more affluent professions, and generally more welcoming of religious change, they resisted the radical reforms being implemented in other German-speaking cities.¹⁰¹

The entire creation and evolution of the Vienna Rite itself represents a deeply conflicted view about the meaning and practice of modern Jewish religion. Mannheimer, whose education spanned both the religious and secular, was hired in 1825 specifically for his interest in creating a synagogue ritual that could respond to the liberal urban enlightenment that Vienna's Jews hoped to make their own.¹⁰² What made Mannheimer attractive to the Viennese Jews was his knowledge not of theology or religious law but of contemporary non-Jewish learning. "Born in Copenhagen in 1793 and raised there, he had attended a university in Denmark at a time when his colleagues in Germany had only rarely received a formal secular education."¹⁰³ As part of Mannheimer's program of modernization, he made the German-language sermon a standard practice in the Vienna Rite. But he

¹⁰¹ For a history of the Reform movement in Germany, see Michael A. Meyer, *Response to Modernity: A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988). For a specific case-study, see Andreas Brämer, "The Dialectics of Religious Reform: The *Hamburger Israelitische Tempel* in Local Its Context 1817-1938," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 48 (2003): 25-37.

¹⁰² For a specific discussion of Mannheimer's debts to Christian in his style of sermon, see Altmann, "New Style of Preaching," 71-2, 79-80. See also Marsha L. Rozenblit, "Jewish assimilation in Habsburg Vienna," in Frankel and Zipperstein, eds., *Assimilation and Community*, 225-245, esp. 228.

¹⁰³ Benjamin Maria Baader, *Gender, Judaism, and Bourgeois Culture in Germany, 1800-1870* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 188. The entire paragraph from which this is taken is also important: "Rabbis and preachers presided at the life-cycle events of the men, women, and children in their communities, overseeing confirmations, weddings, and funerals. For many, Talmudic study no longer played a central role. Isaac [*sic*] Noa Mannheimer in Vienna, for instance, readily admitted that his rabbinic learning was limited. Born in Copenhagen in 1793 and raised there, he had attended a university in Denmark at a time when his colleagues in Germany had only rarely received a formal secular education. Yet Mannheimer had no intention of standing out as a modern Jewish scholar. He did not understand himself primarily as a man of learning. From 1824 to 1865, he served the Jewish community in Vienna as a preacher, delivering sermons at the Vienna temple with passion and in a distinct personal style. Mannheimer took pride in the popularity he enjoyed as a public speaker, but even more than his preaching he prized being a *Seelsorger*, spiritual counselor, and intimate friend of his congregants."

likewise published a prayer book in 1840 that contained no reform to the liturgy whatsoever. This was a typical (though ultimately short-term) religious compromise, adding German elements while retaining the older Hebrew origins.¹⁰⁴ The Vienna Rite remained central to the Viennese community's sense of identity and cohesion well into the final decade of the nineteenth century.

There is a clear relationship between the writings of Isak Noa Mannheimer while he was head of the Viennese community and those of Jellinek upon his arrival in the Habsburg capital. But as we will see in the next chapter, the sermons Jellinek delivered during his years in Leopoldstadt revealed him to be a mature and sophisticated intellectual, one who understood the challenges facing modern German-speaking Jewry. Unlike his contemporary Michael Sachs, who introduced Talmudic and rabbinic references into his sermons in "his desire to revive the true 'spirit' of Judaism, which he [saw as] throttled by a misconceived enlightenment,"¹⁰⁵ Jellinek embraced enlightenment-style discourse as the key to the continuation (or even rejuvenation) of rabbinic texts in the religious life of German Jewry. Jellinek's writings were deeply empathic toward those who sought a continuation with the more conservative past, yet likewise focused with intensity and nuance on the present. In Leopoldstadt, Jellinek became intimately concerned with finding a way to mediate between enlightenment ideas and the historical practices and ethics that he believed formed the core of traditional Judaism.

Looking Ahead

This chapter traced a number of important threads in the modernization of the rabbi and synagogue in Central European Jewish modernity. Sometime between 1800 and 1900, the role of the rabbi changed dramatically. Scholars have long noted the shifting role of the rabbinate in Jewish society. The two major writers in the first half of the twentieth century who came to define the long

¹⁰⁴ See Rozenblit, "Jewish Identity and the Modern Rabbi," 105-6.

¹⁰⁵ Altmann, "New Style of Preaching," 85.

history of modern Jewry—Simon Dubnow and Salo W. Baron—focused on economics and culture. Their narrative of the rabbinate traced its slow decline in the modern world, a movement from relevance to irrelevance. No comprehensive history of the modern rabbinate has been written with the nineteenth-century transformation at its forefront. Simon Schwarzfuchs gave a broad historical overview, but the causal mechanisms for rabbinical change remained unexamined.¹⁰⁶

While Jews openly embraced the promises of emancipation and integration, these same Jews on the whole remained devoted to many aspects of Jewish religious practice, albeit in historically new forms. No longer was Judaism primarily lived in the household through ritual and pattern. Suddenly Judaism was lived mostly in the synagogue, a space increasingly inclusive of women, and where larger numbers could learn not only the tenets behind their practices and beliefs but also hear a language of Jewish philosophy that made Judaism and modernity compatible. “What replaced [pre-modern] rabbinic Judaism was not any one interpretation of Judaism, but an ideology of emancipation that determined cultural preferences and political assumptions.”¹⁰⁷

The next chapter, the last of the major historical analyses in this dissertation, is a detailed study of Adolf Jellinek’s Vienna sermons. Drawing from his many published volumes and pamphlets, the chapter examines the major themes that can be found in his work from the middle 1850s through the 1860s. Contextualizing Jellinek’s words, we focus again on the impact of European liberalism on nineteenth century Jewish religious expression, asking questions about how

¹⁰⁶ Simon Schwarzfuchs, *A Concise History of the Rabbinate* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993).

¹⁰⁷ David Sorkin, “The impact of emancipation on German Jewry: a reconsideration,” in *Assimilation and Community: The Jews in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, eds. Jonathan Frankel and Steven J. Zipperstein, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 178. There is certainly a historical debate worth having to ask the question: is the Judaism ultimately described in this dissertation still “rabbinic”? That is not, however, a historian’s debate, at its core, I believe. What we find in this post-emancipation moment is truly a re-imagination of the rabbi and the synagogue. Whether that creates a Judaism that is not rabbinical I cannot here pass judgment. It is right to say that—outside of certain insular communities comprising less than ten percent of world Jewry—the functional existence of the rabbi as understood in the twenty-first century is fundamentally different from that existence as understood anytime before the nineteenth century.

politics and religion intersected in the complex milieu of the Habsburg Empire. Ultimately, the next chapter is about the fundamental transition of the role of the rabbi in Jewish public culture. The position Jellinek crafted for himself in his writings was that of the modern rabbi, concerned with the philosophical and ethical position of Judaism within a rapidly changing political and social climate. His words were deeply informed by contemporary events, focused on Jews whose lives were permeated more by an urban bourgeois German ethos than a historical Jewish cultural traditionalism. The way he expressed this difference, and the language and imagery he employed to argue on behalf of Jewish texts and their modern importance, are remarkable for their insight and creativity. They are also, as we have been tracing, some of the first examples of a form of rabbinical expression that was altogether new, and that rapidly came to define Jewish communal experience across the Western world in the modern period.

CHAPTER 5:
“IT IS AN ANCIENT MONUMENT:”
THEOLOGY, POLITICS, AND SOCIETY IN THE VIENNESE SERMONS OF ADOLF
JELLINEK

Some are born whole; others must seek this blessed state in a struggle to achieve order. That is no loss to speak of; ultimately such seeking becomes the subject matter of [one's writing]. Observing, reading, thinking, one invents himself. A familiar voice asks: Who am I, and how can I say what I have to? ...His imagination impels him to speak in several tongues though one is sufficient. At this point he, or she, may begin to write...[A] daring endeavor.

Bernard Malamud, *The Stories of Bernard Malamud*

Introduction: Europe Is Modern

As the role of the rabbi and synagogue transformed in the middle of the nineteenth century, the rabbi's sermon became an integral part of the Sabbath religious experience in synagogues across Central Europe. The form and content of these sermons represented a unique shift from the qualities that had historically been associated with rabbinic learning and exegesis. Each rabbi brought something different to his role as a communal preacher. Adolf Jellinek was among the first of the modern rabbis to make his religious role almost entirely about the values and aesthetics of the sermon, rather than about those of halachik authority. Each Sabbath and festival Jellinek stood at the front of the synagogue and preached to a culturally diverse (in matters of tradition, language, observance, economic status, and education) and mixed-gender community about the relevance of Jewish history in the modern era. His voice filled the great central hall of the new Leopoldstädter Tempel, and many more read his words when published in pamphlets and collected volumes. Almost entirely forgotten now, Jellinek's sermons exemplified and solidified the new role of the rabbi in Jewish modernity, and studying them today allows us to analyze and deconstruct the various

philosophic and political elements that propelled religious change in the middle of the nineteenth century.

By 1865, Jellinek was one of the most celebrated rabbis in the German-speaking world. Renowned for his rhetorical gifts, his fame derived from more than just his capacity to turn a stirring phrase. His writings captured a particular zeitgeist then motivating Jewish modernity. More than the writings of his peers, Jellinek's sermons became a model for a sort of progressive traditionalism, a middle way between the Reform and Orthodox positions. Not dedicated to a particular theology or denomination, every word he spoke was nonetheless carefully tailored to the present social and political moment. His sermons were infused with a love of Jewish learning and of ancient texts--of the writings that had captivated him as a young student in the yeshivas of Bohemia and Moravia. As Jellinek wrote in 1861: "Love and loyalty molded ancient Judaism; one ties it around one's neck [like a scarf] or hangs it over one's heart."¹ Those same virtues, he felt, should be present in the Habsburg Judaism of his day. What he valued were ethics and morals, not the revitalization of ancient laws. His sermons proposed a spirit of Judaism, a philosophy of Judaism, something that could be used to interpret and mold the present era but that would not re-impose (this time from the Jewish side) the Jewish-Gentile separation that had long defined the Jews' experience in Central Europe. "The true dictator has at all times and in all religions placed the sacrifice higher than the ethos; set the visible forms over the spirit; and preferred the flames of the altar to those of the intimate heart."²

This chapter focuses on Jellinek's writings from his first decade in Vienna (1857-1867). As described in Chapter 4, those years witnessed the greatest economic and demographic changes in the Empire's history, changes of which Jellinek was both highly aware and intimately part of. Indeed, for

¹ Adolf Jellinek, *Predigten*, vol. 2 (Vienna: Carl Gerold's Sohn, 1863), 105.

² Ibid., 112.

almost twenty years after his arrival in Vienna Jellinek wrote nothing but articles and sermons aimed at the Jewish urban migrants of Central Europe. His focus was singular and pointed: to find a language that would mediate the Jews' transition from rural religious traditionalism to the throws of a theologically confused modernity. Jellinek's work, like that of many of his peers, was, in the words of Mordechai Breuer, "rooted in the desire and the ability to respond to the challenge of tradition by the new, the modern. [His was] not a stubborn and purely passive rejection [of all things contemporary] but a response to them through activity and imagination."³ Mining the classic Jewish sources week after week Jellinek proposed ways of seeing that couched the new in a language of the old. In this way Jellinek's writings mediated the crosscurrents of German intellectual discourse and Jewish ritual, narrative, and historical consciousness. As Björn Siegel writes, "for Jellinek, the focus was not on the blind observance of religious rules, but rather centered on the preservation of religious, ethical and social ideals embodied in the Jewish scriptures and texts."⁴ Jellinek sought to bring together on equal terms the languages of Judaism and German modernity, writing in a way that clearly demonstrated the importance of Judaism for a full and thoughtful life.

The pages that follow conclude the historical narrative we have been tracing in this dissertation. By the 1860s the world of rural Moravia had mostly vanished. Residency laws for Jews had been lifted across Central and Western Europe, and economic conditions attracted hundreds of thousands of them to the continent's thriving and expanding cities. Jews attended gymnasiums, trade schools, and universities in growing numbers, and increasingly sought professional advancement through careers in industry and the civil service. Religious institutions had been set on a new track as well. The German-language sermon was becoming a commonly accepted addition to the Sabbath

³ Mordechai Breuer, "Kreativität und Traditionsgebundenheit," in *Schöpferische Momente des europäischen Judentums in der frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Michael Graetz (Heidelberg: Winter, 2000), 113.

⁴ Björn Siegel, "Facing Tradition: Adolf Jellinek and the Emergence of Modern Habsburg Jewry," *Simon Dubnow Institute Yearbook* 8 (2009): 325.

prayer service. The synagogue had been reimagined as a communal space with a modern architectural style, creating a public monument to a newfound urban Jewish presence. By the 1860s, modernity, in all its definitions, had thoroughly pervaded Central European Jewish life.

This chapter is set at that moment. Perhaps we might call it the moment of the supremacy of the modern, or the moment of the solidification of the modern. Either way, the transformations wrought by the various threads mapped out in the preceding chapters had finally come together and flowered into a new sort of European society, one pervaded by the past but entirely barred from returning to it. No catastrophe or political agenda could send European social life back to what it had been before Napoleon; or before the mill, or the train, or the telegraph; or before the idea of full Jewish emancipation; or, in fact, before the idea of full emancipation more generally--of a world without human subservience, bondage, or slavery altogether. That is the moment in which Jellinek's sermons were set, and in which they must be understood. The past was decisively cut off. The future promised an endless string of progress. But what of morality, tradition, ritual; what of God? Toward those questions Jellinek focused his attention. Philosophers of all types were proposing answers. Jellinek wanted his community--and thereby for Judaism--to have a voice in that conversation, to be representatives of a modern and thriving religious tradition.

The first section below is an intellectual and social history of Jellinek as a German preacher. Whereas the previous chapter traced the history of the sermon in rabbinic Judaism, these pages examine Jellinek's German-Jewish milieu, and specifically the relationship between the themes and motifs of Jellinek's writings and his Viennese context. The chapter then addresses one of the recurring political themes throughout this dissertation: the place of liberalism in Jewish modernity. It ends with analyses of specific topics in Jellinek's oeuvre: the treatment of strangers and foreigners and the centrality of morality and justice. Above it all was the perpetual tension between individual self-expression and the needs and desires of the broader community. By studying the sermons of

Adolf Jellinek, we come to see when and how the modern urban rabbi found one of its most important original architects.

Jellinek as Preacher

Titles carry a great deal of meaning, and Adolf Jellinek had three: rabbi, doctor (PhD), and preacher (*prediger*). When and where he chose to use them--or they were applied to him--offer insight concerning his expected role in the Viennese Jewish community after taking up his position in 1857. Officially, Jellinek was hired from Leipzig to be a preacher, and was referred to that way in official publications.⁵ In private correspondence, however, he was addressed most often as “rabbi.”⁶ For his published books he added “doctor” before his name. The varying usages of these titles symbolized the transforming role of the rabbi in the public sphere of middle nineteenth-century Central European Judaism. The word “rabbi” retained its strong connection with the traditional lifestyle and role discussed in Chapters 2 and 4. By the 1840s, community rabbis were also expected to have earned their doctorate at a European university, and many did so with degrees in Oriental languages or Near Eastern history. But for German Jews it was the title of “preacher” that signaled the most decisive shift away from the old models of communal structure and religious practice. With it, they described their new expectation of rabbinical leaders, with its focus on speech and performance above legal guidance.

In the nineteenth century, “preacher” was a gentile term. By its adoption, the German-speaking Jewish community signaled a desire to move its practices toward a style more broadly

⁵ For just a few examples, see the announcement for Jellinek’s *Predigten* from the publisher Carl Gerold’s Son (Vienna 1863); Jellinek’s Letter to the Editor, *Neue Freie Presse* (January 21, 1868); his Statement in *Die Neuzeit* 4 (January 24, 1868); the review of Jellinek’s *Der jüdische Stamm* in the *Neue Freie Presse* (May 31, 1869); and Jellinek’s essay in *Social-Reform: ein Central-Organ für Volkserziehung, Fortbildung und National-Oekonomie* 8 (5), no. 135 (1871): 65-7.

⁶ See Jellinek’s correspondence at the National Library of Israel in Jerusalem (ARC 4* 1589) and at the Zentralarchiv zur Erforschung der Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland in Heidelberg (Jellinek B.2/4).

similar to that of the German-speaking Christian élite. There is little question that, especially among those who advocated for Reform, many of the changes proposed for the Jewish prayer service were directly modeled on those already in practice in Protestant churches. Both Catholics and Protestants were beginning to rely more heavily on the sermon, especially as the continually increasing flock of urban migrants unsettled existing communal traditions and beliefs. The sermon became the means of knitting together disparate groups, whose provincial churches, though of nominally the same denominations, had never been as cohesively or rigorously orthodox as their clerics liked to imagine. As these various peoples gathered together in cities, the modern sermon took on the duty of promulgating a coherent religious ideology, one that could answer many of the questions arising in modernizing, liberalizing Europe.⁷ As we will see in the coming pages, Jellinek's preaching was more than merely a "Christianization" of Jewish ritual life. Jews too adopted the sermon for the purposes of communal cohesion and theological pedagogy. For urban German-speaking Jews, "*prediger*" symbolized the newfound centrality of the act of public speaking, over and above the traditional roles of the rabbi and the intimacies of legal or interpersonal adjudication.

For Jellinek in Vienna, the majority of his public speaking took place in the Leopoldstädter Tempel, whose massive great hall became the forum where he delivered, week after week, his discourses on the past and future of Judaism. The centrality Jellinek and the community placed on

⁷ In her new collection of essay, Marilynne Robinson makes light of this: "The great importance in Calvinist tradition of preaching makes the theology that gave rise to the practice of it a subject of interest. As a layperson who has spent a great many hours listening to sermons, I have an other than academic interest in preaching, an interest in the hope I, and so many others, bring to the extraordinary moment when someone attempts to speak in good faith, about something that matters, to people who attempt to listen in good faith. The circumstance is moving in itself, since we poor mortals are so far enmeshed in our frauds and shenanigans, not to mention our self-deceptions, that a serious attempt at meaning, spoken and heard, is quite exceptional. It has a very special character...[To] speak in one's own person and voice to others who listen from the thick of their endlessly various situations, about what truly are or ought to be matters of life and death, this is a singular thing. For this we come to church." Marilynne Robinson, *The Givenness of Things: Essays* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2015), 146.

these sermons had only become a feature of the prayer service during his final years in Leipzig, where he had otherwise had time to pursue his own scholarly research. In Leopoldstadt everything was different. Rather than attempt to continue with scholarship, upon relocating to the Danube Jellinek immediately channeled his energies into communal education and outreach. He experimented with ways of making his knowledge and love of texts accessible to a wide public, but one generally only rudimentarily educated concerning religion. He began to reinterpret the classical rabbinic canon with an eye toward the future of the Jewish people. In a way, Jellinek became less insular than he had ever been. Whereas the cosmopolitan scholar educated in Prague and Leipzig had previously written for a select crowd of fellow academics, in Vienna, by turning to the traditional sources and using them to explain contemporary intellectual theories and political affairs, Jellinek broadened his notion of what it meant to be a religious reformer and teacher in modernity.

As we turn in the coming pages to analyze the content of Jellinek's Viennese sermons, what comes into clearer focus are his particular interpretations of Jewish history, especially the ways he employed language and imagery to accentuate Judaism's links to the ethos of liberalism and Enlightenment. It is, of course, the prerogative of the rabbi to make mediated interpretations of traditional texts. Even the most supposedly exacting of commentaries is part of a regime of signs and symbols (cf. Isaiah's *otot ulmoftim* [8:18]). Jellinek knew this, and certainly thought of himself as being part of that intellectual lineage, empowered by the Mishna as the next rung on an eternal ladder of Torah transmission. Rabbinic epistemology, like any philosophical system, assumes new generations of disciples.⁸ But where Jellinek differed was with his intended audience. Instead of teaching in a small yeshiva to just a few students, Jellinek preached to an entire community as if they were all part of the great historical narrative of Judaism itself. The classical and early modern rabbis

⁸ For one account the development of rabbinic *halakhic* exegesis, see Azzan Yadin, *Scripture as Logos: Rabbi Ishmael and the Origins of Midrash* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

certainly wrote high drama, but not every Jew was expected to recognize her or his part in that grand story. Jellinek disagreed. In an era when morality and truth were being debated in the public square, Jellinek believed that every Jew had a right to participate in the discussion.

While in many ways a normative progressive liberal of his time, Jellinek was not entirely willing to forgo some aspects of Judaism that he believed both essential to its historic distinctiveness and necessary for its continuation. One of these was the Hebrew language, “which to anyone would be venerable, but is most especially thus to the Jewish people.”⁹ As part of Jellinek’s dedication to the persistence of Hebrew in modern German Jewish learning, and what sets Jellinek’s sermons apart from a vast majority of those by his rabbinic colleagues in German pulpits, was his use of Hebrew footnotes in the published versions of his texts. Michael A. Meyer writes of how Jellinek’s “elegantly crafted sermons were lavishly embellished with appropriate texts from Midrash and Talmud. Their dominant purpose, it seems, was to make his listeners proud of their particular Jewish heritage, to make them ‘feel good’ about being Jewish.”¹⁰ Meyer’s understanding of Jellinek’s sermons is to see them as motivational: Judaism not only contained essential moral truths but it had proven throughout the centuries that it could sustain and enhance them, creating a unique society that embodied and advanced both an ethical and a divine mission. One’s Jewish ancestors, Jellinek wanted his listeners to believe, were equally as enlightened as any modern person. In the same way as German writers and philosophers were freely quoting the Greek classics, Jews could cite Talmud. And when they did, instead of just finding law—as the Christian polemic insisted—they would find a universal moral code as sophisticated and thoughtfully designed as anything being taught in Humboldt’s Berlin or at Vienna’s University on the Ring.

⁹ Jellinek, *Predigten*, vol. 2, 259.

¹⁰ Michael A. Meyer, *Response to Modernity: A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 192.

A further step is to understand Jellinek's German sermons and their Hebrew footnotes as pedagogical as well as motivational. Though Germany had produced some exceptionally poetic translations of the Bible (not least of which was Martin Luther's), modern rabbis needed to reiterate that the God of Israel did not speak from Sinai in German.¹¹ As the liturgical service in non-Orthodox congregations increasingly adopted German-language elements, and as German (rather than Yiddish, which intrinsically reminds its speakers and readers of its Hebrew roots) became the communal language of Habsburg Jewry, Jellinek's consistent references and gestures to the ur-language of Jewish theology and philosophy aimed to reinforced its illustrious status.¹²

Keeping Hebrew central to Jewish ritual and cultural experience was not only a task for progressive rabbis and their communities, however. As Mordechai Breuer has noted, by the middle of the nineteenth century, even among self-identified (and self-selecting) Orthodox communities, such as the one in Frankfurt am Main,

[t]he bookshelves [...] were likely to hold incomparably more German books than books in Hebrew. Familiarity with German literature was generally more thorough than familiarity with Hebrew literature, not to mention the Talmud. The Orthodox press admonished its readers on occasion that it was their duty to revive the study of Torah in their families, pointing out that true enthusiasm for the heritage of Judaism could be sparked only through study and knowledge. But Torah study remained confined to a minimum even in many families who regarded themselves as strictly observant and faithful to tradition."¹³

¹¹ For an examination of the acquisition of the German language and translation, see Simone Lässig, "Systeme des Wissens und Praktiken der Erziehung: Transfers und Übersetzungen im deutschen Judentum des 19. Jahrhunderts," in Hans-Joachim Hahn et al., eds., *Kommunikationsräume des Europäischen: Jüdische Wissenskulturen jenseits des Nationalen* (Leipzig: Leipziger Universität, 2014), 15–42.

¹² See Yaacov Shavit and Mordechai Eran, *The Hebrew Bible Reborn: From Holy Scripture to the Book of Books: A History of Biblical Culture and the Battles over the Bible in Modern Judaism* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007); Ran HaCohen, *Reclaiming the Hebrew Bible: German-Jewish Reception of Biblical Criticism* (New York: de Gruyter, 2010).

¹³ Mordechai Breuer, *Modernity within Tradition: The Social History of Orthodox Jewry in Imperial Germany*, trans. Elizabeth Petuchowski (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 11.

Seemingly, then, an audience for Jellinek's ideas remained abundant: both the Orthodox and the less traditional were struggling to find the balance between modern European culture and the historic Jewish sources. To solve this problem, Jellinek hoped to prove (both to Jews and non-Jews) that Judaism already embodied the tenets of German Enlightenment, and had done so at least since the time of the early rabbis—if not since Sinai. If they believed this, then studying Hebrew would not be an extracurricular activity--a distraction from modernity--but would actually be essential to any complete understanding of liberal values. Just as there was little doubt about the usefulness of reading Plato in the original Greek, so too the Hebrew of the rabbis should bring philosophical insight and cultural honor (and thereby hopefully acceptance and equality) to modern Jewry.

Jellinek's focus on Hebrew was part of a larger program of modernizing Jewish values. His writings during this period were deeply concerned with Jewish history and the continuing relevance of religious ritual for life in the modern era. He wrote:

I want to introduce [Judaism] in the midst of the grappling and contentions of our moment [...so that we may] know how it responds to the important questions of our time; I want today to speak to and judge [Judaism] on some of the principle tasks with whose solution our age is occupied.¹⁴

These words appeal to a “soul” of Judaism, looking not only at ritual strictures but even more so at ethical wisdom and history. Judaism's long past, Jellinek argued, was part of its great strength. Or to put Jellinek's formulation into a more Hegelian idiom: “Life consists rather in being the self-developing whole which dissolves its development and in this movement simply preserves itself.”¹⁵ Which is to say, for Jellinek, rabbinic Judaism was a continual act of overcoming, an assimilating of the ideas and opinions of the past by absorbing them into new commentaries, which at once allow

¹⁴ Adolf Jellinek, *Der Talmud: Zwei Reden, am Hüttenfeste 5625 (am 16. und 22. October 1864)* (Wien: Herzfeld & Bauer, 1865), 21.

¹⁵ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. Arnold V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 108.

Jewish culture to live inside a tradition while feeling perpetually contemporary. Following Hegel, in Jellinek's formulation the preservation of Judaism across so many centuries was a distinctly dialectical act. It was a dissolving and developing, a synthesis and overcoming, which allowed Judaism to remain ever perceptive to new trends in cultural and moral thought. This final act—the ability to accommodate new ethical ideas—was what Jellinek believed made the heart of the rabbinic project both eminently modern and sure to persist.

In Vienna, the ritual function and public role of the synagogue became Jellinek's central priority.¹⁶ Importantly, as the physical space of the synagogue changed, so too did the communities calling it home, including the many women who began to participate in its life in historically unprecedented ways.¹⁷ As Benjamin Maria Baader writes, throughout the mid-nineteenth century religious leaders noted a steep decline in domestic piety, that is, in the religious life of Jewish families inside their own homes.¹⁸ In response, religious leaders began incorporating women more deeply into the lives of the wider community, and this was most easily done inside the new urban synagogues and at the community schools.¹⁹ Jellinek made a point of preaching about the role of

¹⁶ Mordechai Breuer notes how this focus on synagogue effected both Reform and Orthodox communities. Samson Raphael Hirsch critiqued the over-emphasis on synagogue ritual found in liberal communities. See Mordechai Breuer, *Modernity within Tradition: The Social History of Orthodox Jewry in Imperial Germany*, trans. Elizabeth Petuchowski (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 44-5.

¹⁷ See Maria Benjamin Baader, "When Judaism Turned Bourgeois: Gender in Jewish Associational Life and in the Synagogue, 1750–1850," *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 46 (2001): 113–123.

¹⁸ Benjamin Maria Baader, *Gender, Judaism, and Bourgeois Culture in Germany, 1800-1870* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 74-5. Meyer also notes that in mid-nineteenth century, women began attending religious services more often, resulting in an increased size in women's section of new synagogue buildings. Michael A. Meyer, "'How Awesome is this Place!' The Reconceptualization of the Synagogue in Nineteenth-Century Germany," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 41 (1996): 62.

¹⁹ For example, Abraham Meyer Goldschmidt (1812-1889), who succeeded Jellinek as rabbi in Leipzig, and his wife, Henriette (1825-1920) (née Benas) were pioneers in women's education. Goldschmidt Straße in Leipzig is named for Henriette.

women in Jewish history and practice, using the public space of the synagogue on Sabbaths and festivals to highlight the importance of the feminine within Jewish history and tradition.

There was little that religious leaders could do, however, to alter the increasing acculturation of the Jewish home from the middle of the century onward. Rabbis spent less of their time in the personal spaces of their community members and more time in institutional settings constructed by the community: schools, synagogues, hospitals. With these trends, the rabbi and the synagogue came to be seen as interlocking institutions, each intimately bound up with the other. Such a link gave liberal rabbis newfound freedoms--like the increasing inclusion of women in prayer spaces historically reserved for men--but it also limited the rabbi's broader communal importance. When Jews went home from the synagogue, the rabbi, and Jewish ritual, played a less prominent role than it had just a few decades previously.

The newly created spaces of urban synagogues; the reimagining of the role of the synagogue space in the life of the community; and the changing expectations of the rabbi, are the three panels on the nineteenth century triptych that defined the sociological world of religious Judaism as Jellinek encountered it in 1860s Vienna. As a preacher, Jellinek's religious responsibilities were not so much larger or smaller than his predecessors, but they were meaningfully different. In the next section we will turn once more to the concept of liberalism and its impact on the creation of the urban rabbinate. European liberalism in the middle of the nineteenth century brought with it an entirely new vocabulary, through which writers and leaders sought to express their satisfactions and frustrations with a rapidly changing world. Jellinek whole-heartedly embraced the new liberal lexicon, but--as we will see in the final sections of this chapter--not without always finding its corollary somewhere in the Jewish past.

Jellinek and Liberalism in a Viennese Setting

Setting a Definition

To understand the model of liberalism to which Jellinek adhered, the term must suggest three separate, though interrelated, nineteenth-century phenomena.²⁰ First, liberalism was about modifications to and alterations of traditional Jewish practices, especially as they were developed and fostered by scholars and rabbis in the Wissenschaft tradition. Such changes could affect anything from liturgy (e.g., what was included in the prayer book),²¹ to pedagogy (e.g., who attended and what was taught in Jewish schools),²² to the physical experience of religious practice (e.g., what rabbis wore and how synagogues were built).²³ Second, liberalism involved vast shifts within non-Jewish philosophy and intellectual life as an outgrowth of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, and is most often associated with universalizing ethical and cultural assumptions.²⁴ Third, liberalism

²⁰ For Jellinek, the idea of liberalism never became divorced from that of theology. The Jewish cosmopolitan intelligentsia, both during the fin-de-siècle and after, took an altogether different path, disposing of the religious content of their Jewish heritage almost entirely. See Malachi Hacohen, "From Empire to Cosmopolitanism: The Central European Jewish Intelligentsia, 1867-1968," *Simon Dubnow Institute Yearbook* 5 (2006): 117-133.

²¹ For example, see Adam S. Ferziger, *Exclusion and Hierarchy: Orthodoxy, Nonobservance, and the Emergence of Modern Jewish Identity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 1-17; and Mordechai Breuer, *Modernity within Tradition: The Social History of Orthodox Jewry in Imperial Germany*, trans. Elizabeth Petuchowski (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 173-184.

²² For example, see Simone Lässig, "Bildung als *kulturelles Kapital*? Jüdische Schulprojekte in der Frühphase der Emanzipation," in *Juden, Bürger, Deutsche: Zur Geschichte von Vielfalt und Differenz 1800-1933*, ed. Andreas Gotzmann, Rainer Liedtke, and Till van Rahden (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 263-298; idem, *Jüdische Wege ins Bürgertum. Kulturelles Kapital und sozialer Aufstieg im 19. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004); Carsten Wilke, "Den Talmud Und Den Kant": *Rabbinerausbildung an Der Schwelle Zur Moderne* (Hildesheim: Olms, 2003), esp. 191-254, 401-416; and Simon Schwarzfuchs, *A Concise History of the Rabbinate* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 97-109.

²³ For example, see Eric Kline Silverman, *A Culture History of Jewish Dress* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013); and Carol H. Krinsky, *Synagogues of Europe: Architecture, History, Meaning* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1985).

²⁴ See Hans-Joachim Salecher, *Der Liberalismus und die Erfahrung der Differenz: Über die Bedingungen der Integration der Juden in Deutschland* (Berlin: Philo, 1999), 65-97.

manifested as a political platform, expressed in the French Revolution of 1789, in the 1848 revolutions, and then intermittently by governments and political parties until the First World War.²⁵ For Jellinek, the practice of liberal democracy was not a fundamental part of liberal politics. His belief in the project of the Habsburg Empire--its polyglot of nations kept at peace by a benevolent sovereign--hints at a conservatism concerning the full democratic impulse, with its focus on the rights and responsibilities of the individual over and above those of the group. Jellinek's idea of modern Judaism always centered on the nation, on the Jewish People as an entity with rights and responsibilities equal with but never subservient to the privileges of the individual.²⁶

For Jellinek, the weekly Sabbath sermon was an essential tool for creating and fostering a liberal Jewish ethos within the community. The sermon was a public forum through which Jellinek could actively speak about the impact of contemporary political and philosophical ideas and their relation to traditional Judaism. Jellinek used his sermons to propose solutions grounded, so he argued, in Jewish texts. Beginning in the 1850s he settled on a series of themes and narratives that articulated the ways Judaism as a philosophical and religious system was compatible with, and reliant upon, the new liberal order. In 1862 Jellinek wrote: "Judaism and hierarchy are like day and night. When one rises, the other must retreat."²⁷ Hierarchy was the chosen regime of despots, he said, of those who sought power at the expense of the will and benefit of the people. Judaism in its truest incarnation could abide no such system. The Torah was given to all Israel; its commandments

²⁵ See David Weinstein, "Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Liberalism," in *The Oxford Handbook of The History of Political Philosophy*, ed. George Klosko (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 414-435; and Baader, *Gender, Judaism, and Bourgeois Culture in Germany*.

²⁶ Nationalism, of course, can be both the other side of liberalism and its happy companion. For a discussion of Habsburg nationalism after 1867, see Gary B. Cohen, "Nationalist Politics and the Dynamics of State and Civil Society in the Habsburg Monarchy, 1867-1914," *Central European History* 40, no. 2 (May 14, 2007): 1-38.

²⁷ Jellinek, *Predigten*, vol. 2, 115.

applied to all Israel; and all Israel suffered when one among its people brought shame on the name of God. Therefore, Jellinek believed, the Jews had a moral obligation to support a system of governance that devolved upon every nation an equal set of rights and responsibilities.²⁸

The belief that Jews had a moral responsibility to support the rights of the non-Jewish groups that existed within their same political framework was a central motif in Jellinek's interpretation of Jewish texts. It was also a conscientious break from many of the ways non-Jews had been discussed in traditional Jewish literature. In the centuries before 1800, Jewish leaders and thinkers of all types--rabbis, philosophers, Talmudists, exegetes, mystics--had spoken in various ways about the non-Jewish world and its practices. From the Torah to the Talmud to the works of the early modern sages, Jewish literature was full of wonder, bewilderment, warning, and love of things non-Jewish. Classical and medieval Jewish thinkers struggled to understand how the People of Israel fit into the larger organization of nations, since the Jews had always been, after all, a very small community, with limited political or military power. For much of Jewish history, theologians returned to the Deuteronomical message in their attempt to comprehend the place of Judaism within the wider community of nations.

For you are a people holy to YHWH your God. YHWH your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on earth to be his people. It was not because you were the most numerous of any other people that YHWH set his heart on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples. It was because YHWH loved you and kept the oath that he swore to your ancestors. (Deut. 7:6-8)²⁹

²⁸ Similarly, Immanuel Wolf, one of the founders of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, wrote: "[T]he spiritual content, the idea of Judaism, has communicated itself to the most varied peoples of the world. What is this idea that has existed throughout so much of world history and has so successfully influenced the culture of the human race? It is of the most simple kind and its content can be expressed in a few words. It is the idea of unlimited unity in the all. It is contained in the one word [YHWH] which signifies indeed the living unity of all being in eternity, the absolute being outside defined time and space." Immanuel Wolf, "On the Concept of a Science of Judaism (1822)," *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 2, no. 1 (1957): 194.

²⁹ Except for what are referred to as the Seven Noahide Laws. See Aaron Lichtenstein, *The Seven Laws of Noah* (New York: Rabbi Jacob Joseph School Press, 1981); and David Novak, *The Image of the Non-Jew in Judaism: The Idea of Noahide Law* (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2011).

Across the centuries, the Bible was never the only text in which Jews found all meaning or explanation, yet it was the place to which they singularly returned. Men like Philo and Maimonides felt that the Greek philosophical accomplishment was worthy of Jewish interest. The Talmudic rabbis indulged in Gentile astronomy, mathematics, and the zodiac. Medieval exegetes explored alchemical theories and speculations. But these interests were always couched in Biblical commentaries, spoken of in terms of finding a better understanding of the Torah, God's supreme word.

The traditional rabbinic interest in non-Jewish study was, therefore, primarily related to issues of natural observation and rationalism (e.g. mathematics, geography, etc.). Morality and ethics were different, bound up with observance of the divine commands, whose meaning or explanation could not to be found in the physical world. Moral practices always needed to be traced to the Bible. Which is not to say that the Jews maintained an altogether separate ethical code from that of their non-Jewish neighbors. They did not. What it meant was that the origins and scope of those ethical rules was necessarily different. Where Christians envisioned an expansive regime of human morality, Jewish theology remained deeply circumscribed. For example, when Spanish Catholic mystics imagined a world of unity in God, Spanish cabbalists saw a sharp dichotomy between Jew and Gentile. Or when Thomas Aquinas drew a map of Heaven with all included, Rashi wrote of the world to come where Jews still followed a separate commandment. The natural philosophical theories of non-Jews could be easily assimilated.³⁰ What was necessarily more problematic was anything that suggested that Jewish morality and practice could stem from anywhere but the Revelation at Sinai.

³⁰ See Noah J. Efron, *Judaism and Science: A Historical Introduction* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2007).

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, this rhetorical dichotomy between Jewish and Gentile morality began to collapse. First, Jewish intellectuals adopted the naturalistic language of their Enlightenment compatriots. As Michael A. Meyer noted:

Among a growing number of Enlightened German Jews, Kantianism was understood as modern religion. For some it became a rationale for leaving Judaism, but it also raised the question of whether Judaism could be moralized in practice in the way Mendelssohn had rationalized it in theory. It is this association of religion with the inculcation of moral virtue and the sense of moral obligation that helps to explain the rapid spread of edifying sermons, delivered in the vernacular (and hence comprehensible also to women), not only within a context of liturgical reform but in communities that otherwise remain orthodox.³¹

Even beyond self-identifying “Enlightened” Jews, these modern ideas were having an impact. By the middle of the nineteenth century the concepts of *Bildung* (education for self-development and self-cultivation) and universalism (that moral truth exist *a priori* to all human cognition) were appearing in the writings of Jewish religious leaders across the German-speaking lands. Abraham Geiger, one of the staunchest partisans for religious reform, fiercely advocated the close alignment of Judaism with universal values.³² But so did Samson Raphael Hirsch, the founding ideologue of German neo-Orthodoxy.³³

Jellinek embraced the Kantian call for a universal moralization of religion, but called the Hebrew Bible its originator and Judaism its heir.

Mordechai, say our sages, was a *yehudi*, known as a Jew, because while resident in Shushan he was known as an adherent of the one-and-only God above all others, and no man on earth had the right to deny a Jew his belief, so long as with unswerving truth he upheld the banner of the one-and-only God. And what is learnt from the history of Judaism? It tells us that the

³¹ Michael A. Meyer, “Reflections on Jewish Modernization,” in *Jewish History and Jewish Memory: Essays in Honor of Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi*, ed. Elisheva Carlebach, John M. Efron, and David N. Myers (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1998), 374-5.

³² See Evyatar Friesel, “Abraham Geiger in 1848: His Views on the Revolution, German Culture, and the Jews,” *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 56 (2011): 163–73.

³³ See Mordechai Breuer, *Modernity within Tradition: The Social History of Orthodox Jewry in Imperial Germany*, trans. Elizabeth Petuchowski (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992).

appearance of Judaism was acted upon by many designs and marks: by the destruction of the Jerusalem Temples, by the dissolution of the Jewish state, by the dispersal of the Jewish nation, by new times, new relationships, and new conditions, by bondage and persecution, by outside influences and internal moods. It [also] tells us of a new epoch in the development of humanity, of the gradual victory of freedom over slavery, love over hate, justice over oppression, recognition over persecution, equality over class strife, humanity over barbarism—a [new] epoch molded from a new form, carried on new blood, and requiring new formative elements.³⁴

In this passage, which was typical of Jellinek's rhetorical style, he opened with a distinctly Jewish scene, an interaction or event only available or comprehensible to Jews. In this case, the imagery revolved around an aspect of Mordecai from the Book of Esther: that he was true to the God of Abraham despite his circumstances and the enticements of life in the Persian capital. Jellinek dwelt on this, using Mordecai's experience as a metaphor for Jews and Judaism throughout history. Much had changed about the face of Judaism, but appearances were not essences, he wanted his listeners to know. Even after all their hardships the Jewish people retained their belief in the God of Israel, the one-and-only God. It was for this reason that Judaism survived.

That conclusion should have been the end of the passage: Judaism survived in modernity because it had faith in God and God's commandments. But it was not the end. In an additional rhetorical move Jellinek made the Jews into ethical pioneers for all the world's peoples. Jellinek deeply felt that, in Martin Luther King, Jr.'s words, "the arc of the moral universe is long but it bends toward justice."³⁵ The adversities faced by the Jews were at the same time like the crashing down of great oppressive walls. One after another the evils of the world were faced by the Jews, and as the Jews overcame them, the evils fell away: "freedom over slavery, love over hate, justice over oppression, recognition over persecution, equality over class strife, humanity over barbarism." Even

³⁴ Jellinek, *Predigten*, vol. 2, 235-6.

³⁵ Martin Luther King and James Melvin Washington, *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (San Francisco: Harper, 1991), 245-252.

if, at the time of their overcoming, the world had not recognized that a new moral era had begun, the text of the Bible and the commentaries of the rabbis recorded the transition for them. In the middle of the nineteenth century, as the European world began to embrace for the first time and on a universal basis a set of moral principles already (for Jellinek) deeply woven into the fabric of Judaism, Jellinek was there to show them the source of their values, and to extol the people who had kept them alive across the many centuries.

Judaism and Universalism

As we identified at the beginning of this section, Jellinek was participating in a tradition of Jewish Enlightenment liberalism that extended back at least a century (and somewhat further if one includes Spinoza). Universal morality was part of the inanimate matrix of the world, the maskilim believed, and could therefore be discovered through rational inquiry and historical analysis. This belief had formed much of the underlying intellectual framework for Moses Mendelssohn's arguments in *Jerusalem*, wherein he wrote that Jewish ritual functioned only as a mechanism for moral enforcement and not as a new instance of morality itself. Morality preexisted Judaism, Mendelssohn said, echoing the thoughts of his contemporary non-Jewish philosophers. From its inception, maskilic thinking was premised on the idea that there was a universality underlying existing culture, something that wedded together the diversity of peoples and beliefs into a consistent whole. Mendelssohn's public refusal of Charles Bonnet's (1720-1793) challenge to convert relied on the idea that Judaism and Christianity (and in the end, all religious systems) were founded on a single, undergirding bedrock of natural ethics.

The idea of a universal morality pre-existing human religion blended easily into Christian theology, which assumed a collective belief in the redemptive and saving power of Jesus and the church, but which likewise recognized Christianity as a historical phenomenon. Before Christ, there were no Christians, but there certainly was a God and a moral foundation for the creation of the

world. For Judaism, however, such an idea presented a more difficult problem. The God of Israel is conceived of as the creator of the world, and the rabbis depict the Torah as being present in this original foundational act.³⁶ Judaism, therefore, is coterminous with the Beginning. Further, the covenantal moment with Abraham, the Revelation at Sinai, and the contractual structure of Deuteronomy, were all uniquely personal encounters between Israel and its God. There could be no substitutions with or inclusions of other peoples.

You must neither add anything to what I command you nor take away anything from it, but keep the commandments of YHWH your God with which I am charging you... You must observe [God's statutes and ordinances] diligently, for this will show your wisdom and discernment to the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and discerning people!' For what other great nation has a god so near to it as YHWH our God is whenever we call to him? And what other great nation has statutes and ordinances as just [*tzadikim*] as this entire law that I am setting before you today? (Deut. 4:2, 6-8)

Deuteronomy certainly assumes the presence of other, different nations in the world, and that the God of Israel attends to (and is worshipped by) them. "Now therefore, if you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession out of all the peoples. Indeed, the whole earth is mine, but you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation." (Exodus 19: 5-6) But Deuteronomy also desires for Israel to stand apart, for it to maintain a different law, a different social organization. There is no word here about universalism. Israel is not to share its statutes and ordinances with the other nations, neither by force nor by marriage. The only thing it must be is as an envy and a model. Deuteronomy, at first read, is fundamentally particular to the Jews.

What Deuteronomy also asserts, however, is that the laws of the God of Israel are just (Hebrew: *tzadikim*). It was therefore through justice, not culture or ritual, that the early maskilim asserted the equality of Judaism within the universal system of Enlightenment morality. "What other great nation has statutes and ordinances as just as this entire law?" Deuteronomy asks rhetorically. None, of course, is its unwritten but presumed answer. Yet that question was asked many centuries

³⁶ See *Midrash Rabba* 1:4.

ago. With the Enlightenment, the maskilim argued, non-Jewish Europe was finally in search of a form of justice applicable to the entire world. What God says in Deuteronomy is that the nations must see in the laws of Israel how the thread of justice binds the whole system together.³⁷ By focusing on justice the maskilim shifted the conversation away from theological and ritual difference and toward moral similarity. This, in fact, was among Mendelssohn's important insights in *Jerusalem*. God demanded of Jews many things that had little or nothing to do with ethics. But nothing that God demanded would ever contradict the universal moral code. If it did so, the nations of the world would no longer be able to look upon Israel and see justice in her laws. Ignore the ritual differences, Mendelssohn urged, and focus on the foundational quest for justice. It is there (and perhaps only there) that Jews and Christians will find a path away from religious antipathy, let alone toward mutual respect.

Justice, however, is difficult to achieve, and becomes even more so when the dislike of the offended parties is as deep as that between European Christians and their Jewish neighbors. This antipathy on the part of Christians represented a recurring problem for the maskilim. Near the end of *Jerusalem* Mendelssohn wrote: "Brothers, if you care for true piety, let us not feign agreement where diversity is evidently the plan and purpose of Providence."³⁸ The Europeans need not force the Jews to convert in order to unite the world beneath a banner of righteousness, Mendelssohn was saying. But Mendelssohn's words concerning the divine plan for diversity were subtler than they appeared, appealing not to God as the multiplier but toward humanity itself as the real actor in the divine drama. The God of Genesis is, by one plain-text reading, a strangely passive creator of multiplicity. Humanity was created as one. Humans have children, who, in an Edenic ideal would

³⁷ The rabbis asserted this long ago: one of the seven Noahide laws concerns the establishment of impartial courts.

³⁸ Moses Mendelssohn, *Jerusalem, or, on Religious Power and Judaism*, trans. Allan Arkush (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1983), 138-9.

continue to live together as a single-family. But that is not the way of history. Siblings rival and disperse. God, often only belatedly, gives an imprimatur to that newly created diversity. In one reading of Genesis God is the only creator: of heaven and earth, sun and moon, water and dry land, animals and plants, and work and rest. In another reading, humanity is God's true heir. Made in God's image, humans create new peoples and nations one upon another. They create shepherds and hunters, minstrels and writers, judges and warriors, priests and peddlers. Animals, for the Bible (and certainly for Mendelssohn as well), were their divinely created selves, the same across generations and through time. Humans were an endless supply of difference.

Humanity, then, was the parent of diversity, and therefore of its own discontent. God knew this well before the Flood: "Adah bore Jubal. He was the ancestor of those who live in tents and have livestock. His brother's name was Jubal. He was the ancestor of all those who play the lyre and pipe." (Genesis 4:20-1) In Genesis we are met with the depiction of a God who has created a being--humanity--that is as much a creator as God himself. In the middle of the last century Joseph B. Soloveitchik wrote that "man is the creator of worlds," inadvertently, no doubt, setting humanity even above God in sheer inventiveness and possibility.³⁹ God only created one world. Humans never cease creating new ones.

For Mendelssohn, diversity as "the plan and the purpose of Providence" was a rejection of Christian anti-Judaism in the same way as traditional biblical exegetes rejected Cain for his murder of Abel. One half of the first family was destroyed in that moment, and when God says "Listen, your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground," (Genesis 4:10) God meant not just the one man but all those who could have come after him. The Bible's vision of afterlife is the preservation of one's family name in children and grandchildren. This is the original promise to Abraham. It is

³⁹ Joseph Dov Soloveitchik, *Halakhic Man* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1983).

the fundamental principle underlying levirate marriage. It is the ending to the story of Job. It was the belief of the classical rabbis, who wrote: “Adam was created alone in the world to teach that whoever destroys a single soul is considered as if he destroyed an entire world, and whoever saves a life is considered as if he saved an entire world.” (Talmud Yerushalmi, Tractate Sanhedrin 24a)

When Mendelssohn argued for diversity at the end of *Jerusalem* he meant the type that arose from human creativity, from culture and discovery, not from morality. That Cain committed the first murder was never in question. Every human society was constructed on the same moral foundation. But what flowed from humanity was too rich to be contained within a single type. “To be human is to be involved, *nolens volens* [willingly or unwillingly], to act and to react, to wonder and to respond,” wrote Abraham Joshua Heschel.⁴⁰

Jellinek agreed that human cultural diversity was necessary for the continued survival of the Jews as a separate people. But almost a century after Mendelssohn, Jellinek, too, struggled with the question of how to forge a mutual trust and charitable goodwill between Jews and Christians in modernity. Jellinek wondered: why do Jews and Christians, the closest of religious brethren, seem the most inhospitable one toward the other? His answer returns us to those same first stories in the Hebrew Bible. With difference, especially family difference, difference among those who are the most similar, comes strife. Cain and Abel, Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau, Rachel and Leah, Joseph and his brothers--the troubles in every one of those relationships arose between the nearest of kin. Jacob’s uncle is Ishmael, and yet there is never any mention of a problem between them. Joseph’s aunt (and his father’s wife) is Leah, but we never hear of strife between them either. Siblings are the issue in Genesis, those on the same level of the family tree.

Jellinek observed this dynamic and sought to quell the antagonism between Judaism and Christianity through the metaphor of household peace (called *shalom bayit*). In his sermon “Israel’s

⁴⁰ Abraham Joshua Heschel, *Who Is Man?* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1965), 68.

Teachings on the Relationship Between Jews and Non-Jews” (1859), Jellinek argued that Judaism harbored no antagonism toward other religions, and none especially toward what he called its “daughter religion” (*tochterreligion*), Christianity.⁴¹

O, let but there be for once a century of love, of humanity, of freedom, and of tranquility, after a millennium of hatred, bigotry, slavery, and of contention in the relations between the religions. The Jews, with Abraham, their forefather, say: ‘Let there be no strife between me and you, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen, for we are relatives’ [Genesis 13: 8]. On the ruins of the old, bloody hatred [let there] arise a new, wonderful, glorious temple of religious peace, in which any good, noble, and pious person is recognized as a true priest of the Lord. For as the proverb of our Sages says: he who lives the practices and follows the divine commandments with love is a high priest of humanity!⁴²

This was not simply utopic rhetoric, the naïve desires of a man who believed that the situation for the Jews in Europe was indisputably improving. Rather, like Mendelssohn’s, they were the words of someone who sought a place for Jewry in the European story. The quotation from Abraham in Genesis is revealing. The herdsmen of Abraham and his nephew Lot were quarreling. Instead of bickering, as brothers might, Abraham proposed a solution: Lot should take his household in one direction, and Abraham should take his in another. Strife, as the Bible repeatedly shows, is always greatest among siblings. But Abraham and Lot were not siblings. They could live in the capacious and fertile land amicably, side-by-side but not intertwined. The world was big enough for both of them. And so it proved to be.

So too, argued Jellinek, with Judaism and Christianity. They were not siblings, not rivals for maternal affection. Christianity was, like Lot, a generation removed, and therefore it sought different affections and expected different rewards. The centuries of rivalry had, therefore, simply been a

⁴¹ His references included: the Bible; Josephus; Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds; the Apocrypha; Philo; Mishna; Tosefta; Mechilta; Sifra; Sifre; Judah ha-Levi; Maimonides; Nachmanides; Joseph Jaabez; Rabbi Asher of Germany; Rabbi Nissim of Spain; Rabbi Jerocham of Provence; Moses Isserlis; and Moses Chagis.

⁴² Adolf Jellinek, *Predigten*, vol. 2, 138-9.

misunderstanding. The land--for Abraham, Canaan; for Jellinek, Europe--could indeed host both communities amicably, near one another but still separated, two peoples seeking two needs rather than two siblings seeking one love. Said Jellinek in 1859:

Already in Israel's founding, true humanity toward every human being without distinction was embodied and pronounced, and Jewish history from its very beginning represented the noblest love of the human being. From Moses, David, and Solomon's times through the prophets and psalmists [the value of humanity] was developed and expanded by way of teachers of the law. It was taught in Palestinian as well as in Babylonian schools and in all the lands of the dispersal.⁴³

Judaism, Jellinek argued again and again, gave the world the idea of social welfare, with its love of the widow and the orphan. Judaism ordered respect of the foreigner, rather than his conversion. Judaism suggested the separation of civil and religious law, rather than the theological monarchies of Europe. Judaism, in these cases, was not just described as part of Western history. It was promoted as the founder of ethical universalism itself.⁴⁴

Judaism as Moralism

An increasing acceptance of the appropriated language of moral universalism was only one aspect of Jewish religious transformation in the nineteenth century. The other was the historicization of Jewish practice itself, especially as it concerned the interaction of Jewish theology and ritual with politics and civil legislation. There are many ways to explain why the events of the early nineteenth century precipitated the theological universalization of the Jewish ethical experience. Some of it was certainly polemical. As Jews gained social status they defended their traditions and texts as a way of justifying their historical experience and disinclination toward conversion. There is undoubtedly something deeply competitive in this language, a use of history as if it were an instrument to blunt

⁴³ Ibid., 126.

⁴⁴ For the strength of Jewish affiliation for the ideals of an enlightened universalist German bourgeoisie, see Michael Graetz, "From Corporate Community to Ethnic-Religious Minority, 1750-1830," *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 37 (1992): 78-9. The position of "ethical monotheism" would later famously become associated with the neo-Kantian position of Hermann Cohen.

one's opponent. Indeed, Christianity had certainly felt like an unpleasant rival for much of the past two millennia. There is little reason to suspect that many Jewish leaders would have overlooked an opportunity to provide some alternate narrative for the history of the world, especially if it seemed to be using the newest liberal philosophy to condescend to what must have felt like unending Christian superciliousness.

There is another reason that the 1840s and 1850s, specifically, were the moment when this language began to find common currency in Jewish communities across Central Europe. In arguing for a genealogical connection between Jewish moral principles and those of the liberal Enlightenment, Jewish leaders were searching for a narrative that kept Judaism relevant in an age when civil rights were becoming increasingly dissociated from religious confession.⁴⁵ By the turn of the nineteenth century, two Western nations (the United States and France) had already attempted to found governments whose very premise was that divinity and theology bore no impact on civil administration. As we discussed in Chapter 2, Napoleon's invasion of Central and Eastern Europe began the process of civil emancipation and political reform across the continent. With his defeat came a period of political retrenchment in many German-speaking territories, but Jewish communities remained aware of liberalizing policies elsewhere on the continent even as they may not have been directly affected by them.

All of that changed in 1848, when popular revolutions prompted governments in many Europe states to implement wide-ranging, progressive changes, beginning a process that fundamentally and (so far) inexorably severed religious institutions from civil policy (at least *de jure* if not always *de facto*) in the modern West. The 1848 revolutions had a profound effect on Jewish

⁴⁵ For a discussion of how this bifurcation became reflected in Jewish educational literature, see Andreas Gotzmann, "The Dissociation of Religion and Law in Nineteenth-Century German-Jewish Education," *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 41 (1998): 103–26.

students and intellectuals across Central Europe.⁴⁶ In many ways, the revolutions represented a key transitional moment, the first instance in modernity when Jews participated to a (relatively) great extent in what was primarily a non-Jewish social movement. As Evyatar Friesel writes:

At the time of the [1848] revolution, the majority of the Jewish population in the German states--and the situation was not very different in the Habsburg Empire--still lived closed within their own social and cultural world. Most probably they regarded the upheavals of 1848 with a measure of indifference, if not misgivings: in the smaller towns and villages, where most Jews lived, it happened frequently that the main impact of the 1848 upheavals was a breakdown of public order, which brought tensions between the general population and the Jews, or even riots. However, Jews were found among the leading figures of the revolution in Germany and even more so in Vienna--a new phenomenon in modern Jewish history. They were part of a small section of the Jewish public, mostly younger Jews, or the first set of Jewish students at the universities, or intellectual and public-minded Jews, for whom the aims of the revolution were highly significant.⁴⁷

In 1848, Jews played an active role in both nationalist and liberal debates, and the revolutions brought many Jews into daily contact with like-minded young people of a definitive progressive bent.⁴⁸ The events of that year opened innumerable doors that until 1933 were not again closed in Central Europe, creating a class of politicized Jewish students and professionals whose leadership would come to define the new urban communities established in the 1850s and 1860s.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ See Werner E. Mosse, Arnold Paucker, and Reinhard Rürup, eds., *Revolution and Evolution: 1848 in German-Jewish History* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1981); Salo W. Baron, "The Impact of the Revolution of 1848 on Jewish Emancipation," *Jewish Social Studies* 11, no. 3 (July 1949): 195–248; and Adolf Kober, "Jews in the Revolution of 1848 in Germany," *Jewish Social Studies* 10, no. 2 (April 1948): 135–64.

⁴⁷ Evyatar Friesel, "The *Oesterreichisches Central-Organ*, Vienna 1848: A Radical Jewish Periodical," *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 47 (2002): 117–149, here 118. See also Evyatar Friesel, "Abraham Geiger in 1848: His Views on the Revolution, German Culture, and the Jews," *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 56 (2011): 163–173.

⁴⁸ For a discussion of this issue focused on the turn of the twentieth century, see Jehuda Reinharz, "Jewish Nationalism and Jewish Identity in Central Europe," *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 37 (1992): 147–67.

⁴⁹ For a discussion of this generation post-1848, see Michael L. Miller, "From Liberal Nationalism to Cosmopolitan Patriotism: Simon Deutsch and 1848ers in Exile," *European Review of History: Revue Européenne D'histoire* 17, no. 3 (June 2010): 379–93.

Still, the 1848 revolutions were attempting to capitalize on ideas and politics already well established, foremost among them the divorce of religious institutions from national governance--what Americans now call “the separation of church and state.” Such a severance had a profound impact on Judaism. Though often politically powerless at a regional or national level, Jewish communities in Central Europe had long been more-or-less self-governing autonomies, paying taxes to land owners and princes but conducting their own internal affairs as the community saw fit. This was the case in a place like Moravia, as discussed in Chapter 2.⁵⁰ It was likewise true for French Jews until the Revolution, Italian Jews under the Papal States, and Polish Jews during the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.⁵¹ The institution of a national civil administration meant the dismemberment of Jewish communal autonomy. With new state controls on such things as contracts, school curricula, and taxes, the rabbinical leadership of Jewish communities living in the new secularizing states ceded their active participation in these aspects of communal life.

The intellectual foment that created the church-state division had been roiling for almost two centuries by the time Jellinek encountered it in Habsburg Vienna. In England, Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) published *Leviathan* in 1651, at the end of the English Civil War (1642-1651), in which he argued that state governance should be a contract between individuals rather than a right granted through divine decree. In France, Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) imagined in his novel *Emile* (1762) a system of education based solely on the cultivation of natural instincts. As the Enlightenment progressed, a consensus arose concerning the need to distinguish between religious and secular affairs. Mark Lilla calls these the “two shores” of political philosophy.

⁵⁰ See Michael Laurence Miller, *Rabbis and Revolution: The Jews of Moravia in the Age of Emancipation* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011).

⁵¹ See Antony Polonsky, ed., *Focusing on Jews in the Polish Borderlands* (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2001).

On one shore the basic political structures of society are imagined and criticized by referring to divine authority [this is called political theology]; on the other they are not. And this turns out to be a fundamental difference... The ambition of the new [non-theological] philosophy was to develop habits of thinking and talking about politics exclusively in human terms, without appeal to divine revelation or cosmological speculation. The hope was to wean Western societies from all political theology and cross to the other shore.⁵²

The “other shore” was instantiated in the United States Constitution (1787) and the French Universal Declaration of the Rights of Man (1789), and political theology became nothing but an historical antecedent--and certainly not a proud one. Britain moved awkwardly in this direction, and Central Europe mostly just moved towards it slowly. But by the 1840s, across the European continent it was clear that there were enough liberal-minded students and intellectuals that progress toward a non-theological politics would need to be made, or forcefully impeded--both of which occurred during and after the 1848 uprisings.

While almost unquestionably a positive development for the rights of individuals in both the United States and France, the negation of political theology at a national level placed religious belief and practice in a socially tenuous position. For the first time in history state institutions had created a system in which citizens could act legally (i.e., be considered good people) without recourse to divinity. Judaism had been sidelined under Christian political systems, but it had also been respected as an equivalent mode of communal governance. Under political theology, Jews were allowed to run their own affairs. Judaism was, of course, considered inferior to its Christian counterpart, but it was considered a legitimate system of governance nonetheless. (This is similar to how American politics today understand Chinese Communism: it is just as much a governmental system, but most certainly a substandard one.) With the new liberal political regimes, Judaism became only theology, and therefore only something less enlightened than its Christian relation. Liberal politics was prepared to accept Jews as full individual humans. Christianity was not prepared to accept Judaism as an equal

⁵² Mark Lilla, *The Stillborn God: Religion, Politics, and the Modern West* (New York: Knopf, 2007), 5.

form of divine or moral expression. So with the end of political theology, Judaism as a religion suffered even while Jews as individuals made major social advances.⁵³

Consequently, in this period we see Jellinek describing a new historical justification for Judaism as a religious expression: Jewish texts provided the underlying insights for the very systems that now disgraced them. Post-1848 it became increasingly difficult to justify religious beliefs and traditional practices on their own terms. As we discussed in Chapter 2, the “background” of the world was changing. Mark Lilla and Charles Taylor would both say that the shift away from political theology was a consequence of and impetus for the continuing demise of traditional belief structures.⁵⁴ This left religious leaders--Jewish and Christian--struggling to explain the continued role of religious belief in a world increasingly governed by non-theological civil codes and national administrations maintained on a daily level by bureaucrats rather than clergymen. For rabbis in Central Europe, such a shift became a seminal challenge. One of their responses--as we see quite clearly with Jellinek--was to place Judaism at the very root of liberal moral philosophy itself.

Looking Toward the Sermons

As the Jews integrated into, and therefore became complicit in, the governance of the Habsburg Empire, Jellinek sought to limit the political role of Judaism to the promotion of policies that extended communal and individual liberty. Not that Jews were ever likely to gain much political power by way of representation in European parliaments. But their numbers in the cities (and their

⁵³ Jacob Katz wrote: “There can be no doubt about the commitment of the [liberals] to the full incorporation of the Jews into the German State, [...yet many remained] convinced that the Jews should give up their ‘peculiarities’, like all the other citizens of the new German state, so as to facilitate complete integration into the German people.” Jacob Katz, *Out of the Ghetto; the Social Background of Jewish Emancipation, 1770-1870* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1973), 265f.

⁵⁴ Lilla and Taylor debate this point and more. See: “The Stillborn God”, *The Immanent Frame*, accessed March 29, 2016, <http://blogs.ssrc.org/tif/category/exchanges/book-blog/the-stillborn-god/>.

increasing social and economic prosperity) were enough for Jews to make substantive contributions to the advancement of liberal reforms--should they choose to do so. Jellinek certainly hoped they would, but he worried, too, that Jewish history had not appropriately prepared his community for this newfound political role. Traditional Jewish practice and learning spent little time cultivating an ethos of widespread benevolence toward non-Jews. It was not that historic Jewish texts were particularly hostile to gentiles. It was that neither were they, on the whole, uniquely open to them either. Jellinek, therefore, used his sermons to remake this balance, bringing to the fore stories and laws that presented a more universalized image of Jewish moral thought.

As the rabbi in Vienna, Jellinek no longer exerted a strong civil (i.e., halachik) authority over the lives of the Jews living in his community. Instead, his aim became about helping them through the transition to European modernity. This meant demonstrating not only the compatibility of Judaism with European liberal thought but actually demonstrating how the foundations of Enlightenment moral universalism came from within the Biblical tradition itself. For Jellinek, the classical rabbis constructed an ethical system that contained the same values, and expressed the same desires, as the one being formulated by European intellectuals in his era. He also sought to teach his community in Vienna a new way to interact with Christians. On the one hand, this meant finding for them a language that valued Judaism even in the face of Christian attacks. On the other, it meant urging these traditional, often provincial Jews toward an expanded definition of community, toward seeing themselves and their gentile neighbors as part of a new universal narrative.

The following sections are devoted to analyzing the religious and political content of Jellinek's sermons.⁵⁵ The first section discusses Jellinek's ideas concerning Judaism's dictum to care for the "stranger." Jellinek argued that many of the universal values of liberalism were embodied in

⁵⁵ "In contrast to the early style of Reform preaching, Jellinek did not dwell on general moral truths but on the specific teachings of Judaism." Meyer, *Response to Modernity*, 192.

the textual and, more importantly, the ritual and dialogical history of Judaism's relation to the stranger. The second section describes a set of interrelated themes, *Wahrheit*, *Freiheit*, and *Gerechtigkeit*, truth, freedom, and justice. In Jellinek's search for an overlapping language between Judaism and the broader human experience, he relied heavily on these concepts, often though not exclusively in unison, and returned to them repeatedly, finding their referent in nearly every classic Jewish text, folktale, and ritual. The chapter ends with a discussion of community in Jellinek's writings. Jellinek did not think it wise to displace a community dedicated to morality with a code built on the sovereign rights of the individual, no matter how moral that individual was supposed to be. Fearing the total breakdown of the traditional Jewish community, as well as the irreversible separation of the newly founded denominations, he sought to find a language that would value the rights of individuals while maintaining the focus on Judaism and its common national heritage.

Loving the Stranger

The Biblical *Ger*

Jewish thought has a long history of devoting special moral attention to the treatment of the "stranger."⁵⁶ In the Hebrew Bible the stranger is called a *ger*, and when used in the phrase *ger toshav* means something like the modern legal phrase "resident alien."⁵⁷ The word appears dozens of times

⁵⁶ It remains liturgically present as well. In the Sabbath blessing on wine, it is recited that the stranger who lives in one's midst must be allowed to rest as well. See David Novak, *The Image of the Non-Jew in Judaism: The Idea of Noahide Law* (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2011); David L. Lieber, "Strangers and Gentiles," in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 2nd ed., ed. Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik, vol. 19 (Detroit: Macmillan Reference, 2007), 241-2; and Daniel Sperber and Theodore Friedman, "Gentile," in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 2nd ed., ed. Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik, vol. 7 (Detroit: Macmillan Reference, 2007), 485-487.

⁵⁷ "Resident alien" is the translation of *ger* used most often by the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) and sometimes by JPS.

in all five books of the Torah and throughout the prophetic writings.⁵⁸ As an ethical injunction, the Bible employs the word as a reminder of Israel's sojourn in the Land of Egypt ("You shall not wrong or oppress a stranger (*ger*), for you were strangers (*ger'im*) in the land of Egypt" [Exodus 22:21]), though the first usage of the word in Genesis is actually by Abraham describing himself.⁵⁹ The vast majority of references occur in the latter four books of the Pentateuch, after the Israelites have left Egypt and are receiving the laws that are to govern them in the land of Canaan. The essential paradigm for the Bible is that Egypt's oppression of Israel is the dialogical model for every subsequent moral system: through Egypt's sins we learn the proper conduct for our own society.

In classical rabbinic literature, one of the most quoted references to the treatment of the stranger occurs at the conclusion of, or as the coda to, another, even more famous story about the extent of the rabbis' interpretive power. Referred to in shorthand as the story of the "Oven of Aknai," the Talmud relates an encounter between Rabbi Eliezer (called "the Great") and the rabbis. Eliezer rules the oven pure and the rabbis overrule him, voting it impure. Eliezer's wounded pride resulted in great damage, though it remains unclear who precisely was at fault. The Talmud makes no definitive statement, and Eliezer's wife, Ima Shalom (sister of Rabban Gamliel II), says to Eliezer: "I have this tradition from my father's house: All gates are locked, excepting the gates of wounded feelings." (BT Baba Metzi'a 59b)

It is Ima Shalom's words that prompt the Talmud's digression into the evils of resentment (and in fact into the quotation of a prior teaching made by her own resentful husband):

It has been taught: Rabbi Eliezer the Great said: Why did the Torah warn against [the wronging of] a stranger in thirty-six, or as others say, in forty-six, places? Because he has a

⁵⁸ See entry for "*ger*" in Avraham Evan-Shoshan, *Konkordenziyah hadashah le-Torah Nevi'im u'Khtuvim: ozar leshom ha-Mikre, Ivrit ve'Aramit; shorashim, milim, shemot peretiyim zerufim venirdafim, ba'arikhat Avraham Evan-Shoshan* (Jerusalem: Miryst Sefer, 1978).

⁵⁹ "I am a stranger among you. Give me a burial place among you, so that I may bury my dead from before me." (Genesis 23:4)

strong inclination to evil. What is the meaning of the verse, *You shall neither wrong a stranger, nor oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt?* [Exodus 22:21] It has been taught: Rabbi Nathan said: Do not taunt your neighbor with the blemish you yourself have. And thus people say: If there is a case of hanging in a man's family record, say not to him, 'Hang this fish up for me.' (BT Baba Metzi'a 59b)⁶⁰

So much is to be learned from this simple juxtaposition of lines, and especially from the Talmud's quotation of the words of Rabbi Eliezer within moments of its recounting the sad story of his excommunication. Though Eliezer's reasoning is somewhat enigmatic ("because he has a strong inclination to evil"), both he and Nathan are warning against the same scourge: resentment arises when people dwell too much on past wrongs. Eliezer says: do not mistreat the stranger because you do not know what he has lived through, nor what he has done that has made him a sojourner in a foreign land. Nathan, too, advises against rubbing salt in old wounds. A family's honor is a sacred possession, hard fought and easily lost. There are few who possess a flawless lineage. Think of the evil the Israelites committed in Egypt. What if God had held them fully accountable, or had reminded them of their sins at each flaring of God's anger? So, too, one must overlook the past misdeed of those who come to dwell in Israel's midst, just as God overlooked Israel's flaws when he invited them to dwell in his midst.

That the narrative of the "Oven of Aknai" should end with a reminder of the prominent place that the treatment of foreigners have in Biblical law is more than a little astounding. It is also a very good example of the way the rabbis sought to undercut their own moral superiority at the moment they were most apt to fall into self-congratulatory complacency (they had, after all, just defeated a voice from heaven). Though unmatched at intellectual debate the rabbis were as susceptible as others to the subtle cruelty and harsh judgments that humans are so quick to pass on those they do not like. "Do not taunt your neighbor with the blemish you yourself have," they quote

⁶⁰ Isidor Epstein, ed., *The Babylonian Talmud, Seder Nezikin*, vol. 1 (London: Soncino Press, 1935), 355f.

Nathan saying. Which to them probably meant: though this time it was Eliezer who was headstrong and arrogant, next time it may be us.

Yet the rabbis could have quoted a more apt proverb for just that particular fault of intellectual hubris. They did not. Instead, at the very end of this important story they turn the entire conversation outward, toward the community, and specifically toward the stranger, the traveler, the foreigner living in their midst. As if a mirage were abruptly proven to be a real oasis after all, “for you were strangers in the land of Egypt” suddenly seems like a much more recent event. With a little resentment and time for it to simmer, the sins of the taskmasters in Egypt can suddenly be one’s very own.

The Jews as Hosts and Strangers

The Biblical and Talmudic texts explored above formed the core materials for Jellinek’s various discussions of the Jews’ moral obligations to the other and the stranger. Drawing heavily on the language of Exodus (“You shall not wrong or oppress a stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt”), Jellinek sought to resuscitate a native language of universalism from within the heart of Biblical Judaism. His sermons concerning the treatment of strangers were meant for both his Jewish community and a broader circle of modern readers. Jews remained both a community that must accept strangers among them, and they themselves remained strangers in a predominantly Christian empire. His writings balance these two, sometimes conflicting, circumstances. The Jews would always remain a minority, and for that they would somewhat be perpetual foreigners, though the liberal tradition Jellinek sought to transmit guaranteed them certain rights and privileges. But the urbanization of European Jewry had also confronted them with a new sort of challenge. The liberal model meant that Jewish choices now impacted the lives and prosperity of many peoples quite different than themselves. A growing Jewish presence in the civil service, the intelligentsia, and the professional classes gave every Jewish action an added importance. The Bible’s moral language

concerning the stranger, Jellinek believed, was essential for the creation of a new Jewish ethics in the modern liberal city.

Supporting this point, the first entry in Jellinek's collected sermons, "Ruth" (1861), was an exegesis on the importance of treating the stranger with fairness and equity. Responding to the age-old slur that Jews cared only for themselves, and that Judaism was a religion of laws without loving kindness, Jellinek described the legal obligation to care for those who are different: "But is Judaism so indifferent to the healing of other people? Is it really so narrow-minded and selfish that it does not care about its progress and the spreading of its truth? Certainly not! Forty-five times [...] God focuses the Israelites on justice, love, and mercy toward the stranger."⁶¹ Jellinek's forty-five times is likely a paraphrase (perhaps even a misremembering) of Eliezer's forty-six times from the story recounted above in BT Bava Metzi'a. We read the book of Ruth on Shavuot, Jellinek said, as a reminder that the values inherent in Judaism are universal and accepting.⁶² Though the Torah was given specifically to the Jews, its moral strength arose out of a sense of creating universal order and goodness. Over forty times the Jews are called in the Torah to remember that they were once strangers in a strange land, yet upon each reading Ruth's story leaves one breathless and fearful. How will she be treated in a land not her own? Being a Moabite, is she condemned to remain outside the community of Israel? ("No Ammonite or Moabite shall be admitted to the assembly of YHWH. Even to the tenth generation none of their descendants shall be admitted to the assembly of YHWH." [Deut. 23:3])

In the end Ruth was treated fairly, and for her commitment to Israel she was abundantly rewarded, becoming the great-grandmother of King David, the greatest of the biblical monarchs. What does Jellinek say one should learn from this story? That the Jews have shown to the world

⁶¹ Jellinek, *Predigten*, vol. 1, 7.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 4.

forbearance to history; love of stranger; and loyalty to those who share their values. Not insular, parochial values, but universal ones: welcoming the stranger; feeding and housing the poor; and trusting in the piety and benevolence of those who ask for assistance. For Jellinek, the Book of Ruth was about the practice of civic virtues. It was a Biblical argument that the Jewish presence in non-Jewish lands could be something to value and not to fear. The Jews were kind to Ruth--even after an ancient hostility, which could have bred resentment and suspicion--because that is what the Bible enjoined upon them. You were once foreigners in a new land, like Ruth. Be now like Boaz, Jellinek said, and make for others a home in your community.

Yet the story of Ruth is in many ways the simplest tale of kindness toward the stranger. Ruth wished to be a member of the Jewish community. She had already shown her willingness to follow the practices of the Jews when she married her first husband, the son of Elimelech and Naomi, members of the tribe of Ephraim. When Naomi told Ruth to return to her people after the death of her husband, Ruth responded with the famous lines “for where you go I will too; where you sleep I will sleep; your people will be my people; and your god my god.” (Ruth 1:16) That Boaz was kindly to Ruth made him a good man, but his kindness was certainly made simpler by her willingness to already follow the practices of his people.

The Torah’s use of *ger toshav*, a resident alien, does not, however, always refer to a proselyte like Ruth. If the stranger wishes to partake in the rituals of the community, then yes, he or she must convert. But if the foreigner is merely someone who lives in the community then she has no obligations to take on the commandments of the Jewish people. She must simply be treated fairly and allowed to practice her own customs. A mandate of kindness toward this sort of stranger, Jellinek argued in “Ruth,” was unique to the Bible, and from this far more difficult moral imperative he derived some of his most insightful and deeply powerful ideas.

In an 1858 sermon called “Love the Stranger!” Jellinek noted that, instead of care for the stranger being a commandment simply about justice, the Bible was also mandating a particular emotion. Citing the verse “Love the stranger (*v’ahavtem et ha-ger*), for you yourselves were strangers in the land of Egypt.” (Deut. 10:19), Jellinek translated the opening phrase as an imperative: Love! Through this he argued two points: that the commandment to the Jews to love the stranger was unique among the nations; and that the communal legacy within the Jewish nation to uphold this commandment had remained strong throughout the centuries. Jellinek wrote:

‘Love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.’ What a sublime, blessed law! What a triumph here celebrating the Jewish spirit, which lovingly gathers all strangers around it! Strike out the law books of the ancient peoples; inquire of Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Greece, and Rome; inquire of the Middle Ages, with their blood fanaticism; inquire of the present age, with its clever statecraft: see if [any of their law codes] contain the three words: ‘Love the stranger!’⁶³

That the stranger was someone worthy of loving (*ahava* in Hebrew), and of loving without desiring his or her conversion to one’s own creed, was, in Jellinek’s telling, a political philosophy foreign to most times and places.⁶⁴ Yet the Torah’s commandment “love the stranger” assumes—perhaps even

⁶³ Ibid., 104-5. Though not directly confrontational with Christianity, Jellinek’s comments here suggest a willingness to combat the growing liberal view that moralities across (or even without religion) are equivalent. In a similar vein to Jellinek, Joseph Herman Hertz used his position as Chief Rabbi in Britain to argue for Judaism’s unique moral insights. Benjamin J. Elton writes: “[Hertz’s commentary in his edition of the] Pentateuch also took aim at the idea that Greek and Roman civilization are to be admired, and that Christianity had made an important moral contribution to the world. These were ideas promoted by Claude Montefiore of the Liberal Jewish Synagogue and Hertz thought they would lead Jews into Christianity. He therefore argued that classical civilization was barely disguised barbarism, and Christianity was its bastard child. Anything positive in Christianity came, according to Hertz, from its Jewish roots.” Benjamin J. Elton, “A Bridge Across the Tigris: Chief Rabbi Joseph Herman Hertz,” in *Conversations: The Journal of the Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals* 21 (Spring 2015).

⁶⁴ In a fascinating parallel, Sir Jonathan Sacks, former chief rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth, published an article under the same title about the Middle East refugee crisis that spread across Southern and Central Europe in the later summer and fall 2015. See Jonathan Sacks, “Refugee Crisis: ‘Love the stranger because you were once strangers’ calls us now,” *The Guardian* (September 5, 2015). See Chapter Six for further remarks on the parallels between Jellinek and Sacks.

encourages, or at least does not discourage—that the stranger will remain outside the community of Jews, that the stranger might never become one’s kinsman. It also assumes that the stranger will reside at length in one’s midst. It is not a law about those who are passing through, about being kind to travelers and merchants. The Israelites were strangers in Egypt for four hundred years, and the Bible’s presumption is that the dominant community will maintain and respect (not just be peaceful to or benignly neglectful of, but actually engage with and accommodate) those who live among them but are not of their people. Moses Mendelssohn wrote similarly: “If a *Confucius* or a *Solon* lived among my contemporaries, I could, in accordance with the principles of my religion, love and admire the great man, without hitting on the ridiculous idea of wanting to *convert* a Confucius or a Solon.”⁶⁵

Still, such rhetoric is only meaningful if groups outside of Judaism are also interested in developing a similar set of moral codes. As we have seen in our various discussions of Mendelssohn and his age, Jellinek likewise believed in a form of liberal political philosophy that had been developing since the latter half of the eighteenth century.⁶⁶ Almost ninety years before this sermon, Thomas Jefferson had put into writing: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights.”⁶⁷ The French “Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen” of 1789 likewise enshrined: “Men are born and remain free and equal in rights. Social distinctions can be founded only on the common good.”⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Moses Mendelssohn, “Open Letter to Lavater,” *Writings on Judaism, Christianity, and the Bible*, ed. by Michah Gottlieb (Waltham, Mass.: Brandeis University Press, 2011), 10 (italics in original).

⁶⁶ Samuel David Luzzatto, the Wissenschaft scholar from Padua whom we met in Chapter Three, likewise wrote about loving the stranger. See Samuel David Luzzatto, *Ohev Ger al Targum Onkelos* (Krakow: Josef Fisher, 1845).

⁶⁷ “Declaration of Independence,” The National Archives, accessed March 29, 2016, http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration_transcript.html.

Yet in both cases these words aimed to protect the right of individuals to maintain their differences within broader society. Jellinek's argument in 1858 was that neither of these foundational documents of political liberalism captured the two most essential aspects of the biblical injunction of "love the stranger."

First, Jefferson and the French republicans had only enshrined "negative liberties," to use Isaiah Berlin's terminology: protecting in their texts "simply the area within which a man can act unobstructed by others."⁶⁹ But Jellinek believed that one should love the stranger, that is, that one could be implored through law to reach out and be kind to the stranger. Because God is not the state, since the demise of political theology one is not imprisoned for ignoring God's laws. (Mendelssohn called this the "non-coercive" nature of religious law.) But divine laws were still meant to show a person the moral way to act. Jellinek thought that the Bible had, in fact, created the potential for "positive liberty" among the Jewish people, an impetus for responsible and thoughtful decision-making. One would not be stoned for disrespecting the stranger. Instead, one could be taught to choose to love the stranger. In this sense, God was taking a gamble on humanity. Jellinek, full of optimism, wanted to be part of that bet.⁷⁰

Second, Jellinek believed that to fully internalize the imperative "love the stranger," humanity must remember the second part of the biblical command, "for you yourselves were strangers in the land of Egypt." Strangers might not be individuals. Even Mendelssohn missed the gravity of the latter half of the phrase. Israel was a stranger in the land of Egypt for four hundred years. Not individual Hebrews but the Children of Jacob in its entirety. Therefore, even if the Jews

⁶⁸ Déclaration des Droits de l'Homme et du Citoyen de 1789, from: Legifrance. Le Service Public de la Diffusion du Droit. <<http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/Droit-francais/Constitution/Declaration-des-Droits-de-l-Homme-et-du-Citoyen-de-1789>> Accessed April 15, 2015.

⁶⁹ Isaiah Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 122.

⁷⁰ Berlin is particularly appropriate here, since he believed that "political theory was a branch of moral philosophy," just as Jellinek clearly did. See Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty*, 120.

were to be strangers in Europe for a thousand years, such a thing could only make this commandment more essential. Not only, thought Jellinek, did the nations of Europe need to respect the right of individual Jews to practice their traditions. The Europeans needed to love the presence of the Jewish people—as a separate people—in their midst, in order for true liberalism to find root in Habsburg soil.

Truth, Freedom, and Justice

Alongside his many discussions of the stranger, Jellinek also focused on the themes of *Wahrheit, Freiheit, and Gerechtigkeit*, truth, freedom, and justice. For Jellinek, these three ideals were the zeitgeist of his brand of modernity, transcending any specific event or moment. They stood for him as the pillars of the liberal program, the essential motifs that would allow Judaism to find a place in the moral progress of Europe. “Has not the Hebrew tribe, through its Bible, more deeply impacted the freedom and morality of the nations than Greece through its artistic and literary creations?”⁷¹ With these words Jellinek directly confronted those intellectuals of the German Enlightenment who retained their anti-Jewish prejudices, even as they quoted freely from the ancient Greek and Latin classics concerning the concepts of freedom and morality.

Such overt defenses of Judaism were not the only rhetorical device found in the sermons. Jellinek more often sought to find subtle links between traditional practices and modern ideas. In one example of his concern for justice, Jellinek wrote: “The Palm [used during the Jewish festival of *Sukkot*, the Feast of Booths/ Tabernacles] is the image of the righteous, of the right, the strictly, impartially right. Over everything the standpoint of the right is the most excellent mark of

⁷¹ Jellinek, *Predigten*, vol. 1, 69. Abraham Joshua Heschel makes a similar argument in his essay “No Religion is an Island” (1965), where he argues that the values of contemporary Christianity necessitate the protection of the Jewish people, who are the original keepers of the Hebrew Bible. Abraham Joshua Heschel, *Moral Grandeur and Spiritual Audacity: Essays*, ed. by Susannah Heschel (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1996), 235-250.

halakha.”⁷² The closed palm frond, straight and narrow, sharp at the edges but sturdy, was the central metaphor of halakha and Jellinek’s idea of the moral. Where was the moral amongst the legal jargon, Jellinek heard the enemies of Judaism crying out. It was there, in the halakha, he responded. By rhetorically associating morals with the sturdy and straight, invoking along the way the literal definition of halakha as the way, the road, the path, Jellinek interwove apologetics with traditional rabbinic interpretation. The place of morality, and therefore of justice, was in the tall and strong center, the traditional laws and practices.

It is an argument again reminiscent of Moses Mendelssohn. Mendelssohn argued in *Jerusalem* that Judaism received “revealed legislation,” which was not a unique form of revealed truth but simply a mechanism for solidifying a code of ethics within the people. Because humanity is flawed and full of moral errors, “the lawgiver of [Israel] gave the *ceremonial laws* [...] *Men must be impelled to perform actions and only induced to engage in reflection.*”⁷³ But, Mendelssohn was at pains to say, these ceremonial laws were merely to ensure a form of morality amongst the Jews equivalent to that which is practiced and preached in the other nations of the world. “Judaism,” he says, “boasts of no *exclusive* revelation of eternal truths that are indispensable to salvation.”⁷⁴ Judaism, expressing its ethical heritage through laws and ritual, is neither more nor less moral. It simply codified an already existing universal morality through different mechanisms.

Jellinek took Mendelssohn’s argument one more step. The historical record of Judaism’s revealed legislation, Jellinek argued, suggested that Judaism was not only in full concert with Enlightenment but quite obviously its progenitor. Whereas European thinkers only came to

⁷² Adolf Jellinek, *Der Talmud: Zwei Reden, am Hüttenfeste 5625 (am 16. und 22. October 1864)* (Vienna: Herzfeld & Bauer, 1865), 12.

⁷³ Moses Mendelssohn, *Jerusalem, or On Religious Power and Judaism*, trans. by Allan Arkush (Waltham, Mass.: Brandeis University Press, 1983), 118-9 (emphasis in original).

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 97.

understand the separation of universal and particular moral systems recently, Judaism had recognized just such a bifurcation for the better part of two millennia. Israel, Jellinek argued, had always enlisted people to fight for a just and universal moral code.

[The sages] were to be the speaking conscience of Israel, the blaring trumpet of God's court. When arrogance, violence, tyranny, hypocrisy, pretense, and bigotry roam, they should teach, advise, admonish, warn, threaten, punish, fight with the strength of the word, and make war upon anything wrong, mendacious, mean, and low--[upon] all that weakens the truth, undermines liberty, or paralyzes justice.⁷⁵

The moral codes God gave to the non-Jewish nations could not be in conflict with the moral codes of Israel, which meant that there must be a universal system underlying the particularity of Judaism. This is why Jellinek wrote, "‘Love the stranger’ [...for] every human being [...] is loved by God."⁷⁶ For Jellinek the Bible and its rabbinic interpreters gave Judaism a central role in the historical arc toward Enlightenment's recognition of universal justice.

Described another way, Jellinek imagined the rabbinic corpus as functioning like a prism, taking the non-Jewish elements of the world and refracting them into a Jewish idiom and practice. What that new post-prismatic idiom might look like varied across time and geography, but what Jellinek desired was for the Talmud's method of meaning making to open Judaism outward, helping it become a part of the conversation of modernity.

The words of the Talmudic sages are at the same time as stepping stones, whilst also holding together the faith and the various types of human community through the teachings of justice, humanity, and morality, which, they note, are instilled in every nation and every state through the principles of religious toleration, and by exhortations to peacefulness, which they preach aloud to the glory of God—who makes peace in His heights—so the Heavens can be witness to the harmonious and peaceful interaction of the enlightenment of the universe [*zur Erleuchtung des Weltalls*].⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Jellinek, *Predigten*, vol. 2, 115.

⁷⁶ Jellinek, *Predigten*, vol. 1, 105-4.

⁷⁷ Jellinek, *Der Talmud*, 32.

Jellinek hoped his community might believe that the resources of the Jewish past could speak to the Jewish present. And he wanted to convince them that rabbinic literature would be able to positively engage with whatever modernity created. The Talmud, you can almost hear him say, was fundamentally a system of Enlightenment—motivated by the same philosophical questions and searching for the same political ends.

Jellinek's version of Enlightenment, it should be noted, applied not just to people but to governments as well. He wrote: "justice, humanity, and morality [...] are instilled in every nation and every state through the practice of religious toleration."⁷⁸ Compare these words to those from Kant's famous essay, *What is Enlightenment?*:

When even a people may not decide for itself [the sort of freedom it wants,] can even less be decided for it by a monarch; for his lawgiving authority consists in his uniting the collective will of the people in his own. If only he sees to it that all true or alleged improvements are consistent with civil order, he can allow his subjects to do what they find necessary for the wellbeing of their souls.⁷⁹

Civil order and religious toleration are synonymous, both Kant and Jellinek argued, though Jellinek believed that Torah and Talmud were equally as good at providing a civil framework for common rights among peoples as was metaphysical philosophy.⁸⁰ Jellinek set the Talmudic sages as the originators of the idea of universal justice and humanity, which meant that Jews, long hated for their purported insularity, were really incubators of a broader world vision. Only through the Enlightenment have non-Jews come to recognize what Judaism understood and practiced all along.

⁷⁸ Jellinek, *Predigten*, vol. 1, 105.

⁷⁹ Immanuel Kant, "An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?" trans. James Schmidt, in *What is Enlightenment? Eighteenth-Century Answers and Twentieth-Century Questions*, ed. James Schmidt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 58-64, here 62.

⁸⁰ Immanuel Kant's opinion of Jews and Judaism remains a subject of some question and concern. See Sidney Axinn, "Kant on Judaism," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 59, no. 1 (1968): 9-23; and Emil L. Fackenheim, "Kant and the Jews," *Commentary* (1963, accessed March 29, 2016, <https://www.commentarymagazine.com/article/kant-and-judaism/>).

In arguing to save Judaism because it had long embodied the new liberal philosophies, Jellinek created a novel role for the rabbi and for Jewish texts, one that sought to place Judaism overtly into the lineage of European history and ideas. In his biblical exegesis, Jellinek continuously looked not toward law and history but toward goodness, righteousness, and lawfulness.

[God] is our God, we pronounce. This is the same loving being who includes all families of the earth. And on the basis of written statements, the Babylonian Talmud raises as unbreakable law that of cheating, deceiving, betraying, insulting, and offending...and that loyalty, truthfulness, peacefulness, and justice should necessarily be used against them.⁸¹

Jellinek was interested in the cultivation of a certain type of moral life, one that Judaism embodied but that ultimately transcended the particularities of Judaism. He wrote: “And only in free realms of spirit [does one meet] arbitrariness and randomness, distance and alienation, from the path of the original human nature, from the way of law and justice.”⁸² Jellinek did not want a fully liberalized Jewish religion. He did not want a Jewish philosophy of life, which could mean a way of being moral without ritual or practice. A “free realm of spirit” meant a lonely and isolated world, where people look inside themselves for moral truth rather than to the texts and rituals of the tradition. Jellinek truly believed that the ancient Jewish sources embodied the interpretations he found within them. Such texts were both comforting and burdensome to the Jews of Leopoldstadt. They were their heritage, the texts of their fathers and mothers. But so too these traditions weighed heavily, especially at a time when the promises of Emancipation seemed so near at hand.

A Universal Judaism in Modern Times

Jellinek’s sermons suggested something different from a whole-hearted commitment to progress for the sake of progress. What Jellinek desired, what he wanted to impart to his

⁸¹ Jellinek, *Predigten*, vol. 2, 134.

⁸² Jellinek, *Predigten*, vol. 1, 39.

community, was a commitment to moral and theological advancement not only informed by but actually in the mold of historic Jewish answers and practices.

After the revelation of Judaism, say our Sages, and after time has proven its teachings durable, able everywhere to pave the way to be explored and heeded, a new world epoch must be entered, in which, from the historical heights of progress will be inaugurated a new People's Temple [*Völkertempel*], a new King of Peace, a new shoot from the House of David. And in its Holy of Holies all nations on the earth will cry out from the depths of conviction: '[God] alone is God and there is no other!'⁸³

Jellinek's imagery and metaphors were at once fantastically idealist and deeply traditional. The revelation at Sinai remained, still the central event in world history. But instead of the beginning of Judaism it represented the origin point for the concept of universal law. The image of the Temple remained, but from its unique place as the center of Judaism and Israel's relationship with its God a metaphorical Temple was to be erected, a *Völkertempel*, a temple of the people, not overseen by priests and high officials but accessible to the masses, who would come to proclaim the holiness and oneness of God.

The "shoot from the house of David" was an idea, a vision, a system of being. It was a collective action, not a representative individual. The phrase, taken from Isaiah 11, harkened toward a messianic dream of a rebuilt Zion and a universal peace.

But a shoot shall grow out of the stump of Jesse, a twig shall sprout from his stock. The spirit of YHWH shall alight upon him: a spirit of wisdom and insight, a spirit of counsel and valor, a spirit of devotion and reverence for YHWH...Justice shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his waist...In that day the stock of Jesse that has remained standing shall become a standard to the peoples. Nations shall seek his counsel and his abode shall be honored." (Isaiah 11:1-2, 5, 10)⁸⁴

Jellinek looked to Jewish history to make prescriptions and set a tone for a general European future. He argued that Judaism already embodied the moral virtues that liberals and reformers were attempting to enshrine in civil law. In the way that his Talmudic ancestors rebuilt Torah from the

⁸³ Jellinek, *Predigten*, vol. 2, 71.

⁸⁴ *JPS Hebrew-English Tanakh: The Traditional Hebrew Text and the New JPS Translation*, Second Edition (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1999), 870-1.

inside out following the destruction of the Second Temple, so too Jellinek looked to the tradition's ancient words for insights and principles that would take the Jewish people into another new era.

As discussed in the previous chapters, the enormous theoretical shifts brought about in the second half of the 1700s overturned centuries of tradition, belief, and social practice. The need for Jellinek to interpret and address German-speaking liberal culture for the Jewish immigrant was acute from the 1840s onward. His impassioned defenses of Judaism, alongside his obvious learning and ability to engender respect in non-Jewish scholarly and theological circles, represented for the Jews of Vienna the quintessence of modernity. Michael A. Meyer writes,

To the Viennese Jewish leadership [Jellinek] must have seemed just the right man for their Jewish milieu: a religious leader who did not create ideological division, an accomplished preacher who provided his listeners with memorable artistic experiences, and a man who expressed their own feelings, reconfirming both Jewish loyalties and universal convictions.⁸⁵

Unlike what the French had offered in 1789, which was for the Jew as Jew to be a full emancipated individual but not to be part of a communal Judaism, it appeared to many that the potentials of the German Enlightenment did not require the same total individualization and loss of community. In Vienna, it was believed by some that perhaps the Jews could integrate and gain rights while remaining Jews identifiable as such and part of a historic people.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ Michael A. Meyer, *Response to Modernity: A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 192-3.

⁸⁶ Samson Raphael Hirsch, too, to a surprising degree, sought in his writings to balance the language of human individuality and personal freedom with the needs and role of a sacred community. "The community sought to be the individual's sole master. This was an attack on the inalienable worth of the individual, which does not depend on the glory of the community, and which can never be reckoned in terms of mere bricks, not even bricks used in building the glory of the community. It was also a denial of *shem ha'shem* [the name of God]. [God] summons every individual directly to His service and thereby makes every man, be he prince or slave, *free and equal*. The Name *hashem* [God] tolerates no slavery! The moment the community says *na'aseh lanu shem* [make for ourselves a name] and does not summon each individual *b'shem hashem* [in the name of God], then *vayered hashem*, God descends and does not forsake His world; he descends to see the edifice the community has been building and to assess the intent of the builders." Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch, *The Hirsch Chumash: The Five Books of the Torah: Sefer Bereshis*, trans. Daniel Haberman (New York: Feldheim Publishers, 2006), 270.

For Jellinek, as well as for many of his rabbinical peers, modern political liberalism required the same sort of theological work as was done by the writers of the Talmud, who themselves took nearly five centuries to construct an edifice solid enough to see the Jews through a millennia and a half of diaspora.⁸⁷ Jellinek recognized the perceived gap between Jewish traditional discourse and liberal discourse, and sought to bring about a harmony between them. The weekly Sabbath sermon was not merely a vessel for this project. It was the new way that Jews in modernity could be enfolded into the process of religious transformation itself. Jewish society was changing fundamentally. Much that had previously been taken for granted was lost, probably forever. The urban synagogue brought Jews together and gave them a space in which to express their inherited tradition, with a rabbi who could offer them hope for the future in a language culled from the vast resources of Jewish literature and history. In this way a new Jewish community was formed, one based on rabbis and public teaching, vastly different from the provincial, custom-based Judaism of pre-modernity. But it was something. And Jellinek believed it could be everything.

Jellinek's focus on this new sort of community was the centerpiece of an 1860 sermon called "Four Sabbaths." There, he turned his criticism on the leadership of the Jews themselves, which he saw as undermining the very fragile consensus that had existed during the early years of Jewish urbanization. Criticism of this sort was not something he often did in his Sabbath sermons. A

⁸⁷ In a context distant in time from Jellinek's but not in spirit, Ethan Tucker has spoken about the motivation that keep some rabbis after the Enlightenment searching for linkages between Jewish laws and the rapidly shifting world around them. "When you talk about a [Jewish law] problem, either it can be solved or it's not a problem...I think one of the key claims if you are committed to a Torah that wants to actually instantiate goodness and purpose and God's will in the world, and you are committed to the notion of a God who is a loving and covenantal and caring partner for [the Jewish people] in this world, it simply can never be that there is a gap between your moral convictions, your [liberal] moral and [traditional] religious convictions, and the *retzon haboreh*, what it is that God wants of you." "The Future of Jewish Law and Theology: A Conversation Between Ethan Tucker and Shai Held," Mechon Hadar Online Learning (March 8, 2015), accessed March 29, 2016, <https://www.mechonhadar.org/torah-resource/future-jewish-law-and-theology>.

political man generally, he usually reserved such opinions for the popular press, community meetings, or rabbinical gatherings. In this case, he felt, the need was too great. In the sermon he used the image of Israel's greatest foe--Amalek--as a metaphor for the infighting that was tearing the modern Jewish community apart.

How does Amalek fight in our day? The Jews are divided into two classes: Orthodox and Reform. The former, they say, represent the true and real carrier of ancient Judaism, and should, mercifully and as witness of the curse that weighs upon Israel, be tolerated completely and exclusively. The latter no more find Jews than find dangerous their community, undermining, destabilizing, and rotting all the foundations of state and religion. Let us be honest! From whom does one experience Amalek? From the Jews themselves!⁸⁸

These were harsh words. Jellinek wanted little more than to keep the Jewish community of Vienna united as a single entity, working together for the religious and political betterment of all the city's Jews. Ritual and theological differences aside, Jellinek believed that it was the evangelicals of left and right that placed the community at greatest risk. He also did not think it was historically true to the rabbinic sources. The fundamentalist position was rarely taken by the rabbis and alternate traditions and opinions always mentioned.

It was no accident that Jellinek invoked the name of Amalek in his warning about the disasters that arise from infighting. Amalek is condemned in the Bible beyond all the other nations not because it made war on Israel but because of what sort of war it was. "Remember what Amalek did to you on the road out of Egypt, how he surprised you on the road when you were faint and weary, and cut down all who lagged behind. He did not fear God." (Deut. 25:17f) Amalek took aim at those who were weary and could not defend themselves and never would have taken part in a formal battle. It was a tactic done out of malice, for the sake of bloodshed. The Jewish people were again weak and in danger, Jellinek was warning. Again they were on the road, leaving what they knew behind and settling a world they barely understood. This was not the time for Jewish leaders to

⁸⁸ Jellinek, *Predigten*, vol. 2, 235.

be hurtling ideological stones at one another, to be, on the one hand, separating themselves from the larger community as so called keepers of the true tradition, or on the other, rejecting out of hand so many beliefs and practices that had sustained the nation through its many long centuries of exile.

Amalek was Jellinek's warning. In times of transition, he believed, there will always be an enemy motivated by cruelty. Only when the community remained together could they stand against the common foe, each in his or her own way. For the Bible, that was Joshua with the troops and Moses, Aaron, and Hur with hands raised to heaven. For the Jews of Vienna it meant the traditionalists and the reformers remaining united. Jellinek did not believe it was predetermined that Judaism would survive the transformations of urban modernity. Instead, for him it was Judaism itself that needed to supply the solutions to its most recent challenges--Judaism in concert with non-Jewish Europe. Internal struggles distracted from the more important project of making Judaism an essential part of the European future.

Conclusion

Adolf Jellinek's Vienna sermons are some of the best examples of an early rabbinical attempt to wed traditional Jewish narratives, commandments, and practices to modern liberal philosophy. Quoting from the wide range of Biblical and rabbinical literature Jellinek sought to demonstrate that the values of European liberal modernity were already deeply entrenched in the theology and textual history of the Jewish people. Jellinek's faith in the rabbinical tradition arose from his deeply held belief in the alliance between historical Jewish thought and progressive modern values. Some of his writing was undoubtedly motivated by a fear that the traditions he cherished would be lost to the new generation of acculturating Jews.⁸⁹ Yet never does one find fear to be his overriding concern.

⁸⁹ See Todd H. Weir, "The Specter of "Godless Jewry": Secularism and the "Jewish Question" in Late Nineteenth-Century Germany," *Central European History* 46, no. 4 (January 2014): 815–49.

Instead, Jellinek's abiding interest was in the discourses of universalism, nation, community, and progress.

It is not modern education, with its good tone and its dainty manners, which make the Jews into loyal and selfless citizens, honest and loving member of the whole. Rather it is Judaism, our confession, which inspires truth, justice, love, and fidelity toward every human being without distinction. [Further,] we can show our devotion to the throne and fatherland not with our own success and beneficence, but rather by ensuring that the training of teachers and preachers, who, filled with the divine spirit of Judaism, have the course and the power of conviction...⁹⁰

Jellinek's belief that Judaism was the moral core of life formed the foundation for all his writings. But Jellinek's was a distinctly modern sort of morality, defined by principles that would have felt very comfortable to any moderate liberal political activist of his era. His ideal--"truth, justice, love, and fidelity toward every human being without distinction"--remains the quest of liberal Judaism, though the challenges of modernity have proven themselves to be far more overwhelming than initially imagined. But as the leader of a community that was, for the first time, experiencing vastly expanded legal equality, new forms of social inclusion, and the promises of bourgeois living, the hope of a marriage between Judaism and European culture was eagerly desired.

⁹⁰ Jellinek, *Predigten*, vol. 2, 137.

CHAPTER 6:
CONCLUSION:
FROM CENTRAL EUROPEAN JUDAISM YESTERDAY TO ANGLO-AMERICAN
JUDAISM TODAY

A generation that had gone to school on a horse-drawn streetcar now stood under the open sky in a countryside in which nothing remained unchanged but the clouds, and beneath those clouds...was the tiny, fragile human body.

Walter Benjamin

Introduction: Where We Have Been

This dissertation addressed two major questions at the heart of Jewish religious modernity: Why did religious Judaism change so much in these last two hundred years? And why is its current form the one that it took? To answer these questions I have written a social and intellectual history that followed the transformation of three key aspects of the modern Jewish religious experience—the rabbi, the rabbi’s sermon, and the monumental urban synagogue—during the first half of the nineteenth-century in Central Europe. I focused on one of the seminal figures in this reconstruction of religious Judaism, the Austro-German rabbi and scholar Adolf Jellinek (1821-1893), whose leadership of the Jewish communities in Leipzig and Vienna was instrumental for solidifying the new rabbinical norms and practices. Born into a small Jewish community in Habsburg Moravia and dying in the midst of Vienna’s *belle époque*, over the course of the nineteenth century Jellinek helped to create (and eventually came to epitomize) the new style of urban rabbi, whose weekly sermons, advocacy for Judaism’s embodiment of universal ethics, and synagogue-based leadership replaced the traditional communal functions of the rabbinate in pre-modern Jewish society.

In telling this story I sought to historicize many of the places and strategies that were decisive for religious Judaism's transition into its modern form. As discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, following the demographic changes that resulted from Jewish Emancipation and Europe's economic modernization in the first half of the nineteenth century, a new generation of Jewish leaders in Central Europe began to fundamentally reconstruct the role and importance of the communal rabbi. These young men realized that the rabbi was no longer the chief civil authority in the Jewish community, and recognized that the composition of Jewish communal structure itself was transforming radically, transitioning from a rural based semi-autonomous civil and familial unit to a religious and cultural affiliation within a broader liberal, bourgeois body politic. As Jonathan Hess notes, "Whether conceived of as a distinct period or a more general process, modernity inevitably meant a life for Jews where Jewish identity emerged as a problem, something they needed to define and redefine in relation to themselves, their history and their non-Jewish environment."¹ Believing that the rabbi still had a part to play in this new form of Jewish social and religious experience, these men sought to make the rabbinical role into one of communal teacher and chief ideologue of modernity. Jellinek, himself, was the main proponent of the connection between Judaism and Enlightenment liberalism, and further, of Judaism's foundational role in the creation of universal moral system.

Seizing on the structure of the sermon--historically a rare rhetorical device in Judaism--the young rabbis of Central Europe adopted it into their practice of religious Judaism, placing onto it the burdens of educating and steering the theological and moral beliefs of a new urban Jewry, and demonstrating the connection between traditional Judaism and Enlightenment universalism. The modern sermon focused on negotiating the intellectual borderland and underpinnings of Jewish and non-Jewish culture, and in this way became a chief site of theological innovation and intellectual

¹ Jonathan Hess, *Germans, Jews and the Claims of Modernity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 19.

exchange for modern Jews. By the *fin-de-siècle* in Central Europe, the rabbi's sermon had become the central channel through which the vast majority of Jews received their education in Jewish religious values and principles.

In relating the history of modern rabbinic Judaism, Vienna was more than merely one among a handful of possible locations and Adolf Jellinek was more than just a single exemplary figure. In the middle decades of the nineteenth century the Habsburg capital was growing rapidly, attracting migrants from across the empire's vast territories. Owing to the nature of its imperial acquisitions, by the end of the 1850s Vienna had become one of the continent's most ethnically diverse cities. Municipal authorities constructed new neighborhoods and expanded the capital's metropolitan area in ways that would become the model for urban projects across the continent in the following decades. Though royal troops defeated an attempted liberal revolution in 1848, the insurgents succeeded in forcing the abdication of Austria's monarch, Ferdinand I, inaugurating (after a period of reactionary absolutism) the long and relatively moderate reign of Franz Joseph. While now a mostly forgotten ghost on the map of Europe, the nineteenth-century Habsburg Empire--with Vienna as its crown--cultivated a social and intellectual world that has indelibly defined the contours of Western modernity.

After moving to Vienna in 1857, Jellinek's career, too, grew to outsized influence, and he used his weekly Sabbath sermons as a means of expounding upon a distinct and (ultimately highly influential) philosophy of modern Judaism. His intellectual choices concerning the connection between Jewish texts and contemporary philosophical values made his works highly original, and later provided a model for generations of rabbis. Over many pages and many Sabbaths, Jellinek asked his congregation to see the relationship between the Jewish and non-Jewish worlds as one of fluidity and dynamism, as an interaction without a requisite antagonism, and of Judaism's origin as the place for much of the moral code that liberal modernity held dear. Despite increasing political

fractiousness within the Jewish community and continued attacks on Jewish practice and theology, Jellinek used his intellectual training and rhetorical skills to forcefully define a moderate center. His sermons are the foundational examples of what modern rabbinic rhetoric eventually came to be.

By focusing on the rabbi, the rabbi's sermon, and the synagogue, I have maintained religion (identified as both theology and social structure) as a key lens through which to describe and understand the Jewish experience in modernity. Though modern Jewish history is often related through the prisms of culture, economics, or politics, a great deal of Jewish social space remained inextricably linked with, and defined by, historic religious structures, beliefs, and institutions. Immanuel Wolf wrote similarly in 1822: "In the diverse unfolding of the whole life of a people there do of course exist aspects and tendencies which are remote from the sphere of religion; but in Judaism, more than anywhere else, the influence of the basic religious idea is visible in all the circumstances of human life."² It is my contention that what has remained under-examined in the history of Jewish modernity is the extraordinary creativity of Jewish religious life itself, which is why this dissertation has been concerned with the shifts, creations, apologies, innovations, accentuations, dissociations, and leaps of theological imagination exhibited by Central European Jewish religious leaders, and most especially of Adolf Jellinek, as they confronted a rapidly changing world. Faced with new philosophical ideologies, internal demographic shifts, and immense pressure from their Christian counterparts to justify the continuation of religious Judaism in an enlightened and rational age, these leaders forged the foundational elements that continue to sustain and organize the vast majority of Jewish religious practice in the present day. This is a story that needed to be told.

Future Research

The modernization of Jewish life has been a topic of discussion almost since it first began in the latter decades of the eighteenth century. A particular sort of self-reflection, fundamentally rooted

² Immanuel Wolf, "On the Concept of a Science of Judaism (1822)," *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 2, no. 1 (1957): 194.

in the historicization of cultures and values, is a key component of Western modernity generally, and of Jewish modernity specifically. The intricacies of the various elements that came together and led to the reconstruction of Jewish life, and the way the rabbinate was transformed in the process, are important facets of European history. They help us understand the manner by which Enlightenment, its subsequent philosophical movements, and broader economic and demographic shifts all had deep and profound repercussions for religious beliefs and practices in the modern world.

This dissertation, of course, is just the beginning of the work that needs to be done to comprehensively understand the transformations of Jewish practice and rabbinical culture in nineteenth-century Central Europe. Each of the chapters above provides the historical groundwork upon which a rich and complex history of Jewish life can be written. My goal has been to re-orient our understanding of the nature and practice of rabbis in the day-to-day religious experience of Jews in the German-speaking lands of Central Europe across the first half of the nineteenth century. In the course of a mere five decades, from the beginning to the middle of the 1800s, Jewish leaders and their communities in that part of the world radically restructured the nature and importance of the rabbi, the synagogue, and of religious practice. This was a reformation whose components had not previously been traced and whose centrality for our understanding of modern Jewish life had not been fully appreciated.

This project remains, however, a mostly panoramic vision of the changes that swept through Jewish religious practice. What is required going forward is a systematic and detailed account of the social, political, economic, and intellectual worlds that existed at each phase of that historical arc. There was no goal or obvious trajectory in the story I have recounted here. Instead, at each moment there were numerous factors and choices, and an unwieldy array of dialogues, political philosophies, and social obligations that confronted Jewish religious leaders as the Jewish communities of Central

Europe moved from rural towns and villages into industrializing cities. Nevertheless, despite all the tumult and argument that arose within rabbinic circles, over the course of the nineteenth century a new sort of religious structure took shape in urban centers, one that mirrored and underscored many of the values and challenges seen elsewhere in European modernity.

Adolf Jellinek must remain central as this work progresses. Certainly, his participation in the nineteenth-century worlds of academic scholarship and Jewish community organizing invite much greater biographical and intellectual analysis. However, it has been my argument throughout this dissertation that Jellinek's ultimate historic significance does not derive merely from his participation in the fascinating and at many times fractious community of scholars, religious leaders, and politicians whose lives and writings made the nineteenth century such a vibrant and innovative era. Instead, Jellinek is best understood within the context of broader structural transitions in the practice of religious Judaism as it unfolded during his life. At each point in his career Jellinek took the road that led back toward community engagement and religious reform instead of into arcane scholarly inquiry or institution building. As this project moves forward, identifying and investigating the nuances of his story will ultimately allow us to more clearly understand the changes that overtook Jewish social and religious experience in nineteenth-century Europe. A fuller account of Jellinek's personal story will provide the sort of specificity and ethnographic nuance needed to fully reveal the epochal transformation this dissertation is designed to portray.

Any future study will likewise need to delve at greater length into the phenomena of the rabbinical sermon. Such work will involve looking at the sermon as a religious and intellectual performance, given to an audience whose expectations were about both instruction and, if not quite entertainment, something similar. By the middle of the nineteenth century rabbis were written about widely in the popular press and thereby evaluated on a new criterion, that of charisma. This was not

a charisma such as the kind that attracted disciples to Hassidic masters, but a different, more recognizably modern type. As William Clark describes it, modern charisma

had to pass muster with bureaucratic or rationalized criteria...which included productivity in publication, diligence in teaching, and acceptable political views and lifestyle. But to achieve success, one also had to acquire fame, be in fashion, and display “originality,” a spark of genius, in writings. This became a new sort of...charisma tied to writing for “applause” and “recognition.”³

Linked in this way with similar changes in Christian (primarily Protestant) rhetorical practices in the decades before and after 1800, the rabbi and the pastor both adapted new forms of public religious display to fit communal expectations in the industrial city.

Finally, sermons became a new form of exegetical practice not only as a spoken but also as a printed and published media, one focused on interpreting contemporary political and cultural events through the lens of ancient texts. Rabbis and pastors used their sermons to edify and unify increasingly diverse (and diffuse) urban communities. Any future study of the modern sermon will need to examine the content and stylistic overlaps of Jewish and Christian sermons and the practices surrounding their performance and distribution.

Making Contemporary Connections

Despite the accidental nature of rabbinical transformation in the middle nineteenth century, the structures of Judaism that resulted have had a profound effect on Jews from that time to the present day. I therefore want to take these final pages to discuss the ways that the nineteenth century transformation of rabbinic practice has impacted the traditions and experiences of modern Anglo-American Judaism. The historical period represented by this dissertation encompassed the creation of most of the assumptions and practices that now define Jewish religious life in the United States, Britain, and the British Commonwealth. The rabbi, rabbi’s sermon, and the synagogue are arguably the primary loci of religious experience for the majority of Jews in these places. That is a truly

³ William Clark, *Academic Charisma and the Origins of the Research University* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 3-4.

remarkable transformation. In 1815 Jewish religious continuity was based on family and local communal custom. Today it is based on a formal religious infrastructure centered on the rabbi and synagogue.

Comprising almost half of extant world Jewry (around eight million people), simply the number and importance of Anglo-American Jews seems like justification enough for pursuing this connection. By the latest calculation there are roughly fifteen million Jews, residing primarily in Israel and the United States (six and a half million and six million, respectively), with variously sized communities in France, Britain, Argentina, Germany, Ukraine, South Africa, Australia, and Canada, and very small communities nearly everywhere else. But numbers alone, I think, do not reflect the overwhelming influence that European--and especially German and Habsburg--Jewish modernity has had on the practices and beliefs of contemporary Anglo-American Judaism. Almost all Anglo-American Jews (except, arguably, the ultra-Orthodox, or Haredim) express sentiments about Judaism—its history and theology—that more closely resemble those of other Jews alive today than to anything thought or written by their classical, medieval, or early modern forebears. It is my contention that, more than any other, Anglo-American Jewry is the clearest inheritor of Central European modernity.⁴ It reflects a continuation of the German tradition more or less uninterrupted by the vast upheavals (fascist occupation and liquidation, Soviet social engineering, Israeli nation building, expulsion from Islamic lands) experienced by the other half of their co-religionists.⁵

⁴ Vast numbers of German or German-educated rabbis migrated to England and the United States in the second half of the nineteenth century. The institutions they built and the customs they established greeted the later arriving migrants from the Russian Empire. Though often of Hassidic background, these eastern migrants quickly discarded their old traditions and embraced an Anglo-American form of German Judaism.

⁵ Of course, any project that seeks to draw even the weakest link between the world of Napoleon and Franz Joseph on the one hand, and the present day on the other, must do so with care, for between that time and today sits the twentieth century. There can be little argument that the Shoah and the building of the State of Israel are two events whose impacts have forever altered the physical, psychological, and theological composition of world Jewry. As Imre Kertész said in his

The relationship between the new type of rabbinic Judaism described in this dissertation and twentieth and twenty-first century Anglo-American religious belief and practice is made compellingly when one reads the statements of three chief rabbis side-by-side. First, Adolf Jellinek:

When we built [the new synagogue in Vienna in 1825...] we wanted a place to extoll the religious teachings of Israel, its great truths, and the great ideas of Judaism concerning clemency and humanity, concerning justice and freedom [...] On Sabbaths and holidays, when from our ancient scriptures law, history, and the prophets are read publicly in the old sacred language, evidence can be made in the German language that our laws emanate wisdom and goodness. They are a source of love and justice at a time when the current alphabet of civilized humanity has hardly been able to stammer [such moral truths]. Our law, with bright and clear voice, unequivocally proclaims: "Love your neighbor as yourself," whomever he is and whomever you may be [...] Come down to him and recognize in him your human brother.⁶

Second, Joseph Hertz (1872-1946), Chief Rabbi of the British Empire, 1913-1946:

What is true of the child, is true of the nation as well, and is true of humanity at large. Through the Ten Commandments [...] Israel planted Duty and Holiness into the heart of humanity. No religious document has exercised as great an influence on the moral and social life of man [...] Israel must be conscious of itself, of what it has done, of what it is still capable of doing. Israel is [...] a great, eternal, indomitable people, that has fought and suffered on every battlefield of human thought—to whom the present moment should appear not as the end, but only as the center, of its career.⁷

Nobel Prize acceptance speech, "Which writer today is not a writer of the Holocaust? One does not have to choose the Holocaust as one's subject to detect the broken voice that has dominated modern European art for decades." Imre Kertész, "Nobel Lecture," December 2, 2002, The Nobel Prize, accessed March 29, 2016, http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/2002/kertesz-lecture-e.html. Just as no traditional Jew can cross the world without thinking of the Babylonian exile that began Israel's diaspora two and a half millennia ago, so too it is now impossible to write about Jewish history without the events of the twentieth century holding silent court behind every letter. The Shoah is present in each of the chapters to come. Most of the communities to be discussed, the synagogues to be described, and the beliefs and hopes to be analyzed were destroyed in the Second World War. Nevertheless, as I aim to demonstrate below, there remains a strong thread linking the patterns and practices of contemporary Anglo-American Jewry with the aspirations, expectations, and religious creations of Central European Jewry a century and a half ago. For an interesting thought experiment about a world without the dissolution of the Habsburg Empire in 1918, see Robert A. Kann, "Should the Habsburg Empire Have Been Saved? An Exercise in Speculative History," *Austrian History Yearbook* 42 (May 3, 2011): 203–10.

⁶ Adolf Jellinek, *Zur Feier des fünfzigjährigen Jubiläums des israelitischen Tempels in der innern Stadt Wien* (Vienna: Winter, 1876), 8.

⁷ Joseph H. Hertz, *Sermons, Addresses and Studies*, vol. 1 (London: Soncino, 1938), 230-1. See also idem., *A Book of Jewish Thoughts* (London: Office of the Chief Rabbi, 1940). For a shorter

Third, Jonathan Sacks (b. 1948), Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth, 1991-2013:

If there is one shared feature of [my sermons], it is that I have tried to set the biblical text in the wider context of ideas. Many traditional commentaries look at the Torah through a microscope: the detail, the fragmentation of text in isolation. I have tried to look at it through a telescope: the larger picture and its place in the constellation of concepts that make Judaism so compelling a picture of the universe and our place within it.⁸

What we see running through these texts, separated as they each are by three-quarters of a century, is a shared theory of the rabbi's role in a new world order.⁹ All speak of Judaism as if it were an obvious part of the narrative of Western intellectual development, even when such a naturalization of Judaism into the broader history of European ideas was a unique creation of the middle nineteenth century (and of Jellinek and a handful of others in particular). Just as we see the turn

introduction to the life and works of Hertz, see Benjamin J. Elton, "A Bridge Across the Tigris: Chief Rabbi Joseph Herman Hertz," in *Conversations: The Journal of the Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals* 21 (Spring 2015). The overlaps between Hertz and Jellinek are remarkable. Elton writes: "Hertz had not emerged [in the position of Chief Rabbi] simply because other candidates fell away or because of a quiet chat between Milner and Rothschild. He provided something which the community had sensed it lacked under the Adlers [the father Nathan (1845-1890) and son Hermann (1891-1911)]. When Nathan Adler became Chief Rabbi, British Jewry was an essentially a German community and increasingly acculturated. This began to change in the 1880s and by 1911 traditionalists from Eastern Europe were becoming powerful. Hermann Adler lacked a natural affinity for them and in some cases was outright unsympathetic to their situation. Hertz was from the East; Yiddish was a natural tongue for him and he had grown up in the old-world culture of the Lower East Side. His Seminary and university training made him suitable as the leader of Anglicized Jewry and as religious representative of Jews to the outside world. His innate traditionalism made him acceptable to the Jews of the East End of London and comparable communities around the country. The very qualities which made him unemployable in [increasingly assimilating] 1890s America made him ideal for the greatest rabbinic position in the world." Ibid. This article condenses some of the work done in Elton's book, *Britain's Chief Rabbis and the Religious Character of Anglo-Jewry, 1880-1970* (Manchester, U.K.: Manchester University Press, 2009). See also Derek Taylor, *Chief Rabbi Hertz: The Wars of the Lord* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2014).

⁸ Jonathan Sacks, *Covenant & Conversation: Genesis: The Book of Beginnings* (London: Maggid, 2009), 3.

⁹ Commenting on Hertz, but capturing a critique that can be made about Jellinek and Sacks as well, Elton writes: "If Hertz's reputation during his lifetime derived from his actions as a religious leader, since his death it has rested on his writings. He was not primarily an original scholar, but he was extremely well-read and a great popularizer." Elton, "A Bridge Across the Tigris."

toward a language of universal morality among Christian theological tracts in the early decades of the nineteenth century, so we see it in Jewish texts as well. These three leaders (somewhat more than implicitly) claimed that the rabbi was a negotiator and integrator of Jewish morality with its gentile equivalent, and that the rabbi was a forger of links between the long and deep Jewish past and the complex, somewhat inscrutable multicultural present. The fact that not only was this an entirely new innovation devised by Jewish leaders in Central Europe at the dawn of modernity, but that it has now become such a dominant part of the rabbi's role within Jewish religious experience, suggest that the past one hundred and fifty years constitute a new cultural event in the history of rabbinic Judaism, a recognizable break and transfiguration from the pre-modern Jewish experience that came before it; in other words, a new shoot from the House of David.

To begin to more carefully trace the lineage of the rabbi, the rabbi's sermon, and the synagogue from Central Europe to modern Anglo-American Jewry, we must examine the various ideologies of Judaism present in contemporary Jewish life in the English-speaking West. For many of those Jews, Judaism represents a social category (as opposed to a race or nationality) that most easily encompasses a cross-section of human diversity--albeit a "Western" form tied exclusively to the idea of individual self-expression (and increasingly to identity politics). An interesting corollary to the individual diversity expressed by Anglo-American Jewry is the extremely limited physical and mental space allotted to its religious observance. Outside specific Orthodox enclaves in a handful of cities, rarely is a whole street or neighborhood considered an area of dense Jewish presence.¹⁰ The following is a description of a contemporary Anglo-American Jewish religious service, which should

¹⁰ This is made clear by the relative dearth of eruvs--symbolic markers of Jewish neighborhoods--in the United States. Few exist in cities with total populations below half a million, even when many smaller cities host Jewish communities of a few thousand families or more. (The contributors to Wikipedia maintain a fairly comprehensive list of American--and international--eruvim. See "List of Places with Eruvim," Wikipedia, accessed March 29, 2016, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_eruvin#United_States. In looking at this list, and then realizing that the United States is home to some six million Jews, the number of Jews who live inside these eruvim is marginal.

be familiar to everyone who has encountered it: A rabbi stands at the pulpit of a synagogue located in an urban environment and preaches about the universal ethics and the historical importance of Jewish texts and practices. The community is composed of many congregants born elsewhere, or with local roots mainly two or three generations old. Few of those sitting quietly in the pews know how to read or understand much Hebrew, or consider themselves religiously observant (followers of mitzvot or halakhah) or keepers of Jewish dietary restrictions (kashrut). They expect the rabbi to connect Jewish texts to a current event, a social mission, or a public policy, and for the rabbi's secular politics (about which they care very deeply) to align with their own.

Such scenes predominate on Sabbath mornings in cities and towns across Anglo-America. Its familiarity has made it banal. Certainly, Jewish ethnographers strive to classify and explain the myriad small differences between communities, especially as we see them in the United States.¹¹ And new religious factions attempt to gain supporters by accentuating ever-narrower disparities.¹² But the core components of Anglo-American Jewish life today (large synagogues, a reliance on urban spaces to create Jewish density, pulpit rabbis, diverse congregant backgrounds, a belief that Judaism embodies universal ethics) remain consistent across the denominational spectrum.¹³

¹¹ See Jonathan D. Sarna, *American Judaism: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004); Samuel C. Heilman, *Portrait of American Jews: The Last Half of the 20th Century* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1995); and Jack Wertheimer, *A People Divided: Judaism in Contemporary America*, First Edition edition (New York: Basic Books, 1993).

¹² As is happening now between Yeshivat Chovevei Torah (YCT), Mechon Hadar, the Jewish Theological Seminar, and Drisha, all in New York. See the most recent article by Rabbi Avi Weiss, founder of (YCT) proclaiming a new “Open Orthodoxy.” See Avi Weiss, “Defining ‘Open Orthodoxy’ Within Judaism,” *Tablet Magazine*, accessed March 29, 2016, <http://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-life-and-religion/191907/defining-open-orthodoxy>.

¹³ There is much talk, however, that we might be living through some sort of paradigm shift, as “independent minyanim”—prayer groups organized without rabbis—are finding larger numbers of young adherents than traditional synagogues. See Elie Kaunfer, *Empowered Judaism: What Independent Minyanim Can Teach Us about Building Vibrant Jewish Communities* (Woodstock, V.T.: Jewish Lights, 2010).

In contemporary Anglo-American Judaism, religion and religious expression are often limited to a synagogue, a school, or a community center. A private home might witness religious blessings on special holidays or when family is present, but would otherwise lack daily ritual activity. Judaism is often an intellectual exercise, being the idea of the Sabbath (which is itself probably not observed for its full twenty-five hours) or a library of Jewish history or philosophy. Judaism might be a Hebrew name, a family story, a vacation to Israel or Poland, a devotion to a homeless shelter, a food bank, a halfway house, or a civil rights rally (with commitment to these social goods perhaps attributed in some way to the Jewish concept of *tikkun olam*, repairing the world).

In all these cases, being Jewish and participating in Judaism are often entirely devoid of their historic theological content, or of any larger enforceable social organizer (e.g., God said to Moses, etc.). Today, Anglo-American Jews *go* to Jewish places, *make* time for Jewish practice, *seek* out Jewish learning, and *create* Jewish space, which means that to be religiously Jewish they must *do* things that are in some way opposed to any number of larger cultural forces compelling them otherwise. It also means that living in Jewish space can be justified only when Jewish purposes align with reigning social and intellectual norms—when Judaism’s unique theological demands are undercut by the ostensibly more important (and more moral) assumptions of individual liberty and personal freedom.

Yet as scarce and disjointed as twenty-first century Anglo-American Judaism might appear, it is also intellectually creative and socially vibrant. Seemingly full of contradictions, Anglo-American Judaism today reflects a continually transforming response to the immense pressures of historical continuity, economic and political evolution, and intellectual acculturation. Take just four examples. First, at a time when Jewish religious practice has ceased to be an organizing factor in the lives of a majority of Anglo-American Jews, synagogues continue to be built and funded, and more than half of self-identifying Jews still celebrate major religious holidays. Second, though rabbinical Judaism

assumes a normative collective ethic over individual autonomy (or, as Abraham Joshua Heschel said, it is not if you believe in God but what God wants from you), few contemporary Jewish spaces demand a particular level of observance or form of belief before allowing entrance and participation. Third, while the central texts of historical Judaism are highly gendered toward the masculine, translations used as liturgy increasingly are not, and the old works continue to be reinterpreted (rather than cast aside) as quickly as the liberal values of inclusion shift.¹⁴ And fourth, the volume of new texts focused on Jewish universalism suggests a broad and ongoing communal commitment to this form of intellectual justification for Jewish continuity.

All the contradictory and affirmative aspects of present-day Anglo-American Jewish experience are reflections of what I see as the major transformations within religious Judaism fashioned by nineteenth-century Central European Jewish religious leaders in their attempt to create a religious practice applicable to modern Western life. That these elements of contemporary Judaism are so vastly different from the ideas and experiences of Jews who lived before 1800 is underappreciated. What is truly astonishing is that, in the midst of some of the most tumultuous decades in Jewish history, a relative handful of people created the institutions and theologies that continue to influence the lives of millions of Jews well into the twenty-first century.

In the end, it is not from simple historical interest that we should draw lines of connection between the religious challenges and constructions of the 1850s and the lives of Jews in the 2010s. Modernity created a set of assumptions that set the European world on a particular course. Those values and normative ethics appear to be, in many quarters, breaking down. Knowing that the modern synagogue was formed and reimagined based on a unique set of historical trends and

¹⁴ For the most contemporary example, consider the new High Holiday prayer book (*Mishkan Hanefesh, Machzor for the Days of Awe*) published in 2015 by the Reform Movement in America: Gabe Friedman, “Reform movement’s new holiday prayer book is radically inclusive,” *The Times of Israel* (Friday, August 21, 2015). For the Central Conference of American Rabbis’ (CCAR) promotional webpage for the new book, see <https://www.ccarpress.org/content.asp?tid=349>.

demands offers us a perspective on its possibilities and limitations unavailable to those who view the institutional arrangements of Judaism as much longer, older, and more stable than they really are. The rabbi has always been a part of Judaism, but who he (and now often she) has been, what has been expected of her, where she resides, and what her religious purpose is, continue to present challenges for religious Judaism. Finally, listened to or ignored, the sermon remains a central component of Jewish religious practice in our era.

Each of these aspects of Jewish religious life had its origins in the cities and synagogues of Central Europe a century and a half ago. Studies like this one are not designed to pass judgments on the decisions of the past. But knowing why particular societies formed as they did should provide a measure of honesty in discussions about the present. The powers of the liberal tradition, with its universalistic ethic, are still loudly promoted across the Jewish community. It is not just to an historical era that one should look for future guidance. But it is certainly through past experience that one can gain a measure of perspective concerning the great range of human possibilities.

APPENDIX 1:

INTRODUCTION TO BET HA-MIDRASCH (VOL. 3)

Jellinek, Adolf. *Bet ha-Midrasch: Sammlung kleiner Midraschim und vermischter Abhandlungen aus der ältern jüdischen Literature*. Vol. 3. Leipzig: Vollrath, 1855.

I should have failed to preface this third part of my “Bet ha-Midrasch” at all, if I had not felt urged to utter a serious word about the sad situation in which Jewish Studies finds itself. I must mention the despicable meanness and smallness of spirit that prevails in the circle of Jewish scholars, and that complicates any cooperation or cooperative pursuits. By mastering the conceit of sitting enthroned in the clouds, we have a *corps d’elite* who ignore the others. This all-knowing few only teach, but they do not want to learn, and mostly they slander by searching everywhere for literary errors in others. They lack true humility, which was already considered by the ancients as essential to genuine research. Such are weaknesses and infirmities that remain even today.

Indeed, Jewish scholars have revealed the same social evils that have already been active over so many different generations. But there are damages which disturb the progress of science, and which must be removed, or at least made aware of, if the efforts of the last years are not to be thwarted. Above all, such petty actions lack that free spirit which imbues science for its own sake, and leaves it up to time to fully investigate all of her. The meaning of science is to feel and sense every little thing that is important for true research, for how often can a side path end up being the clearest view to the realm of knowledge? Only on such a sense of striving with certainty and security will one spare no effort to open a field of research anew. But because this sense is missing, we cannot know what investigations remain undone, what works fail to address the design of practical life, since there are those who outright accuse others about miniscule observations and surprise them by treating this or that literary theme. The lack of disinterested scientific research results in a contempt of the work itself, which begins early in life. Seeking to capture the big picture, each

supports his own literary tower. His aversion to receiving a new article of science has caused there to be no common ground in the most important matters of Jewish literary history.

Further, often one finds that influential men lack the ability to be objective about that which lies outside his specialty. Anyone in Talmudic research, because he thinks this is most closely associated with life, cannot understand why one should set his sights on scholarship. The former calls with all his strength of spirit and matter to suppress the study of literary history as something merely *minorum gentium* [of the minor nations], having no idea that it tells us about how the mind and body relate, and is of the cultural moment in literary history. Others look on with tedious smiles as he lays out his work, and cannot set as their highest point a series of various booklets that run to a great length such that the seemingly separate parts relate and make up a great whole.

Finally, we often look in vain for that love of truth which has the courage to give truth in the world of research, someone who does not cover up or make up, and is not full of prejudices when it comes time to fight. Who has not the courage in science to sincerity and truth, of him we say: Stay away! Enter not as an unauthorized priest to desecrate this sanctuary!

I must in conclusion indict, as in court, the modern study of Jewish literature. The scientific treatment of the vast, comprehensive, and manifold subjects, written down in various languages and hidden in remote libraries of Jewish literature, is still very young, and the resources for its pursuance still very few. It requires great and exhausting efforts to complete this work in a sure and reliable manner, for just as literature itself has changed, so too have the methods for its research. What time and what resources were utilized to bring to their present state our knowledge of Greek and Roman literature, and of Church history! In earnest do I wish the men of Jewish Studies to pursue the cause of truth in their research, and be just in judgment, so that the field might thrive. (July 26, 1855)

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